

# The European Ocean Coalition (EU4OCEAN)



WEBSITE



LINKEDIN

#EU4Ocean #Youth4Ocean #EUBlueSchools #OceanLiteracy

The EU4Ocean unites organisations, projects, and individuals to promote ocean literacy and sustainable ocean management. Its core initiative, the annual **Challenge of the Year**, drives key actions like the Call for Collective Action, #MakeEUBlue Awards, and youth-led campaigns.

Supported by the European Commission (DG MARE), EU4Ocean fosters innovation through funding and expert support, encouraging collaboration across Europe. It combines EU-wide efforts with regional actions for the Arctic, Atlantic, Baltic, Black, and Mediterranean Seas, as well as the global ocean.

**EU4Ocean**  
Coalition consists of  
**3 communities**

**Network of European  
Blue Schools**  
for educators and schools



**EU4Ocean Platform**  
for organisations and individuals  
engaged in ocean literacy



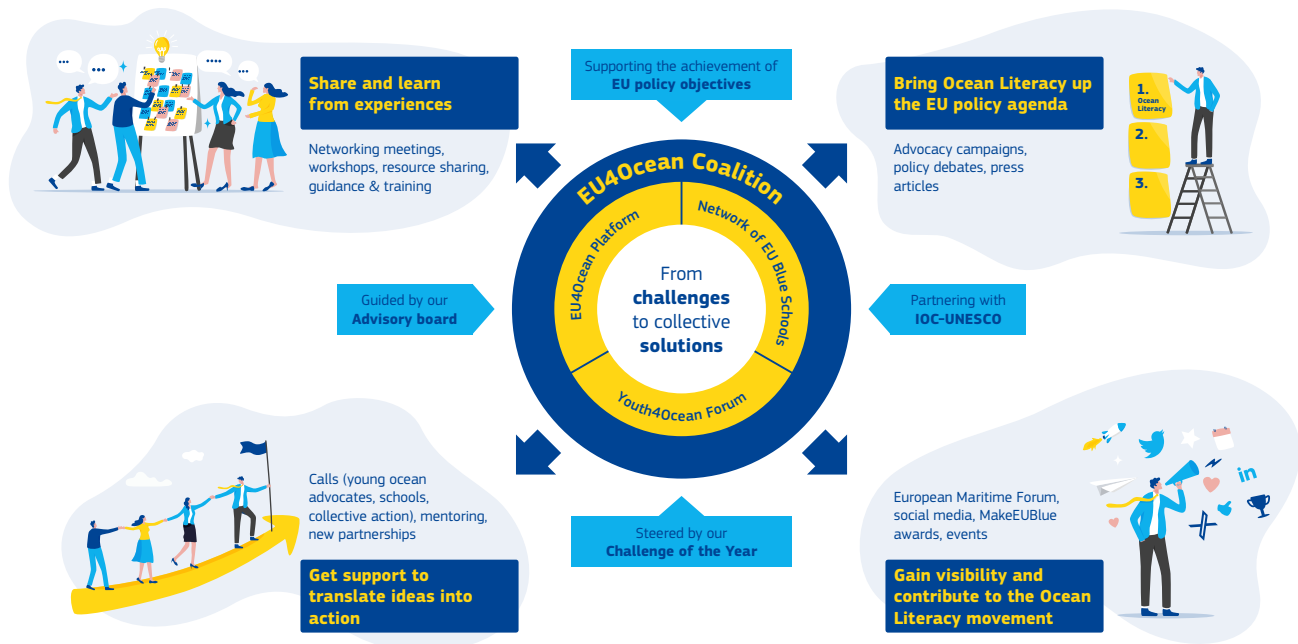
**Youth4Ocean Forum**  
for young advocates  
aged 16–30

#EU4Ocean  
#Youth4Ocean  
#EUBlueSchools



# Strengthening Ocean literacy in Europe

## What does the EU4Ocean Coalition offer?



### WHAT IS A EUROPEAN BLUE SCHOOL?

A **European Blue School** brings the ocean into the classroom. It's a school, which, through project-based learning, engages students with marine- and maritime-related topics to create awareness and a feeling of responsibility for our ocean.

### WHAT IS A YOUNG OCEAN ADVOCATE?

EU Young Ocean Advocates are members of the [Youth4Ocean Forum](#), who have been recognised by the Directorate General of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs (DG MARE) of the European Commission for their outstanding and innovative work that contributes to improving the health of the world ocean and the well-being of coastal communities.

### WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF EU4OCEAN?

The project aims to enhance ocean literacy through four key outcomes. First, it seeks to expand and strengthen the **EU4Ocean coalition's three communities—platform, youth, and schools**—by increasing membership diversity and establishing conditions for long-term sustainability in strategy, governance, and financing. Second, it supports **collective ocean literacy initiatives** at various levels (EU, sea basin, national, and local), particularly those that engage members across all three communities and secure funding from EU and other sources.

