



**Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
Socialists & Democrats  
in the European Parliament**

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To Mr Costas Kadis,  
Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans

Brussels, 09 April 2025

**Objet: Positioning Europe as a maritime power for the people and the environment by adopting a European Ocean Act**

Dear Commissioner Kadis,

We are delighted to see your dedication to an ambitious and bold European Ocean Pact. As you know, for too long, the Ocean has been overlooked in the EU agenda. This must change and you can count on the support of the S&D group to make it happen.

At a time when Europe must reinforce its strategic autonomy and global leadership the European Union holds a powerful trump card for people, climate, biodiversity, sovereignty, and the economy: the Ocean. We must position ourselves as a true maritime power: one that not only harnesses the Ocean's vast potential but also protects it for future generations. **This requires a bold step: transforming the European Ocean Pact into a European Ocean Act.**

The European Ocean Act must be an ambitious and binding framework that integrates the Ocean into the heart of European decision-making. It must ensure our oceans are governed effectively and sustainably, our coastal and island communities thrive, and our maritime industries lead in the transition to a decarbonized and high-value-added economy. This vision is not just about environmental protection, it is about sovereignty, security, and economic resilience for all Europeans.

**The S&D Group is calling for a bold and transformative vision: a new model of governance that redefines the relationship between the Ocean and the people. To achieve this vision, we identified eight key priorities.**

**First, we need to keep the Ocean at the Hearth of the EU Agenda.** The Ocean is central to Europe's future but always forgotten: we need to integrate it into EU decision-making. To achieve this, **we must introduce an *Ocean Policy Mainstreaming Principle*** across all existing and future EU legislation. This cross-sectoral approach will ensure that ocean resilience and sustainability are not just considered but embedded into the core of all European policies, driving a truly blue transition for our economy and environment.

**Second, the European Ocean Pact must place people at its core.** We need to make outermost regions, coastal, and island territories good places to live and empower them by:

- Creating high-quality, well-paid, and jobs people are proud of, in ocean-related sectors through advanced skills training and stronger marine education, fostering a shared sense of stewardship for our common maritime heritage.
- Ensuring the right to stay and live well by improving public services, guaranteeing access to affordable housing, good infrastructures, reliable transport and communications, equal education, and stable employment, making these communities attractive places to live and work.
- Ensure access to affordable housing in tourist-heavy areas to prevent displacement and gentrification, balance economic benefits with social well-being, and promote a sustainable approach to tourism within environmental limits.
- Taking special attention to outermost and ultra-peripheral regions by tailoring policies to their unique challenges and opportunities, implementing a sea basin approach for the Caribbean, Pacific, Indian Oceans, and the Atlantic Arc islands to strengthen economic and social cohesion.

**Third, we must urgently restore and protect the Ocean to sustain its generosity.** There are no human activities without a healthy Ocean; there is no vibrant Ocean without sustainable human activities. Protecting marine ecosystems is not just an environmental necessity; it is an economic and social imperative. We must act decisively to restore ocean health by:

- Transforming EU waters into a biodiversity refuge by effectively protecting and managing at least 30% of EU seas by 2030, with at least 10% under strict protection. Developing nature based solutions to restore biodiversity and improve the role of ocean as carbon sink and climate regulator.
- Promoting sustainable artisanal fishing that respects both the environment and working conditions of fishers. This means establishing a fair and just transition framework while banning unsustainable and high impact bottom-contact fishing activities in all those MPAs which have as their objective the protection of habitats on the ocean floor, while safeguarding the continued use of adapted, low- impact bottom-contacting fishing gear that is already the standard in many coastal and artisanal fisheries today;
- Adopting a holistic 'source-to-sea' approach to combat inland water pollution that affects sea basins and estuaries. We must treat water as a connected system, from rivers to ocean, by tackling all sources of pollution including, plastic and chemical pollution, PFAS and pesticides, and nutrient pollution such as nitrogen and phosphorous leakage at their source.
- Banning deep-sea mineral exploitation activities in European seas and support for a moratorium on deep-sea mining, in line with the precautionary approach, within the International Seabed Authority and other international ocean governance bodies until sufficient and robust scientific evidence has been obtained to ensure that exploitation activities cause no harm to the marine environment.

