

EU leads the way with ambitious action for cleaner and safer seas

Malta, 5 October 2017

EU leads the way with ambitious action for cleaner and safer seas

At the ongoing EU-hosted [Our Ocean conference](#) in Malta (5-6 October), the European Union has committed to 36 tangible actions to foster healthier, cleaner, safer and more secure seas. Amounting to over €550 million and involving activities worldwide, the announcements underline the EU's determination to improve the situation of the seas and send a positive signal of encouragement to the rest of the world – governments and private sector alike – to step up and tackle the growing ocean challenges, from plastic pollution and protecting marine life to the impact of climate change and criminal activities at sea.

The EU's 36 commitments are described in detail below.

[Maritime security](#) is the basis for global trade and prosperity, but it is under threat – from natural disasters to piracy, trafficking and armed conflict. To make our oceans safer and more secure the European Union announced:

- **€37.5 million** to ensure maritime security and **counter piracy** along the **south-eastern African coastline and in the Indian Ocean**. The funds are to be implemented by four regional organisations (IGAD, COMESA, EAC and IOC) in cooperation with UNODC, INTERPOL and FAO. The programme supports alternative livelihood initiatives in the coastal pirate areas of Somalia, investigation capacities at national and regional level, prison reforms, prosecution and judicial capacity, disruption of illegal financial flows, combating money laundering, and various other maritime tasks, in addition to a regional mechanism for the coordination and exchange of maritime information.
- **€4 million** of investment in its **satellite monitoring programme** (Copernicus) in 2017 to support EU agencies and EU Member States in monitoring oil pollution and large-scale commercial fisheries (including the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing) in the **Northeast Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Baltic, the North Sea, the Black Sea, the Pacific Ocean and around the Canary Islands**. Copernicus will also introduce new services to support law enforcement and navigation safety in ice-infested areas.
- continued **support for maritime security** in the **Gulf of Guinea**, including through the Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Network and the launch of two new programmes: the SWAIMS programme (Support to West Africa Integrated Maritime Security), worth **€29 million**, and the programme to improving port security in West and Central Africa, worth **€8.5 million**.

- **€1 million** in 2017 to support the upgrading of the ICT systems of **EU maritime authorities** and facilitate cooperation between them. Furthermore, the European Union announced that it will contribute **€80,000** to facilitate cooperation between **coastguard authorities** in Europe.
- the **launch of a prototype surveillance tool** in September 2017 which detects ships to reveal the extent of human activities at sea. The 'Search for Unidentified Maritime Objects' tool, or 'SUMO' for short, is a piece of software that automatically analyses data from radar imaging satellites to find vessels as small as 1 metre long, even in cloudy conditions or at night. The SUMO tool is open source, to promote uptake by users and developers and facilitate international cooperation on mapping of ship routes, monitoring shipping intensity, identifying polluting ships, monitoring fishing activities, countering piracy and smuggling, and controlling maritime borders.

Marine pollution is a massive problem, with over 10 million tonnes of litter ending up in the sea each year. By 2050, our oceans could contain more plastic than fish. To tackle these challenges, the EU announced:

- The launch of **WISE-Marine**, a gateway to information on European water issues for the general public and stakeholders to promote better ocean governance and ecosystem-based management. The platform will be expanded and integrated further in the years to come.
- **€2 million** in 2017 to support the implementation of the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive** by the Member States and a further **€2.3 million** to support regional and inter-regional cooperation for this objective. The EU law aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of the waters of EU Member States by 2020 and to protect the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend.
- **€2.85 million** for **marine pollution prevention** and preparedness projects and **€2.5 million** for marine pollution exercises, to support and complement the cross-border cooperation efforts between EU countries and with selected countries in the EU's vicinity.
- draft measures to reduce the **leakage of plastics into the environment** by the end of 2017, as part of its upcoming **plastics strategy**.
- draft measures in 2017 to **reduce the discharges of ship-generated waste** and cargo residues into the sea.

The sustainable **blue economy** is forecast to double by 2030, from an estimated €1.3 trillion today. The theme was added by the EU to this year's edition of the Our Ocean conference to foster stronger synergies between sustainable ocean solutions and economic growth and employment in coastal communities around the world. To this end, the EU announced:

- More than **€250 million** to fund **marine and maritime research** in 2017. This includes €40 million to support low-emission and advanced waterborne transport and over €30 million for marine energy. Furthermore, the EU announced that it will provide €12 million to support two new innovation projects on cleaning actions to combat marine litter and other pollutants. Finally, the European Union announced to support the BlueMED Initiative for cooperation on a healthy, productive

and resilient Mediterranean Sea through science and research with over €50 million.

