

## 4.2.2 Preserving and enhancing the natural environment

### 4.2.2.1 Natural preservation; Dublin; Maribor; Athens; Palma; València; Venice

**UNESCO Dublin Bay Biosphere, Where People and Nature Connect; Dublin:** Dublin city is home to the Dublin Bay Biosphere which has a unique UNESCO designation, as it is the only Biosphere Reserve worldwide which includes within its area a national capital city. It recognises the biodiversity of the area, as well as the economic, cultural and tourism importance of this biodiversity, and the need for an ecologically sustainable economic model for the Biosphere. The Biosphere was expanded in 2015, now covering the whole of Dublin Bay, extending to over 300km<sup>2</sup>. Over 300,000 people live within this newly enlarged Biosphere. The buffer zone comprises 82km<sup>2</sup> of public and private green spaces such as parks, greenbelts, and golf courses, which surround and adjoin the core zones. The transition zone comprises 173km<sup>2</sup> and forms the outer part of the Biosphere. It includes tourism hot spots, residential areas, harbours, ports, and industrial and commercial areas. The Biosphere has three main goals: conservation, which focuses on promoting the conservation of landscapes, habitats, wildlife, and cultural values; learning, which emphasizes supporting education and research for a better understanding of nature and global issues, and development, which aims to fostering a sustainable economy and society for people living and working in the area. It operates important programmes to help foster economic and environmental sustainability. To build on this success, the partnership has developed a five-year Conservation Programme, a five-year Research Strategy, a three-year Business Development Plan and an Education and Awareness Programme. Within the Dublin Bay Biosphere, which includes three Blue Flag beaches, are exceptional recreation areas for both Dubliners and tourists alike. Visitors who use wheelchairs can now access these amenities due to the introduction of special 'beach wheelchairs' which are available free of charge at North Bull Island and Dollymount Strand. For visitors, another popular way to explore the biosphere is on the award-winning Biosphere Discovery Tour which is run by Dublin Bay Cruises. Furthermore, 1600 Dublin bikes and explore the Biosphere on Dublin's newest Coastal Mobility Route, which comprises over 3.6km of cycling and walking path along Dublin's coastline which was opened in 2020. Since opening, the Coastal Mobility Route has become an important sustainable transport corridor for Dublin which helps to spread our visitors more sustainably throughout the city. The route is also fitted with smart sensors to measure its usage. Its success has transformed how people get around Dublin, with over 20,000 cycle trips being recorded every week, a 100% increase since 2019.