

USES AND ACTIVITIES: STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR

The Straits of Gibraltar are characterised by being the point where the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea meet, and a major point of arrival where important international shipping and dense traffic flows merge, some of which have the port of Algeciras as their final destination. Given the very dense traffic in the Straits, there are two safety devices to separate traffic: the Hoyo Bank device, to the southwest of Tarifa, and the Straits of Gibraltar device.

Algeciras is the number one Spanish port regarding overall traffic and heads the ranking for container traffic in the Mediterranean, making it an internationally important logistics hub.

Over 10% of international sea traffic goes through the Straits, and this figure is even higher for oil tankers, as this is a key point for connecting with the highest oil producing areas in the Persian Gulf. The main traffic routes in the subdivision are through the Straits of Gibraltar, which link the waters of the Atlantic with the Mediterranean. These routes go to and from: the Straits of the Bosphorus, the Suez Canal, Finisterre, the North Atlantic, the South Atlantic and the Canary Islands.

There are also two routes through the Straits that link the ports of Tarifa and Algeciras with the ports of Ceuta, Melilla and North Africa. The traffic on these routes is primarily passengers and energy products (oil and gas).

An area has been established where anchoring and trawling are forbidden

to protect the gas pipeline that links the Maghreb and Europe across the Straits. Given the strategic military nature of the Straits of Gibraltar and the Alboran Sea and also the proximity of the naval bases at Rota and Cartagena, there are frequent Spanish and NATO military manoeuvres in the area.

There are also several underwater electric cables in the Straits making the Spain-Morocco electrical connection as well as the Maghreb-Europe pipeline.

The short distance that separates the continents of Europe and Africa in the area of the Straits has meant that the idea of a fixed link across the Straits of Gibraltar has been considered sporadically since 1969, occasionally coming to the fore in the international technical sphere. There has been a range of solutions proposed, worked out to a greater or lesser degree: bridges, tunnels, floating and fixed pipes, dikes, etc.

Another aspect that should be highlighted is the irregular migration from the north of Africa of large numbers of people crowded into small boats. In this respect, a surveillance system has been set up on the Spanish shore to monitor both this kind of immigration and drug-trafficking, which is also highly prevalent in this maritime area.

BASIC DATA

Subzone Estrecho de Gibraltar

Jurisdiction	Nº	Length (Km)			Area (Sq. Km)										
	Submerged heritage	Emissaries	Sub. conductions	Restrict. areas	Harbour areas	Military zones	Sand and gravel extraction	Wind farm zoning			Aquaculture inst.	Fishing grounds	Artificial reefs	Almadrabas	Archeological serv.
								Suitable	Condi onated.	Exclude d.					
IW	2	0	13	9	0	29	21	0	3	114	0	1	0,16	6	9
TS	7	1	280	67	48	390	7	0	167	664	1	106	0	1	78

Governance

Legal framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Management of Environmental Quality Act (GICA) • Act No. 41/2010, of 29th December, on protection of marine environment
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs • Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food • Ministry of Public Works • Ministry of the Interior • Ministry of Defence • Ministry of Culture • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • Andalusian Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries • Andalusian Regional Ministry of Environment • Andalusian Regional Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Sport • Andalusian Regional Ministry of Culture • Andalusian Regional Ministry of Public Works and Housing
Instruments	

