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EUSurvey

Revision of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive/the Ocean Act

Fields marked with * are mandatory.



Introduction

Activities in European seas and ocean continue to increase and **the demand for maritime space is rising**. Managing diverse uses and activities, such as marine renewable energy, maritime transport, fishing, aquaculture, tourism, in a fair and sustainable way and ensuring biodiversity conservation and restoration, requires an integrated and ecosystem-based approach to planning and management. Maritime spatial planning is a process by which the relevant authorities analyse and plan the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve economic, ecological and social objectives.

The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (Directive 2014/89/EU) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/89/oj/eng>) ('MSP Directive'), adopted in 2014, serves as a tool to manage coherently these uses, based on an ecosystem-based approach, ensuring that human activities are conducted in an efficient, safe and sustainable way.

On 5 June 2025, the European Commission adopted the European Ocean Pact (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0281>). A cornerstone initiative of the Ocean Pact is the **European Ocean Act**, which will build on the **revision of the MSP Directive** and seeks to improve the coherence and effective implementation of maritime governance in the EU, in synergy with the parallel revision of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), for which a separate public consultation was carried out between 15 December 2025 and 9 March 2026.

The adoption of a legislative proposal for an Ocean Act is planned in 2026. It will serve several objectives:

- Support the **six strategic priorities** of the European Ocean Pact.
- Reference **relevant Ocean-related EU targets** making them identifiable **under one roof** [see for example the Annex in the European Ocean Pact Communication (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0281>)]
- **Modernise maritime spatial planning** through strengthened national cross-sectoral coordination and a strengthened sea-basin approach.
- Create a **legal basis for the EU Ocean Observation governance** and coordinated planning of observation campaigns.
- **Align with the ongoing revision of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive** to improve policy coherence and better integrate ecological considerations in planning
- Support coherent and **effective implementation of EU Ocean Governance, streamline and reduce reporting**, considering notably the existing efforts under the proposal for a Regulation to speed up environmental assessment (COM/2025/984 final) and the Industrial Accelerator Act.

The reply to the questions should take between 15 to 35 minutes. At the end of the questionnaire, you have the possibility to upload documents in word or pdf format up to 1 MB.

About you

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Part I: General questions (all respondents)

1. How familiar are you with maritime spatial planning?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Slightly familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Very familiar
- ☒ Extremely familiar
- ☐ Don't know

2. Were you aware that the EU has a law to plan maritime space called the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD)?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☒ Yes, and I am familiar with its objectives and requirements
- ☐ Yes, but I only have a general understanding of it
- ☐ I have heard of it, but don't know what it does
- ☐ No, I was not aware of it
- ☐ Not sure/cannot recall

3. The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, adopted by the EU in 2014, requires Member States to develop and implement maritime spatial plans for their marine waters by 2021. In your opinion, what impact have these plans had on:

	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very negative	Don't know
a. The contribution to the growth of maritime economies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very negative	Don't know
b. The sustainable use of marine resources	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
c. The planning of existing and future uses of the marine waters	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. The protection of the marine environment	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
e. the contribution to increasing knowledge in maritime areas	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Contribution to achieving Good Environmental Status under the MSFD	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
g. Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

If other, please specify:

250 character(s) maximum

0 out of 250 characters used.

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. Stronger EU rules are necessary to help use the space more efficiently	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. The protection of marine ecosystem should be a priority in maritime planning decisions	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Governments should be required to trace and share ocean data used to improve decision-making on EU national, regional and local levels.	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. The EU should ensure that ocean policies support both environmental protection and economic competitiveness.	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
e. A new EU Ocean governance framework should be created to better plan and utilize maritime space	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Ocean planning should systematically address climate change impacts on coasts, seas and oceans	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. How important is cooperation between neighbouring countries for managing shared sea areas?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☒ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not important
- ☐ Don't know

6. Do you wish to respond to the second part of the questionnaire, which focuses on more detailed aspects of the revision of the current MSPD and development of the Ocean Act?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☒ Yes (if ticked, the respondent goes to 'PART II')
- ☐ No (if ticked, the respondent directly goes to 'Conclusion' or "PART III" if the respondent is an SME)

Part II: Specific questions: Ocean Act development and MSP Directive revision (Expert respondents)

1. Objectives and priorities of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD) Revision

Current objectives of the MSP Directive are:

- Reducing conflicts and creating synergies between different activities
- Encouraging investment through predictability, transparency and legal certainty
- Increasing cross-border cooperation between EU countries to develop renewable energy, allocate shipping lanes, lay pipelines and submarine cables, etc.
- Protecting the environment by assigning protected areas, calculating impacts on ecosystems and identifying opportunities for multiple uses of space

7. The MSPD, as currently implemented, is effective in achieving its objectives.

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☒ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

