

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.



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 swathes 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.

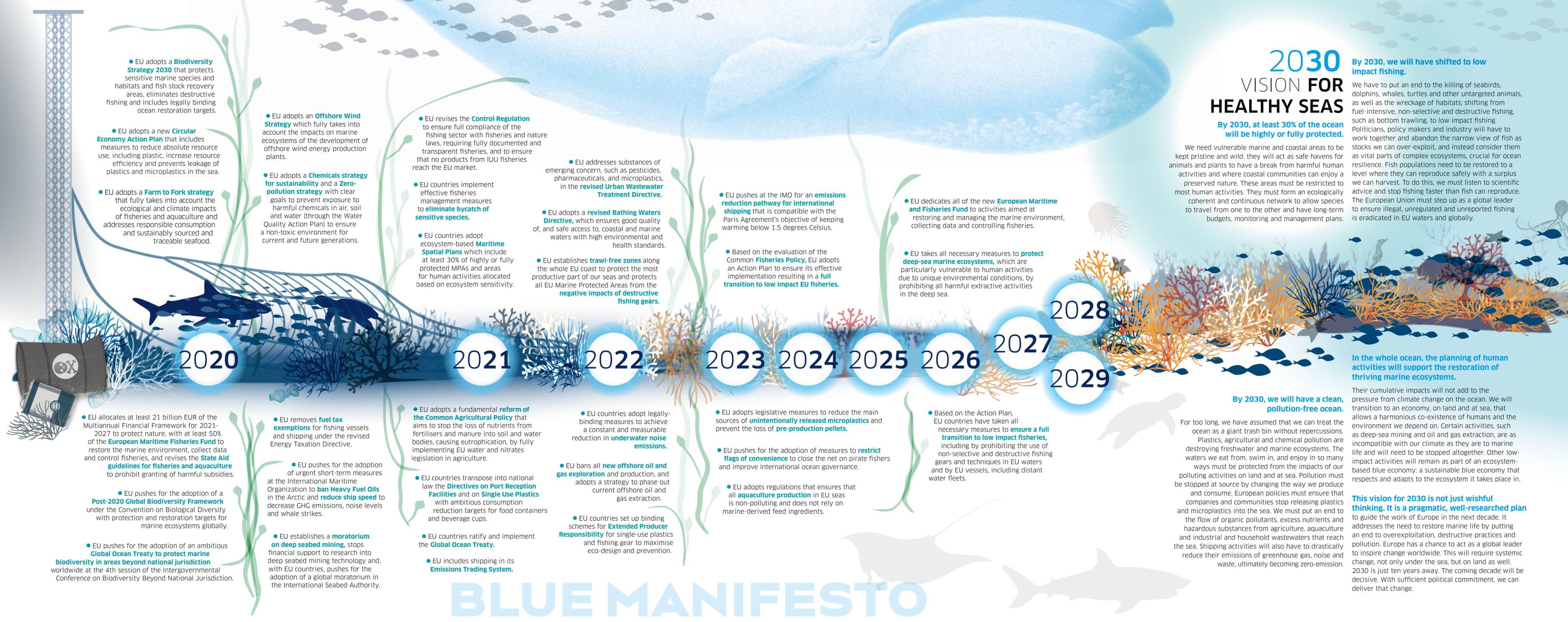
The ocean acts as a vital carbon sink, regulates weather patterns and provides oxygen. We depend on it – even if we live inland.

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**.

THE ROADMAP
TO A HEALTHY OCEAN
IN **2030**



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, unregulated and unreported 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.

By 2030, we will have a clean, pollution-free ocean.

For too long, we have assumed that we can treat the ocean as a giant trash bin without repercussions. Plastics, agricultural and chemical pollution are destroying freshwater and marine ecosystems. The waters we eat from, swim in, and enjoy in so many ways must be protected from the impacts of our polluting activities on land and at sea. Pollution must be stopped at source by changing the way we produce and consume. European policies must ensure that companies and communities stop releasing plastics and microplastics into the sea. We must put an end to the flow of organic pollutants, excess nutrients and hazardous substances from agriculture, aquaculture and industrial and household wastewaters that reach the sea. Shipping activities will also have to drastically reduce their emissions of greenhouse gas, noise and waste, ultimately becoming zero-emission.

BLUE MANIFESTO