

Feedback from European Marine Board Secretariat to the European Commission's [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU \(28 October 2020\)](#)

We agree that the ocean is an integral part of the EU Green Deal and a green recovery in Europe, not only in terms of the blue economy, but also considering that the ocean is a key factor in addressing climate change, feeding the population, and searching for novel compounds with medical properties etc. We therefore support a communication which highlights this integral role of the ocean.

We also support coordinated action at European level as the ocean affects us all. The current coordinated European-level action on many marine and maritime issues, chiefly encompassed within the Integrated Maritime Policy, is an example to other sectors and regions globally, and the Commission should take this opportunity to build on these solid foundations and further demonstrate European leadership. This is also an opportunity to expand coordination between marine and maritime sectors and other relevant sectors within the scope of the EU Green Deal, e.g. energy for climate change and the zero-carbon goal, and agriculture for food provision and pollution. This will not only avoid compartmentalization between different marine sectors, as is proposed in the roadmap and which we strongly support, but also between different sectors. In this way, approaches which solve challenges in one sector but create them in another can be avoided. This will help move towards a more holistic approach to a green recovery, which will ultimately benefit everyone.

The Green Deal and the new Sustainable Blue Economy roadmap calls for a truly sustainable transition, to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. However, that cannot be achieved if we "[offshore our environmental damage to nations outside of the EU](#)". In this case, this holds for the import of non-sustainably caught seafood products. The Green Deal and Sustainable Blue Economy will not be achieved if we do not hold our import nations to the same standards as we hold ourselves. More generally, the price of our achievement of a sustainable blue economy in Europe should not be borne by other parts of the world. That is a true holistic approach.

This holistic approach also means that humans need to be considered as a part of the wider ecosystem. They are both impacting on, and being impacted by natural environments, including the ocean, and hence the health of humans is inextricably linked with the health of the ocean. A truly sustainable blue economy means that it is sustainable for the economy, the marine environment and for humans. In addition, the roadmap highlights an aim to increase citizen engagement. By clearly including people into wider discussions on achieving a sustainable blue economy citizens will have a clearer understanding of its importance and impetus for engagement.

As outlined in the roadmap, ocean observations are needed to support research and monitoring, without which we cannot achieve a sustainable blue economy. You cannot manage what you do not know. This system should be coordinated at least at European level and will require significant

investment from nations. It will also require ongoing coordination and data sharing between different observing communities, including national monitoring, research and industry, e.g. through the EOOS ([European Ocean Observing System](#)) initiative. This will help to achieve an efficient and fit-for-purpose ocean observing system in Europe. This system will also need to be future-proof, to take advantage of the rapid changes and technological developments highlighted in the roadmap.

To ensure that the knowledge gaps and rapid changes in technology, big data and digitalization highlighted in the roadmap can be addressed, professionals with appropriate skills are required. The achievement of a sustainable blue economy should be underpinned by strategic investment in and coordination of training programmes at all levels and within all relevant sectors.