



## **2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event**

*Reduce ocean noise and save our ocean*

29th of June 2022, 11.30h-12.30h, NGO Base Camp, Lisboa Marina

Organized by: OceanCare, Coalition Clean Baltic and BUND,  
Co-Sponsored by Germany and Switzerland

### **Background on the event**

Ocean health is deteriorating, caused largely by a wide range of (transboundary) pollutants. One of the most prominent forms of transboundary pollution is underwater noise generated by human activities. Noise travels far and wide underwater and its impacts may be registered far from its point of origin. Noise emissions, - both ‘non-impulsive’, which is typically a constant drone predominantly generated from shipping, and ‘impulsive’ generated by hydrocarbon exploration activities, as well as other industrial and military activities - can cause negative effects on marine wildlife, from large whales to small krill. Yet, reducing noise emissions at source means preventing the introduction of this pollutant into the ocean and is also linked to other environmental benefits, such as greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction. This side event presented and discussed such multi-environmental benefits of noise prevention and mitigation measures from shipping as well as by the oil and gas sector and gave specific context to different concepts for a protective status of sea areas.

### **Key Issues discussed**

- Sources of underwater noise.
- Impacts of underwater noise on marine species.
- Differences between impulsive and continuous noise. The main focus of this side-event was on noise from shipping, i.e., continuous noise.
- Operational measures to reduce noise such as slow steaming, quiet areas and re-routing were presented, including recent developments in the Mediterranean.

## **Key recommendations for action**

- What we need are measures that reduce noise levels in the ocean immediately.
- Noise is one of the “nicer” problems because once it is switched off, it is gone, and does not linger like other pollutants.
- Acknowledgment that we know enough to act!
- Regulated speed reductions locally, in the long run as an international standard.
- Need for re-routing in specific areas with noise sensitive species.

## **Voluntary Commitments**

The intended objective of the side event was to a) raise the issue of anthropogenic underwater noise pollution from two specific sources; b) identify and discuss multi-environmental benefits of noise prevention and mitigation measures from shipping as well as by the oil & gas sector and c) give specific context to different concepts for a protective status of sea areas. These objectives were met, and there was a general commitment to continue the work on integrating underwater noise reduction measures as APMs under the application for the PSSA status for the [Cetacean Migration Corridor](#) (CMC) in the Mediterranean Sea. There was also general commitment to keep an open dialogue between the shipping industry, IMO and NGOs, and to continue ongoing work with underwater noise under the [HELCOM BSAP](#) and [Baltic Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise](#).