But the tide is turning. Citizens around the world have come together to demand action on the climate crisis. In response, the European Commission has committed to ambitious climate and biodiversity strategies that will shift investment and legislation towards a climate-resilient and ecologically diverse future. The ocean must be an integral part of these strategies.

In past decades, we have witnessed a succession of strategies and action plans for safeguarding the ocean. While these plans were needed, they have never been fully implemented. In 2008, European governments committed to have “ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive” by 2020. They are nowhere near achieving this. On any given day, a dolphin in the ocean has to navigate warming and more acidic seas, while also dodging trawling nets, offshore drilling, noisy and heavily polluting ships, invasive species, diseases from farmed fish, dead zones, construction, tourism, and swathes of pollutant-laden plastics and microplastics.

We have a rescue plan for Europe for the next ten years. The Blue Manifesto: Roadmap to a Healthy Ocean in 2030 is a unified call to action by civil society organisations from all over Europe working for healthy seas and ocean.

We need thriving marine and coastal ecosystems to support a climate-resilient future. In past decades, we have seen a succession of strategies and action plans for safeguarding the ocean. While these plans were needed, they have never been fully implemented. In 2008, European governments committed to have “ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive” by 2020. They are nowhere near achieving this. On any given day, a dolphin in the ocean has to navigate warming and more acidic seas, while also dodging trawling nets, offshore drilling, noisy and heavily polluting ships, invasive species, diseases from farmed fish, dead zones, construction, tourism, and swathes of pollutant-laden plastics and microplastics.

The ocean acts as a vital carbon sink, regulates weather patterns and provides oxygen. We depend on it – even if we live inland.
The European Union (EU) has adopted an Offshore Wind Energy Strategy which fully takes into account the impacts on marine ecosystems of the development of offshore wind energy production plants. The strategy also includes measures to address the gap in needs to be therefore, still put in place to achieve clean and healthy habitats and fish stock recovery that fully takes into account the pollution strategy with clear policies, as well as the work of the International Maritime Organization to ban Heavy Fuel Oils in the Arctic and reduce ship speed to decrease GHG emissions, noise levels and whale strikes.

EU countries take measures to ensure that the EU waters do not accumulate harmful pollutants that could affect human health and the marine environment. EU countries designate and protect Marine Protected Areas under the 2013 Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and implement the Paris Agreement’s objective of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. EU countries adopt the necessary measures to ensure that EU waters do not accumulate harmful pollutants that could affect human health and the marine environment.

EU countries adopt a fundamental Biodiversity Strategy 2030 to protect nature, with at least 50% of habitats and fish stock recovery. By 2030, we will have shifted to low impact fisheries, and fishing gear to maximise the productivity part of our seas and protects sensitive marine species and habitats; shifting from the wreckage of habitats; shifting from the work together and abandon the narrow view of fish as a resource with clear advice and stop fishing faster than fish can reproduce. By 2030, we will have shifted to low impact fisheries, and fishing gear to maximise the productivity part of our seas and protects sensitive marine species and habitats; shifting from the wreckage of habitats; shifting from the work together and abandon the narrow view of fish as a resource with clear advice and stop fishing faster than fish can reproduce.