



Press Release | September, 30 2024

Embargoed to 00:01 Tuesday 1 October

Launch of the Blue Manifesto : 140 organisations call on new EU leadership to prioritise ocean health with new fund and ban on destructive activities

With [Ocean Week taking the stage this week in Brussels](#) (30 September- 4 October), 138 organisations call on the newly elected EU institutions to take a series of bold measures to stop the EU's ocean and coastlines being pushed to the brink, including launching a Ocean Fund and proposing new legislation to ban destructive activities at sea.

Launched at the European Parliament on 1 October, [the Blue Manifesto](#), led by BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, ClientEarth, Oceana, Seas At Risk, Surfrider Foundation Europe and WWF, advocates for an ambitious Ocean Deal that places ocean health at the heart of EU decision-making. It comes after the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, pledged to create a "European Ocean Pact" in July as she was re-appointed for a new term.

The NGOs coalition declares : "The ocean is vital for food, health, wellbeing and livelihoods. It covers 70% of the world's surface, acts as a vital carbon sink, mitigates climate change, regulates the weather patterns and produces oxygen. But Europe's seas are at a tipping point, having been overexploited due to the relentless pursuit of "blue growth". That's why, this Ocean Week, we launch the Blue Manifesto – our step-by-step roadmap to a healthy ocean backed by 140 organisations.

"The announcement of a European Ocean Pact marks a step in the right direction from the EU. However, aligning the Pact with the policy roadmap outlined in the Blue Manifesto will be crucial to ensuring meaningful, long-term ocean protection, as will proper funding to support it. There is no time to waste – if we don't want an ocean that's polluted and degraded, the EU must implement the measures outlined in this manifesto without delay."

According to the European Environment Agency, [more than 90%](#) of Europe's marine area is under pressure from human activities - intensive fishing, shipping, oil and gas drilling, tourism and other coastal activities. Destructive practices such as bottom trawling continue in 90% of EU offshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and more than 14 million tonnes of plastic still enter the ocean each year.

The Blue Manifesto calls on the EU to:

- **Use its money more wisely, for example by:**
 - Removing all subsidies that are harmful to the marine environment and redirecting resources towards an EU Ocean fund
 - Increasing resources for compliance and enforcement units to address marine-related legislation violations
- **Improve ocean governance, for example by:**
 - Establishing an EU Ocean and Seas Agency that issues regular reports on the environmental and climate status of the ocean
 - Introducing a framework for the traceability and labelling of all seafood products in the EU
 - Ensuring proper implementation and enforcement, in line with the priorities outlined in the Commissioner Mission Letters
- **Ensure effective marine protection, for example by:**
 - Proposing a ban on destructive activities, including bottom trawling, in all EU MPAs
 - Proposing new legislation with binding 2030 targets for the effective protection and management of at least 30% of EU seas, including at least 10% under strict protection, by 2030
 - Proposing a ban on deep-sea mining and marine geo-engineering in European seas
 - Proposing new legislation on ocean resilience and coastal adaptation
 - Banning offshore oil and gas exploration
 - Proposing new legislation to restrict the import and trade of aquatic food products that cause harm to endangered species and bycatch of sensitive species
- **Fight against pollution, for example by:**
 - Advocating for an ambitious Global Plastic Treaty that addresses the full lifecycle of plastics
 - Enforcing a ban on Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
 - Introducing mandatory ship speed reduction measures and rerouting away from critical habitats
- **Add the “blue” to the EU’s green just transition, for example by:**
 - Presenting an action plan for a just transition to a blue economy that respects ecological limits
 - Proposing a revised Energy Taxation Directive to phase out fuel tax exemption in fisheries and redirect funds to finance a just and fair transition in the fisheries sector

The Blue Manifesto comes in the wake of the recent appointment of Costas Kadis as European Commissioner-designate for Fisheries and Oceans. The six NGOs leading on the Blue Manifesto [shared concerns](#) that the [mission letter](#) addressed to Kadis by President von der Leyen fails to provide concrete plans to achieve a healthy ocean.

