

OUR OCEAN, AN OCEAN FOR LIFE

The European Union will host the fourth high-level Our Ocean conference in Malta on 5 and 6 October 2017. Since 2014, Our Ocean conferences aim to inspire joint solutions and ambitious commitments for safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans. Our Ocean, an ocean for life follows on from the previous conferences and complements the EU's international ocean governance initiative, which sets out an agenda for the future of the oceans around the world, proposing 50 concrete actions.

Nearly 1000 participants are expected to attend, including heads of state and government; foreign, economy, environment and fisheries ministers; and other established and up-and-coming ocean leaders in government, business, finance, science and civil society. Young and cutting-edge innovators and entrepreneurs are to share the stage with well-known and dynamic global leaders in ocean conservation.

Time to act

The Our Ocean spirit is well established. Previous conferences have seen a tremendous wave of commitments and billions of euros pledged. Our Ocean 2017 will continue to focus on marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and climate-related impacts on the ocean, but this year we want to offer a distinctively European flavour by introducing the themes of blue economy and maritime security, both of which have been mainstreamed into EU policy-making and represent enormous opportunities for growth and development.

While maintaining its global reach, Our Ocean 2017 will highlight the particular importance of action in the Mediterranean Sea, and Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

Commitments will be sought not only from governments, but also from the industry, the research community and civil society, including philanthropies and NGOs. The European Union is calling in particular the most visionary corporate leaders to use their spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship, and commit to the protection and sustainable use of Our Ocean, and a greener value chain.

Creating a legacy

Delivering on commitments made at previous conferences is a test of legacy: tracking their progress will be a key part of the forthcoming conference. With a focus on high-level engagement, partnership and action, Our Ocean continues to complement and drive other international efforts, such as delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals under Agenda 2030. At the same time, the EU, as proud organiser of this year's edition, aims at engaging the public, especially the younger generation, in ocean advocacy. We launched a communication action to raise awareness and to call for action on marine litter – a growing and alarming phenomenon that we can all, individually and collectively, contribute to address.

As the Our Ocean conferences have demonstrated over the past years, the global community acknowledges the importance of one of the most precious resources. The challenges ahead need the joint efforts of the international community to be tackled. It is time for a new, sustainable vision along with strong and action-oriented commitments to restore the health of Our Ocean and move to seize the opportunities that lie in its waters, for the present and future generations.