

**June 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 great potential for economic growth and employment creation. The common fisheries policy 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 by international commitments and recent policy initiatives, such as the directive on single-use plastics to reduce marine litter. On the occasion of the World Oceans Day on 8 June, the following publications of the European Parliamentary Research Service provide background information and analysis.

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

Briefing by Frederik Scholaert, 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 also play 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 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, 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. Council and Parliament reached agreement on the text in January 2019 and it is expected to be signed shortly.

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

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Frederik Scholaert, May 2019

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. Parliament adopted its first-reading position on the proposal on 4 April 2019.

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

Briefing by Irina Popescu, 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.

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Further reading:

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

Infographic by Irina Popescu, February 2019

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

Briefing by Cornelia Klugman, May 2018

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

Briefing by Didier Bourguignon, October 2018

[Ten issues to watch in 2019](#)

In-depth Analysis by Etienne Bassot, January 2019

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

Briefing by Naja Bentzen, January 2017

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

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Cemal Karakas, May 2019

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

'At a glance' note by Marketa Pape, May 2018

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

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Marketa Pape, April 2019

[Sustainable tourism: The environmental dimension](#)

Briefing by Vivienne Halleux, March 2017

[The African Union's blue strategy](#)

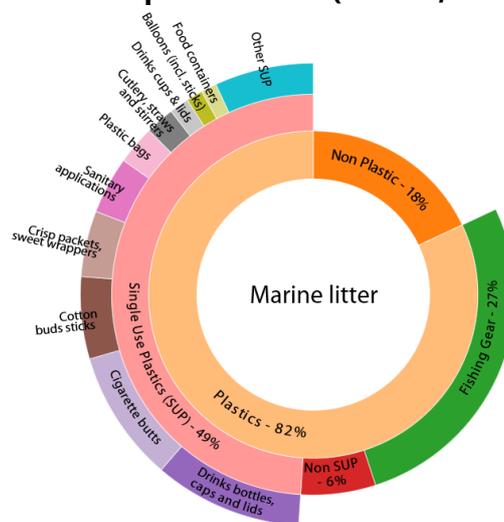
'At a glance' note by Eric Pichon, March 2019

[Piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Africa: EU and global impact](#)

In-depth Analysis by Eric Pichon, March 2019

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](#).

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