The Blue Manifesto was first launched in 2020. Each year since, the six NGOs have tracked the EU's progress, or lack thereof, in delivering a healthy and climate-resilient ocean by 2030. According to these [annual progress assessments](#), EU Member States missed several opportunities to improve the state of Europe's seas. They also failed to meet several legal requirements, including bringing an end to overfishing by 2020 under the Common Fisheries Policy and achieving Good Environmental Status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Notes to Editors

1. For enquiries and interview opportunities, please contact: Susannah Birkwood, Media Consultant at birkwoodsusannah@gmail.com

The following representatives are available for interview:

- **Monica Verbeek, Executive Director at Seas At Risk**
- **Anouk Puymartin, Policy Manager at BirdLife Europe & Central Asia**
- **John Condon, Senior Lawyer, ClientEarth**
- **Vera Coelho, Deputy Vice President, Oceana in Europe**
- **Gaëlle Haut, EU Affairs Coordinator, Surfrider Foundation Europe**
- **Antonia Leroy, Head of Marine Policy at WWF European Policy Office**

2. Photographic exhibition of artisanal fishers calling on EU countries for a fairer and more transparent allocation of quotas to incentivise low-impact fishing, in exhibition running on the European Parliament esplanade until 4 October [link to go live on 30 Sept]

3. List of organisations which signed the Blue Manifesto: Aquatic Life Institute, aquatil gGmbH, Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation, ARK Rewilding NL, Art Bakard, Asociación Ambiente Europeo, Associação Bandeira Azul de Ambiente e Educação, Association BIOM, Atlantic Cities, Beyond Plastic Med, BirdLife Malta, BirdLife Sweden, BirdWatch Ireland, BLOOM, Blue Ventures, BLUEBIO ALLIANCE, Blutopia, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, BUND, CAN Europe, Cantine sans plastique France, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), CHELONIA, Child Rights International Network (CRIN), City to Sea, Clean Air Action Group, CNCD-11.11.11, Coalition Clean Baltic – CCB, Coastwatch Europe, Compassion in World Farming, Cyclades Preservation Fund, Danmarks Naturfredningsforening, Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (DOF BirdLife), Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz, Deutsche Umwelthilfe, Deutscher Naturschutzring (DNR), Doggerland Foundation, Društvo Ekologi brez meja, Eco-Union, ECODES, Ecologistas En Accion – EEA, ECOS (Environmental Coalition on Standards), Electra Energy, Environmental Investigation Agency, Environmental Justice Foundation, Eurogroup for Animals, Europe Jaques Delors, European Environmental Bureau – EEB, European Underwater Federation (EUF), Fauna & Flora, Feedback EU, FishSec, Fondation Tara Océan, Foro Marino Islas Baleares, France Nature Environnement – FNE, Friends of the Earth Cyprus, Friends of the Earth Europe, Fundación Montescola, Fundación Nueva Cultura del Agua, Fundación para la conservación de Ibiza y Formentera, Gallifrey Foundation, Geota, Global Witness, Good Fish, GOOD KARMA PROJECTS, GYBN Europe, Health and Environment Justice Support, Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), High Seas Alliance, Iceland Nature Conservation Association, International Fund for Animal Welfare – IFAW, International Peace Information Service

(IPIS), Irish Wildlife Trust – IWT, Jesuit European Social Centre, Kelonia-RMR, KYMA sea conservation & research, Lithuanian Ornithological Society (LOD), LookDown Collective, Marilles Foundation, Marine Conservation Society, MATER, MIO-ECSDE, Mundus Maris, Naturskyddsforeningen (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation), Naturvernforbundet, Norwegian Society for The Conservation of Nature, Natuur; Milieu, Natuurpunt, No Plastic In My Sea, North Sea Foundation, Ocean; Climate Platform, Ocean Alive, Ocean Rebellion, Ocean Vision Legal, Ocean. Now! e.V. OceanCare, Oceano Fresco, Oikos - Cooperação e Desenvolvimento, OURZ GmbH, Patagonia, Pestizid Aktions-Netzwerk e.V., Planet Tracker, Plastic Change, Plastic Soup Foundation, Polish Zero Waste Association, Quercus - Associação Nacional de Conservação da Natureza, Recycle Lebanon, REScoop.eu, Retorna, Sciaena, SDG Watch Europe, Sea First, SEO/BirdLife, SharkGuardian, SharkProject, Stop the Grind, StopFinningEU, Sunce, Sustainable Fisheries and Communities Trust (SFACT), Sustainable Ocean Alliance, SWAN, TransMarTech S-H GmbH, Umanotera, Waddenvereniging, WeMove Europe, Wetlands International Europe, Wetlands International Europe, Whale and Dolphin Conservation – WDC, Women Engage for a Common Future, Worldrise, Youth and Environment Europe (YEE), zeefier, ZERO, Zero Waste Society.

4. The Blue Manifesto is available in English, French, German and Spanish [HERE](#).

5. The European Green Deal is the European Commission’s vision to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050. It provides actions to boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy and stop climate change, halt biodiversity loss and cut pollution. It outlines investments needed and financing tools available and explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition.

6. “Ocean Week” launched in 2020. During this annual week-long event, citizens, activists, policymakers and journalists will debate, exchange experiences and solutions on the challenges the ocean is facing. The Ocean Week programme is available at www.oceanweek.eu

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