- A further strengthening of its work on the **All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance** by fostering enhanced cooperation frameworks with Atlantic partners such as Brazil and South Africa on marine science, research and innovation under the Belém Statement, and will allocate over **€60 million** in the period 2018-2019 to fulfilling this objective. The EU will also continue to implement the ground-breaking **Galway Statement on Ocean Research Cooperation** with the USA and Canada. The European Union reported that the number of research teams working in international consortia on the challenges facing the Atlantic Ocean will exceed 500 by 2019.
- A **€14.5 million** investment initiative in 2017 to promote a sustainable **blue economy** in the European Union. Around **€8 million** of the fund is to provide start-up grants for high-potential projects in emerging blue economy sectors across the EU. In order to better monitor and combat marine litter, a further **€2 million** will go towards providing support for innovative technologies to monitor and/or combat marine litter in waters around the European Union. Furthermore, **€3 million** will go towards facilitating twinning projects in the Mediterranean Sea Basin, such as between maritime training and education institutes, businesses operating in the blue economy and local fishing communities. Finally, **€1.5 million** is to be allocated to restoring marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mediterranean.
- The launch of the **Pacific – European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme**, worth **€45 million**. Sweden announced that it will contribute €10 million to the programme. The purpose of the programme is to support sustainable management and development of fisheries for food security and economic growth, while addressing climate change resilience and conservation of marine biodiversity.
- Work on **accelerating Maritime/Marine Spatial Planning processes worldwide**, in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO), as both committed to on 24 March 2017. Maritime spatial planning (MSP) works across borders and sectors to ensure human activities at sea take place in an efficient, safe and sustainable way. Building on the Joint Roadmap, the EU will provide a grant of **€1.4 million** to IOC-UNESCO to **develop international guidelines** for MSP. As part of this venture, **two MSP pilot projects** will be launched in early 2018: one in the **Mediterranean** and another in the **South Pacific**. Furthermore, an **International Forum** for MSP will be created to facilitate discussions on how MSP, including cross-sectoral actions, should be applied globally. The first workshop is to take place in spring 2018.
- **€3 million** to support projects in EU countries to set up cross-border cooperation on **maritime spatial planning**. Maritime spatial planning works across borders and sectors to ensure human activities at sea take place in an efficient, safe and sustainable way.
- **€23 million** of investment in the marine environment monitoring service of its **satellite monitoring** programme (Copernicus) in 2017 and 2018. The service focuses on climate change, fisheries and marine protection. It was also announced that Copernicus will, for the first time, create

Ocean Monitoring Indicators, including on biochemistry. These indicators, important for measuring ocean health, will be published in the Ocean State Report that will be available online by the end of 2018.

- Its commitment to further progressing **Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements** with coastal states. These agreements already assist countries in the development of sustainable fisheries, the effective management of monitoring and control systems and the fight against IUU fishing. The new generation of agreements are to have a more integrated approach, including promoting a sustainable blue economy as well as advancing investment in the fisheries sector. This new approach should allow partner countries to gain more value from the ocean economy in a sustainable manner.
- **€8.5 million** for the preservation of marine and coastal **biodiversity** in the **Caribbean Sea Basin** for the benefit of communities that depend on these ecosystems. This action targets in particular natural areas that are threatened by misuse, overexploitation, pollution and climate change effects.
- Nearly **€6 million** to support projects in EU countries to set up cross-border cooperation on **maritime spatial planning**. Maritime spatial planning works across borders and sectors to ensure human activities at sea take place in an efficient, safe and sustainable way.
- Financing to test the **first wave and tidal array deployments** in Europe in 2017 by contributing **€1.5 million** to support administrations and project developers involved in environmental monitoring.
- Its intention to develop the **Pilot Blue Science Cloud**, which is to modernise the process of accessing, managing and using **marine data**, with the goal of improving the handling of large quantities of different marine and maritime data using cloud technologies. Furthermore, the Blue Cloud is intended to further foster work between EU scientists and their international partners. Cloud technologies can improve global and regional ocean observations and forecasting, as promoted in the framework of the G7 Future of the Sea and Oceans initiative and as part of the worldwide effort to build an improved Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).
- At least **€1 million** to support the **World Bank's Global Fisheries Programme (PROFISH)**. The aim of the programme is to improve environmental sustainability, human wellbeing and economic performance in the world's fisheries and aquaculture, with a focus on the welfare of the poor in fisheries and fish farming communities in the developing world.

[Climate change](#) has very direct consequences for the oceans, with rising sea levels and increasing acidification among the most alarming. The European Union therefore announced:

- A **€10 million** project with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) concerning climate change mitigation in the **maritime shipping sector**. The project aims to establish five Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres (MTCCs), one in each of the target regions – **Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific** – thereby forming a global network. The network's task is to enable developing countries in these

regions to develop energy-efficiency measures in maritime transport.

