

BLUE MANIFESTO

THE ROADMAP
TO A HEALTHY OCEAN

Thriving marine and
coastal ecosystems for a
climate-resilient future
IN 2030

2021

PROGRESS
ASSESSMENT
SUMMARY



SEAS AT RISK



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BLUE MANIFESTO

2021 ASSESSMENT

In 2019, over 100 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) signed the [Blue Manifesto](#), a roadmap for policy makers and legislators on the choices that will need to be made to strengthen and improve the existing European Union (EU) marine policy framework.

Where other policy papers provide recommendations and suggestions, the Blue Manifesto gives an operational timeline of the concrete steps that need to be taken now and in the coming years if Europe's seas are to thrive. Each year has specific milestones aligned to EU and international policy and legislation. Following these will ensure that Europe is on a path to a sustainable future, with flourishing healthy seas in 2030. The milestones are designed to be scored, allowing progress to be assessed each year. Where possible, they are linked to existing or scheduled policy and legislative processes.

The [2020 progress assessment](#) found that most milestones had not been fully met, although a majority were on track to be partially achieved. Again in 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed almost all EU files, with many processes experiencing further delays.

This second assessment reviews progress towards achieving the milestones set for 2021 and updates the milestones for 2020. Of the eight milestones for 2021, only one is assessed as fully met, while two are on track to at least partly deliver on their targets.

Three milestones are not met and two others have insufficient progress even for an indicative score. The 2020 scoring was adjusted for several milestones: one was scored down from green to yellow, one from yellow to red, and one milestone that could not be scored last year has now been scored yellow. This makes the revised overall outcome for 2020 more negative than initially reported, with four milestones not achieved, six only partly achieved and just two fully achieved.

NEW 2021 MILESTONES IN THE BLUE MANIFESTO

The Blue Manifesto lists eight new milestones, many of which build on the milestones for 2020. The 2020 milestones that were not concluded in last year's assessment have now been reassessed and the update added to this year's score.

The assessment is twofold. First there is the scoring of progress in the processes associated with milestones, which is scored in percentage completion. Second there is the delivery of the sub-targets within the milestone, which is scored through a traffic-light system, with red indicating the targets not met, yellow those that are partly met, and green where targets have been delivered in full.

To the extent possible, the colour-coding is based on a comparison between the exact wording of the Blue Manifesto and the wording in the relevant policy and legislative documents. Sub-targets were scored down when 1) the sub-target was not reflected in the official text, 2) the wording was there, but without any associated action to ensure it was implemented, and 3) no or little action was taken by the Commission or the Member States towards completing the milestone. Milestones in their early stages, or with little clarity on the direction of their process, are marked in grey.

A background document detailing the assessment of each milestone is available on request.

OVERALL PROGRESS 2021

NR	MILESTONE 2021	TEXT WITH TARGETS	OVERALL SCORE
12	Fisheries Control Regulation	EU revises the Control Regulation to ensure full compliance of the fishing sector with fisheries and nature laws (1), requiring fully documented and transparent fisheries (2), and to ensure that no products from illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fisheries reach the EU market (3).	
13	Bycatch of sensitive species	EU countries implement effective fisheries management measures to eliminate bycatch of sensitive species (1).	
14	Maritime Spatial Plans	EU countries adopt ecosystem-based Maritime Spatial Plans which include at least 30% of highly or fully protected Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) (1) and areas for human activities allocated based on ecosystem sensitivity (2).	
15	Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) reform	EU adopts a fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy that aims to stop the loss of nutrients from fertilisers and manure into soil and water bodies (1) causing eutrophication, by fully implementing EU water and nitrates legislation in agriculture (2).	
16 ^a	Port Reception Facilities Directive	EU countries transpose into national law the Directives on Port Reception Facilities (PRFD) (1) and on Single-Use Plastics (SUP) (2), with ambitious consumption reduction targets for food containers and beverage cups (2).	
16 ^b	Single-Use Plastics Directive		
17	Global Ocean Treaty	EU countries ratify and implement the Global Ocean Treaty (1).	
18	Emissions Trading System	EU includes shipping in its Emissions Trading System (1).	

