

Input from the European Marine Board to the European Oceans Pact

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The European Marine Board (www.marineboard.eu) welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to propose a single strategic reference framework for all ocean-related policies (European Oceans Pact) to holistically manage how we interact with the Ocean. The European Marine Board highlights that Ocean observations, data collection, marine knowledge, and research and innovation should be key pillars of this European Oceans Pact, and we encourage the European Commission to ensure that Ocean observations are also part of the EU Ocean research and innovation strategy. As such, we recommend that the European Commission should take stock of its work, reports and communications across disciplines (marine environment, Blue Economy, maritime transport, fisheries & aquaculture, climate, biodiversity, etc.), the resolutions from the European Parliament, and the robust and independent scientific advice from the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and the European Marine Board flagship foresight document, [Navigating the Future VI](#).

The European Marine Board aims to advance Seas & Ocean science, and as such we would like to highlight the [Vigo Declaration](#), **signed by all the European marine science networks and endorsed by the European marine science community** at the EurOCEAN 2023 Conference (10-11 October 2023, Vigo, Spain). The Vigo Declaration underscores the urgent need for integrated land-sea policies, sustained and coordinated Ocean observations, and committed citizen engagement to address the pressing issues of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

The European Oceans Pact promotes a holistic and coherent approach to all ocean-related policies, which is important to ensure coherence across economic sectors and levels of governance, but it should also **ensure integrated and adaptive land-sea policies**. Managing our marine and terrestrial systems separately creates a discontinuity that hampers the resilience of coastal communities and socio-ecological systems. All aspects of land-sea-society interactions should be holistically included in European Oceans Pact through harmonised governance, standards, policies and monitoring across the land-coastal-Ocean interface, as is done in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

We would also like to reiterate the role that the EU can play in joint planning and collaboration for Ocean observation activities, which the European marine science community has been calling for since at least 2004, when the EMB released the [Galway Declaration](#) at the 2004 EurOCEAN conference. **We encourage the European Commission to take action towards the implementation of the [EU initiative on Ocean Observations](#) to achieve a common approach for measuring once and using data many times.** The EU should recognise and support the essential role of coordinated Ocean Observations to deliver marine knowledge, enable the objectives of the European Ocean Observing System (EOOS) Framework, and an open, accessible, and fit for purpose European Digital Twin of the Ocean. This recognition and support

would be fundamental for the European Oceans Pact to ensure coherence across all policy areas linked to the Ocean.

To ensure committed Ocean citizens (including coastal communities), **the EU Missions offer an excellent opportunity to highlight the fundamental importance of the Ocean** as part of the wider Earth system to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, also highlighted in the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

As there is **only One Ocean**, we call on Europe to take responsibility and show leadership to live within Ocean and planetary boundaries, promote greater social and economic justice, and ensure that all society benefits from our **One Ocean**. Equity and inclusion should be at the core of the European Oceans Pact, ensuring that the best decisions are made to leave no one behind. The European Oceans Pact should aim to achieve the goals of the United Nations Decades of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and for Ecosystem Restoration. Putting marine knowledge at the core will not only align with the EU Mission to “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” but also strengthen the resilience of Europe's coastal communities, and the leadership of the EU in global Ocean governance.