- **€1.5 million** for reducing black carbon emissions in the **Arctic**. The project is intended to reinforce international cooperation to protect the Arctic environment.
- **€600,000** over the next two years for an integrated **Arctic** project focusing on the three priority areas of EU Arctic policy: Climate Change and Safeguarding the Arctic Environment; Sustainable Development in and around the Arctic; and International Cooperation on Arctic Issues.

Marine protection: Less than 5% of the world's marine and coastal areas are currently protected by law, and even less is enforced – despite the UN's 2020 target of 10% protection. The European Union therefore announced:

- The European Commission announced the **phase-out by end 2017 all single-use plastic cups** in water fountains and vending machines in all its buildings and meetings. It also committed to report on all its efforts towards a further reduction of the use of other single-use plastic items in all its buildings and events at the occasion of the 2018 Our Ocean Conference. Measures to achieve this will include improving its green public procurement, reducing single-use plastics in canteens and cafeterias, promoting use of tap water, launching a wider awareness-raising campaign for staff on waste reduction, sorting and recycling and greening Commission events.
- **€20 million** to support the management of **marine protected areas** in **African, Caribbean and Pacific countries** through the programme BIOPAMA II (Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme).
- Together with Germany, support for the establishment of a cross-sectoral and cross-boundary **multi-stakeholder platform for regional ocean governance** by 2020. This platform will be developed under the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG), initiated in 2015 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales – IDDRI) and the Think Tank for Sustainability (TMG). The development of the platform has been announced by Germany as a voluntary commitment on the occasion of the UN Ocean Conference for their implementation of SDG14 (5-9 June 2017). The PROG forum will provide new knowledge on integrated ocean governance at three different levels: (1) within regions; (2) between regions; and (3) between the regional level and the global level. Building on a collaborative process with international partners in 2018, the European Union and Germany will organise the first meeting in 2019.
- **€1.5 million** to analyse ecosystems and economic activity on the **mid-Atlantic Ridge and the Rio Grande Rise**, in order to support the definition of a coherent set of Areas of Particular Environmental Interest.
- Its intention to support the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean in establishing a **Fishing Restricted Area (FRA) of at least 2,700 km²** to protect demersal stocks in the habitat recognised as essential nursery and spawning ground for a number of marine species outside territorial waters of Italy and Croatia of the **Jabuka/Pomo Pit**

area of the Adriatic Sea. The creation of the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA will be for decision at the annual session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on 16-19 October 2017.

Sustainable fisheries are a prerequisite for continued access to sufficient, nutritious seafood for coming generations. To ensure sustainable fisheries around the world, the EU announced:

- **€15 million** under the PESCAO programme for the improvement of regional fisheries governance in **Western Africa** with the aim of developing a regional fishing policy, putting in place a regional coordination against illegal unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing and improving fish stock management at regional level.
- **€5.7 million** in 2017 to support the work of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in improving the sustainability of fishing resources in the **Mediterranean**. This is a follow-up to the **Medfish4Ever Declaration**, a 10-year pledge to save the Mediterranean's fish stocks and protect the region's ecological and economic wealth that was signed on 30 March 2017.
- A minimum of **€1 million** in 2017 for the FAO global programme to support the implementation of the landmark **Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing**. The programme provides policy, legal and technical assistance and capacity-building to strengthen enforcement of the Agreement. Furthermore, the EU announced that it will host the international conference to assess and review the Port State Measures Agreement in 2020. Finally, the EU announced that it will contribute **€225,000** in 2017 to FAO for the development of a **global record** that is **to register fishing vessels**, refrigerated transport vessels and supply vessels worldwide.
- New rules that are expected to enter into force by the end of 2017 to better and more sustainably manage the **external fishing fleet**. The new rules will allow the European Union to better monitor and control its fleet and efficiently address the problems of reflagging and chartering, thus enhancing efforts to combat IUU fishing.
- Its commitment to reaching a **multilateral agreement on fisheries subsidies** at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference that is to take place in Buenos Aires in December 2017. With this objective, the EU put forward a revised proposal in July 2017 at the World Trade Organisation to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, to **eliminate subsidies** that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and to refrain from introducing new subsidies of this kind. The proposal, aimed at implementing SDG 14.6, also contains provisions on enhanced transparency and guidelines on special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries. Furthermore, the EU will do its utmost to further this agreement and to support it through the stages of negotiation and implementation.

Further information

[Our Ocean website](#)

Watch live stream of the Our Ocean conference (available in EN, FR, ES, CN, RU, AR)

Watch live stream of EU press conference from Malta (Friday 6 October 13:00 CET)

MEMO/17/3588