



EUROPEAN UNION



# EU MISSIONS

RESTORE OUR OCEAN AND WATERS



## 4th EU Blue Parks Community Workshop

### 'Strict protection in European seas: how it helps people and nature'

Place: **European Commission, Charlemagne building (CHAR), Brussels. Room: JENK**

Format: In-person; streaming available

*The EU Blue Parks Community under the **EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030"** brings together EU Member States national, regional and local authorities, European marine networks, businesses, and research and innovation researchers and their projects to collaborate on marine protection and restoration in EU sea-basins.*

*With **107 member** organisations in January 2025, the community aims to help identify and address challenges, share tools, solutions, and good practices for marine protected areas (MPAs), contributing to the protection of 30% and strict protection of 10% of EU sea areas by 2030.*

***The 4th European Blue Parks Community workshop, themed 'Strict protection in European seas: how it helps people and nature'**, will explore the transition to 10% strict protection, emphasizing evidence-based benefits for biodiversity and ecosystems, fisheries and coastal communities, offering actionable insights into how strict protection can strengthen conservation while supporting well-being and sustainable livelihoods.*

*Regularly highlighted by the community members, strict protection at sea appears as a crucial opportunity to meet the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the EU Biodiversity 2030 and the Mission Ocean and Waters targets, with a reinforced need for sharing of efficient tools, strategies, and governance models.*

#### **Why attend?**

- *Learn from expert presentations and a roundtable discussion with MPA managers and other experts on good practices for marine protection and get updated on tools/services for MPA design, implementation and monitoring across different sea basins.*
- *Engage in interactive discussions with the community on challenges and means to meet the European and international marine protection and restoration targets.*
- *Exchange on opportunities to enhance cooperation.*

**4th EU-Blue Parks Community Workshop**  
**'Strict protection in European seas: how it helps people and nature'**

6 March 2025, 14:30 – 18:30 CET

13:45 *Welcome coffee*

**14:30 Introduction and opening statements**

*Elisabetta Balzi, DG RTD*  
*Andrea Vettori, DG ENV*

**14:45 Session 1 – Strict protection state-of-play and case-studies**

Moderators: Roberta Zobbi (DG MARE) and Eduardo Carqueijeiro (DG RTD)

- **State of play with EU Biodiversity strategy target for strict protection in marine areas**  
*Vedran Nikolic, DG-ENV D.3*
- **Establishing Europe's largest MPA network**  
*Rui Martins, Blue Azores, Azores Regional Government (PT)*
- **Expanding and strengthening marine protection in Ireland**  
*Oliver Ó Cadhla, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (IE)*

**Q&A**

- **Ensuring sufficient protection and restoration in the Baltic Sea's marine environment**  
*Jannica Haldin, EU project PROTECT BALTIC, HELCOM*
- **Highlighting international best practices for strict protection**  
*Emilie Riclet, SML, EU LIFE project Marha (FR)*
- **Ecological benefits, resilience to climatic nexus**  
*Emma V. Sheehan, Lyme Bay MPA (UK)*

**Q&A**

- **Boosting local economies through strict protection**  
*Mark John Costello, Nord University (NO), EU project MPA-Europe*
- **Identification of conservation areas and conflicts through participatory mapping**  
*Vera Helene Hausner, UiT Arctic University of Norway, EU project BioProtect*
- **Engaging stakeholders for successful implementation**  
*Margarita Stancheva, Center for Coastal and Marine Studies (CCMS), EU project Blue Connect*

**Q&A**

16:45 *Coffee break*

**17:15 Session 2 Roundtable panel – Towards strict marine protection: operational insights and collaborative actions**

Moderator: Alberto Zocchi (CINEA)

- *Carole Martinez, MedPAN*
- *Emanuel Gonçalves, Oceano Azul Foundation (PT)*
- *Emma V. Sheehan, Lyme Bay MPA (UK)*
- *Francesco de Franco, Torre Guaceto Marine Protected Area (IT)*
- *Nicolas Fournier, Oceana*
- *Salvatore Livreri Console, Isole Egadi Marine Protected Area (IT)*
- *Steven Degraer, EU project BLUE4ALL*
- *Sylvain Blouet, Côte Agathoise MPA (FR)*

**18.20 Closing remarks**

*Magdalena Andreea Strachinescu Olteanu, DG MARE*

**18:30 End**