UPDATED RESULTS 2020

NR	MILESTONE 2020	TEXT WITH TARGETS	2020 SCORE	2021 SCORE
1	Biodiversity Strategy 2030	EU adopts a Biodiversity Strategy 2030 that protects marine sensitive species (1) and habitats (2) and fish stock recovery areas (3), eliminates destructive fishing (4), and includes legally binding ocean restoration targets (5).		
2	Farm to Fork Strategy	EU adopts a Farm to Fork strategy that fully takes into account the ecological and climate impacts of fisheries and aquaculture (1) and addresses responsible consumption (2) and sustainably sourced and traceable seafood (3).		
3	Circular Economy Action Plan	EU adopts a new Circular Economy Action Plan that includes measures to reduce absolute resource use, including plastic (1), increase resource efficiency (2) and to prevent leakage of plastics and microplastics in the sea (3).		
4 ^a	Chemicals Strategy	EU adopts a Chemicals strategy for sustainability (1) and a Zero-pollution strategy (2) with clear goals to prevent exposure to harmful chemicals in air, soil and water (through the Water Quality Action Plan) to ensure a non-toxic environment for current and future generations.		
4 ^b	Zero-Pollution Action Plan			
5	Offshore Wind Strategy	EU adopts an Offshore Wind Strategy which fully takes into account the impacts on marine ecosystems of the development of offshore wind energy production plants (1).		
6	European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)	EU allocates at least 21 billion EUR of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 to protect nature (1), with at least 50% of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund to restore the marine environment, collect data and control fisheries (2), and revises the State Aid guidelines for fisheries and aquaculture to prohibit granting of harmful subsidies (3).		
7	Energy Taxation Directive	EU removes fuel tax exemptions for fishing vessels and shipping under the revised Energy Taxation Directive.		
8	Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Global Biodiversity Framework	EU pushes for the adoption of a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the CBD, with protection (1) and restoration (2) targets for marine ecosystems globally.		
9	Sustainable shipping at the International Maritime Organization (IMO)	EU pushes for the adoption of urgent short-term measures at the International Maritime Organization to ban heavy fuel oil in the Arctic (1) and reduce ship speed (2) to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, noise levels and whale strikes.		
10	Global Ocean Treaty	EU pushes for the adoption of an ambitious Global Ocean Treaty to protect marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) worldwide at the 4th session of the Intergovernmental Conference on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction.		
11	Moratorium on deep-seabed mining	EU establishes a moratorium on deep-seabed mining (1), stops financial support to research into deep seabed mining technology (2) and, with EU countries, pushes for the adoption of a global moratorium in the International Seabed Authority (ISA) (3).		

2021 ASSESSMENT PER MILESTONE

12 • FISHERIES CONTROL REGULATION

75%

Progress on file 75%; trilogue has started on the Fisheries Control Regulation and is expected to conclude in early 2023.

Milestone text:

EU revises the Control Regulation to ensure full compliance of the fishing sector with fisheries and nature laws (1), requiring fully documented and transparent fisheries (2), and to ensure that no products from IUU fisheries reach the EU market (3).

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Ensure full compliance with law	Council approach removed many offences defined as serious infringements and reduced options for enforcement of offences.
Require full documentation & transparency	Commission draft takes a risk-based approach for vessels over 12 metres. Both European Parliament amendments and general Council approach further reduced options for use of electronic monitoring.
Prevent IUU from reaching EU	European Parliament and Council proposed amendments to increase the margin of tolerance in logbook estimates, potentially increasing the amount of unreported catch on the EU market.

13 • BYCATCH OF SENSITIVE SPECIES

0%

Progress on file 0%: in order to score this milestone consistently, it has been linked to the implementation of national pledges on the Action Plan to Conserve Fisheries Resources and Protect Marine Ecosystems. As the Action Plan has yet to be published, Member States have not started their pledges.

Milestone text:

EU countries implement effective fisheries management measures to eliminate bycatch of sensitive species (1).

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Eliminate bycatch of sensitive species	Existing programmes to deliver on this target have been largely ineffective. In recent years, the Commission began infringement procedures against several Member States for failing to implement measures to prevent bycatch of protected species (e.g. common dolphins in the Bay of Biscay, Baltic harbour porpoise). Measures proposed jointly by Member States and approved by the European Commission will increase protection, although they remain insufficient.

14 • MARITIME SPATIAL PLANS

50%

Progress on file 50%; some Member States have finalised their Maritime Spatial Plans, others are finalising theirs, while some still have substantial work to do.

Milestone text:

EU countries adopt ecosystem-based Maritime Spatial Plans which include at least 30% of highly or fully protected MPAs (1) and areas for human activities allocated based on ecosystem sensitivity (2).

