

WG1 – June 18, 2025



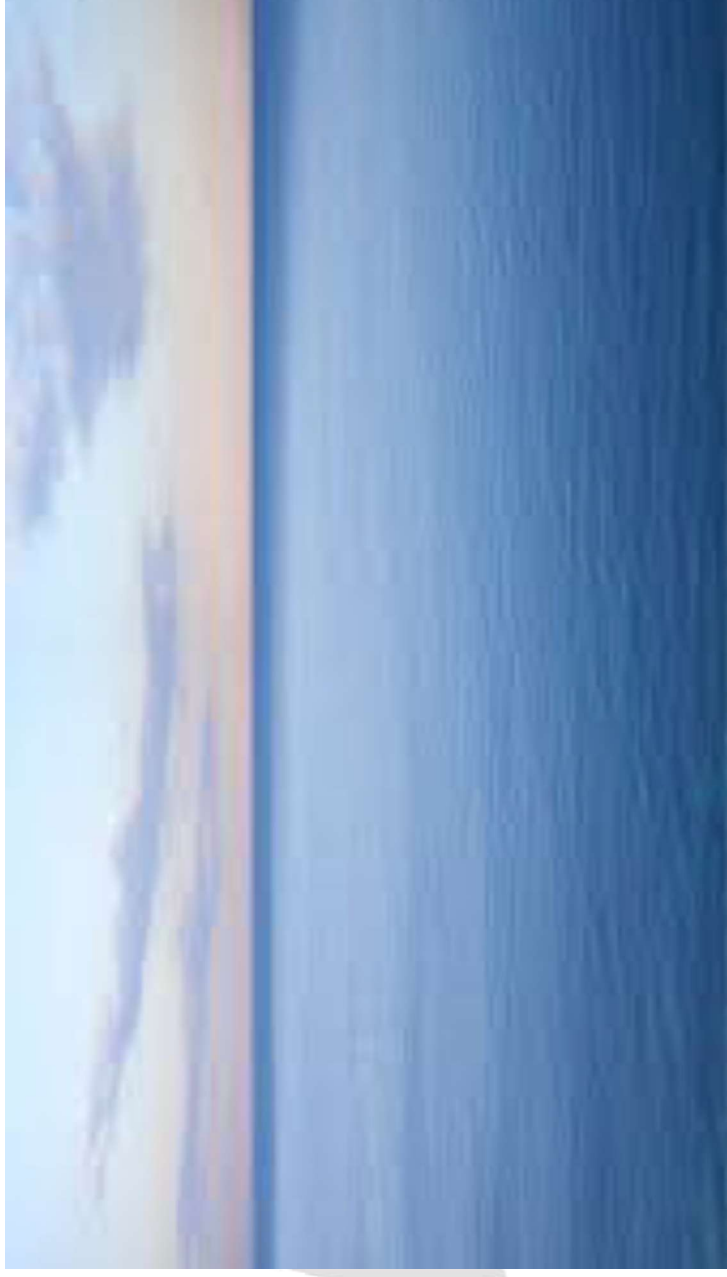
EC COMMUNICATION The European Ocean Pact

