

How can you “Sea Change” that occurs over 500 years?

New Sea Change Resources Launched to Support a Healthier Ocean

Press Release: October 2017

Many of the detrimental changes that are occurring in the ocean are out of sight, and therefore out of mind. To coincide with the upcoming ‘[Our Ocean](#)’ conference, a major global event on international ocean governance hosted by the European Union (EU) in Malta this year, the EU-funded [Sea Change](#) project is launching a number of original and inspiring resources that help foster a deeper understanding amongst European citizens of how their activities impact on ocean health.

Ocean health and human health are intrinsically linked, and by helping citizens to understand how their activities affect the ocean, **Sea Change** calls on all citizens to take responsible action to support a healthier ocean. Jan Seys of [the Flanders Marine Institute](#) (VLIZ), one of the work-package leaders of **Sea Change**, says *“The ocean is crucial for our planet and is constantly in a state of change. When rather abrupt and human-induced changes are at stake, scientists and educators should feel responsible and share their knowledge as much as possible with the public. Only by informing and engaging citizens, can we build Ocean Literacy, make well-informed decisions and change behaviour for the sake of a healthy planet”*.

Symptoms of anthropogenic change include rising sea temperatures, sea-level rise, changing acidity levels, plastic debris and melting ice-caps, as well as pressures facing marine biodiversity. A powerful new **Sea Change** infographic, developed by British Illustrator Glynn Gorick and VLIZ in collaboration with the Oceans Past Initiative and the Oceans Past Platform, shows recorded measurements of the dramatic changes the ocean has undergone since Ferdinand Magellan embarked on his voyage around the world 500 years ago (1519-1522). You can view the infographic on the **Sea Change** website: <http://seachangeproject.eu/images/SEACHANGE/OurOceanOurHealth/500-yrs-high-res.jpg>.

Although these changes are dramatic, we can still help to protect the ocean and all of the wonderful benefits it provides us with. As part of its ‘Our Ocean, Our Health’ campaign, **Sea Change** has also produced a short video series with useful tips on how we citizens can **“Make a Small Change for Sea Change”** through our daily activities in the bathroom, the kitchen, the supermarket, on the commute, in the office and when eating on the go. The videos can be watched on the **Sea Change** Vimeo account (<https://vimeo.com/album/4588555>) and are accompanied by a set of colourful infographic posters. These are available on the project website: <http://seachangeproject.eu/ouroceanourhealth/ocean-literacy-resources>. An earlier video introducing the ocean’s life-giving vitality, called “Our Ocean Our Oxygen” is also available to share.

Jan Seys, VLIZ says *“history has demonstrated that with enough support, we can turn these negative evolutions around to support healthier oceans, by reducing human-induced pressures. It’s important that the scientific data that illustrate these dramatic changes in our planet’s life support systems are clearly communicated to the public so that they can take action.”*

A number of other **Sea Change** resources have also been made available, including a new series of online workshops to focus on three major ocean and sea issues of societal importance in the future: ocean and human health, seabed mapping, and aquaculture. The course, called “A Sea Change for

Ocean Literacy”, will run between 30 October and 17 November 2017, and is led by the College of CoExploration Limited in the UK, supported by the College of Exploration, USA and VLIZ, Belgium. To register for these free workshops, please visit: www.coexploration.org/seachange

A variety of inspiring outreach and engagement activities aimed at improving Ocean Literacy across Europe are also featured in the fourth edition of the **Sea Change** Newsletter, which is now available to download from the media section on the project’s website: <http://seachangeproject.eu/seachange-media-2/factsheet>

All of the **Sea Change** resources have been developed to foster a deeper understanding amongst European citizens of how their activities impact on ocean health. They can be found at <http://seachangeproject.eu/ouroceanourhealth/ocean-literacy-resources>

Pledge to make a “Sea Change” in your daily behaviour today at <http://seachangeproject.eu/ouroceanourhealth/take-action-checklist> and share your commitment online using [#OurOceanOurHealth](https://twitter.com/OurOceanOurHealth)

Get the latest news on the **Sea Change** campaign by following the project on Twitter at https://twitter.com/SeaChange_EU and liking it on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SeaChangeProjectEU>.

Notes for Editors

Sea Change aims to empower us, as “Ocean Literate” citizens, to take direct and sustainable action towards a healthy ocean, healthy communities and ultimately a healthy planet. The **Sea Change** project is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 652644. The Marine Biological Association, UK (MBA) is coordinating the project. AquaTT is the project dissemination partner.