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
30% highly/fully protected MPAs	Very few Member States designated highly or fully protected MPAs within their Maritime Spatial Plans. No countries designated 30% of their exclusive economic zones (EEZ) as highly protected MPAs.
Allocation through ecosystem sensitivity	This target is not well reflected in most plans. Plans are instead dominated by the urgent need to develop offshore wind farms.

15 • CAP

100%

Progress on file 100%: the full CAP Regulation was published in December 2021

Milestone text:

EU adopts a fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy that aims to stop the loss of nutrients from fertilisers and manure into soil and water bodies (1), causing eutrophication, by fully implementing EU water and nitrates legislation in agriculture (2).

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Prevent loss of nutrients	Not fully achieved, as legislation does little to end destructive practices that cause runoff of fertiliser and nutrients.
Implementation of water and nitrate legislation	CAP refers to the relevant legislation but does not provide binding targets. A strong implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Nitrates Directive is needed.

16a • PORT RECEPTION FACILITIES

?%

16b • SUP DIRECTIVE

75%

Port Reception Facilities Directive: progress cannot be scored due to the lack of available data. The Directive was published in June 2019, with Member States legally obliged to transpose it into national law by June 2021. No overview is available of the level of implementation in Member States. To date, no infringement procedures have been initiated against any Member State for lack of implementation. The European Commission published four implementing regulations for the Port Reception Facilities Directive on 24 January 2022. These have yet to be transposed into national laws.

SUP Directive: progress is at 50%. While implementation has begun, not all Member States have transposed the Directive into law as yet.

Milestone text:

EU countries transpose into national law the Directives on Port Reception Facilities (1) and on Single Use Plastics (2) with ambitious consumption reduction targets for food containers and beverage cups (2)

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Ratify Port Reception Facilities Directive	Port Reception Facilities Directive adopted in 2019 and transposed into law by Member States by 2021.
Ambitious reduction targets in Single-Use Plastics Directive	SUP Directive agreed and published, but many Member States have set national ambition lower than that prescribed by the Directive.

17 • RATIFICATION OF THE GLOBAL OCEAN TREATY

0%

Progress 0%: In March 2022, the fourth and final session on developing an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine BBNJ concluded without agreement among the parties.

Milestone text:

EU countries ratify and implement the Global Ocean Treaty (1)

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Ratify Global Ocean Treaty	The process is delayed. A fifth negotiation round will take place in August 2022.

18 • EMISSIONS TRADING SYSTEM

40%

Progress on file 40%: the draft legislation (part of 'Fit for 55' package) was published in July 2021. The European Parliament's rapporteur on the file has sent their report to the Committee on the Environment (ENVI) and it has yet to be scheduled for a plenary vote. The Council has not published its response to the legislative draft.

Milestone text:

EU includes shipping in its Emissions Trading System (1)

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Emissions Trading System includes shipping	European Commission proposal and European Parliament report include shipping in the Emissions Trading System.

UPDATED 2020 MILESTONES

Updates since the 2020 assessment are **in bold**.

1 • BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY 2030

100%



Progress on file 100%; European Parliament plenary vote took place in June 2021.
Draft restoration law is scheduled to be released by the European Commission before summer 2022.

Milestone text:

EU adopts a Biodiversity Strategy 2030 that protects marine sensitive species (1) and habitats (2) and fish stock recovery areas (3), eliminates destructive fishing (4) and includes legally binding ocean restoration targets (5)

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Species protection	Ambition is strongly worded in Biodiversity Strategy 2030 text, but delivery will depend on concrete targets in the Action Plan to Conserve Fisheries Resources and Protect Marine Ecosystems.
Habitat protection	Covered in Biodiversity Strategy 2030 text, but success is closely linked to target 4 (destructive fishing). Delivery will depend on concrete targets in the Action Plan to Conserve Fisheries Resources and Protect Marine Ecosystems.
Recovery areas	Commitment to strictly protect 10% of Europe's land and seas, but delivery will depend on the concrete targets in Action Plan to Conserve Fisheries Resources and Protect Marine Ecosystems.
Destructive fishing	Wording in Biodiversity Strategy 2030 text is not strong enough to deliver on this target.
Blinding restoration targets	The restoration law will be published on the 22nd of June 2022. Colour coding has been changed to yellow because of the strong industry lobby (food security) and challenging political context (e.g. war in Ukraine) delaying the proposal.

