



EU announces €3.5 billion worth of commitments to protect the ocean and promote sustainability at Our Ocean Conference in Greece

Athens, 16 April 2024

Today, at the [Our Ocean Conference in Greece](#), the European Union is confirming its **strong engagement for international ocean governance by announcing [40 commitments for action for 2024](#)**. These actions will be funded by €3.5 billion from various EU funds. They represent the biggest amount ever announced by the EU since the start of Our Ocean Conferences.

The Our Ocean Conference is an international effort, launched in 2014 and hosted by a different government each year, aiming to foster global ocean governance and action to support marine conservation and sustainable development. This year's conference calls for joint efforts worldwide in support of a safe, secure, clean, healthy and sustainably managed ocean. At the Conference, the EU is taking commitments for action covering all themes of this event: sustainable fisheries, marine protected areas, ocean and climate change, sustainable blue economies, marine pollution, maritime security, and beyond.

EU commitments for a safe, secure, clean, healthy and sustainably managed ocean

Sustainable fisheries:

- up to **€1.9 billion** under the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) to support sustainable fisheries – one of the biggest amounts announced. It will be used in Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal's (2020-2026) recovery and resilience plans to support investments and reforms in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.
- **€23.5 million** during the period 2024-2025 to support Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) and relevant International Agreements in the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Arctic and Antarctic Oceans and the Mediterranean and Black Seas.
- **€1.5 million** to support the implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) to fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Marine protected areas:

- **€1.36 million** to support the implementation of the Marine Biodiversity of areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement
- **€24 million** to protect marine biodiversity and preserve marine ecosystems in the Blue Benguela Current (Southern Africa), Maldives, Suriname and the French Southern and Antarctic Lands

Ocean and climate change:

- **€103 million** for ocean observation programmes (Copernicus, Wekeo, Neccton) and research to advance ocean models for climate predictions.

Sustainable blue economies:

- up to **€130 million** under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. It will be used in Italy and Portugal's recovery and resilience plans to support two investments (2020-2026) in sustainable blue economy.
- **€134 million** to help African countries develop their blue economy in a sustainable manner. This corresponds to €59 million for Western Africa, €10 million for Mauritania, €35 million for Mozambique, €30 million for Angola.

Marine pollution:

- up to **€980 million** under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. It will be used in Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Finland (2020-2026) recovery and resilience plans to support four investments and two reforms to fight against marine pollution.

Maritime security:

- **€45 million** to enhance maritime security and safety in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Guinea regions in Africa.

Support to the Mediterranean:

- The EU and Sweden commit **€7.5 million** for the Blue Mediterranean Partnership to support the sustainable development of a blue economy in the Mediterranean region. This is in line with the [European Green Deal](#), the [EU's Agenda for the Mediterranean](#) and the [Union for the Mediterranean \(UfM\) ministerial declaration on sustainable blue economy](#).
- **€2 million** for the project supporting the Southern Mediterranean Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in implementing the ecosystem approach to achieve Good Environmental Status (EcAp MED PLUS), from 2024 until 2027.

Research:

- Through the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters, **€92.3 million** are committed to restore our blue planet and ensure a sustainable blue economy.

Background

The ocean and seas cover 71% of the Earth's surface. The ocean is under pressure: it suffers from global warming, unsustainable practices, illegal fishing, pollution and the loss of marine habitats. Our Ocean Conference aims to strengthen the collective efforts to address these issues. It brings together countries across the world, civil society, and industry to inspire joint solutions and present ambitious commitments to protect the ocean. Originally launched in 2014, the Our Ocean Conference has since mobilised more than 2,160 commitments worth approximately \$130 billion.

The EU has developed a [commitment tracking tool](#) available on the Our Ocean website. This allows citizens to follow the progress of the implementation of all the commitments made at all Our Ocean Conferences.

In addition to its commitments, the EU has co-hosted a high-level side event calling on the swift ratification of the BBNJ Agreement, together with the governments of Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, France, Republic of Korea, Nigeria and Palau as well as the Natural Resources Defence Council, Bloomberg Philanthropies Ocean Initiative, the High Seas Alliance, Mission Blue, Pew, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the European Bureau for Conservation. The EU has also organised side events on the EU Ocean Mission (16 April) and on the ocean and climate with Mercator Ocean International (15 April).

For More Information

[Our Ocean Conference](#)

[EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Water](#)

[Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction \(BBNJ Agreement\)](#)

[Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing \(IUU\)](#)

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Quotes:

"The European Union continues standing up for the ocean. With €3.5 billion worth of pledges, the European Union confirms its strong commitment to protect the ocean. The ocean is part of who we are, and our shared responsibility. One year after the conclusion of the BBNJ Agreement, I am glad to reiterate, here in Greece, the EU's ambition to continue acting as a driving force towards ocean sustainability."

Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries - 16/04/2024

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