Fighting the climate crisis requires climate-smart fishing in Europe

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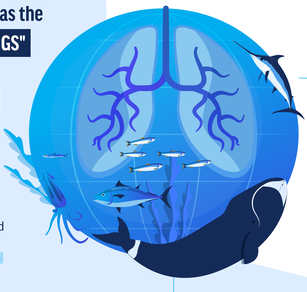
The ocean acts as the **PLANET'S "LUNGS"** and a massive **CARBON SINK**



BLUE CARBON ECOSYSTEMS

Seagrass meadows, kelp forests, tidal marshes, and seabed sediments **store significant amounts of CO_2**

FISH

Contribute to the **global carbon cycle** by moving carbon from the surface to deeper waters

TO HELP ADDRESS AND ADAPT TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS, THE EU MUST MOVE TOWARDS CARBON- NEUTRAL AND LOW-IMPACT FISHING

The EU fishing industry **CONTRIBUTES TO CLIMATE CHANGE** via:

6 M. TONS OF CO_2 PER YEAR DUE TO FUEL BURNING

1 DIRECT CO_2 EMISSIONS

Most EU fleets are **fossil fuel dependent and inefficient,** and not resilient to shocks in energy prices.

Certain fishing methods, such as **bottom trawling,** consume more fuel than others

2 REMOVAL OF FISH BIOMASS

Overfishing in the EU has led to many **fish populations** being **below sustainable levels**, likely disturbing their role in the ecosystem and carbon cycle

3 DISTURBANCE TO VULNERABLE BLUE CARBON HABITATS

High-impact bottom fishing methods can **disturb sensitive habitats**, releasing carbon back into the water.

This released carbon can then be converted to CO_2, potentially **increasing ocean acidification** and reducing the ocean's capacity to absorb atmospheric CO_2

CO_2 STORAGE CAPACITY OF THE OCEAN DUE TO OVERFISHING

CO_2 RELEASE FROM BLUE CARBON HABITATS DUE TO DAMAGING PRACTICES

CLIMATE-SMART fisheries management requires:

CUTTING FOSSIL FUEL EMISSIONS

FUEL SAVINGS

50%

can be achieved by optimising fishing vessel structures, gears, and routes

100%

from switching to renewable energy fuels & propulsion

The EU's energy transition initiative of its fisheries must transform the sector to one of low-impact

Prioritise moving away from the most **fuel-intensive and high impact fishing** - such as bottom trawling - towards:

Fuel efficient practices

Selective, low-impact gears

Green energy sources

REBUILDING AND MAINTAINING FISH BIOMASS

Follow **scientific advice** and end overfishing

Adopt an **ecosystem-based approach** to fisheries management

Allocate fishing opportunities to prioritise **low-impact, less fuel-intensive fleets**

This approach has **multiple benefits:**

1. Protects the role of fish in the carbon cycle
2. More fish abundance reduces fuel & operational costs
3. Decreases fleets' fuel footprint per kg of seafood

SAFEGUARDING BLUE CARBON HABITATS

Protecting blue carbon habitats from physical disturbance could help the ocean's capacity to store excess atmospheric carbon.

This can be done by:

Better **habitat mapping**

Disturbance sensitivity analysis of different habitats

Climate-smart **maritime spatial planning**

THE TIME FOR CLIMATE-SMART FISHERIES IS NOW

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