



# Blue Citizen Compass

## Concept Definition

A Blue Citizen can be anyone. By nature, we are all Blue Citizens — not because we choose to be, but because we are inherently connected to the ocean as citizens of the Blue Planet. Therefore, everyone has the natural right to identify themselves as a Blue Citizen.

Consequently, we aim for a political and legal understanding of Blue Citizenship — a guideline for stewardship and rights.

A Blue Citizen is aware of the ocean's vital role, its interconnection with life on land, and the shared responsibility we hold across borders, ecosystems, and communities. We are dedicated to understanding the relationship between the ocean, society, and all living organisms, and we do not regard the ocean as a mere resource.

A Blue Citizen is educated about the ocean and actively shares knowledge—acting as an ambassador and raising awareness in society. We appreciate and respect the ocean as our life-sustaining engine, driven by a passion for protecting it and ensuring a reciprocal relationship with nature.

We stand up for the ocean, give voice to its needs, and take action—through community involvement, political engagement, or personal commitments. A Blue Citizen seeks justice and equality across borders, advocates for balance in giving and taking, and contributes to collective efforts to restore and sustain the ocean.

As Blue Citizens we acknowledge the fact that it is ultimately not the ocean that needs governance but our behavior towards it.

In line with Challenge 10 from the UN Ocean Decade, as Blue Citizens we believe in a healthy human-ocean-relationship that just needs to be restored.

Even though naturally rooted in our very existence on an Ocean Planet, Blue Citizenship is a conscious decision to live in respect, awareness, and responsibility—based on the belief that the ocean is not separate from us, but part of who we are.



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#Youth4Ocean  
#EUBlueSchools

The project *Young Citizens' Council for the Ocean* is implemented by Nina Dietz and Jan Feuring with the support of the EU4Ocean Coalition funded by the European Commission.

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# Principles

- I. **Inclusivity and Universal Contribution:** We are all Blue Citizens – no matter where we live, whether by the sea or far from it. We believe everyone can contribute to saving the ocean.
- II. **Balance and Reciprocity:** We believe in peace and harmony between humans and the ocean. We respect the ocean: if we take, we must also give.
- III. **Ocean Literacy:** Educating people about the ocean's importance is essential.
- IV. **Emphasis on nature's inherent value in sustainability:** We must protect and care for the ocean, rather than own or exploit it.
- V. **Ocean Advocacy:** Let's stand up and raise our voices for the ocean.
- VI. **Youth Participation:** Young people must be heard, taken seriously, and included in political processes.
- VII. **Think globally, act locally:** We start our common endeavor at a European scale, aiming for local implementation and striving for a global vision.
- VIII. **Solidarity in transition:** Our council takes a realistic and sustainable political stance. We consider not only environmental, but also economic impacts. We show empathy toward sectors that need to adapt and strive for a just transition. We call for fair burden-sharing and support for countries with fewer financial resources. Global North states must support those in the Global South.
- IX. **Integrity in Communication:** We commit to honesty and realism. We avoid exaggeration and oversimplification. We seek to understand in order to help—and we choose optimism.
- X. **Universal Collaboration and Expertise:** As Blue Citizens, we value multiple perspectives, build networks, and promote knowledge-sharing. We aim to collaborate with experts to find common solutions. We recognize and respect the expertise of indigenous people and local communities and strive for collaboration and participation in decision-making.
- XI. **Behavioral Change:** We are committed to sustainable consumption, awareness, and the ongoing reconsideration of our habits.





# Policy Recommendations

## Strengthening Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

We call for the regulation of MPAs by a European institutionalized control team.

We propose a reward system for states that comply with MPA protection regulations.

We recommend the establishment of a European patrolling team to monitor MPAs, supported by satellite and AI surveillance systems.

We recommend placing at least 12 % of European waters under strict protection status.

## Combatting Harmful Ocean Exploitation

We demand a moratorium on deep-sea mining.

We advocate for a complete phase-out of bottom trawling practices and call for an immediate ban on bottom trawling within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as an essential first step.

We urge countries to conduct thorough, independent research on the true costs of bottom trawling and deep-sea mining, challenging prevailing narratives promoted by certain governments and corporations.

We urge the EU to respond decisively to governments initiating deep-sea mining—through public criticism, sanctions, or trade tariffs.