Dr. Jan Seys is the head of the Communication department of the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ). He is a marine biologist by training, having worked for ten years in marine and estuarine research in Belgium and the Netherlands, and two years as a managing director of a bilateral Kenya-Belgium cooperation in marine sciences. Since 2006 he is the chair of the European Marine Board Communications Panel, and a member of the News & Information group of the Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean (POGO).

VLIZ is a centre for marine and coastal research which promotes Flemish marine scientific research and international marine education. In its capacity as a coordination and information platform, VLIZ supports some thousand marine scientists in Flanders by disseminating their knowledge to policymakers, educators, the general public and scientists.

Glynn Gorick is an artist and former school teacher who investigates the complexity of ecosystems in his art through variations in scale. By adapting the scale to fit the subject, he draws molecules, cells, individuals, communities, ecosystems, and the biosphere in a way that can illustrate levels of organisation. Glynn’s Linked In profile is available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/glynn-gorick-98801246/?ppe=1>

The **Oceans Past Initiative (OPI)** is a global research network for marine historical research. Their goal is to enhance knowledge and understanding of how the diversity, distribution and abundance of marine life in the world's oceans has changed over the long term to better indicate future changes and possibilities. Further information is available at: <https://www.tcd.ie/history/opi/>

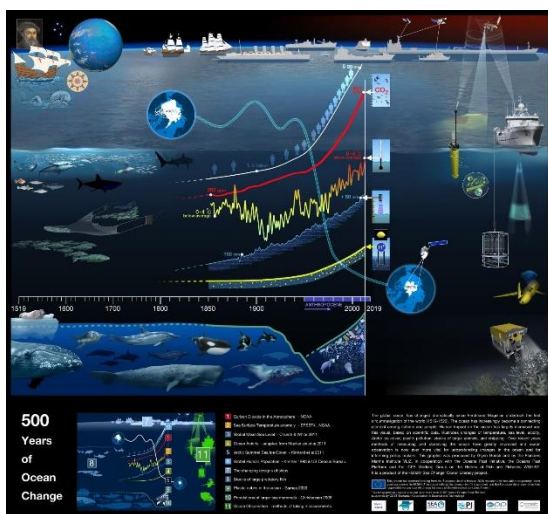
The **Oceans Past Platform Action** aims to measure and understand the significance and value to European societies of living marine resource extraction and production to help shape the future of coasts and oceans. More information is available here: <https://www.tcd.ie/history/opp/>

For a detailed overview of **Sea Change**, please visit the project website at www.seachangeproject.eu

Press Queries

For **press queries** about the infographic produced by VLIZ and Glynn Gorick, please contact Jan Seys at the Flanders Marine Institute (Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee; VLIZ): E-mail: jan.seys@vliz.be, Tel.: +32-(0)478-37 64 13

For **press queries** about other resources, please contact the project Communications Officer: Emer Cooney, AquaTT (email: emer@aquatt.ie, Tel: +353 1 644 9008)



The infographic 'MAKE A SEA CHANGE IN THE BATHROOM' provides practical steps to reduce bathroom-related pollution. It is organized into four columns, each with an illustration and a 'HOW THIS HELPS' section.

- RETURN UNWANTED MEDICINES:** Advise returning unused medicines to a pharmacy. The 'HOW THIS HELPS' section notes that unwanted pharmaceuticals are not always removed by domestic sewage systems and can enter the marine environment.
- AVOID products that contain MICROBEADS:** Check labels and avoid microbeads. The 'HOW THIS HELPS' section explains that many bathroom products contain plastic microbeads, which attract toxins and can be ingested by fish and shellfish.
- NEVER FLUSH PLASTIC down the toilet:** Use eco-friendly products and dispose of them responsibly. The 'HOW THIS HELPS' section states that 8 million tonnes of plastic waste go into the ocean every year, which takes a long time to break down and can choke or harm marine animals.
- Save water and energy with SHORT SHOWERS and by REUSING TOWELS:** The 'HOW THIS HELPS' section notes that conserving water reduces the wastewater for onshore treatment systems, and excess wastewater can overflow and affect water quality.

 The infographic also includes social media handles (@seachange_eu) and the website (www.seachangeproject.eu) at the bottom.