



Nature
Conservation Agency
Republic of Latvia

Political insight in Marine Protected Areas

The Future of Marine Spatial Conservation: From Science to Policy

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October 28 2025, Liepāja

From top to bottom



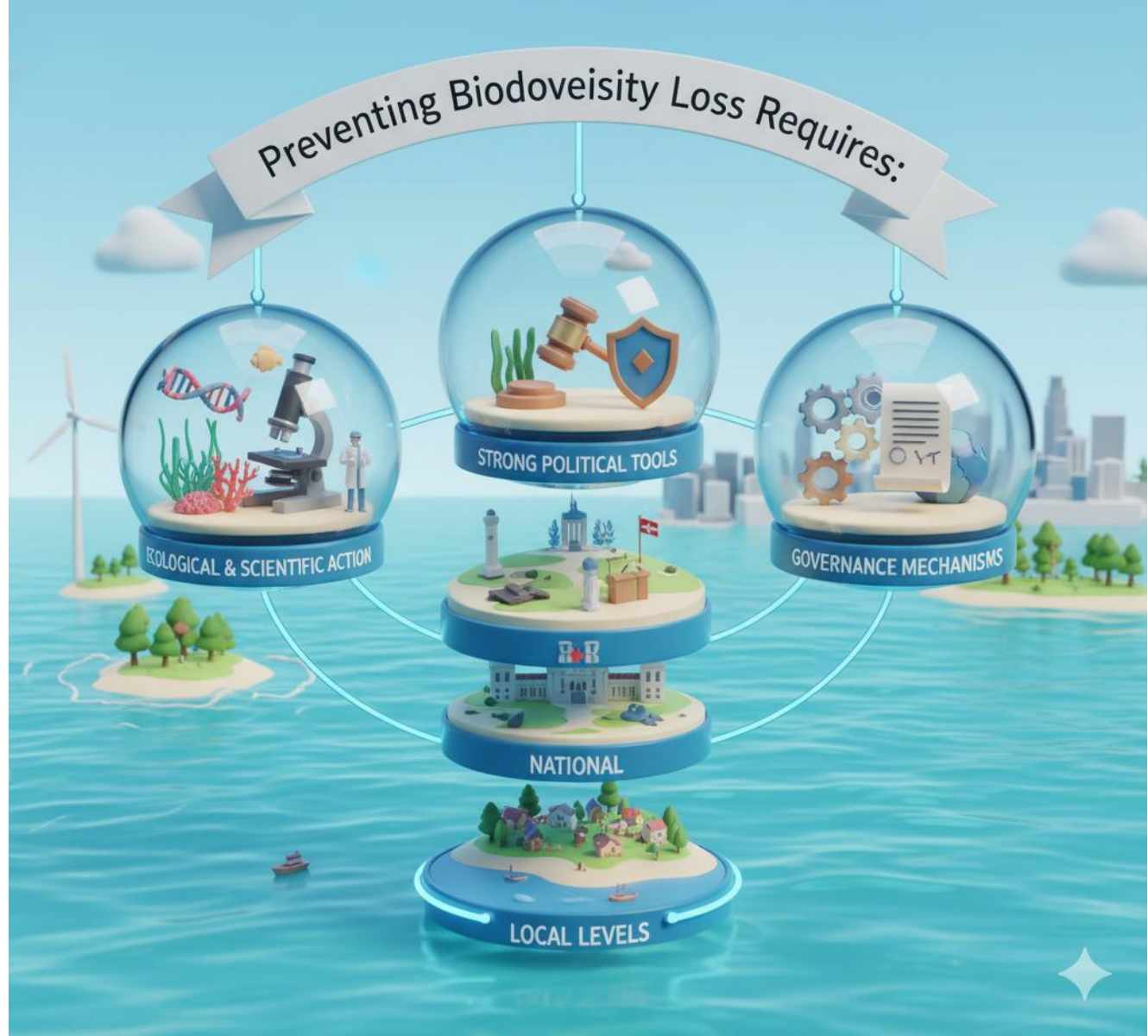
How to prevent biodiversity loss?