## Ending Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported (IUU) Fishing

We demand robust control mechanisms to prohibit IUU fishing.

We propose integrating satellite and AI technologies into enforcement strategies.

## Sustainable Fisheries Management

We call for the revision of current fishing quotas, ensuring alignment with ecological limits and scientific data.

## Supporting Marine Restoration and Innovation

We demand EU funding for national rewilding projects such as artificial reefs, kelp farms, and mangrove restoration.





# Policy Recommendations

## Integrating Ocean into Climate Commitments

We urge European countries to uphold the Paris Agreement and link its implementation with ocean-related measures.

We demand the inclusion of ocean-related Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The integration of coastal and marine ecosystems as nature-based solutions in Europe's NDCs is critical.

## Reducing Plastic and Promoting Circular Economy

We urge the EU to incentivize alternatives to plastic and call on the European Commission to cooperate only with sustainable firms.

We propose a reward system for companies that invest in research on plastic alternatives, implement circular economy practices, and reduce plastic production and consumption.

Companies must also be required to internalize the true cost of plastic production and use.

## Enhancing Ocean-Linked Reporting and Standards

We call on the EU to build on existing frameworks such as ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) and GPPS (Global Plastic Pollution Scorecard), integrating them into EU ocean initiatives.

ESG reports must align with ocean-related EU goals and help reduce ocean-bound plastic.

We also support the development of a taxonomy for sustainable marine activities, covering marine ecosystem protection and responsible marine resource use.

## Empowering Civil Society and Transparency

We encourage civil society actors to contribute to ocean monitoring and reporting.

The EU should incentivize citizen participation, making gaps in regulation more visible and increasing public engagement with EU ocean action.





# Policy Recommendations

## Advancing Ocean Education and Awareness

We demand the inclusion of Ocean Literacy and Blue Citizenship Education in school curricula across Europe.

We propose the establishment of annual Blue Days across Europe, inspired by Romania's Green Week initiative. There is no Green without Blue.

We support using arts and films to reach diverse audiences and raise awareness about ocean challenges and the Ocean–Climate Nexus.

## Acting on Urgency and Science

We demand clearly communicated deadlines for action in emergency zones, especially those identified by coastal communities, Indigenous Peoples, scientists, and other ocean experts.

## High Seas Treaty and Legal Recognition

We urge all European nations and global partners to quickly ratify the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Agreement).

Even if BBNJ is not universally signed, we insist that ratifying parties move forward and do not allow a decade of negotiations to go to waste.

We call for the eventual recognition of the High Seas as a legal person. As a step towards making the ocean a space of rights, legal personhood for cetaceans should be granted as a symbolically important interim stage.

## Upholding the Precautionary Principle

The EU must place the Precautionary Principle at the core of all ocean-related decision-making.

In this context, we also call for the establishment of rules to prevent harmful tourism and ocean noise pollution.





# Institutional Changes

Young people across Europe bring valuable insights, innovation, dedication, and a sense of urgency to ocean protection — yet they are still largely absent from institutional decision-making. Currently, there is no formal consultation, no speaking rights, and no structural representation for youth in ocean-related EU policy processes.

We believe that greater youth participation can enhance the quality, legitimacy, and future-readiness of ocean governance.

To support this, we propose a clear, collaborative five-step framework that invites policymakers to gradually and meaningfully integrate young voices into existing structures.

## Step 1: Recognition

We propose the formal recognition of a Young Citizens' Council for the Ocean as a legitimate consultative body by the European Commission. This council would operate at the European level, bringing together young Europeans committed to protecting the ocean and supporting EU ocean objectives.

## Step 2: Information Access

We ask to be informed throughout the decision-making process. We would like access to relevant protocols and working documents. We are ready to sign non-disclosure agreements where necessary, and propose jointly agreeing on a reasonable lead time that enables us to provide constructive input before decisions are made public.





# Institutional Changes

## Step 3: Public Consultation

We propose to be publicly consulted on ocean-related matters prior to decisions being finalized.

We see this as an opportunity to contribute to better outcomes by bringing in the perspective of future generations.

