



An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications



DRAFT PROG

Coastal Zone Monitoring, Protection & Restoration with Informed Citizen Participation

Europe House, 5 Balfe St, Dublin, DO2 E7K4

9am–3pm, August 28, 2026, followed by fieldtrip

DAY 1

9:15–9:30am: Registration

9:30am: Welcome *Peter Power, Head of the European Commission Representation in Ireland and Karin Dubsy, Coastwatch Coordinator.*

9:40am Session 1 Panel: Adaptation to Climate change and Nature Restoration on top of daily tasks and challenges?

The facilitator introduces the state of coastal nature and waters, projection with climate change and urgency to act. Panelists set out how it could/does happen with examples and wins for people and nature. Questions from the floor.

11:00am: Coffee

11:20am Keynote day 1: Environmental law Compliance Assurance with Informed Citizen Participation. *Prof. Uta Wehn, IHE Delft and lead in the more4nature Horizon Project*

11:40am Session 2: Public Participation: Monitoring & Reporting

Sharing best practices, challenges & resolving issues

Monitoring & Reporting for the MSFD *Dr Siorcha Ni Longphuirt (DCEE)*

Focus 1: Marine litter *Coastwatch, Marian Paiu, Mare Nostrum NGO*

Focus 2: Transboundary collaboration in the coastal zone on biodiversity

Ceuta – Morocco Jose Gracia y Calvo, CW Europe España and NI?

12:45am–1:30pm: Lunch

1:30pm Session 3: Preventing Damage, Management, Enforcement, and Restoration

2 parallel groups with examples of best practice and challenges, tease out recommendations

Group 1: Public Alerts to Sewage and other pollution, with best case reaction scenarios

Group 2: Protecting/managing/restoring seagrass as biodiverse Blue Carbon habitat

2:30pm: Coffee & Fruit – Rooms brought back to plenary

2.40pm: Feedback from groups with key session outcomes

3:00pm: Official Close & Launch of Coastwatch Autumn Shore Survey 2026

DAY 2 Fieldtrips & EC Address for local stakeholders, authorities, delegates from abroad

After the Dublin conference we travel to County Wexford and explore Waterford Harbour management with climate change, water, habitat and species restoration challenges.

August 29th 9.00 am Duncannon Fort: Wexford keynote address and context briefing:

Welcome: *Lisa McDonald, Cathaoirleach, Wexford. tbc*

Address: EU Nature and Marine Law Compliance Assurance – a win for all.

Diarmaid O'Cuanachain, EC DG ENV Nature Conservation Unit.

Coffee and divide into fieldtrip groups. Some by car share, some by bus to get to location.

Field trips in small thematic groups on boats and foot to explore riches and challenges of the Waterford estuary – detail to follow. Leaders include Dr. Tim Butter on Water Testing, Walter Foley and Pat Moran on local fisheries. All meet for late lunch to avail of low tide. Day 2 ends ± 3 pm in Waterford. Train 2 hrs to Dublin leaves at 4.



The Aims of this conference and fieldtrips

To strengthen informed citizen participation in protecting, managing and restoring our coastal zone. To improve timely decision making relating to ocean health and tackling water pollution, marine litter, nature and climate change challenges.

To build on the Irish Presidency Ocean Act conference and with examples and fieldwork.

To celebrate and cherish the beauty, complexity and values of our coastal nature and culture.

Irish Presidency

Ireland now has the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. One of the Irish Presidency priorities is to translate the ambitious aims of the European [Ocean Pact](#) into practical measures, with a focus on strengthening marine spatial planning and supporting the delivery of marine protected areas and nature restoration. The presidency will also advance work to promote and develop the circular economy. Environmental groups and civil society have been included in the presidency planning for the past year and marine eNGOs participated in the presidency Ocean Act conference. Citizen engagement in ocean stewardship was highlighted by several speakers.

Coastwatch

Coastwatch is an environmental group set up in 1987 with the main goal of informed public participation in environmental protection, management, especially in the coastal zone. Soon citizen access to justice and nature restoration were added to its active engagements. The Coastwatch citizen science autumn shore survey started in Ireland in 1987 and spread across Europe 1989 onwards with EC support. Some examples of recent results adapted to EU law is the inclusion of banned single use plastics (SUP Directive) in the autumn survey and indeed in official reporting under the MSFD. Another example is the [Citizen Seagrass Campaign](#).

Coastwatch is also partner in 2 EU Horizon projects:

[more4nature](#) which aims to bring about transformative change in environmental protection by including citizens and communities as key actors in collaborative environmental compliance assurance.

[EcoTwin](#) which aims to improve decision-making and scenario analysis related to ocean health and coastal management and make marine data more accessible to all by developing innovative models and analyses tools. The Waterford estuary is one of its case study sites.



European Commission. 2017. Towards an improved assessment of environmental compliance assurance. European Commission, Luxembourg: Publications, Office of the European Union.

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