

## **Statement by President António Costa at the Ocean Pact side event at the 2025 UN Ocean Conference**

Less than three months ago, the European Council adopted very ambitious conclusions on oceans. For the first time, the 27 heads of state or government have adopted a strategic approach to this asset, which is itself of strategic importance. A holistic approach. For protection, security and economic sustainability.

And now, the European Union is delivering.

First, I would like to thank the Commission President, dear Ursula, and Commissioner Costas Kadis for proposing the European Ocean Pact. It will deliver better environmental protection, strengthen our competitiveness in blue economy sectors, empower coastal communities and increase maritime security and defence. All at the same time.

Illustrating that, for the European Union, the health of the oceans is not just critical to a sustainable future. It is also critical for a secure and competitive future. Which indeed needs a comprehensive and strategic approach and governance.

Second, the European Union is also delivering on the High Seas Treaty. We played a decisive role in its conclusion. And now, thanks to the vital contribution we have made, it will soon enter into force. By the end of the year, we hope.

Over the last two weeks, seven EU member states and the European Union itself moved ahead with ratification. Joining Spain and France, and numerous other partners around the world. Sending a signal to everyone for increased global action and ambition. And championing international cooperation on the Ocean.

Third, for Europe, the Ocean is now a scientific mission. To harness huge opportunities, foster innovation, boost competitiveness and achieve economic resilience. I welcome the Commission's announcement of the Ocean Observation Initiative. And France's announcement of its 'Mission Neptune'. Others have given priority to the Moon or Mars. But, as you said this morning, Mr President [Macron], we can actually put Neptune before Mars. Europe is making the Ocean its mission, taking a science-based approach.

The European Union has the will and the conditions to become a global scientific hub for ocean knowledge, for climate action, and for digital maritime security. This is why a moratorium on deep-sea mining is essential.

This is why we must foster such a science-based approach at global level based on multilateral engagement with public and private sectors.

For the European Union, it is clear: the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss demands quick decisions and even more global engagement.

The decline in the oceans' health and the risks involved make our commitments urgent and multilateralism more important than ever.

We sense the urgency. We will stand for unity. We will protect the Ocean as our common good. For better global governance. For the future of our planet.