## Step 4: Conditional Right to Delay (Limited Veto Mechanism)

In rare and clearly defined cases, we propose the right to delay the implementation of a proposed policy — specifically, when that policy contradicts the EU's own national or international commitments.

This mechanism is not intended to disrupt but to serve as a safeguard for coherence and integrity. The Young Citizens' Council for the Ocean would act as a guaranteeing body, helping to ensure that Europe adheres to its own stated principles and agreements.

Where appropriate, it could be discussed, whether such a delay mechanism could remain confidential to avoid unnecessary public pressure or politicization, while still enabling internal course correction.

## Step 5: Institutionalized Participation

In the long term, we hope to be recognized as a legislative institution with the following rights:

- A vote on ocean-related EU decision-making
- The right of initiative to propose relevant policy ideas





# Institutional Changes

## Structure and Development of the Young Citizens' Council for the Ocean

We are committed to building a council that is representative, well-informed, and capable of engaging meaningfully with democratic institutions. To ensure this, we propose a two-tier structure:

### 1. Core Council

- Composed of approximately 15 members, aged 16–27
- Holds the institutional rights outlined in the five-step proposal
- Responsible for representing youth in official EU ocean-related processes

### 2. General Council

- Open to young people aged 14–30
- Functions as a space for education, engagement, and empowerment
- Members participate in Ocean Literacy Workshops and elect the Core Council at regular intervals (to be discussed and agreed upon)
- Only individuals aged 16 to 27 may be elected to the Core Council

To ensure a broad and inclusive perspective, participation in both councils is open to all young Europeans, including those from countries outside the European Union — such as potential EU candidate countries or landlocked states with a stake in ocean-related matters.

We believe this pan-European approach enriches the conversation and strengthens solidarity across the continent.

Should the European Commission consider it necessary, the Council is open to discussing a defined minimum share of EU citizens within the Core Council to ensure adequate representation in line with the Council's formal relationship to EU institutions.





*This First Draft of  
the Blue Citizen  
Compass was  
created by the*

## Young Citizens' Council for the Ocean

*June, 2025*

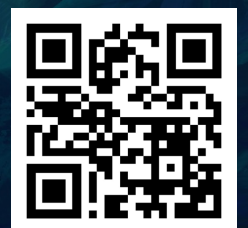
Roko Šarić, Croatia, 18  
Ula Fajon, Slovenia, 17  
Valentina Kramer, Italy, 16  
David Critan, Spain, 17  
Naomi Eijkenaar, Netherlands, 17  
Anna Theissen, Germany, 16  
Antonia Spielvogel, Germany, 17  
Paul Nilca, Iceland/Romania, 19  
Veronika Honak, Ukraine/Cyprus, 17  
Lauritz Gut, Germany, 17  
Janna Meinshausen, Switzerland, 19  
Mia Bulat, Serbia, 18  
Julischka MacNeil, Germany, 18  
Daria Moti, Romania, 16  
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# Blue Citizen Compass

While our compass is inclusive by principle and open to Blue Citizens the world over, we seek to build on regional structures to advance meaningful change in (young) Blue Citizenship participation and to lay the foundation for a hopeful narrative of European ocean identity. In this sense, the EU can be seen as a pragmatic starting point with pioneering potential. Since there is only one ocean—our shared responsibility and a common stake for all humanity—the Blue Citizenship endeavor is inherently cosmopolitan in spirit.



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# Acknowledgement

The Blue Citizen Compass is the result of a truly collaborative journey. It would not have taken shape without the thoughtful guidance, open exchange, and encouragement we received from policy experts, scientists, and cultural practitioners. Their contributions—through workshops and conversations both online/offline and during our time by the Baltic Sea—have enriched our thinking and supported the Council in developing its voice.

This Compass builds on the Blue Citizen Curricula, developed by the founders and initiators of the Young Citizens' Council for the Ocean. The Curricula are grounded in three interwoven pillars:

Knowledge (Think) — to understand the ocean's complexity, and importance

Culture (Feel) — to connect emotionally and creatively,

Governance (Act) — to take responsibility and shape inclusive, just ocean policies.

As we share this first edition of the Compass, we warmly invite policymakers, institutions, and all interested stakeholders to engage in dialogue with the Council. We look forward to constructive exchange, reflection, and collaboration as we work together toward a thriving future for our ocean.

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