Preventing biodiversity loss requires:

-  ecological and scientific action
-  strong political tools
-  governance mechanisms

Work at all levels:

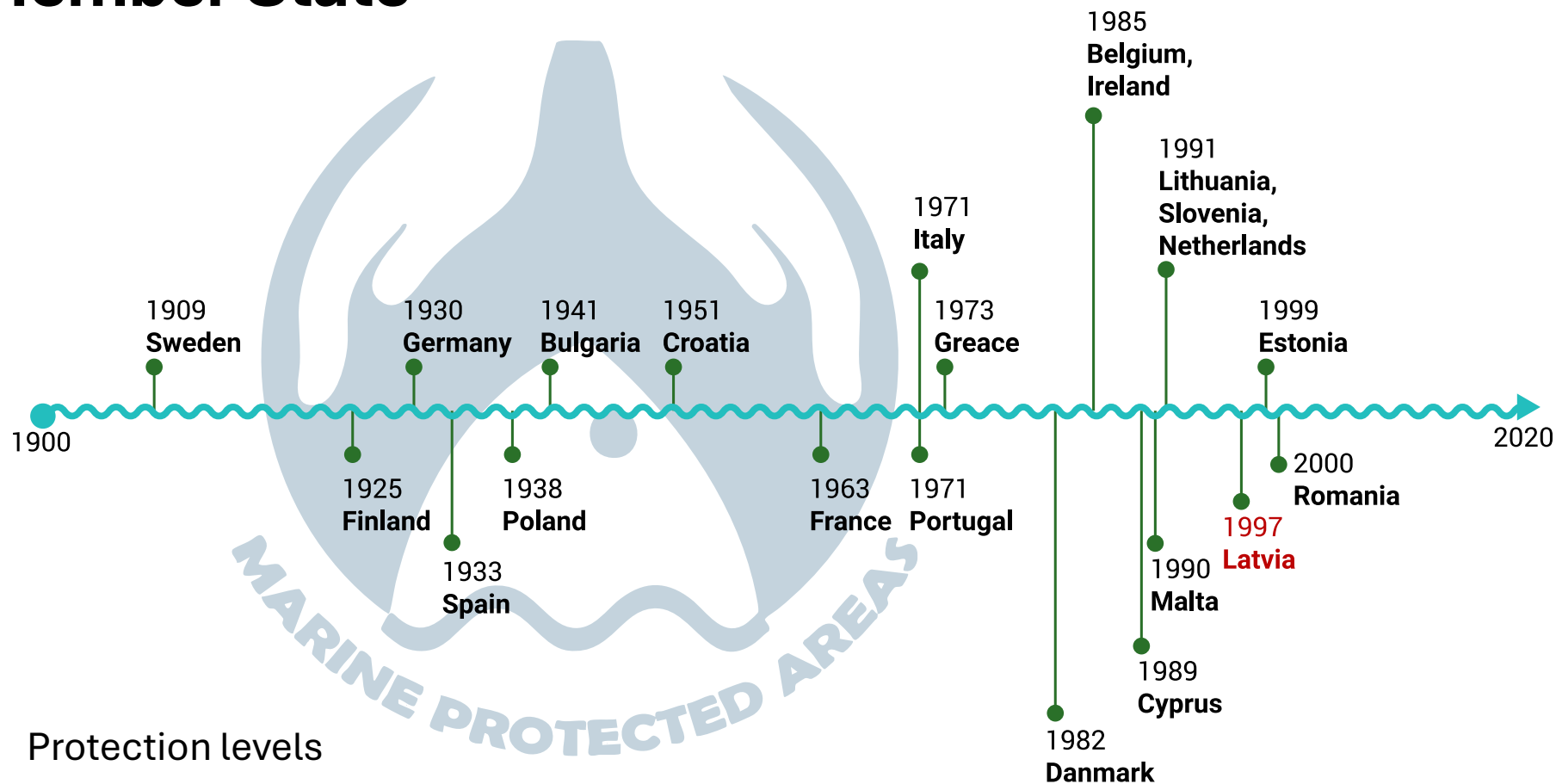
-  international
-  national
-  local



International Agreements and Conventions



First Marine Protected Areas designation in each Member State



EU policy I

Birds Directive
(1979) & Habitats
Directive (1992)

 The foundation of the ***Natura 2000*** network.

