

Press Release

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Strategic Partnership between Europêche and Waste Free Oceans

Last week, Waste Free Oceans and Europêche announced their new partnership in the fight against marine litter. By joining forces with the maritime industry, the new partnership will help improve the environmental status of Europe's waterways, rivers, coastal areas and regional seas by reducing amounts of marine litter.

[Europêche](#), the Association of National Organisations of Fishing Enterprises in the European Union, is the leading European organisation of shipowners, fishermen and employers that today counts 17 member organisations from 11 European countries. By uniting with [Waste Free Oceans](#), an impact on marine litter can be made as the WFO foundation works to mobilize and unite the fisheries sector, public authorities, the international plastics industry and other stakeholders in combatting the growing issue of marine litter.

Improvements on many port reception facilities is a key element of the cooperation, as well as the establishment of a special harmonised pan-European waste landing fee in ports. Indeed, the unfair reality today is that in many cases fishermen still have to pay for landing any litter caught in their nets - whether it is theirs or not!

Javier Garat Perez, Europêche President, states: "There are already many good examples of improved sustainability and environmental awareness in our industry, yet we need to share our experiences more with our colleagues and the outside world. Formally joining forces with Waste Free Oceans will bring our environmental goals into a new dimension. We aim to apply for and establish several joint projects, among others, under the EMFF [European Maritime and Fisheries Fund]."

Both Waste Free Oceans and Europêche will therefore support to organise modern, state of the art fishing for litter (FFL) schemes all around Europe with the help of the fishing industry. The projects will first begin in active Europêche member countries. These schemes will apply both passive and active FFL, as well as ghost net retrieval, thus following the examples of previous programmes initiated in Spain and Belgium aiming to prevent marine litter, reuse and close material loops.

WFO Co-Founder Bernard Merx says: "WFO has been increasingly involved in many international meetings on improving the environmental status of the European regional seas, waterways and oceans. Hardly any of those meetings included fishing and other maritime industries even though they have a key role to play in most of the remediation and some of the prevention actions. The partnership with Europêche and its members is expected to speed up the progress. In all projects around Europe where we worked intensely with fishermen, we found great commitment and willingness to assist on their part."

For more information:

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