

Ocean Action Panel 1

Conserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems including deep-sea ecosystems

Monday, 09 June 2025, 10:00-13:00

Mr. Atanas Kostadinov, Deputy Minister of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria

**Your Excellences,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my privilege and great honour to be part of this important panel discussion dedicated to the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of the marine and coastal ecosystems.

People have always been dependent on seas and ocean. Marine environment is unique home to a lot of species and provides us with food and resources. However, the marine ecosystems are under extreme pressure due to different human activities like unsustainable fishing practices, land and marine pollution, expansive coastal development and imbalanced resource exploitation. They are also affected by accelerating climate change and dynamic geopolitical situation. It is up to us to prevent degradation and biodiversity loss and to restore and conserve effectively the ecosystems in seas and ocean.

Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems are vital for the human well-being and social stability and their sustainable maintaining depends on our common efforts and urgent actions towards integrated and balanced sustainable development.

Bulgaria is a sea-boarded country and for us conservation and sustainable use of the sea and marine resources is defined as a key pillar in several national strategic documents in order to ensure a healthy and environmentally friendly economic growth of the Black sea region.

For example 35 measures have been developed in National Priority Framework for Action 2014-2030 aiming to improve the conservation status of marine and coastal habitats and species. The protected marine Natura 2000 zones

have been extended – there are 37 protected areas along the Black sea coast where significant species and their habitats are protected.

Some amendments in the Bulgarian legislation introduce stricter regulations for the beach protection. Bans on construction, dune fencing and landscape changes have also been introduced, thus promoting sustainable tourism. Encouraging the use of science-based methods and active collaboration with academia, Bulgaria adopted a Methodology representing a modern integrated approach to coastal dune mapping.

Despite of the positive results achieved we continue to strive towards sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities. To determine the impact of fishing activities on marine ecosystems, an annual scientific study is carried out to assess the catch, incidental catch, discarded and landed quantities of fish and other aquatic organisms.

Although the efforts made at national level, the challenges we face go beyond the capacity to act of any single actor, they require a need to strengthen the international partnerships towards sustainable ocean ecosystems. We recognise the potential of multilateralism, of the existing and ongoing international processes, conventions, frameworks and agreements like the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, INC on plastic pollution, the BBNJ Agreement and others.

We firmly believe that dialogues between parties, coordination and collaboration at all levels will enhance scaled-up actions, multilateral policy framework and mobilisation of different types of resources to tackle this crisis. The engagement of all stakeholders – governments, intergovernmental and financial institutions, NGOs and private sectors – is essential to secure a sustainable future for our seas and ocean.

Thank you for your kind attention.