Launched by the EC on 05/6/2025

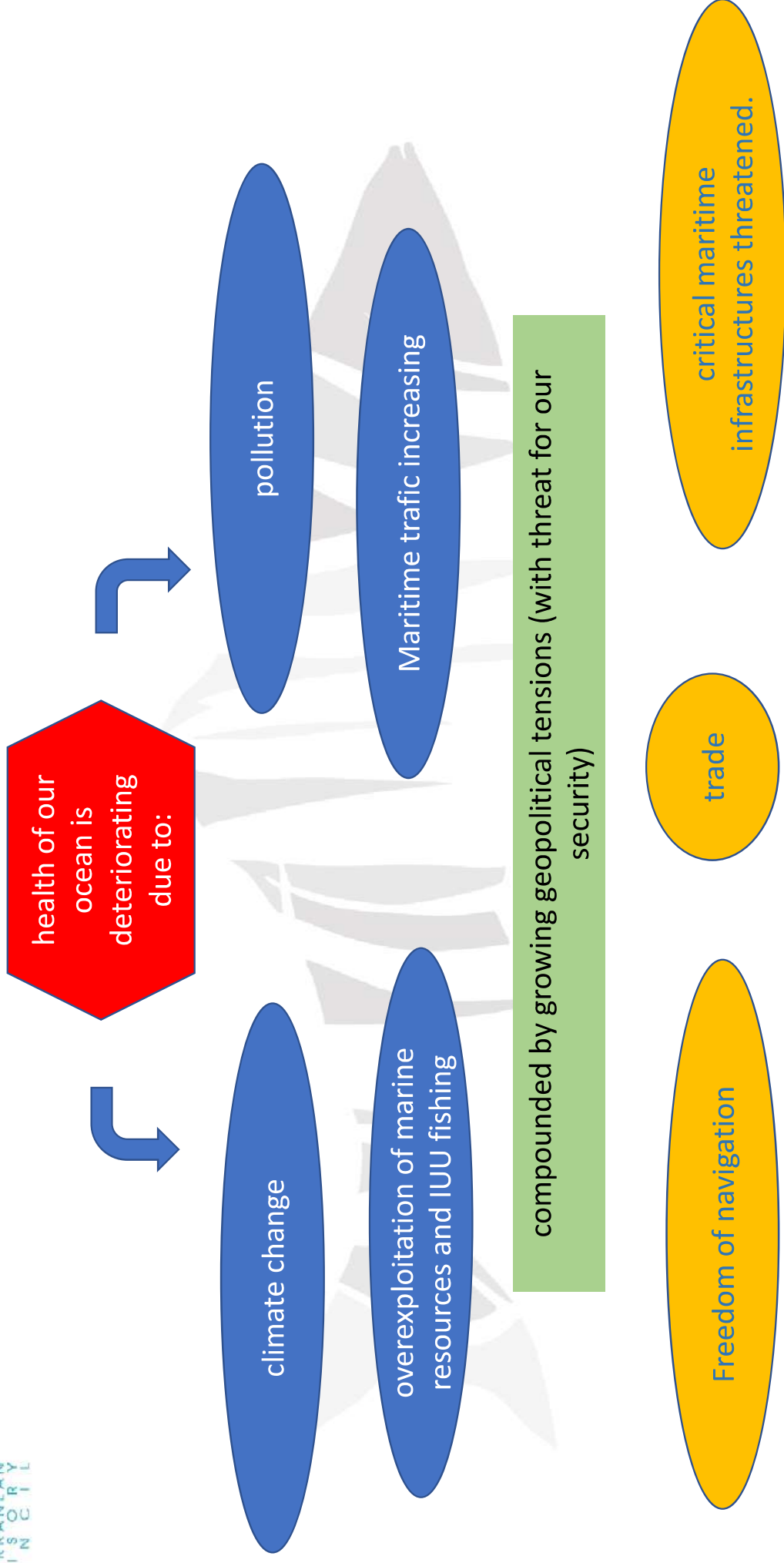
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The importance of Oceans

- EU 25 million km² of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) across its Member States, outermost regions and overseas territories.
- 70,000 km UE coastline
- 40% of UE population living within 50 km of the sea
- European blue economy directly supports close to 5 million jobs
- contributes over €250 billion in gross value added annually to the EU economy.
- Maritime routes carry some 74% of the EU's external trade,
- underwater communication cables carry 99% of inter-continental internet traffic.



