

Africa-Europe Foundation announces at COP27 a first cross-continental platform of its kind on Ocean Governance and Blue Economy

17 November 2022, Sharm El Sheikh – The Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) is launching a flagship initiative and cross-continental platform on Ocean Governance and Blue Economy, a critical domain for global climate action and geo-economic strategic empowerment.

The new initiative will be led by AEF with the support of the European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) and in partnership with the African Union Commission Directorate for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment.



AEF Executive Director Paul Walton at COP27 with Yoshioka Tatsuya, Founder and Director of the Peace Boat Ecoship Project and Nathalia Lawen, Ocean and Climate Ambassador from Seychelles.

The announcement was made by the Africa-Europe Foundation Executive Director Paul Walton at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), taking place on the African continent, in Egypt.

“‘Ocean and blue economy’ represents a strategic domain of international cooperation which has been largely neglected but is critical to accelerating global climate and biodiversity action, together with economic and social development,” stated **Director Walton** at COP27. “Maximising the impact of partnerships will be key to reinforce cooperation, as well as opening up space to more effectively connect blue economy changemakers and policymakers”.

During the inception phase from November 2022, AEF will be focused on establishing a first Africa-Europe Strategy Group on Ocean Governance and Blue Economy, bringing together experts and leaders from diverse organisation settings including civil society, business and policymaking from across Africa and Europe, with a central role for youth voice, agency and leadership.

The initiative was welcomed at COP27 by **H.E. Josefa Sacko, the African Union’s Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment**, who underlined the AU’s commitment to “deepen dialogue on ocean governance and increase efforts to protect ocean environment, sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, and to conserve biodiversity”. From the **European Union, the Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries H.E Virginijus Sinkevičius** highlighted on the back of the AU-EU Summit that “this new Strategy Group can promote closer

cooperation with Africa on ocean governance, building on and complementing the work already ongoing. It will increase the level of understanding between the two continents and expand the sharing of knowledge and capacity building.”

The launch at COP27 takes place ahead of the AU-EU Commission-to-Commission meeting in Brussels, a first milestone in reinforcing the political centrality of Ocean Governance and Blue Economy as part of a strengthened Africa-Europe partnership.

ABOUT THE AFRICA-EUROPE FOUNDATION

The Africa-Europe Foundation is co-founded by Friends of Europe and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, in partnership with the African Climate Foundation and the ONE Campaign. The purpose of the Africa-Europe Foundation is to strengthen Africa-Europe relations by facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue, catalysing partnerships and unlocking new opportunities.

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