Additionally, the project focuses on **building capacity for developing, implementing, and evaluating ocean literacy initiatives**, addressing a gap from the coalition's first phase. Lastly, it aims to **raise the visibility and political profile of ocean literacy**, securing broader policy and financial support across key sectors, including marine, climate, education, and research.

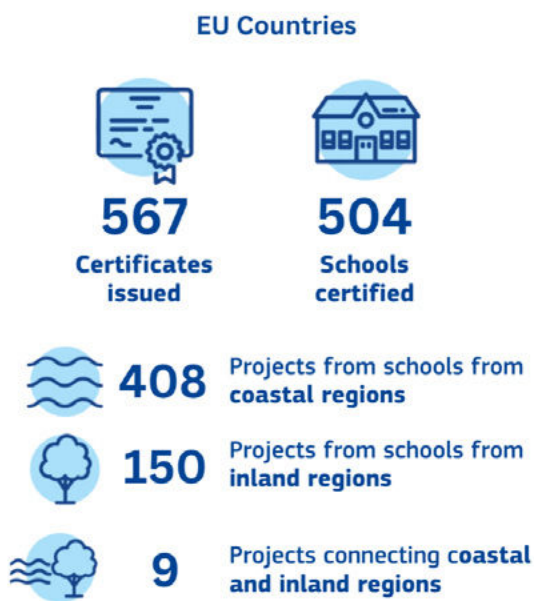


## WHAT IS THE GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS OF EU4OCEAN ?

While the main focus of the project and of the support to the EU4Ocean coalition is the EU, it also contributes to strengthening ocean literacy beyond EU borders, in particular: (i) for non-EU countries sharing regional seas with EU Member States (e.g. from Northern Africa and the Middle East for the Mediterranean); (ii) via the involvement of the EU4Ocean coalition in international projects and initiatives, in particular the UN Decade for Ocean Science for Sustainable Development benefiting inter alia from IOC-UNESCO support<sup>6</sup>; (iii) via synergies established with other recognised (regional) ocean literacy coalitions like the ones established in the Atlantic, Canada, the US.

## FACTS & FIGURES

As of January 2025, there are over 560 Blue Schools in Europe: [Network of Blue Schools | Little waves make a big ocean!](#)



## SUCCESS STORIES & CASE STUDIES



The Thalassophile Project is an Erasmus+ partnership of organisations in accessible pedagogy and marine conservation and research, funded for two years, starting October 2022. It aims to make an introduction to marine science and conservation accessible to all European citizens, especially those who are hearing or visually impaired. The project coordinator is Interchange Non-Profit GUG and our partners are the Turin Institute for the Deaf.

Eliminating the gap in available 'blue' educational material tailored to a D/deaf and/or blind audience will produce more citizens ready and able to change their behaviours for the better. The project seeks to improve the accessibility of marine education; to encourage all adults to make changes to sustain and improve marine environments and to network organisations and experts in the fields of accessible pedagogy and marine education, so that they understand and can comply with each other's needs.

The project team has created a framework to guide others in **making their marine science and conservation material more accessible to adult learners**. They are also developing four original Thalassophile Project episodes in line with this framework, and have begun curating existing accessible material, and making it available to scientific outreach, adult education and conservation educators, via an online database. Finally, they will also be consolidating this learning into four factsheets, and disseminating to cross-sector stakeholders.

In 2024, the project provided the EU4Ocean Coalition with great insight in matters of inclusion and accessibility of ocean literacy, including by contributing to several high-level panel discussions at the European Ocean Days' Ocean Literacy in Action event, as well as the Ocean Literacy Dialogues in collaboration with IOC-UNESCO during the UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona.

More information and access to materials on the [Thalassophile Project's website](#).



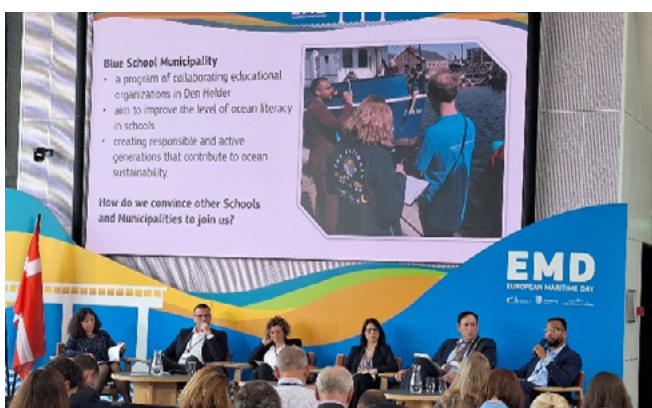
## Marine Life Hand Signals



## Blue School Municipality of Den Helder, The Netherlands

The Blue School Municipality concept is a program of collaborating schools in Den Helder, the Netherlands. The aim is to **improve the level of ocean literacy in schools**, creating responsible and active generations that contribute to ocean sustainability. The Blue School Municipality encourages school communities to **understand the ocean's impact on us and our impact on the ocean**, engaging the schools in the municipality in exploring ocean issues through structured and interdisciplinary strategies that strive for social impact, both with the participation from different partners and through the involvement of local communities.