Cumulative impacts on Oceans



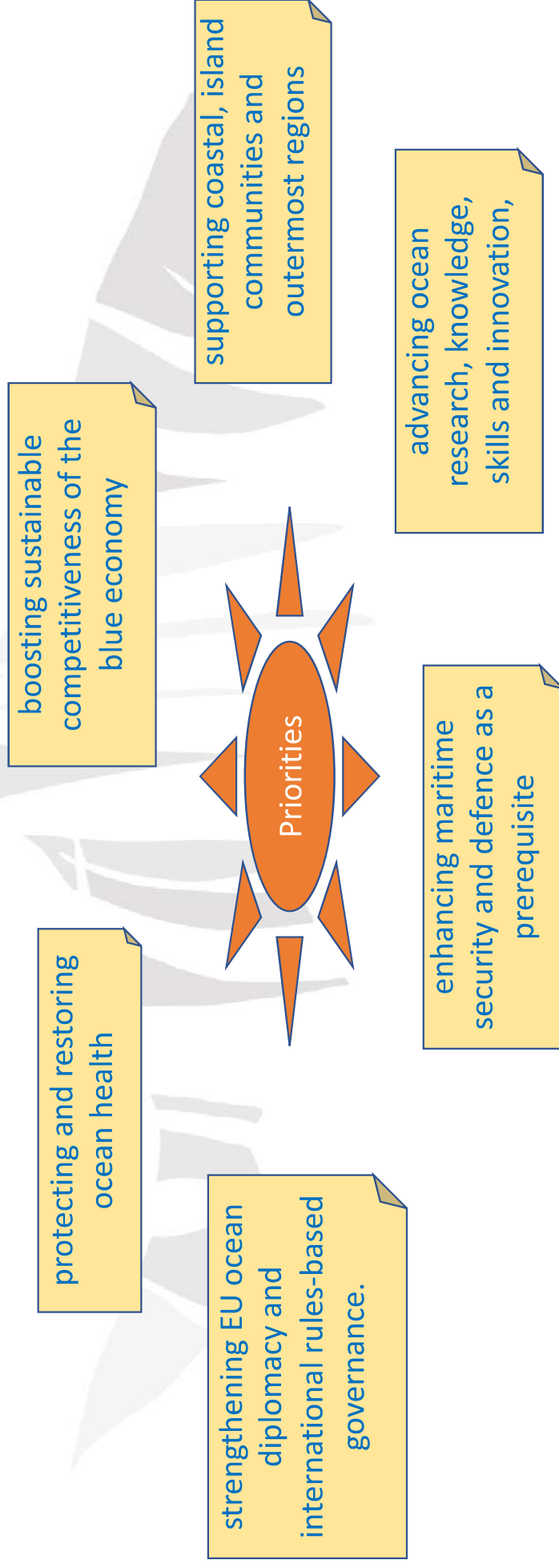
Rationale of Ocean Pact

To address all these challenges and strengthen Europe's leadership in Ocean policies, the European Ocean Pact builds on existing legislation and initiatives and will, for the first time, **provide a holistic approach across all policy areas.**

It is a **comprehensive strategy** to better protect the ocean, promote a thriving blue economy and support the well-being of people living in coastal areas. The Pact brings together EU ocean policies **under one single reference framework**, addressing the significant threats facing our ocean, our coastal communities, islands and outermost regions.