Marine Strategy
Framework
Directive (2008)

EU Member States have to

-  assess the **health** of their marine ecosystems
-  set **environmental targets**
-  develop **Marine Strategies**

Common
Fisheries Policy

-  Fishing quotas
-  Closure of sensitive areas
-  Technical measures
-  Control of bycatch and reduction of discarded fish

EU policy II

Funding

-  LIFE Programme
-  European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)
-  Horizon Europe

Monitoring, enforcement

-  Member States must report every 6 years
-  The European Environment Agency coordinates data collection and assessment
-  Enforcement – both national and at EU level

EU policy III

Ecosystem-based management

 The EU policy emphasises ecosystem-based management – marine protection is about habitats, ecological processes and their connections

Marine spatial planning

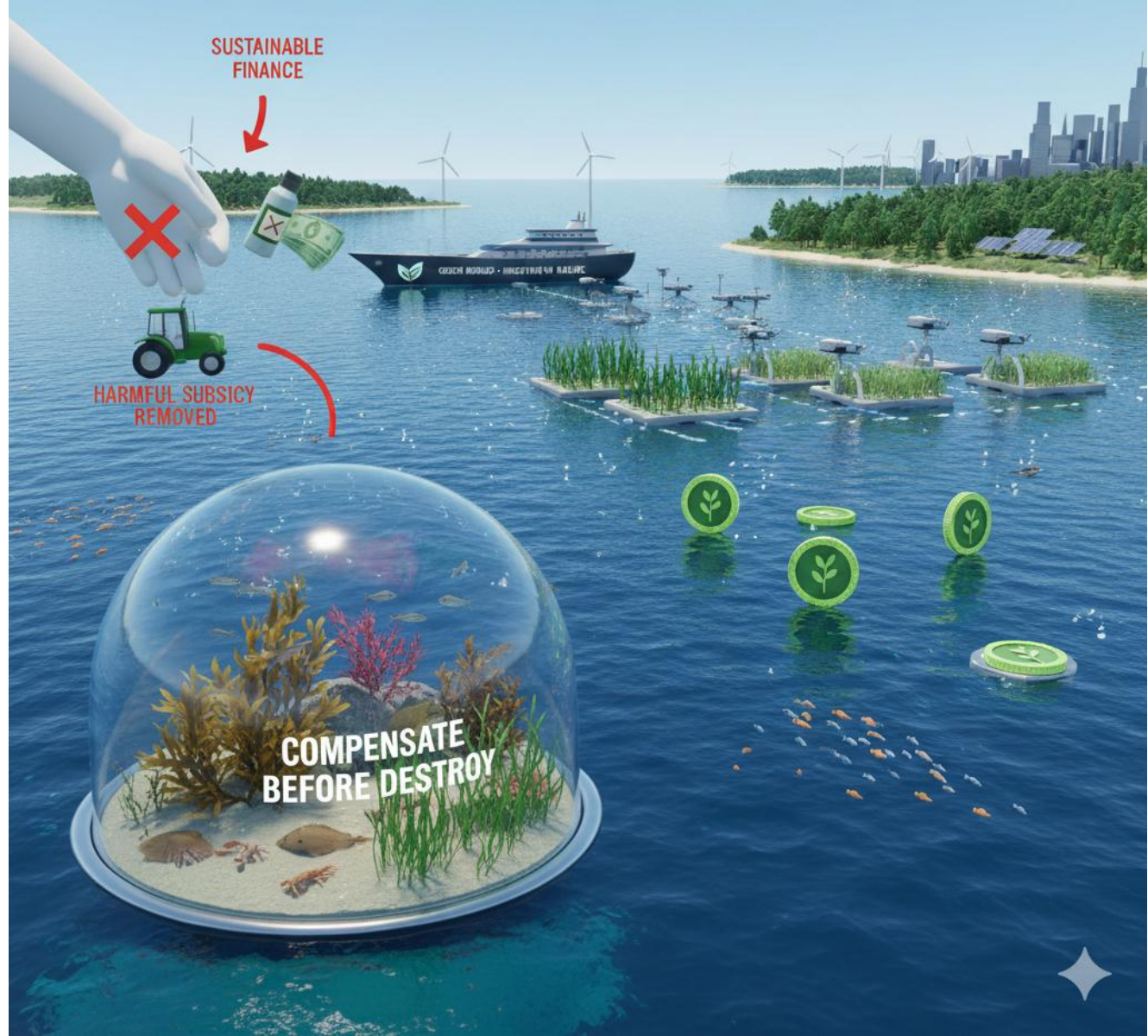
 Integration of different uses of the sea
 Reduction of conflicting uses
 Well-planned protection zones

