

# European Union leads the way on global actions for better governance of the oceans

The European Commission has announced over €550 million of EU-funded initiatives to tackle global oceans challenges, at the Our Ocean Conference 2017 in Malta, co-hosted by High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

The commitments announced in Malta made by the Commission and by other public and private actors from 112 countries around the world reached over €6 billion. The resources will be invested to strengthen the fight against marine pollution and enlarge protected areas, reinforce security of the oceans, foster blue economy initiatives and sustainable fisheries and intensify the EU efforts against climate change, in line with the Paris Agreement and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) under Agenda 2030. Participants also announced the creation of new Marine Protected Areas spanning more than 2.5 million km<sup>2</sup>, or more than half the size of the entire European Union.

The full list of over 400 commitments ([36 from the EU](#), over 200 from third country governments, more than 100 from business and several others from NGOs, foundations, research institutes and international organisations) are available [online](#).

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *“The European Commission has demonstrated with concrete pledges its strong commitment to the sustainability, security and prosperity of our oceans. If they are at risk, so are we, for the oceans nourish our planet and our people, and they connect us to our partners around the world.”*

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: *“The sea is a global common. It is Our Ocean because it belongs to humanity, to each and every human being. We all have a responsibility to preserve what’s common – to preserve it as a treasure and avoid that it turns into a threat. The European Union believes that a globalised world needs a more cooperative global governance. We believe in the power of diplomacy, we invest in it, we believe and invest in the power of common rules and international institutions. And it is difficult, actually impossible, to imagine a global governance without a cooperative oceans’ governance.”*

Commissioner Karmenu **Vella** said: *“Three years ago I was asked by President Juncker to define the EU’s global ocean role. I think together we have delivered. Our policies on land, like our commitment to the circular economy and reduced plastic waste; and at sea, on marine pollution, on protected areas, and on harnessing the ocean’s clean energy, clearly demonstrate this. The European Union is earning respect and inspiring action across the*

planet”.

Commissioner Neven **Mimica** said: “These two days have delivered on our Sustainable Development Goals ocean commitments. Small-scale fishermen around the world have a better chance of fishing safely, legally, and sustainably. Food chains are more secure. Coastal areas more protected. We are acting on the climate challenge. For many of our developing country partners, sustainable ocean governance is a question of survival. The road ahead is still long, but we are moving in the right direction.”

The Our Ocean Conference has brought together public and private actors from six continents, who are collectively committed to the cause of better ocean governance and the sustainable use of the oceans. EU commitments reach far beyond its geographical region, to support sustainable international ocean use worldwide, focusing in particular on developing countries.

For the first time, the Conference gathered significant commitments from the private sector, including Airbus, Unilever, Procter & Gamble, PepsiCo, Marks & Spencer, Carrefour, Royal Caribbean Cruises, AXA, Sky and others.

Commitments will be tracked and reported at the next Our Ocean Conference in Indonesia in 2018.

## **Background**

Previous conferences, hosted by the governments of the United States (2014, 2016) and Chile (2015), have seen a wide range of [commitments](#) and billions of euros pledged.

The Our Ocean 2017 Conference addressed the themes of marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and climate change. This year, the European Commission introduced the themes of blue economy and maritime security. Our Ocean engaged participants from around the globe to make significant commitments. With a focus on high-level engagement, partnership and action, the EU continues to drive other international efforts, such as delivery on the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) under Agenda 2030. The conference also complements the EU’s [international ocean governance initiative](#), which set out an agenda for the future of the oceans around the world, proposing 50 concrete actions.

## **More information**

[Our Ocean 2017 website](#)

[Factsheet](#): EU leads the way with ambitious action for cleaner and safer seas

[MEMO](#): European Union generates global action for our ocean