

BLUE MANIFESTO

THE ROADMAP TO A HEALTHY OCEAN IN 2030

We need thriving marine and coastal ecosystems to support a climate-resilient future

In past decades, we have witnessed a succession of strategies and action plans for safeguarding the ocean. While these plans were needed, they have never been fully implemented. **In 2008, European governments committed to have "ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive" by 2020.** They are nowhere near achieving this. On any given day, a dolphin in the ocean has to navigate warming and more acidic seas, while also dodging trawling nets, offshore drilling, noisy and heavily polluting ships, invasive species, diseases from farmed fish, dead zones, construction, tourism, and swaths of pollutant-laden plastics and microplastics.

But the tide is turning.

Citizens young and old took to the streets, urging European governments to take global leadership on an ecological transition. In response, the European Commission has committed to ambitious climate and biodiversity strategies that will shift investment and legislation towards a climate-resilient and ecologically diverse future. The ocean must be an integral part of these strategies.

We need marine and coastal ecosystems to be rich in fauna, flora, and genetic biodiversity so that they can perform their natural functions and support life on earth.

The ocean acts as a vital carbon sink, regulates weather patterns and provides oxygen. We depend on it – even if we live inland.

WE HAVE A RESCUE PLAN FOR EUROPE FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS

European countries are **legally-bound** to put a number of measures in place to achieve clean and healthy seas. They failed to do so **before 2020**. The following, therefore, still **needs to be done as a matter of urgency** to address the gap in delivering on commitments:

- EU countries adopt the necessary measures to ensure that **EU seas are in good environmental status** under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
- EU countries adopt the necessary measures to ensure that **EU freshwater is in good status** under the Water Framework Directive.
- EU countries designate and **protect all marine Natura 2000 sites** from harmful activities under the Birds and Habitats Directives.
- EU countries **end overfishing** of all harvested stocks under the Common Fisheries Policy.
- EU countries take measures to **end illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing** in their waters, by their fleet or by their citizens, under the IUU Regulation, and to fully implement the **Deep-Sea Regulation**.

2020

- EU adopts a **Biodiversity Strategy 2030** that protects sensitive marine species and habitats and fish stock recovery areas, eliminates destructive fishing and includes legally binding ocean restoration targets.
- EU adopts a new **Circular Economy Action Plan** that includes measures to reduce absolute resource use, including plastic, increase resource efficiency and prevent leakage of plastics and microplastics in the sea.
- EU adopts an **Offshore Wind Strategy** which fully takes into account the impacts on marine ecosystems of the development of offshore wind energy production plants.
- EU allocates at least 21 billion EUR of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 to protect nature, with at least 50% of the **European Maritime Fisheries Fund** to restore the marine environment, collect data and control fisheries, and revises the **State Aid guidelines for fisheries and aquaculture** to prohibit granting of harmful subsidies.

- EU adopts a **Farm to Fork strategy** that fully takes into account the ecological and climate impacts of fisheries and aquaculture and addresses responsible consumption and sustainably sourced and traceable seafood.
- EU adopts a **Chemicals strategy for sustainability** and a **Zero-pollution strategy** with clear goals to prevent exposure to harmful chemicals in air, soil and water (through the Water Quality Action Plan) to ensure a non-toxic environment for current and future generations.
- EU pushes for the adoption of a **Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework** under the Convention on Biological Diversity with protection and restoration targets for marine ecosystems globally.
- EU pushes for the adoption of urgent short-term measures at the International Maritime Organization to **ban Heavy Fuel Oils** in the Arctic and **reduce ship speed** to decrease GHG emissions, noise levels and whale strikes.

2021

- EU establishes a **moratorium on deep seabed mining**, stops financial support to research into deep seabed mining technology and, with EU countries, pushes for the adoption of a global moratorium in the International Seabed Authority.
- EU pushes for the adoption of an ambitious **Global Ocean Treaty to protect marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction** worldwide at the 4th session of the Intergovernmental Conference on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction.
- EU countries implement effective fisheries management measures to **eliminate bycatch of sensitive species**.
- EU adopts a fundamental **reform of the Common Agricultural Policy** that aims to stop the loss of nutrients from fertilisers and manure into soil and water bodies, causing eutrophication, by fully implementing EU water and nitrates legislation in agriculture.

- EU removes **fuel tax exemptions** for fishing vessels and shipping under the revised Energy Taxation Directive.
- EU revises the **Control Regulation** to ensure full compliance of the fishing sector with fisheries and nature laws, requiring fully documented and transparent fisheries, and to ensure that no products from IUU fisheries reach the EU market.
- EU countries adopt ecosystem-based **Maritime Spatial Plans** which include at least 30% of highly or fully protected MPAs and areas for human activities allocated based on ecosystem sensitivity.
- EU countries transpose into national law the **Directives on Port Reception Facilities** and on **Single Use Plastics** with ambitious consumption reduction targets for food containers and beverage cups.