The six priorities of the Pact

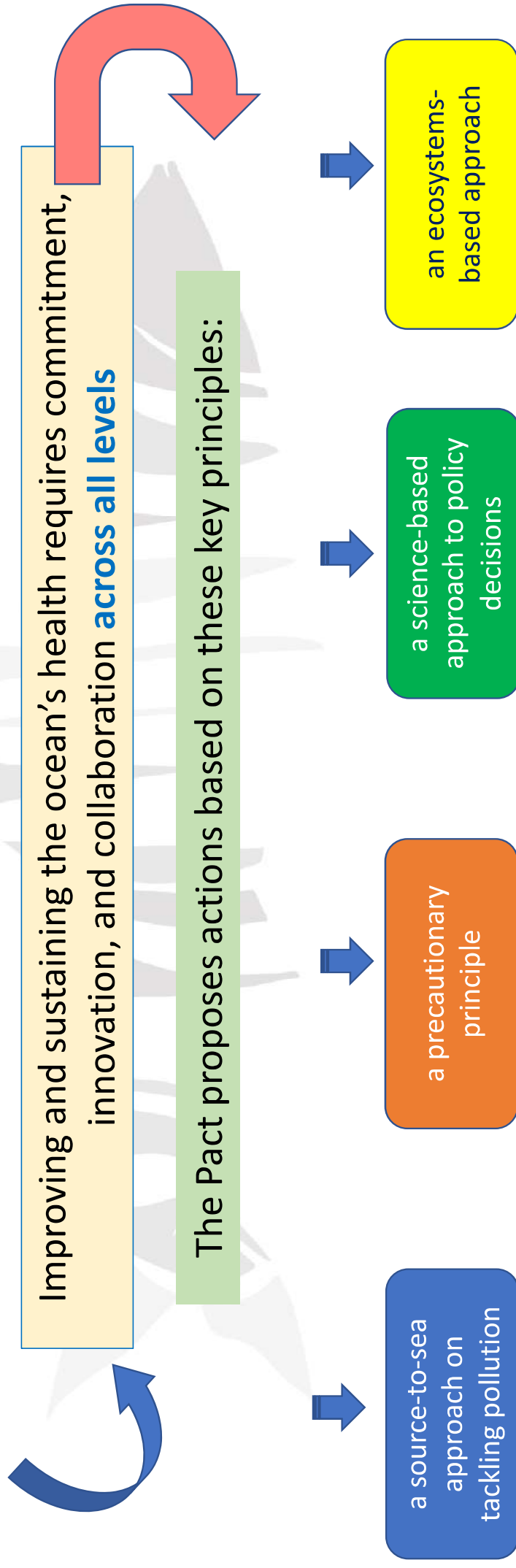
The European Ocean Pact builds on existing legislation and initiatives, introducing a single reference framework aimed at streamlining coordination processes, simplifying reporting obligations and offering a strategy for implementing existing legislations and achieving policy goals more coherently across sectors.



Ocean Health and Sustainability

Integrated approach

Significant EU **objectives** have been set and EU initiatives have **led to progress** in Ocean's health. But the marine environment **continues to degrade**, and the ocean and the diversity of life it supports remain vulnerable.



Ocean Health and Sustainability

Integrated approach

The ocean as an ally in the fight against climate change (carbon sink):

Marine ecosystems restoration (by Nature Restoration Reg.): Legally binding targets to restore at least 20% of EU marine areas by 2030 and all degraded ecosystems by 2050.

Support to coastal communities to build new business models that benefit both nature and people including European blue carbon reserves, taking into account the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change guidelines

Protecting and restoring marine life and essential ecosystem services of the ocean

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs): (Biodiversity strategy 2030) MS encouraged to accelerate efforts to meet the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 target of legally protecting 30%, and strictly protecting 10% of its seas, proposing management plans for each MPA, based on science and with the involvement of all local stakeholders including fishers.

This should include identifying, on a case-by-case basis, **which fishing techniques are compatible with the conservation of the targeted species and habitats in the MPAs concerned**

Effective implementation and enforcement of existing EU legislation: Birds and Habitats Dir.; Marine Strategy Framework Dir. and the Nature Restoration Reg.

Ocean Health and Sustainability

Integrated approach

Sustainable management of marine activities

Beyond MPA, crucial an **ecosystem-based** approach to the management of activities at sea, as well as those on land that affect the sea, as outlined in the MSFD in order to achieve clean, healthy and productive seas, and ultimately a 'good environmental status' (GES) for all EU marine waters.

Steps needed to fully achieve GES across all 11 descriptors of the MSFD then **the Commission will revise the MSFD to accelerate progress towards achievement of the environmental objectives**

Marine and fresh water pollution control:

Reduction of plastic litter in the ocean by 50% and nutrient losses by 50% by 2030.

Tackling pollution from land-based and maritime sources through a source-to-sea approach through the **Water Resilience Strategy (presented By ec June 2025)**.

Commission recalls the possibility for Member States to support active or passive marine litter collection schemes under the EMFAF national programmes.

Climate change: Promoting blue carbon and offshore renewable energy to mitigate emissions and increase resilience.