2 • FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

100%



Progress on file 100%; Since the Farm to Fork Strategy was adopted, emphasis has shifted from regulating producers to empowering consumers.

Milestone text:

EU adopts a Farm to Fork strategy that fully takes into account the ecological and climate impacts of fisheries and aquaculture (1) and addresses responsible consumption (2) and sustainably sourced and traceable seafood (3)

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Ecological and climat impacts	Covered in the Farm to Fork Strategy, but success depends on strengthening the implementation of the environmental protection articles in the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which has been weak to date.
Responsible consumption	A Sustainable Food Systems Framework Initiative has been launched, laying down rules on sustainability labelling of food products and minimum criteria for sustainable public procurement of food. It is uncertain whether regulating consumer information for seafood can deliver on biodiversity objectives.
Sustainable and traceable seafood	The initiative on substantiating Green Claims is positive, but it is unclear whether or not biodiversity will be among the criteria.

3 • CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

100%

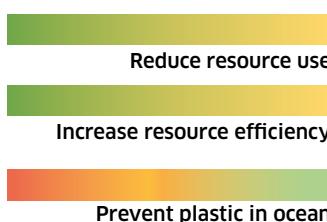
Progress on file 100%: the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Circular Economy Action Plan in February 2021. The European Commission has an overarching Plastics Strategy to tackle plastic pollution and marine litter, which includes the SUP Directive, the Plastic Bags Directive and a Delegated Regulation on Plastic Waste Shipments. The Commission is developing an initiative on microplastic pollution, which is to be released before the end of 2022.

Milestone text:

EU adopts a new Circular Economy Action Plan that includes measures to reduce absolute resource use, including plastic (1), increase resource efficiency (2), and to prevent leakage of plastics and microplastics in the sea (3)

Sub-target

Delivery scoring



Reflected in the final Circular Economy Action Plan text, but without clear targets and not specifying all materials to be covered. Final results will depend on the concrete legislative targets developed in response to the Plan.

European Commission developed an ambitious Plastics Strategy anchored in legislation. The roadmap text for the microplastic initiative focuses more on innovation than on prevention.

4a • CHEMICALS STRATEGY

100%

4b • ZERO POLLUTION ACTION PLAN

100%

Progress on Chemicals Strategy 100%: the Chemicals Strategy was fully endorsed by the Council in March 2021.

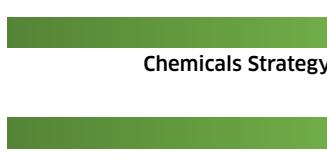
Zero-Pollution Action Plan for Air, Water and Soil 100%: the Plan was concluded in 2021, but implementation at Member State level is ongoing, as is development of legislation.

Milestone text:

EU adopts a Chemicals strategy for sustainability (1) and a Zero-pollution strategy (2) with clear goals to prevent exposure to harmful chemicals in air, soil and water (through the Water Quality Action Plan) to ensure a non-toxic environment for current and future generations

Sub-target

Delivery scoring



Framework adopted to reduce harmful chemicals in the habitat protection environment and safeguard a future non-toxic environment, including clear goals.

Zero-Pollution Action Plan: European Commission text for the Plan recaps existing tools and fails to address all sources of ocean pollution.

An ambitious Restrictions Roadmap was announced in April 2022, with a political commitment to use existing legislation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation) to ban the most harmful chemicals in a speeded-up process.

5 • OFFSHORE WIND STRATEGY

100%



Progress 100%: in December 2020, the EU published its Offshore Wind Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future. In response, the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) prepared an own-initiative report, which was approved in plenary in February 2022.

Milestone text:

EU adopts an Offshore Wind Strategy which fully takes into account the impacts on marine ecosystems of the development of offshore wind energy production plants

Sub-target

Delivery scoring



Offshore Wind Strategy text states that planning of offshore renewable energy is to be compatible with biodiversity protection, but only points to existing tools (Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Natura 2000 network, etc.). The ITRE report refers to an ecosystem-based approach to planning offshore wind parks in recital only.

6 • MFF & EMFAF

100%



Progress on file 100%: the EMFAF entered into force on 14 July 2021. On 27 January 2022, the European Commission adopted new Guidelines on State aid for climate, environmental protection and energy (CEEAG).