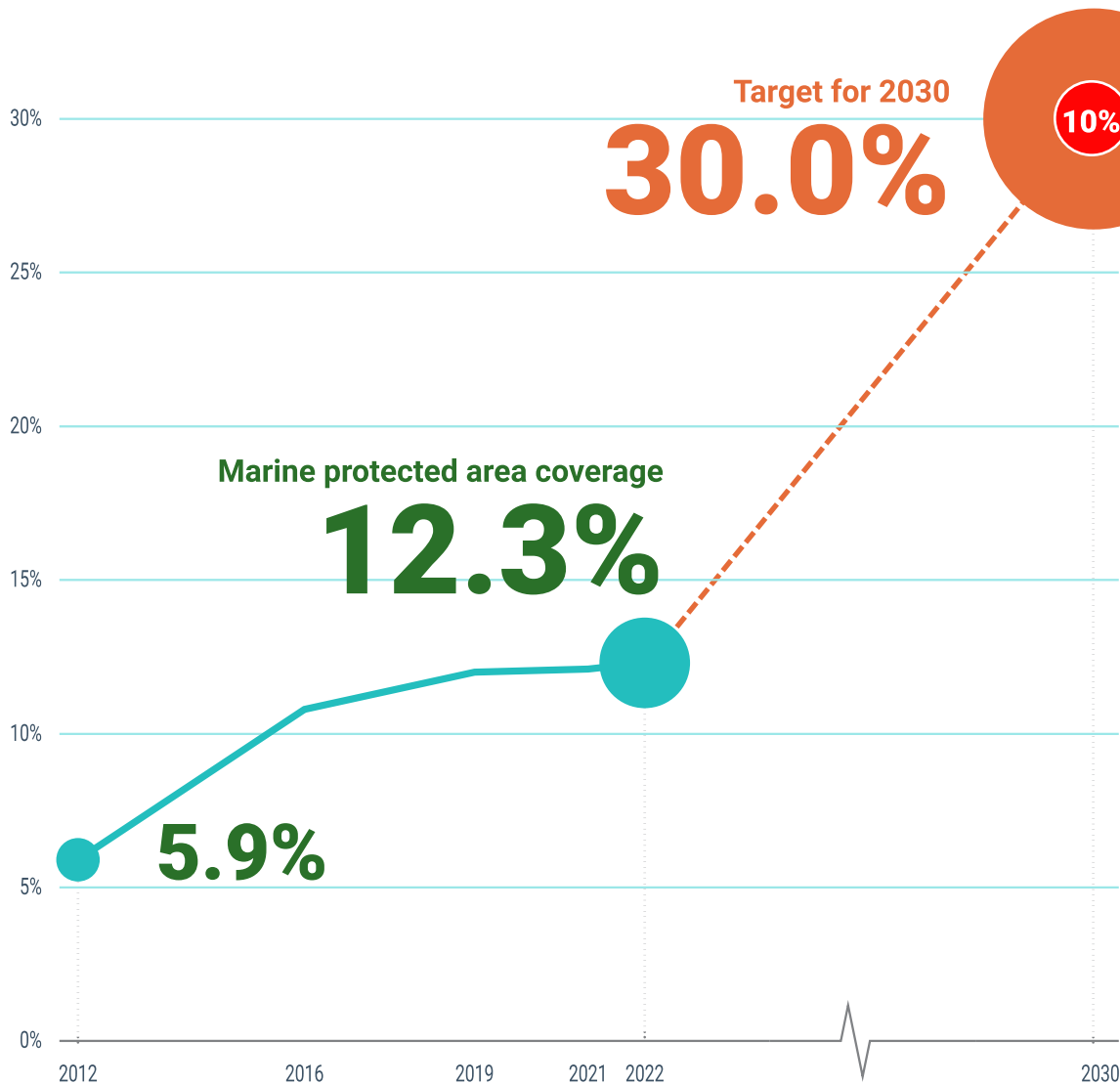
Other policies

 Blue economy
 Climate change
 Pollution
 International cooperation

Economic and Market-Based Instruments

- 🧑 Subsidy reforms – removing harmful subsidies (e.g., for intensive agriculture)