A strong governance framework is needed to align actions at Union, regional, national, and local levels through the various sea basins, involving both EU and non-EU countries

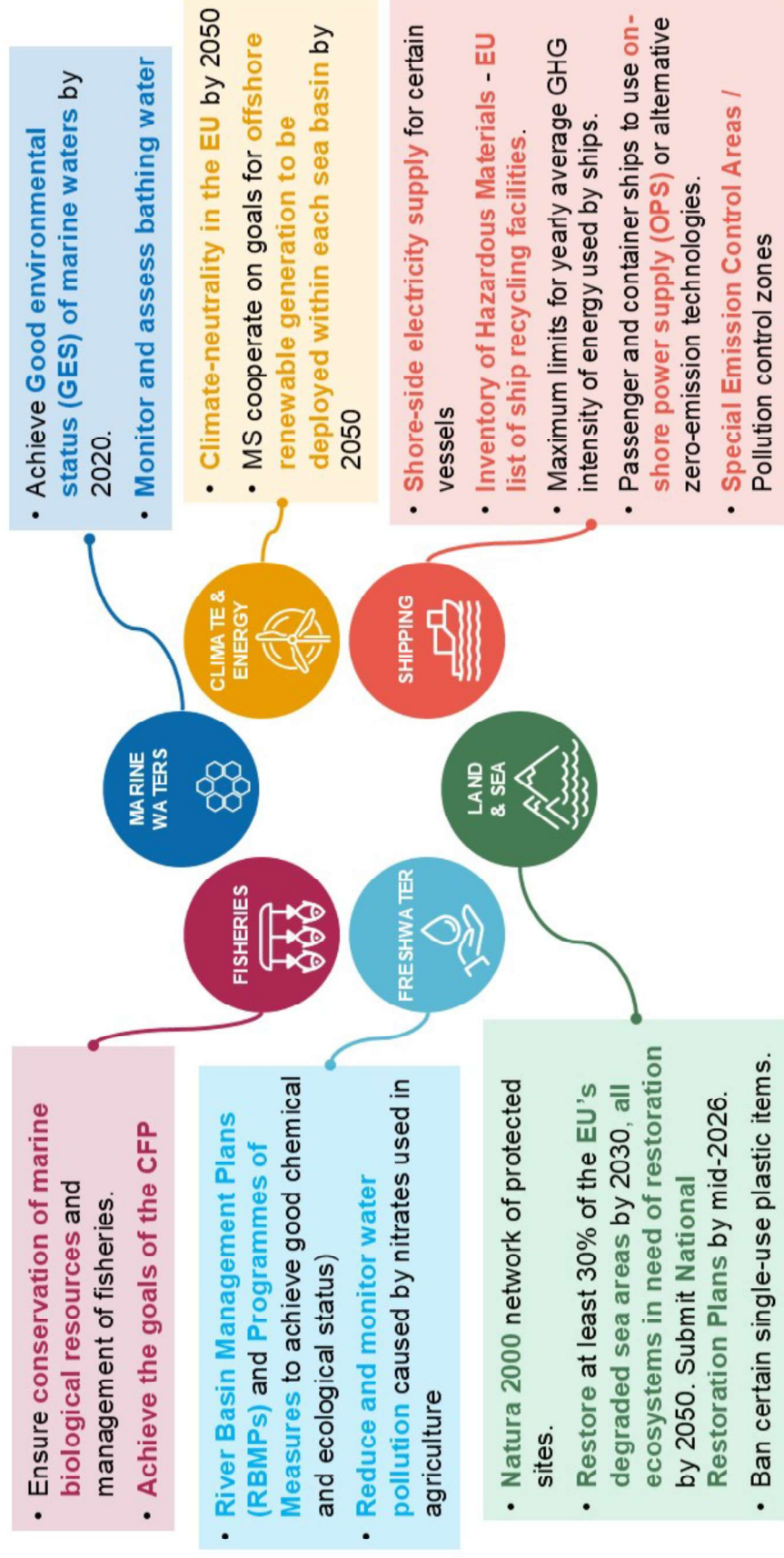
GL Ceccaroni 2025



1.1. Implementation of ocean related objectives

Strengthened Governance Framework

OCEAN-RELATED TARGETS IN EU LEGISLATION AND POLICY – a selection



Source COM (2025) 281 def.

www.med-ac.eu

Strengthened Governance Framework: HOW?