8. Which objectives should the revision of the MSPD prioritise? (choose up to 4)

Between 1 and 4 selections

- ☐ Increase cross-sectoral coordination at national administration level
- ☒ Making maritime spatial planning ecosystem based meaning that maritime activities need to operate within the ecological boundaries of marine ecosystems
- ☒ Making climate smart, meaning that climate mitigation and adaptation are integrated into planning
- ☒ Integration of EU's Biodiversity objectives and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- ☐ Better co-existence/multi-use
- ☐ Better monitoring of how maritime spatial planning contributes to achieving environmental, social and economic objectives
- ☐ Improved stakeholder cooperation and engagement
- ☒ Better inclusion of coastal, island communities and outermost regions
- ☐ Better organised sea-basin approach to maritime spatial planning
- ☐ Digital data-sharing and centralised monitoring data
- ☐ Strengthening land-sea interactions and the source-to-sea approach
- ☐ Support the integration of maritime security and defence in maritime spatial planning
- ☐ Boosting sustainable competitiveness
- ☐ Strengthening EU diplomacy and international rules-based governance
- ☐ Advancing ocean research, knowledge, skills and innovation
- ☐ Effective conflict prevention between different activities
- ☐ Other

If other, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

SWAN wishes to see the Ocean Act strengthen and enforce existing Directives, namely legally binding objectives and timebound targets for protection measures including 30% MPA coverage, with 10% under strict protection, and achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) under the MSFD.

285 out of 500 characters used.

9. Maritime spatial plans support the achievement of good environmental status, of EU seas and ocean, as defined under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☒ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

10. To what extent do you believe that referencing the relevant EU Ocean-related targets (for example in the European Ocean Pact Communication Annex (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0281>)) in the Ocean Act will facilitate their coherent and effective implementation?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☒ Extremely effective
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Neither effective nor ineffective
- ☐ Ineffective
- ☐ Extremely ineffective
- ☐ Don't know

Comments:

500 character(s) maximum

Referencing these targets within the Act is vital. Targets must be enshrined into enforceable European law. The Act must also ensure consistent application of the ecosystem-based approach through MSP and other sectoral plans.

225 out of 500 characters used.

2. Blue economy activities and multi-use considerations

11. To what extent do you think that multi-use of maritime space (for example combining energy, transport and nature protection) should be encouraged where possible?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☐ Strongly in favour
- ☐ In favour
- ☐ Neutral
- ☒ Against
- ☐ Strongly against
- ☐ Don't know

12. To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

For planning maritime activities, cumulative environmental impacts of human activities should be considered.

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☒ Always
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Don't know

13. To what extent do you agree that the revised MSP Directive should require security considerations to be included in maritime spatial planning?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree

- ☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
☒ Don't know

3. Stakeholder engagement and public participation

14. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. Minimum stakeholder engagement requirements should be established	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Clear guidance on stakeholder engagement should be established	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Public access to ocean information should be improved to increase transparency	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. The competent authority should document public consultations and provide feedback on how comments were addressed	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Stronger participation in ocean planning decisions from local communities and authorities should be encouraged	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Scientific data and ocean observation

15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. Member States should be required to share the data used for maritime spatial planning to improve decision-making	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Centralised data across EU Member States would help improve national and regional maritime spatial planning	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. The introduction of ocean observation governance system should help to avoid fragmented ocean observation across and within Member States	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

16. What is your assessment of the current European ocean observation system? (multiple choice is allowed)

- ☐ Is well coordinated, operational and effective
☐ Efficient IT tools and mechanisms for coordinating in-situ ocean campaign plans are broadly in place and functioning
☐ Would significantly benefit from improved governance at national level
☐ Would significantly benefit from improved governance at EU level
☐ Would significantly benefit from improved governance at regional level (sea basin)
☐ Would significantly benefit from improved governance at EU level to contribute to the international level
☐ Would significantly benefit from the development of efficient IT tools and mechanisms for better coordinating in-situ ocean campaign plans
☒ Other

If other, please specify

500 character(s) maximum

Unknown

7 out of 500 characters used.

17. Should a European Forum on Ocean Observation be established to enhance governance (presumably composed of Member States and the European Commission), it should (multiple choice is allowed):

- ☒ Provide advice to the European Commission
- ☒ Provide advice to Member States
- ☐ Be able to take decision with an impact at EU level (e.g. using common standards, tools for collaboration)
- ☐ Be able to take decision with an impact on Member States (e.g. adapting national strategies following Forum recommendations)

Conclusion: Additional comments (all respondents)

22. If you have any further comments on the MSPD revision and the development of the Ocean Act, please provide them below.

500 character(s) maximum

0 out of 500 characters used.

Please upload a document if you wish to share a more extensive contribution or any background materials that will help us to understand your answers.

 Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

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