
THE EUROPEAN OCEAN ACT

Securing Europe's Ocean Future

Europe's future security, competitiveness and resilience will also be decided at sea.

Europe's seas underpin food security, energy infrastructure, maritime transport, coastal economies and millions of jobs across the Union. Yet marine ecosystems continue to deteriorate despite decades of legislation and political commitments. Good Environmental Status has not been achieved and fragmented governance continues to weaken implementation.

This implementation gap is becoming a strategic vulnerability for Europe, weakening fisheries productivity, offshore infrastructure, maritime supply chains and coastal stability. At a time of growing geopolitical competition and pressure on marine resources, Europe cannot afford weak ocean governance. The European Ocean Act is therefore an opportunity to move from commitments to delivery, ensuring 100% of EU waters are managed sustainably within ecological limits.



Two strategic imperatives for the Ocean Act

1. Make ecological security the foundation of Europe's maritime strategy

Healthy marine ecosystems are strategic natural infrastructure underpinning Europe's food security, energy transition, blue economy and long-term competitiveness. Ecological security should therefore be recognised as a strategic condition for Europe's economic security and strategic autonomy. The Ocean Act should ensure that 100% of EU waters are managed sustainably within ecological limits by making Good Environmental Status and ecosystem-based management the foundation of all ocean-related policies and maritime activities.

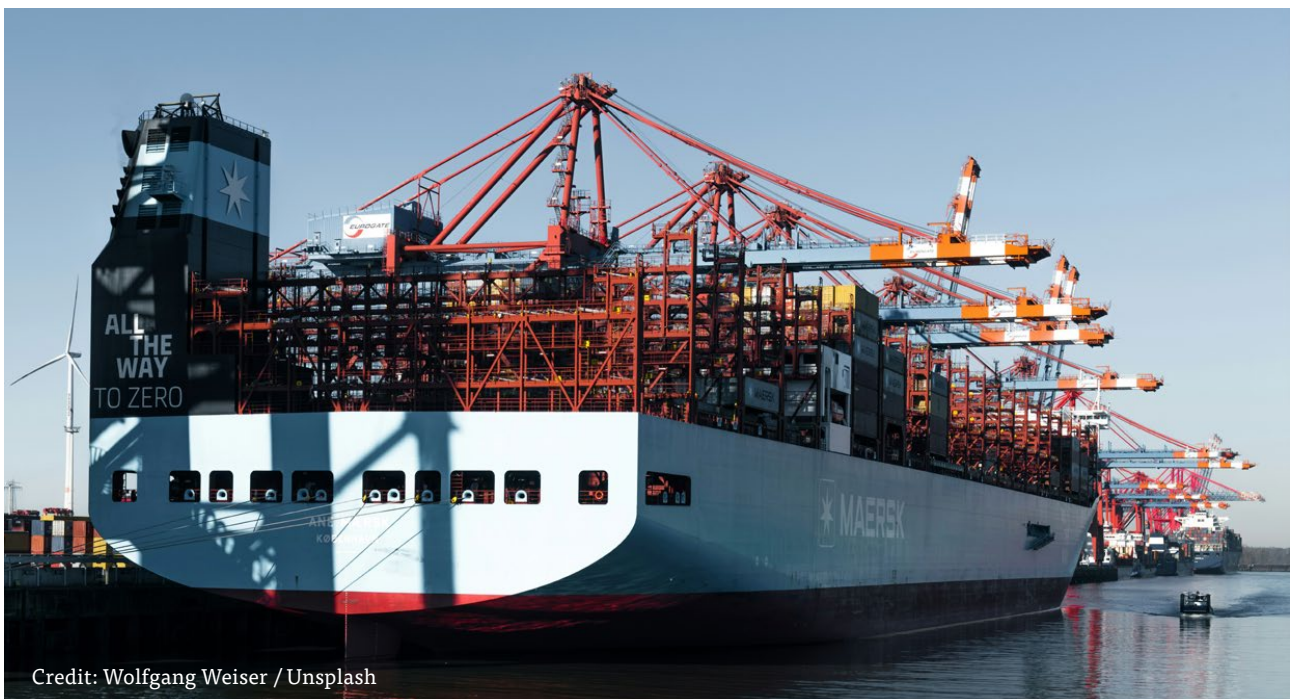
2. Turn commitments into delivery

The EU already has legislation, targets and political commitments. The challenge is no longer ambition, but implementation and delivery. The Ocean Act should strengthen enforcement, transparency, accountability and governance coherence across sectors while ensuring that Marine Protected Areas deliver effective protection in practice. A stronger governance framework would reduce strategic vulnerabilities, support resilient coastal economies and sustainable fisheries, improve long-term investment certainty and reinforce Europe's leadership in ocean governance.

Five priorities for actions

The Ocean Act should:

1. Establish Good Environmental Status as the binding ecological baseline for all maritime activities;
2. Make the EU's 30x30 targets legally enforceable, including 10% strict protection;
3. Strengthen monitoring, compliance, transparency and enforcement mechanisms;
4. Reinforce integrated maritime spatial planning and sea-basin coordination;
5. Align EU funding with restoration, low-impact activities, maritime resilience and long-term competitiveness.



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