

High-level conference

# Oceans

the future of the blue planet

19 March 2019, 14:00-19:00 CET

Plenary Chamber, European Parliament, Brussels

#OceansEU



## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT THINK TANK – TOPICAL DIGEST

March 2019

*Oceans are not only a primary source of food, but are central to the carbon cycle, regulate the climate and produce most of the oxygen in the air we breathe. In recent years, ocean pollution has rightly received more attention. The 'blue economy', covering traditional sectors such as fisheries, extraction of oil and gas, maritime transport and coastal tourism, as well as new industries such as renewable ocean energy and blue biotechnology, has a great potential for economic growth and employment creation. The common fisheries policies and the integrated maritime policy, ensuring a coordinated approach to blue economy sectors, are key established EU policies that aim to enhance the sustainable development of the maritime economy. They are complemented with international commitments and recent policy initiatives such as the directive on single-use plastics to reduce marine litter. On the occasion of the high-level conference on oceans on 19 March 2019, the following publications of the EP Think Tank provide background information and analysis.*

### [Ocean governance and blue growth: Challenges, opportunities and policy responses](#)

*Briefing by Frederik Scholaert, European Parliamentary Research Service, March 2019*

Oceans cover more than two thirds of the earth and are a vital element of life on our planet. They are not only a primary source of food, but are central to the carbon cycle, regulate the climate and produce most of the oxygen in the air we breathe. Oceans play also an important socio-economic role. The 'blue economy', covering traditional sectors such as fisheries, extraction of oil and gas, maritime transport and coastal tourism, as well as new, fast-growing industries such as offshore wind and ocean energy, and blue biotechnology, show a great potential for further economic growth, employment creation and innovation.

### [Single-use plastics and fishing gear: Reducing marine litter](#)

*'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Didier Bourguignon, European Parliamentary Research Service, November 2018*

Most of the plastic in our oceans originates from land-based sources. On European beaches, plastics make up 80-85 % of marine litter, which is considered a major threat to marine and coastal biodiversity. Marine litter also costs the European Union economy an estimated €259 million to €695 million per year. In May 2018, the European Commission put forward a legislative proposal seeking to address the issue of marine litter from plastics.

### [EU action to combat marine litter](#)

*Study by Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, May 2017*

This report summarises four presentations by experts and discussions which took place at the workshop 'EU Action to Combat Marine Litter' held on 3rd May 2017 in the European Parliament in Brussels. The aim was to provide background information to the ENVI Committee's Members and contribute to their understanding of the need to tackle marine litter and the challenges involved.

### [Research for PECH Committee - Regional ocean governance in Europe: the role of fisheries](#)

*Study by the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, August 2017*

This study requested by the European Parliament (PECH Committee) examines regional ocean governance in the European regional seas in the context of fisheries. It assesses key regional organisations, examining the mechanisms by which they cooperate and coordinate their outcomes, within the context of EU policy.

## [European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2021-2027](#)

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Frederik Scholaert, European Parliamentary Research Service, November 2018  
As part of the next EU budget framework for the 2021-2027 period, the European Commission published its proposal for a regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) on 12 June 2018. The new fund will continue to support the EU common fisheries policy and the Union's maritime policy.

## [EU policies – Delivering for citizens: Fisheries](#)

Briefing by Irina Popescu, European Parliamentary Research Service, January 2019

The European Union has sole responsibility for the conservation of its marine fisheries resources, and manages them under the common fisheries policy (CFP). Launched in 1983 and reformed every ten years since then, the CFP has come a long way. The current framework, resulting from the 2013 CFP reform, is aimed at ensuring that EU fisheries are sustainable – environmentally, economically and socially.

### Further reading:

#### [Illegal, unreported and unregulated \(IUU\) fishing](#)

Infographic by Irina Popescu, European Parliamentary Research Service, February 2019

#### [Research for PECH Committee - Small scale fisheries and 'Blue Growth' in the EU](#)

Study by the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, April 2017

#### [The EU, a world leader in fighting climate change](#)

Briefing by Cornelia Klugman, European Parliamentary Research Service, May 2018

#### [EU policies – Delivering for citizens: Environmental protection](#)

Briefing by Didier Bourguignon, European Parliamentary Research Service, October 2018

#### [Ten issues to watch in 2019](#)

In-Depth Analysis by the European Parliamentary Research Service, January 2019

#### [Arctic continental shelf claims: Mapping interests in the circumpolar North](#)

Briefing by Naja Bentzen, European Parliamentary Research Service, January 2017

#### [Horizon Europe – Specific programme: Implementing the framework programme](#)

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Cemal Karakas, European Parliamentary Research Service, November 2018

#### [The first climate change strategy for shipping](#)

At a glance note by Marketa Pape, European Parliamentary Research Service, May 2018

#### [Port reception facilities for ship waste: Collecting waste from ships in ports](#)

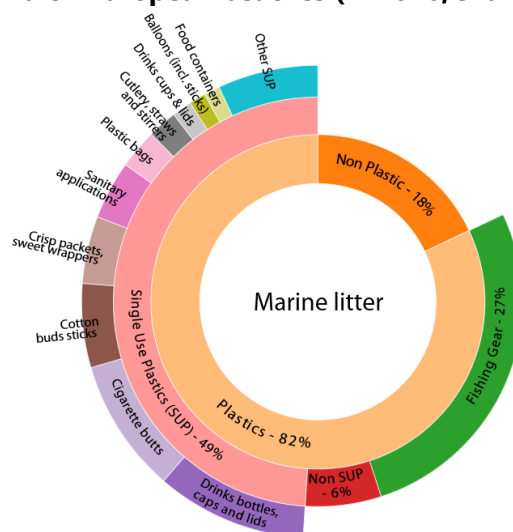
'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Marketa Pape, European Parliamentary Research Service, February 2019

#### [Sustainable tourism: The environmental dimension](#)

Briefing by Vivienne Halleux, European Parliamentary Research Service, March 2017

### More in the [Graphics Warehouse](#):

## Composition of marine litter found on European beaches (in 2016, share by item count)



Data source: [European Commission: SWD\(2018\) 254](#).

You can access this Topical Digest at

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/TD\\_HLConference\\_Oceans\\_Final.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/TD_HLConference_Oceans_Final.pdf) & <https://epthinktank.eu/high-level-conferences/>  
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