OCEAN ACT: the Commission will propose by 2027 an “Ocean Act”, a legislative proposal revising the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive to ensure **coherent implementation** of ocean-related policies across Member States, also through increased cross-sectoral coordination at national level and through a better organised sea basin approach. **The Commission will also work towards simplifying and synchronising ocean-related reporting obligations for Member States in existing legislation**

EU Ocean Pact Dashboard: A public platform to track progress on key indicators.

Ocean Board: composed of representatives from relevant sectors linked to the Ocean, a high-level advisory body involving stakeholders across ocean sectors. (as EBAF in Agriculture)

Regional coordination: Enhanced cooperation in key sea basins (Baltic, Black Sea, Mediterranean, Arctic) and support for integrated maritime planning.

Strengthened Governance Framework

Working together at regional level and funding

Pact for the Mediterranean

There will be a new **Pact for the Mediterranean**, that will pave the way towards a common space of peace, prosperity and stability in the Mediterranean region, building on the foundations of the 2021 Agenda for the Mediterranean.

The Commission, in collaboration with the Union for the Mediterranean, will support the development of a blue economy sea-basin strategy on the Eastern Mediterranean, which currently lacks a dedicated structure for cooperation, based on the format of the WestMed Initiative and in cooperation with existing regional bodies.

Funding

The Ocean Pact need investments and funding from private and public sources. Programs like InvestEU, BlueInvest , and Smart Specialisation will support innovation, infrastructure, and start-ups.
Enhancing coastal communities' resilience through EU financing and EIB loans

Sustainable Blue Economy and Competitiveness

Blue economy is an important part of broader industrial and security strategy, and spans wide with:

- (i) traditional sectors in fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, and coastal tourism;
- (ii) new and emerging sectors in renewable energy, blue biotechnology, underwater robotics, and ocean observation, and
- (iii) global ocean technology champions, driven by research and innovations in AI, cleantech, and deep tech.

A regenerative blue economy that restores the ocean while fostering development, social inclusion and equity, involves revitalising marine resources and the ocean's natural systems

Sustainable Blue Economy and Competitiveness

Supporting the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for sustainable
Aquatic Food, Food Security and Sovereignty

Complementing the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the comprehensive **evaluation and possible revision of the CFP, covering also the Common Market Organisation (CMO)**, and the **Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture** will mark a significant milestone.

Fisheries and aquaculture, including the processing sector, will improve their competitiveness and resilience and ensure a stable supply for the EU market, while maintaining an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management.

Collaboration with MS will make fishing activities future-proof and more sustainable by improving gear selectivity, including through innovation, and reducing negative impacts on the marine ecosystem, minimising and, where possible, eliminating incidental catches of sensitive marine species.

Sustainable Blue Economy and Competitiveness

Supporting the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for sustainable
Aquatic Food, Food Security and Sovereignty

The Commission will propose:

- Measures aimed at the decarbonisation and modernisation of the fisheries fleet, supported by the Energy Transition Partnership for the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- Support for small scale fisheries as a priority and the establishment of a dedicated Advisory Council to SSF.
- The establishment of an EU initiative on Sustainable Aquaculture, involving Member States' authorities, representatives of the sector, other interest groups, research and innovation institutions, business accelerators, and financial institutions.
- To scale up European algae production

Sustainable Blue Economy and Competitiveness

Supporting the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for sustainable
Aquatic Food, Food Security and Sovereignty

- A dedicated policy initiative on addressing the issue of **Non-Indigenous Species** (NIS) threatening fisheries and aquaculture, including opportunities for making use of these species in cases where those species are too spread already.
- A guidance document on managing predators, in the frame of the implementation of the Strategic Aquaculture Guidelines.
- The evaluation of the CMO Regulation to assess the effectiveness of the current labelling rules, including the scope of the products covered, their origin, and the channels through which they are sold, such as supermarkets, fishmongers and restaurants.
- An EU-wide campaign in 2027 on the benefits and the value added of EU-produced and sustainable “Aquatic food”.
- Measures ensuring the sustainability of fisheries management and a level playing field for European fishers globally .
- The evaluation and possible revision of the CFP Regulation
- Support the social dimension of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors

