The European Ocean Pact

Published by AGRINFO on 08 Aug 2025

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Ocean Pact

What is changing and why?

The **Ocean Pact**, adopted by the European Commission on 5 June 2025, introduces a comprehensive EU ocean strategy for the first time. It also announces plans to revise several pieces of legislation, including the Common Fisheries Policy, and new initiatives including the Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture (expected in 2026). The EU has set targets on ocean preservation and sustainable management, and seeks a strong governance framework to ensure implementation and enforcement of these targets. The Pact offers a single framework for implementing such legislation, and lays the groundwork for an Ocean Act (expected in 2027) building on the existing Maritime Spatial Planning Directive. This will streamline coordination on ocean policy goals more coherently across sectors, and align actions globally at multiple levels.

The **Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture** aims to improve the competitiveness and resilience of these sectors, including processing. Seventy per cent of aquatic food consumed in the EU today is imported, and the EU aims to ensure a stable supply. To boost the sustainable economic growth of ocean resources, the European Commission is exploring how to improve the sustainability of imported fisheries and aquaculture products under the autonomous tariff quota regime. The EU also aims to tackle non-sustainable fishing practices, especially through zero tolerance of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and cooperation in the management of stocks shared with other countries.

The EU has also announced a new generation of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) aligning with its wider regional strategies and priorities, notably for Africa and the Indo-Pacific.

Actions

The EU will hold public consultations on many of the initiatives foreseen in the Ocean Pact. Non-EU stakeholders are encouraged to participate in such consultations, which are open to stakeholders in non-EU countries.

Organisations wishing to respond must be registered. First Create an EU login account, then register your organisation on the Transparency Register.

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Timeline

- The digital EU catch certification scheme (CATCH) will become mandatory for EU Member States and importers from January 2026.
- A Communication on a new strategic approach to EU fisheries external action is expected in 2026.
- The Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture is expected in 2026.
- An Ocean Act is expected in 2027.

For more information see the full record on the AGRINFO website – where you can also view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

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