Milestone text:

EU allocates at least 21 billion EUR of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 to protect nature (1), with at least 50% of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund to restore the marine environment, collect data and control fisheries (2), and revises the State Aid guidelines for fisheries and aquaculture to prohibit granting of harmful subsidies (3)

Sub-target

Delivery scoring



No funds exclusively for nature protection are incorporated in the final MFF text.



15% of the EMFAF budget is given to data collection - this is the same level as the 2014 European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), with no budget ringfenced for environmental restoration or control.



Not included in legislation.

7 • ENERGY TAXATION DIRECTIVE



Progress on file 40%: Commission adopted proposal for revision of the Energy Taxation Directive in July 2021. This is a council-regulatory file so negotiations are with Council only. The ECON committee in the European Parliament will vote on an opinion on the Commission's proposal in June 2022, with plenary vote scheduled for September.

Milestone text:

EU removes fuel tax exemptions for fishing vessels and shipping under the revised Energy Taxation Directive

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Removes fuel tax exemptions	Commission proposal removes mandatory tax exemption for fishing vessels but taxation level still low and leaves option to exempt extra-EU (long distance) vessels from taxation.

8 • CBD – GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK



Progress on file 75%: COP 15 was postponed due to COVID-19 and is now scheduled for August 2022. Initially planned to take place in Kunming, the current COVID-19 situation in China makes further delay or a move another location likely.

Milestone text:

EU pushes for the adoption of a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity with protection (1) and restoration (2) targets for marine ecosystems globally

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Blinding protection targets	In March 2022, the CBD working group held another preliminary session to the COP. The EU continues to push for binding targets, but many countries remain firmly opposed to strong, binding language.
Blinding restoration targets	

9 • SUSTAINABLE SHIPPING AT THE IMO



Progress on file 75%: The Arctic heavy fuel oil ban was adopted in June 2021. There has been no progress on mandatory ship-speed reduction.

Milestone text:

EU pushes for the adoption of urgent short-term measures at the International Maritime Organization to ban heavy fuel oils in the Arctic (1) and reduce ship speed (2) to decrease GHG emissions, noise levels and whale strikes.

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Ban heavy fuel oils in Arctic	The Arctic heavy fuel oil ban will not enter into force until 2024. However, exemptions (for vessels with protected bunker tanks) and the potential for Arctic state waivers mean that it will not have a significant impact.
Mandatory ship-speed reduction	Civil society proposals to the IMO for an urgent and ambitious short-term measure to cut ships' GHG emissions did not progress, in part because of insufficient support from the EU.



10 • GLOBAL OCEAN TREATY ON BBNJ

100%



Progress on file 100%: In March 2022, the fourth session on developing an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the sustainable use of biological diversity of areas beyond biological jurisdiction (BBNJ) concluded without agreement among the parties. A fifth session is now planned for the 15th to 26th of August 2022.

Milestone text:

EU pushes for the adoption of an ambitious Global Ocean Treaty to protect marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction worldwide at the 4th session of the Intergovernmental Conference on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
EU pushes for ambitious text in treaty	The EU was part of a high ambition coalition, together with 13 other countries, including India, Australia, Canada and Britain, who endorsed the same strong goal and binding text for curbing biodiversity loss. The EU could not prevent the process from derailing.

11 • MORATORIUM ON DEEP-SEABED MINING

50%



Progress on file 50%: Once the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 process is concluded, next steps would be to implement a moratorium in Member State legislation. The 2021 ISA meeting did not take place.

Milestone text:

EU establishes a moratorium on deep seabed mining (1), stops financial support to research into deep seabed mining technology (2) and, with EU countries, pushes for the adoption of a global moratorium in the International Seabed Authority (3).

Sub-target	Delivery scoring
Moratorium on deep seabed mining	The 2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy implicitly calls for a moratorium on deep-sea mining, which is similarly repeated in the Blue Economy Strategy. These strong words have not resulted in any concrete action.
Stop support for research in DSM	Difficult to achieve, as any research into environmental effects can also have an element of technology research. In the 2021 Strategic Foresight Report, the European Commission announced plans to step-up deep-sea mining exploration.
Push for global moratorium	No initiative relating to a moratorium is on the draft agenda. It is expected that the EU will only push for a global moratorium once it has set its own moratorium.



Find the Blue Manifesto

The Roadmap to a Healthy Ocean in 2030 here:

<https://seas-at-risk.org/blue-manifesto>

More details on the assessment and the used methodology here:

<https://seas-at-risk.org/publications/blue-manifesto-assessment-2021/>

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