The European Ocean Act

Published by AGRINFO on 28 May 2026

European Ocean Act: Public consultation launched

European Ocean Act: Public consultation

Update

The European Commission has launched its public consultation on the forthcoming European Ocean Act, a key legislative initiative under the European Ocean Pact, which will bring together the European Union's policies and actions for managing the ocean in a unified and coordinated plan.

Stakeholders including parties in Regional Seas Conventions and international organisations, as well as the general public, are invited to provide their feedback on this initiative via the EU's Have Your Say webpage until **16 July 2026**.

What is changing?

The European Commission has launched its public consultation on the forthcoming European Ocean Act. Following consultations and a call for evidence in early 2026, stakeholders and the wider public are now invited to help shape the proposal for the Act.

The Act will build on a revision of the existing Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU). It will establish a single framework to facilitate the Ocean Pact's key objectives, and bring together the European Union's policies and actions in a unified and coordinated plan for managing the ocean.

Broadly, the Act intends to:

- create an integrated EU framework by aligning and simplifying existing rules that affect seas and oceans
- improve cross-sector coordination at sea (energy, fisheries, shipping, conservation, defence) and enhance planning for sea■basins
- better integrate biodiversity, climate, and pollution objectives into maritime planning and management
- provide clearer rules for activities such as offshore renewables, fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, and tourism, while respecting environmental limits

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

- improve ocean knowledge, monitoring, and data sharing, including through EU ocean observation initiatives such as the European Digital Twin Ocean (a virtual replica of the ocean) and OceanEye (the European ocean monitoring and observation initiative).

The consultation consists of three parts:

- I General – for all
- II For experts
- III For small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Part I, question 6 asks whether you also wish to answer one of the other parts.

At the end of Parts II and III, there is a box for brief additional comments and also the possibility to upload a file with your additional input.

The Ocean Act is still at an early stage. Stakeholders can provide input on areas that are not directly mentioned but that they wish to be tackled by the Act.

Why?

This final public consultation is an opportunity for stakeholders, including parties in Regional Seas Conventions and international bodies, to highlight additional priorities the Ocean Act should cover.

Consultations offer an opportunity to “Have your say” and raise any concerns. Feedback that highlights practical considerations and potential economic consequences, supported by scientific data, has a greater chance of being taken into account in the policy process.

Timeline

The Ocean Act is likely to be adopted in the fourth quarter of 2026.

Recommended Actions

Stakeholders and the general public within and outside the EU can provide feedback via the European Commission’s Have Your Say webpage until **16 July 2026**.

Stakeholders wishing to respond must be registered. Those who do not already have an account will first need to create an EU login account.

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

Background

The European Ocean Pact, adopted in June 2025, 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.

It is built around six priorities:

- protecting and restoring ocean health
- boosting the competitiveness of the EU's sustainable blue economy
- supporting coastal and island communities, and outermost regions
- advancing ocean research, knowledge, skills, and innovation
- enhancing maritime security and defence
- strengthening EU ocean diplomacy and international ocean governance.

The first five priorities are EU-wide; the sixth aims to reinforce cooperation in international initiatives and improve the EU's contribution through:

- a strategic approach to the EU strategy on fisheries external action, including a new generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (see also CFFA 2026)
- implementation of CATCH, the digital catch certification scheme that helps prevent illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishery products from entering the EU market (mandatory for all EU importers and competent authorities in all EU Member States from 10 January 2026) (DG-MARE 2026)
- ratification and implementation of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement and support for its implementation in less developed countries through a €40 million contribution to the EU Global Ocean Programme
- conclusion of a Plastics Treaty to curb ocean pollution
- designation of three vast marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean to conserve Antarctica's marine ecosystems and biodiversity
- support for phase 1 of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies; and conclusion of negotiations on phase 2
- piloting of an International Platform for Ocean Sustainability.

Resources

CFFA (2026) Aligning ocean governance and fisheries policy: what the EU Ocean Act must deliver. Policy brief, 17 March. Brussels: Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements.

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

DG-MARE (2026) New digital certification system to tackle illegal fishing. News Announcement, 12 January. EU Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

Directive 2014/89/EU establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning

European Commission: The European Ocean Pact

Sources

European Ocean Act: Public consultation

Visit the AGRINFO website to view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

Disclaimer: *Under no circumstances shall COLEAD be liable for any loss, damage, liability or expense incurred or suffered that is claimed to have resulted from the use of information available on this website or any link to external sites. The use of the website is at the user's sole risk and responsibility. This information platform was created and maintained with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents do not, however, reflect the views of the European Union.*

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*