2022

- EU addresses substances of emerging concern, such as pesticides, pharmaceuticals, and microplastics, in the **revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive**.
- EU establishes **trawl-free zones** along the whole EU coast to protect the most productive part of our seas and protects all EU Marine Protected Areas from the **negative impacts of destructive fishing gears**.
- EU bans all **new offshore oil and gas exploration** and production, and adopts a strategy to phase-out current offshore oil and gas extraction.

- EU adopts a **revised Bathing Waters Directive**, which ensures good quality of, and safe access to, coastal and marine waters with high environmental and health standards.
- EU countries adopt legally-binding measures to achieve a constant and measurable reduction in **underwater noise emissions**.
- EU countries set up binding schemes for **Extended Producer Responsibility** for single-use plastics and fishing gear to maximise eco-design and prevention.

2023

- EU pushes at the IMO for an **emissions reduction pathway for international shipping** that is compatible with the Paris Agreement's objective of keeping warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

- Based on the evaluation of the **Common Fisheries Policy**, EU adopts an Action Plan to ensure its effective implementation resulting in a **full transition to low impact EU fisheries**.

2024 2025

- EU adopts legislative measures to reduce the main sources of **unintentionally released microplastics** and prevent the loss of **pre-production pellets**.

- EU pushes for the adoption of measures to **restrict flags of convenience** to close the net on pirate ships and improve international ocean governance.

2026

- EU adopts regulations that ensure that all **aquaculture production** in EU seas is non-polluting and does not rely on marine-derived feed ingredients.

- EU dedicates all of the new **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** to activities aimed at restoring and managing the marine environment, collecting data and controlling fisheries.

2027

- EU takes all necessary measures to **protect deep-sea marine ecosystems**, which are particularly vulnerable to human activities due to unique environmental conditions, by prohibiting all harmful extractive activities in the deep sea.

- Based on the Action Plan, EU countries have taken all necessary measures to **ensure a full transition to low impact fisheries**, including by prohibiting the use of non-selective and destructive fishing gears and techniques in EU waters and by EU vessels, including distant water fleets.

2028 2029

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2030

VISION FOR HEALTHY SEAS

By 2030, at least 30% of the ocean will be highly or fully protected.

We need vulnerable marine and coastal areas to be kept pristine and wild: they will act as safe havens for animals and plants to have a break from harmful human activities and where coastal communities can enjoy a preserved nature. These areas must be restricted to most human activities. They must form an ecologically coherent and continuous network to allow species to travel from one to the other and have long-term budgets, monitoring and management plans.

By 2030, we will have shifted to low impact fishing.

We have to put an end to the killing of seabirds, dolphins, whales, turtles and other untargeted animals, as well as the wreckage of habitats; shifting from fuel-intensive, non-selective and destructive fishing, such as bottom trawling, to low impact fishing. Politicians, policy makers and industry will have to work together and abandon the narrow view of fish as stocks we can over-exploit, and instead consider them as vital parts of complex ecosystems, crucial for ocean resilience. Fish populations need to be restored to a level where they can reproduce safely with a surplus we can harvest. To do this, we must listen to scientific advice and stop fishing faster than fish can reproduce. The European Union must step up as a global leader to ensure illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is eradicated in EU waters and globally.

In the whole ocean, the planning of human activities will support the restoration of thriving marine ecosystems.

Their cumulative impacts will not add to the pressure from climate change on the ocean. We will transition to an economy, on land and at sea, that allows a harmonious co-existence of humans and the environment we depend on. Certain activities, such as deep-sea mining and oil and gas extraction, are as incompatible with our climate as they are to marine life and will need to be stopped altogether. Other low-impact activities will remain as part of an ecosystem-based blue economy: a sustainable blue economy that respects and adapts to the ecosystem it takes place in.

This vision for 2030 is not just wishful thinking. It is a pragmatic, well-researched plan to guide the work of Europe in the next decade. It addresses the need to restore marine life by putting an end to overexploitation, destructive practices and pollution. Europe has a chance to act as a global leader to inspire change worldwide. This will require systemic change, not only under the sea, but on land as well. 2030 is just ten years away. The coming decade will be decisive. With sufficient political commitment, we can deliver that change.

THE "BLUE MANIFESTO-ROADMAP TO A HEALTHY OCEAN IN 2030"

is a unified call to action by civil society organisations from all over Europe working for healthy seas and ocean.

