

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECEIVES MANIFESTO FOR THE CREATION OF A “EUROPEAN PACT FOR THE OCEAN” WITH CONCRETE GOALS TO PROTECT THE OCEAN

- **In the lead-up to the 2024 European elections, Europe Jacques Delors and Oceano Azul Foundation have joined forces to develop, promote, and encourage the adoption of a European Pact for the Ocean, with contributions from a panel of prominent figures.**

Europe Jacques Delors and Oceano Azul Foundation have brought together a group of leading European figures to develop a **manifesto advocating the adoption of a European Pact for the Ocean**. This would enable the next European Commission to outline a coherent political strategy based **on ambitious actions to address environmental challenges and harness the economic opportunities the ocean offers to the European continent**. This document, officially presented at the Our Ocean Conference held in Athens, Greece, was delivered to the European Parliament on Wednesday, April 17.

This year's European elections represent a critical moment for the future of the ocean and, consequently, for the continent itself. The **ocean sustains all life on Earth and provides Europe with numerous essential services and opportunities** across multiple areas of life: **climate regulation, biodiversity preservation, food security, innovation, employment, competitiveness, science, transport, clean energy, tourism, data connectivity, peace, cooperation, and security** – along with its **aesthetic, spiritual, and cultural dimensions**.

However, the ocean's health is in decline, and the European Union's (EU) fragmented and isolated approach to maritime policy has, to date, not been designed to fully capitalise on its true potential. Without immediate, bold, and holistic investment in the ocean, the EU risks losing its greatest ally in the transition to a sustainable, prosperous, and peaceful future.

Thus, in the lead-up to the 2024 European elections, Europe Jacques Delors and Oceano Azul Foundation have developed and will promote a manifesto for the adoption of a European Pact for the Ocean. In collaboration with a group of distinguished figures known for their expertise in both European and ocean-related matters, this initiative aims to generate political momentum for the adoption of an ambitious and positive European agenda for the ocean in the next legislative term. To encourage the adoption of this pact, this **manifesto advocates for an approach that integrates opportunities for prosperity and social equity, environmental protection, and geostrategic dynamics**.

To this end, the manifesto for the European Pact for the Ocean outlines **several concrete measures and objectives**, including:

- Prioritising a sustainable, robust, and competitive European blue economy by harnessing the economic potential of existing sustainable ocean industries and promoting innovative, sustainable, and carbon-neutral blue economy sectors;
- Protecting and restoring the ocean and seas to recover not only their natural capital and services but also to ensure the overall functioning of the ocean system;
- Combating pollution through a commitment to cleaning European oceans and seas, reducing marine litter with binding measures, including for industries, to prevent debris pollution – particularly plastics – and tackling marine pollution from other land-based sources, such as agricultural runoff or industrial and sewage discharges;
- Building knowledge and awareness of ocean sustainability;
- Improving ocean governance by renewing leadership for the EU's ocean and seas, strengthening international cooperation and coordination, and adopting a new geostrategic approach to the ocean in order to build a sovereign, secure, and powerful Europe.

The following prominent individuals, as members of the **Stakeholder Group**, made decisive contributions to the “Manifesto for the Creation of a European Pact for the Ocean”:

- Pascal Lamy (President), Vice-President of Europe Jacques Delors and Chair of the Board of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters;
- Tiago Pitta e Cunha (Vice-President), Chief Executive Officer of Oceano Azul Foundation;
- Geneviève Pons, Vice-President and Director-General of Europe Jacques Delors, Vice-President and Director-General of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters, and President of NGOs and Citizen Engagement Group;
- Catherine Chabaud, Member of the European Parliament (Renew), Substitute Member of the PECH Committee;
- José Maria Costa, former Secretary of State for Maritime Affairs of Portugal;
- Assunção Cristas, former Minister of Agriculture, the Sea, the Environment, and Spatial Planning of Portugal;
- Maria Damanaki, former European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries;

- Brigita Dejus, Senior Researcher at the Riga Technical University and Board Member of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters;
- Ana Gavrilovich, Associate Professor at the University of Zagreb, Croatia, Department of Fisheries, and Board Member of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters;
- Rémi Gruet, Executive Director of Ocean Energy Europe;
- Peter Heffernan, Board Member of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters, former Director of the Marine Institute (Ireland), and Board Member of Oceano Azul Foundation;
- Pierre Karleskind, Member of the European Parliament (Renew), Chairman of the PECH Committee;
- Petros Kokkalis, Member of the European Parliament (GUE/NGL), Substitute Member of the TRAN Committee (Transport and Tourism);
- Spyros Kouvelis, Board Member of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters, and former Minister of State for Economic, Environmental, and Cultural Affairs of Greece;
- R. Andréas Kraemer, Non-Executive Director of Oceano Azul Foundation;
- Jacqueline McGlade, former Executive Director of the European Environment Agency (EEA);
- Sophie Mirgaux, Special Envoy for the Ocean, Ministry of Environment of Belgium;
- Patrick Moller, Executive Director of Ocean Energy Europe and Cor Power Ocean;
- Maria Cristina Pedicchio, President of the Istituto Nazionale di Oceanografia e di Geofisica Sperimentale (OGS), and Board Member of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters;
- Klara Ramm, Assistant Professor at the Warsaw University of Technology and Board Member of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters;
- Frank Schweikert, Director of the German Ocean Foundation;
- Sebastian Troëng, Vice-President of Conservation International;
- Paula Valcarce, Coordinator of the Spanish Institute of Oceanography, and Board Member of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters;
- João Vale de Almeida, former EU Ambassador to the United Nations and the United States;
- Ivelina Vasileva, former Minister of Environment of Bulgaria, Senior Adviser at EPPA, and Board Member of Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters;

- Karmenu Vella, former European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries;
- Mónica Verbeek, Executive Director of Seas at Risk;
- Klaus Welle, former Secretary-General of the European Parliament.

About Oceano Azul Foundation

Oceano Azul Foundation is an international foundation based in Portugal, established in 2017. Under the motto ***From the ocean's point of view***, its mission is to contribute to a healthy and productive ocean for the benefit of all life on the planet. Science-based, the Foundation's work contributes to **protecting, developing, and enhancing the Blue Natural Capital**, integrating key areas such as **Ocean Conservation; International Ocean Advocacy; the Blue Economy**; as well as focusing on **Ocean Literacy** and **Education** and empowering civil society. The Foundation's change model allows it to develop projects focused on Marine Protected Areas and sustainable fisheries, while simultaneously advising governments and decision-makers to advance the international ocean agenda, notably in collaboration with other foundations and civil society organisations, the UN, and the EU. The Foundation also runs communication campaigns to amplify its impact by raising awareness about the importance of protecting and restoring the ocean.

About [Europe Jacques Delors](#):

Europe Jacques Delors is a leading think tank headquartered in Brussels, dedicated to research on sustainable development and European environmental policy.

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