- 🧑 Sustainable finance and green bonds – investing in nature-based solutions
- 🧑 Principle «before destroy or affect, compensate»



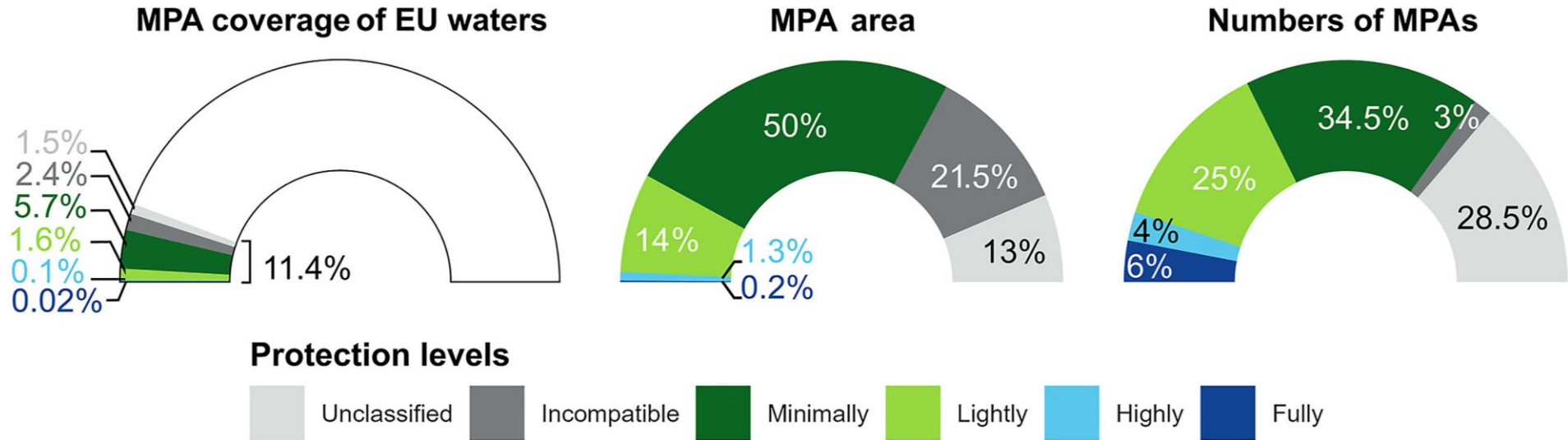


EU policy – how successful?

