

# **SUPPORTING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES TO DELIVER OCEAN SUSTAINABILITY**

## **A CHARTER FOR BLUE EDUCATION IN EUROPE**

*June 29, 2022 – Lisboa*



**#EUBLUESCHOOLS**

## Context

To respond to current and forthcoming climate and biodiversity crises, societies must engage in **transformative changes** defined as a “*fundamental, system-wide reorganization across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values*”<sup>1</sup>. Life-long and community-wide approaches to **education for sustainable development, global challenges and citizenship** is critical to instigate and deliver the required transformative changes. It will require specific attention in the years to come so all citizens acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that can support a (pro-) active (individual and collective) role delivering these changes.

To respond to the many challenges faced by marine ecosystems and the ocean in Europe, several **blue education initiatives and networks** have been launched in recent years in Europe at different (regional, river basin, national, sea basins, European) scales.

These initiatives share common ambition and philosophy to engage pupils in ocean knowledge and conservation and to inspire youth to integrate the ocean in their education, careers and lives.

## *A charter for blue education in Europe: what for?*

It is now time to **establish closer links** between these networks and initiatives, as well as with other European green, climate and sustainability education networks addressing ocean understanding, conservation and the need for collective action toward a healthy ocean. Beyond sharing experiences and best practices, as well as combining efforts and resources for a more impactful outcome, this will: (1) pave the way for a **forward-looking and dynamic EU-wide community** of education networks and initiatives addressing directly or indirectly ocean sustainability; (2) enhance the **societal and political visibility** of education for the sustainable development of the ocean in the marine, climate, environmental and education policy agendas, as well as the agenda of the overarching European Green Deal.

This collective effort, in line with the European Commission’s Council Recommendation COM/2022/11 on learning for environmental sustainability<sup>2</sup> will support the EU4Ocean coalition<sup>3</sup> and its EU Network of Blue Schools<sup>4</sup>. It will contribute to the blue education and ocean literacy efforts carried out within the frame of the United Nations (UN) Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development<sup>5</sup> including the IOC-UNESCO initiative on Blue education Curricula<sup>6</sup>. In the medium to long term, it will **foster the transformative change** required for delivering a truly sustainable ocean in Europe and beyond.

1 - IPBES. 2019. Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. S. Díaz, J. Settele, E. S. Brondízio E.S., H. T. Ngo, M. Guèze, J. Agard, A. Arneth, P. Balvanera, K. A. Brauman, S. H. M. Butchart, K. M. A. Chan, L. A. Garibaldi, K. Ichii, J. Liu, S. M. Subramanian, G. F. Midgley, P. Miloslavich, Z. Molnár, D. Obura, A. Pfaff, S. Polasky, A. Purvis, J. Razzaque, B. Reyers, R. Roy Chowdhury, Y. J. Shin, I. J. Visseren-Hamakers, K. J. Willis, and C. N. Zayas (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 56 pages.

2 - Which sets as an objective the scaling up of good practices and networking on sustainability and biodiversity among stakeholders.

3 - <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/4484>

4 - <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1485>

5 - <https://www.oceandecade.org/>

6 - <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380544>

## Our goals

1. **Equip learners** with knowledge on the role of the ocean in its wider natural, social and cultural context, as well as with skills and tools that can support critical thinking informed decisions and empowerment.
2. **Promote empathy** for the ocean amongst learners, to increase awareness of the role of the ocean in society, culture and personal lives, and connection to other ecosystems.
3. **Recognise the links** between Blue, Climate and Green education, and where possible measure the impact on how they connect students to nature, promote sustainable behaviours and develop eco-citizenship.
4. **Co-develop the best methods** for engaging learners and optimizing their education in both formal and informal settings using appropriate pedagogies and tools adapted to regional specificities and cultures.
5. **Organise ongoing training** and development for education professionals and youth leaders, as well as for trainers themselves, in the principles and practices of blue education.
6. **Identify and encourage** international and regional **cooperation** in formal and informal education that address ocean sustainability and the conservation of marine ecosystems
7. **Exchange, develop, codify and disseminate** of good practices and research in blue education to help increase the effectiveness and efficiency aoc practices and programmes.
8. **Increase the visibility** of blue education with decision makers and the media to strengthen political, institutional and financial supports from the local to the European levels.
9. By engaging with Departments of Education, Members of the Teaching Community and Government Representatives, **promote the inclusion of blue education** in the national curricula and support the development of a sustainable model for blue education at all levels.
10. **Contribute to the evaluation** of strategies and policies that support blue education at all levels in respect of the key principles promoted by the present Charter, and seek opportunities to influence/adapt these strategies and policies as appropriate.

## Signing organisations

The persons and organisations that contributed to the co-development of this charter welcome the EU4Ocean's initial effort to bring together like-minded organisations to achieve the above goals. By signing this charter, they agree to: (1) **implement the commitments** set by the Charter in their own education projects and activities addressing ocean sustainability; (2) respond to future invitations to discuss potential **partnerships** that can strengthen blue education in Europe and beyond; (3) support the **wider application of the Charter's principles** by other organisations and initiatives, inviting them in particular to join, sign and implement the charter.



The **European Marine Science Educators Association**, supporting the EU Network of Blue Schools, represented by Nicola Bridge, president



The **BlueGeneration** Project, represented by Silja Teege, coordinator



The **Office Français pour la Biodiversité**/French biodiversity agency, represented by Cyrille BARNERIAS, director for European and International Relations



The **Direção-Geral de Política do Mar (DGPM) of the Ministério da Economia e do Mar, Portugal** - supporting the **Escola Azul network in Portugal**, represented by Raquel Costa, coordinator



The **Swedish Institute for the Marine Environment**, represented by Kajsa Tönnesson, director



The **Irish Ocean Literacy Network**, represented by Maria Vittoria Maria, Co-secretariat



The **Oceano Azul Foundation**, represented by Rita Alexandra Duarte Borges, Blue Generation Project Manager



The **Centre for Sea and Society, University of Gothenburg**, represented by Lena Gipperth, coordinator



**Ciência Viva**, represented by Ana Noronha, Executive Director



**ACTeon**, coordinator of the EU4Ocean coalition and of the BlueSMed project, represented by Pierre Strosser, head