**Fourth, we need to grasp the Ocean's potential to foster economy, generate quality jobs, and enhance European sovereignty and security.** The Ocean is a cornerstone of Europe's sovereignty, economic resilience, and security. With the largest maritime area in the world—spanning 25 million km<sup>2</sup> of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)—and a blue economy that provides 4.5 million quality jobs with a dynamic network of SMEs, the EU has a unique opportunity to lead in sustainable maritime growth. To fully harness this potential, we must:

- Boost offshore wind and marine renewable energies to strengthen their role as a significant pillar of Europe's electricity production by 2050. Achieving this goal demands targeted investments in offshore energy infrastructure, ensuring technological advancement and grid integration while protecting European industries from unfair competition.
- Reconquering the European leadership in both military and civil maritime industry sectors, by decarbonizing maritime transport and ensuring European-built ships are prioritized for goods and passenger transport within the EU (e.g., cabotage and short-sea shipping), with the support of an effective sectoral plan in clean industrial deal.
- Offering new perspectives to fisheries by investing in modernisation and decarbonisation of the fishing fleet ensuring social, economic and environmental sustainable fishing activities.
- Strengthen Europe's maritime security and global competitiveness by recognizing the Ocean's strategic role in defence, trade, food and energy sovereignty and critical infrastructures. Protect the European Union's maritime routes, develop tailored defence strategies for all coastal areas and islands and adopt a dedicated plan to support the establishment of a strong European maritime defence industry. Seas and oceans must be at the core of European defence.

**Fifth, we must unlock the full potential of Ocean knowledge, research and innovation.** A strong blue economy depends on cutting-edge research, innovation, and skills development. Without high-quality marine and maritime knowledge, industries cannot compete, and without robust scientific data, we cannot protect the Ocean. To harness the Ocean's full potential for solutions, we must:

- Boost research with a strong mobilisation of the Framework Programme to implement the Research and Innovation (R&I) objectives set in the future European Ocean Pact and ensure traceability of research 'blue' expenses.
- Launch a dedicated EU mission on maritime pollution and acidification under the future FP10 framework, aligning with Mission Starfish 2030 to restore our Ocean and waters.
- Guarantee open access to quality data and science, strengthening collaboration between European and international research institutions while protecting scientists from authoritarian threats.
- Invest in education and skills development to equip the next generation of professionals for the sustainable blue economy, ensuring high-quality training, lifelong learning

opportunities, and stronger career pathways in maritime sectors; promote gender mainstreaming by addressing the underrepresentation of women in marine-related; fostering a common identity, citizen's commitment and shared responsibility for the ocean.

**Sixth, we must govern the Ocean at the right level for maximum environmental, social, and economic effectiveness.** Effective ocean governance requires a multi-level approach—some decisions must be made at the global stage, while others are best addressed locally. To build an interconnected and effective governance system for our Ocean, we must:

- Align EU policies with global commitments by championing an ecosystem-based approach in international fora, ratifying the BBNJ High Seas Treaty without delay, relaunching efforts for a global plastics treaty, securing a moratorium on deep-sea mining, and continue to strengthening the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- Put the blue economy development at the centre of a renewed EU-Africa relationship, including knowledge and expertise in the field of offshore energy and maritime decarbonisation, based on fairness, inclusive dialogue and cooperation with all partners.
- Strengthen EU governance framework by combining a revision of the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) directive and a revision of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) to ensure coherent ecosystemic approach, sustainability, long-term resilience and implementing solutions that allow multiple use of the limited space available.
- Empower local and regional authorities by giving them the tools and autonomy to make ocean-related decisions closer to the people. This includes strengthening their capacity to implement the Ocean Pact and ensuring that every maritime region develops a “blue” smart specialization strategy to drive sustainable local development.

**Seventh, ambition without funding is just rhetoric: we must secure a real financing for the European Ocean Act.** To achieve our objectives, the European Ocean Act must be backed by real and dedicated financial resources. We propose:

- Guaranteeing that at least 1% of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is allocated to the Ocean and the blue economy. This allocation should be in addition to existing funds, such as the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).
- Exploring innovative financing mechanisms, such as blue bonds, to drive investment.
- Ensuring transparency and accountability by introducing “Blue Annexes” in EU funding programs, clearly identifying and tracking expenditures dedicated to the Ocean.

Eight, as a conclusion, for all of this reasons, we need to *transform the European Ocean Pact into a European Ocean Act*

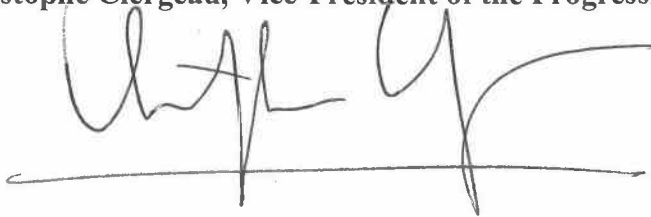
**Eighth, a vision alone is not enough: we need binding commitments.** That is why we call for a European Ocean Act to enshrine key objectives into law and provide a concrete roadmap for implementation. This Act must establish, first, clear, legally binding targets to ensure the long-term protection, resilience, and sustainable use of our Ocean; second a credible action plan to upgrade

and enforce existing legislation and new policy objectives including a mix of new legislative and non-legislative measures.

Commissioner, we trust in your vision for the Ocean, and we stand ready to support you in shaping an ambitious, holistic, and forward-looking European Ocean Act. Together, we can make Europe a true maritime power, for the people and for the planet.

Yours sincerely,

**Christophe Clergeau, Vice-President of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christophe Clergeau', written over a horizontal line.