👤 5.9% in 2012 >
12.3% in 2022 >
30.0% in 2030

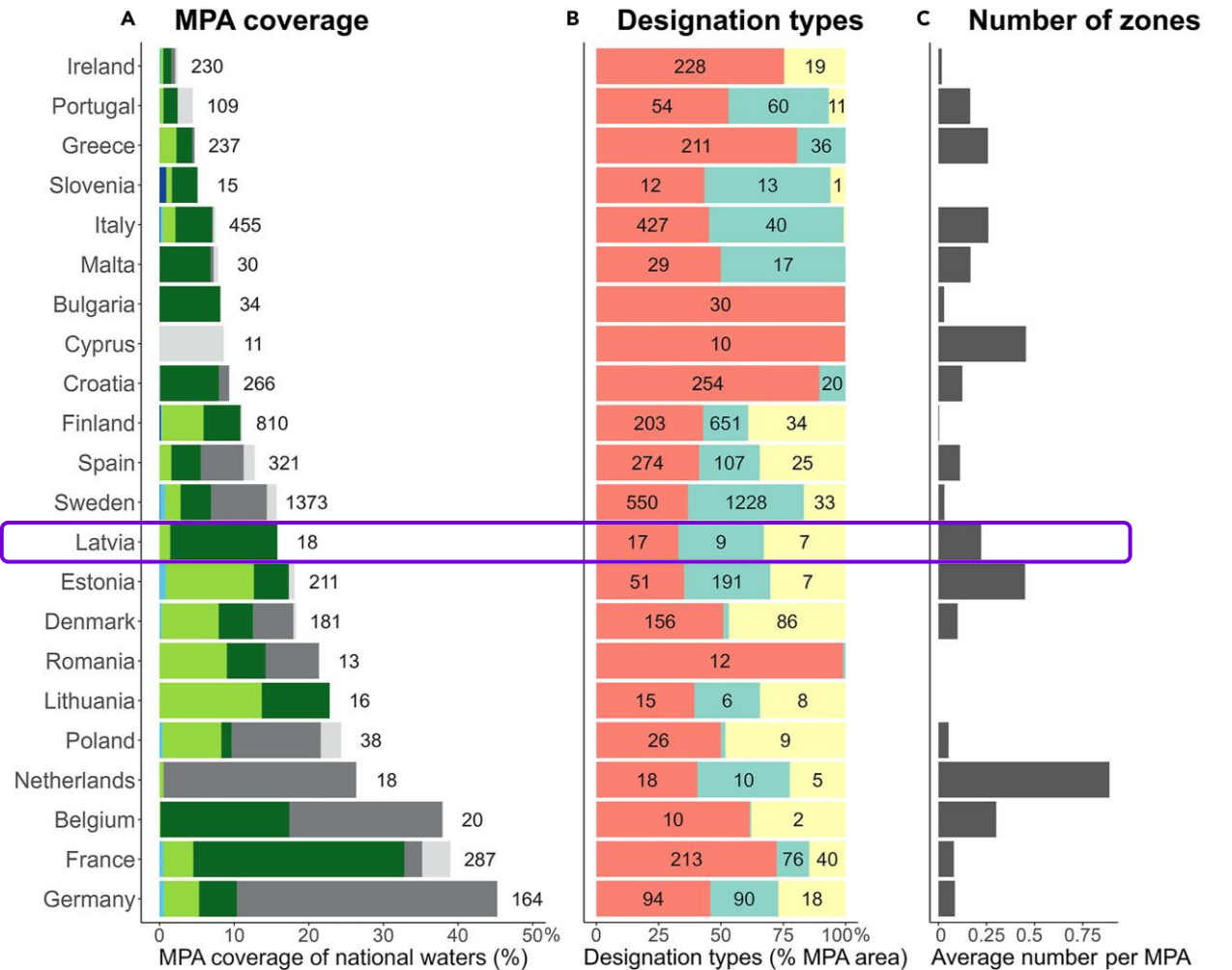
👤 Many MPAs are
“paper parks”

Marine Protected Areas - Protection levels



MPA characteristics for each EU coastal country

 National designations and earlier designated MPAs show stronger protection levels





National Legislation and Policy I

MPA in Latvia are managed in accordance with:

 Law «On Specially Protected Nature Territories» (e.g. *Natura 2000* aspect)