Other issues of Ocean Pact

Supporting coastal, island
communities and outermost regions

- ❖ Coastal communities are the driving force linked to a sustainable and competitive blue economy then it is crucial to ensuring the future of these communities.
- ❖ The Commission will present a **dedicated strategy for the development and resilience of EU coastal communities**
- ❖ In addition, the Commission will make a proposal on the creation of **European blue carbon reserves.**

Other issues

Advancing ocean research, knowledge,
skills and innovation

- ❖ The Ocean Pact proposes an **ambitious EU Ocean Observation Initiative to improve our knowledge of the ocean.**
- ❖ It will be underpinned by an Ocean Research and Innovation Strategy and feed the **European Digital Twin of the Ocean.**
- ❖ It will maintain the EU as a global ocean leader in ocean science, technology and data.
- ❖ To raise awareness on the importance of the ocean, the Commission will establish an **EU Ocean Youth Ambassador Network** to engage young advocates in ocean sustainability across the EU and globally.

Other issues

Enhancing maritime security and
defence

- ❖ The Commission will **strengthen EU coast guard and naval cooperation and maritime border security**.
- ❖ There will be a coordinated strategy to **remove unexploded ordnance** from European waters.
- ❖ Investment will be made in a pioneering **European drone fleet**, using technologies such as artificial intelligence and advanced sensors for real-time monitoring of maritime activities, strengthening the EU's maritime surveillance capabilities.
- ❖ Protection of critical maritime infrastructure: implementation of the EU Action Plan on Cable Security

Other issues

International Ocean Governance and Diplomacy

European ocean diplomacy will intensify actions to protect the ocean, building effective ocean-related political, economic, cultural and scientific relations with countries, nations and relevant organisations

Stronger international partnerships and promotion of multilateral diplomacy

They are necessary for effective marine resource protection and management, especially in fisheries where efforts to create a better and fairer international level playing field will help both EU fisheries and global sustainability.

Other issues – fishing related

International Ocean Governance and Diplomacy

In this framework, the Commission will undertake the following actions:

- ❖ explore how to improve the **sustainability of imported fisheries and aquaculture products** under the Autonomous Tariff Quota (ATQ) regime.¹
- ❖ **To reduce the accidental catch of sea turtles in 2026**
- ❖ **Ratification and full implementation of international instruments** such as , for example, the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement on prohibiting harmful subsidies
- ❖ To intensify efforts to **address challenges with "flags of convenience"**, ensuring transparency in fishing vessel ownership structures to hold accountable those responsible for illegal practices in maritime industries, including fisheries, and environmental management.
- ❖ The EU actively leads and advocates within **Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)** to **uphold high standards** of sustainability in fisheries management, especially for fighting against IUU fishing activities.

Other issues – fishing related

International Ocean Governance and Diplomacy

- ❖ The Commission will propose a **new generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements** (SFPAs) aligning with the EU's wider regional strategies and priorities, most notably for Africa and the Indo-Pacific, to contribute to a coherent EU approach for sustainable fisheries and ocean governance.
- ❖ The EU will continue to lead by example through its **zero-tolerance approach to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing** based on dialogues with third countries and the IUU carding system.
- ❖ In particular, it will leverage the EU catch certification scheme (CATCH) which aims to safeguard the EU market from IUU fishery products.
- ❖ The EU will continue to promote the implementation of its **updated fisheries control rules** on the global stage.

Next Steps

The Ocean Pact is a strategic roadmap and call to action for ensuring the ocean's resilience, climate regulation role, biodiversity, and economic potential.

The European Commission will coordinate with EU institutions, Member States, stakeholders, and international partners to implement the Pact and deliver tangible results for a sustainable future.

Thank you for your attention!

Source:

Ocean Pact (COM(2025) 281

EU press release: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1424