

Ocean Action Panel 6

Advancing sustainable ocean-based economies, sustainable maritime transport and coastal community resilience leaving no one behind

Statement by Estonia

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Estonia is a country inextricably linked to the sea. Our history, culture, and economy are woven into the fabric of the Baltic Sea coastlines. Our coast is home to vibrant communities whose daily lives are deeply intertwined with the sea. Therefore, it is vitally important for us that the marine environment remains healthy and provides sustainable livelihoods for future generations.

Regarding sustainable ocean-based economies, in Estonia, we are committed to developing a blue economy that balances economic growth with marine environmental protection. This means investing in innovation in the marine sector, be it smart solutions in seafood production, offshore renewable energy, or biotechnology that responsibly utilizes marine resources.

Sustainable maritime transport is another crucial pillar. Estonia's location on the Baltic Sea makes us an important transit country. We understand that maritime transport is the backbone of global trade, but its environmental impact cannot be ignored, therefore we are welcome International Maritime Organizations climate strategy and developed measures. We are actively working to reduce ship emissions, promote the use of alternative fuels, and advance digital solutions that make shipping more efficient and environmentally friendly. For example, we are establishing marine retrofit Centre – Estonian Marine Greentech and Retrofit HUB, this centre focused on modernization of ships and green technologies. This also includes investments in green port infrastructure and smart logistics systems. Our aim is to be an example in the development of cleaner and more sustainable maritime transport for example smart ports and green corridors on our main routes.

However, we must acknowledge that our concerns are not limited to controlled and regulated maritime transport. We are also deeply concerned about the shadow fleet, which often operates outside the framework of international standards and sanctions. These ships, which often sail under unknown flags, are often outdated, poorly maintained, and pose a serious threat to the marine environment – as well as a growing risk to subsea infrastructure and communication cables.

Estonia is a small country, but we are ambitious. We believe that developing sustainable ocean-based economies, sustainable maritime transport, and resilient coastal communities is possible and necessary. This requires international cooperation, innovation, and commitment. By working together, we can ensure that our sea remains a vibrant resource, and our coastal communities can continue to flourish towards a prosperous and sustainable future.

I would like to thank all the organisers and participants today for contributing to the better future. I wish you all the best and success in today's discussions!

I thank you for your kind attention!