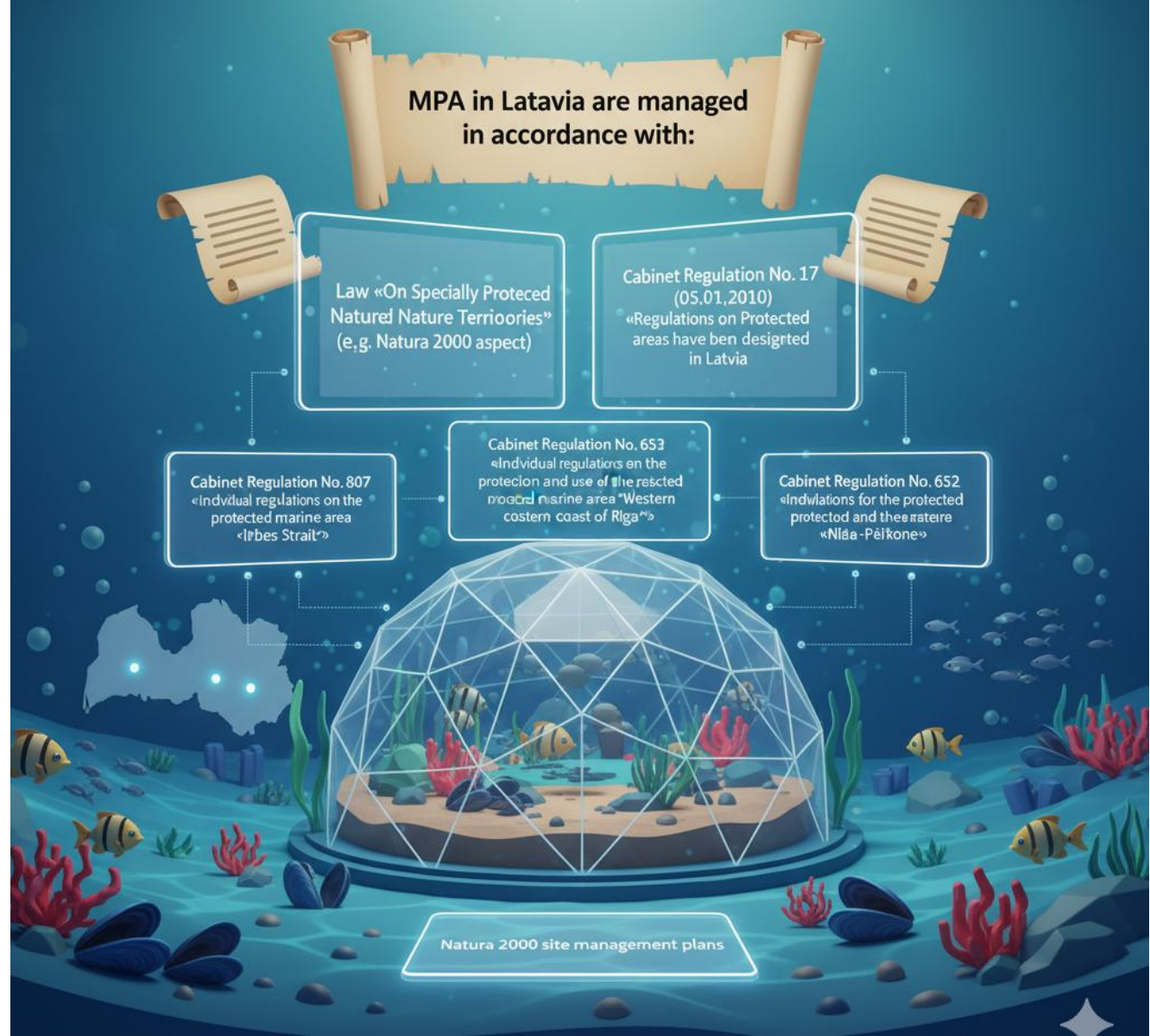
 Cabinet Regulations

- No 17 «Regulations on Protected Marine Areas» – 7 protected marine areas have been designated in Latvia
- No 807 «Individual regulations on the protection and use of the protected marine area «Irbes Strait»»
- No 653 «Individual regulations on the protection and use of the protected marine area «Western coast of the Gulf of Riga»»
- No 652 «Individual regulations for the protection and use of the protected marine area «Nida-Pērkone»»

 *Natura 2000* site management plans

National Legislation and Policy II

-  Law on the Conservation of Species and Biotores (e.g., endangered species protection)
-  Environmental impact assessment (EIA) requirements for development projects
-  Land-use planning policies
-  Agri-environmental schemes (forestry and agricultural policies)
-  Fishery policy



Challenges for Latvia

The positive signs:

-  identified important sites and improved knowledge
-  scientific and institutional capacity
-  communication and cooperation between sectors



Challenges for Latvia

 Well-located and well-managed refuges

 MPAs must be complemented by broader measures

 **Strong**

- **management**
- **monitoring**
- **data collection**
- **adapting management**





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