The collaborating educational organizations in Den Helder have set the goal of implementing the Blue School concept as a **continuous learning path from nursery school to secondary and possibly higher education too**. This provides the opportunity for teachers and secondary school students to develop projects for primary education. The Blue School Municipality now includes **five EU Blue Schools**: Jac P Thijsseschool, Scholen aan Zee, VONK, Villa Kakelbont and Algemene Basisschool Comenius. Each school has their own blue school projects. These schools are leading the way in making their students aware of the importance of our seas and oceans. They exhibit how schools can successfully collaborate with the local maritime sector and how teachers can engage their students actively on different ocean projects despite the curriculum restraints. And for a maritime municipality like Den Helder, the commitment of the blue schools is also valuable in terms of employment and social cohesion.



The Jac P Thijsseschool was the first school ever that was granted a certificate of an EU Blue School for their project 'the Fisheries', connecting children and the local fishermen via different activities. The school organized together with the municipality and Scholen aan Zee the first **Conference on EU Blue Schools** in 2023. At the conference, participants learned to champion the concept of project education and open schooling – encouraging the development of local partnerships. The conference offered different **Seatalks** and workshops by ocean experts, also useful resources and best practices on marine education for in the classroom. After three years, the municipality of Den Helder decided to set up the Blue School Municipality to support its schools and to inspire other municipalities.

**Download photos:** [REVOLVE - Blue School Municipality of Den Helder, The Netherlands - FC2021](#)



## SCIENCE IS WONDERFUL

Science is Wonderful! is an initiative of European Union's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), the reference programme for doctoral education and postdoctoral training. This allows excellent young researchers across the EU and abroad to study a topic in depth that they care about.

Science is Wonderful! bridges this research with schools across the European Union. It celebrates the value and impact of EU-funded research by giving primary and secondary school students the chance to interact with leading researchers and innovators, learn more about their work in engaging formats and ask questions about scientific careers. Since its inception in 2015, Science is Wonderful! has organised an annual science fair that interactively showcases research projects and innovations through presentations, hands-on experiments, games and quizzes.

The next science fair will take place on **13 and 14 March 2025** at the Africa Museum in Tervuren, Belgium.

Whether you are young or young at heart, this is your chance to celebrate science in the most exciting way possible.

Meet over 100 leading researchers from around the globe and explore their groundbreaking work through interactive experiments, hands-on activities, science shows, games and quizzes.

Last year, blue school students and EU4Ocean advocates joined the Science is Wonderful science fair.

**Download photos from last year:** [Science is Wonderful!](#)

**Learn more about the Science Fair taking place in March 2025:**

[Science is Wonderful! - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#)

## EXPERTS



### Pierre Strosser

**Pierre Strosser** is an environmental economist with more than 20 years of experience in research and consultancy supporting ecological and climate transitions in Europe. He contributes today to initiatives like the EU Ocean Coalition ([EU4Ocean](#)), promoting ocean literacy across Europe, [Towards IPOS](#), enhancing science-policy interfaces and [BlueLightS](#), integrating marine sustainability into education systems. Pierre holds a Ph.D. in economics applied to water resources (Wageningen, the Netherlands), complemented by agriculture and environmental engineering degrees (Agro Paris and ENGREF, France).



### Olga Mashkina

**Dr. Olga Mashkina** is a highly accomplished environmental economist with extensive expertise in water and marine policies and management in Europe. She holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Economics (2003) and has pursued advanced studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. After having worked in the USA and Finland, Olga has joined ACTeon Environment (France) in 2014, where she has been a senior consultant, leading projects that bridge science, policy, and stakeholder engagement to raise awareness on marine issues and sustainable blue economy. Over the last 10 years she has been actively involved in the ocean literacy, coordinating ResponSEable project (2015-2019), and since 2019 she has been coordinating the EU4Ocean coalition.





## Molly Wingate

**Molly Wingate** is a political scientist specialised in marine policy and citizen engagement processes. She works for [ACTeon](#) on European projects such as [BlueLightS](#) and [EU4Ocean](#), which aim to bolster water literacy within the realms of public knowledge, practices and education systems.

Her role currently includes strategising on and coordinating an advocacy campaign, community of practice management and developing international recommendations for increasing the visibility of aquatic environments in the European education system.

## EU4OCEAN IN THE MEDIA

[Blue Schools, scuole Isola d'Elba nella rete europea](#) – Il Messagero

[La Comisión Europea premia un programa de AZTI por fomentar la sostenibilidad](#) – La Voz de Galicia

[El CORI de Cartagena será el representante de Escuelas Azules en la Región de Murcia](#) – Europa Press

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