



CO-EVOLVE

Promoting the co-evolution of human activities and natural systems for the development of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism

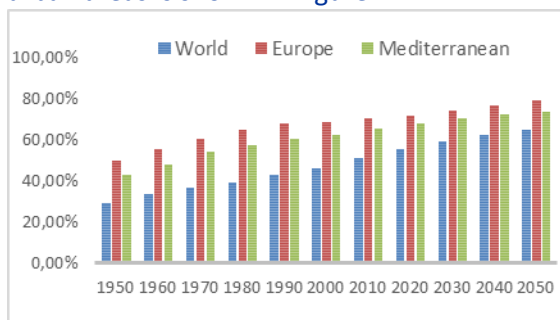
FACTSHEET #3

Urbanisation & littoralisation

SUMMARY:

Urbanisation and especially coastal urbanisation or littoralisation, namely land occupation by urban land uses and related infrastructure in coastal areas, is a long-standing and intense phenomenon in the Mediterranean region. Urbanisation constitutes a dominant driving force of development in Mediterranean and worldwide and therefore emerges at the forefront of the policy-making agenda.

Between 1950 and 2010, the Mediterranean **urbanisation rate** increased from 42.86% to 65.63%, while estimations show that, by 2050, 73.96% of the Mediterranean population will live in urban areas. The population residing in urban areas is shown in Figure 1.



United Nations Environmental Programme Data Set (2015)

In addition to Population Density (persons per square km) (Figure 2), it becomes evident that the urbanisation rates in European Mediterranean cities grow much faster than population since the 1970s, especially in some of the largest cities of Spain, France, Italy and Greece.



Population density and urban centers in the Mediterranean, UNEP/MAP (2012)

The population within 100 kilometers of the Mediterranean coast has increased almost 1.5 times in the period from 1975 to 2005 (Figure 3). Likewise, the population density at the European coast of the Mediterranean, from 190 to 2013, is continuously increasing but with a lower growth rate over the years.

Drivers, pressures or impacts of urbanisation may vary from one country to another as well as at regional and local scale within the same country. However, in the Mediterranean as a whole, the **drivers** that led to its current situation range from demographic and social to economic and political and their interrelations.



Population trends in European coastal region, EEA (2013)

The Mediterranean coast attracts socioeconomic development which can lead to increased pressures on natural and human environments. The artificialisation of the coastal environment is the dominant driver of coastal zone development in the Mediterranean region (Figure 4).



Change in artificial land use in 0-10 km coastal strip, EEA (2013)

Mainly two general processes of land use change have occurred during the last decades; first, the decline in dry farming and forest use

and second the intensification of irrigated crops and the urbanisation of coastal plains.

In this context of measuring and monitoring the artificialisation of the coast, the Indicators proposed by **Ecosystems Approach (EcAp)** about coastal ecosystems and landscapes can be used as a tool to evaluate the state of Mediterranean coasts.

Among the 11 Ecological Objectives (EO) set by EcAp, EO8 focuses on coastal ecosystems and landscapes with emphasis on the integrated nature of the coastal zone (EO). EO8 includes two indicators:

- common indicator 16: “Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of man-made structures” and
- candidate indicator 25: “Land use change”

The monitoring aim of the EO8 common indicator is twofold: (i) to quantify the rate and the spatial distribution of the Mediterranean coastline artificialisation and (ii) to provide a better understanding of the impact to the shoreline dynamics. It has an operational target on impact, thus it is associated to concrete implementation measures related to specific human activities.

The use of these indicators is crucial in order to fill the gap of systematic monitoring and assessment and thus contribute to the shaping of legislation about coastal areas.



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<https://co-evolve.interreg-med.eu/>



co-evolve@pta-emth.gr

