

To Mr Costas Kadis
EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels

Cc: EU Commissioner Jozef Sikela and EU Commissioner Jessika Roswall
Cc: DG MARE, DG ENV, DG INTPA, DG CLIMA, EEAS

Brussels, 12th May 2025

RE: Call for Clear and Ambitious Financing Provisions under the ‘European Oceans Pact’

Dear Commissioner Kadis,

We are pleased to write on behalf of several of the world’s leading conservation and environmental organisations to express our strong support for the proposed ‘European Oceans Pact’. We recognise its potential to drive meaningful change in ocean conservation and governance, and call for the inclusion of clear and ambitious provisions for the financing required to support effective and lasting ocean conservation efforts.

Covering more than 70% of the planet’s surface, oceans support extraordinary biodiversity, regulate the global climate, and sustain the livelihoods of over a billion people. However, they are increasingly under threat from climate change, ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, pollution (including underwater noise pollution), overfishing, and unsustainable fishing practices, among other pressures. The interlinked global crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and threats to human and wildlife health are continuing to accelerate, posing existential threats to biodiversity and human well-being and undermining efforts to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF).

Maintaining and improving ecological integrity – ecosystem structure, function, and composition – is central to addressing all these crises, and the importance of ecological integrity is recognized in the KM-GBF and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement. It is therefore critical to focus conservation efforts to preserve and restore the integrity of key ecosystems, including the oceans, and the services they provide to protect both biodiversity and benefit the people who depend on them, who in turn should then support conservation.

Through the ‘European Oceans Pact’, the EU and its Member States can leverage their financial resources and political weight to champion global conservation efforts and sustainable practices. Under target 19 of the KM-GBF, the EU committed to “increasing total biodiversity related international financial resources from developed countries, including official development assistance”.

Given the high potential to contribute to economic growth, poverty alleviation, and environmental protection, the EU and its Member States should scale up blue economy investments in partner countries, also under the Global Gateway initiative. These should be targeted towards seascapes with

the most potential to simultaneously achieve climate, biodiversity, and development commitments, including for key coastal and marine seascapes under phase II of the NaturAfrica programme.

The Pact should also promote the effective allocation of EU and Member State financing—including support from development agencies—to key stakeholders, including civil society organisations, who are engaged in on-the-ground ocean conservation efforts. In this context, existing mechanisms, such as the Blue Action Fund, which are specifically designed to channel funding to local and regional conservation initiatives, can play important roles and should be leveraged and supported accordingly.

Finally, we urge the EU to further foster strategic partnerships with private sector actors, including philanthropic foundations. Aligning public and private funding streams will maximise the impact of available resources and accelerate progress toward shared ocean conservation goals.

We thank you in advance for considering our recommendations. We look forward to your response and to collaborating closely with you on a range of ocean-related priorities, as we can also contribute to fostering strategic partnerships. We'd also welcome the opportunity to provide further information and would be happy to arrange a meeting to discuss these important issues in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

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Wildlife Conservation Society European Union Office (WCS EU)



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