

“Mediterranean Blue Islands” special prize

Awards ceremony EU Blue Champion Islands, Palermo, Italy, 31 May 2023 from 15:30 - 16:00 CET

<p>Context</p>	<p>In the framework of the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”, the Coordination and Support Action for the Med Lighthouse BlueMissionMed announce the “Mediterranean Blue Islands” special prize, to be awarded to 2 islands of the Mediterranean Sea participating to the "Celebrate Islands 2023" international contest. The “Mediterranean Blue Islands” special prize aims at recognising, promoting and supporting the best initiatives which actively contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” in their local context. The awards ceremony will take place in Palermo during the High Level Event Mission 'Restore our Ocean and waters by 2030' - The Mediterranean lighthouse in action organised by the European Commission in close cooperation with the Italian government, the Sicily Region, and the University of Palermo, with the support of the BlueMissionMed.</p>	
<p>Organizers</p>	<p>EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030</p>	<p>Website</p>
	<p>BlueMissionMed</p>	<p>Website</p>
	<p>In the context of Celebrate Islands 2023</p>	<p>Website</p>
<p>Why to participate?</p>	<p>The “Mediterranean Blue Islands” special prize will award the 2 winning islands with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label “Mediterranean Blue Island”, given by the European Commission and recognizing the winning island as best practices contributing to the Mission Ocean’s objectives. • Participation to the Med Lighthouse pilot of services for targeted transitional roadmap (to support the capitalization of technology and business models; support access to finance; networking; good practice exchange). • Invitation to present the best practice to key Med Stakeholders in the context of the High-Level Event Mission ‘Restore our Ocean and waters by 2030’- The Mediterranean lighthouse in action – organised by the European Commission in Palermo on May 30-31, 2023. 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The finalists will join key Mediterranean stakeholders in the context of the 1st Med Stakeholder Forum organised by BlueMissionMed in Palermo on May 30, 2023, which will take place back-to-back to the High-Level Event Mission 'Restore our Ocean and waters by 2030' - The Mediterranean lighthouse in action.
<p>How to participate?</p>	<p>To compete for the special prize, participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Represent an island or group of islands from the Mediterranean basin.Apply to the call "Celebrate Islands 2023" international contest by May 3, 2023; link: https://celebrate-islands.org/.Be one of the signatories of the Mission Charter or submit an action to the Mission Charter in line with the Mission Ocean's objectives <u>before the deadline</u> (May 3, 2023); link: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/MissionOceanWatersCharter.
<p>Important dates</p>	<p>The deadline for submission is May 3, 2023.</p> <p>The winners will be notified by May 17, 2023.</p> <p>The winners will be invited to the awards ceremony in Palermo on May 31 during the <u>High-Level Event Mission 'Restore our Ocean and waters by 2030' - The Mediterranean lighthouse in action</u> and their travel and accommodation expenses will be taken in charge by the organisers.</p>
<p>Selection criteria for the "Mediterranean Blue Islands" special prize</p>	<p>1) Actions shall be submitted by single islands or groups of islands to contribute to the Mission "Restore our Ocean and waters by 2030" and create the conditions to achieve one or more of the Mission objectives and enablers.</p> <p>Mission objectives</p> <p>I. Protect and restore marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>a. Protect a minimum of 30% of the EU's sea area.</i><i>b. Strictly protect at least 10% of the EU's sea area.</i><i>c. Restore at least 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers.</i><i>d. Contribute to relevant upcoming marine nature restoration targets, including degraded seabed habitats and coastal ecosystems.</i> <p>II. Prevent and eliminate pollution of our ocean, seas and waters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>a. Reduce by at least 50% plastic litter at sea.</i>





- b. Reduce by at least 30% microplastics released into the environment.
- c. Reduce by at least 50% nutrient losses, the use and risk of chemical pesticides.

III. Make the sustainable blue economy carbon-neutral and circular:

- a. Eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from maritime economic activities in the EU and sequester those emissions that cannot be avoided (net zero maritime emissions).
- b. Develop zero-carbon and low-impact aquaculture, and promote circular, low-carbon multi-purpose use of marine and water space.

Mission enablers

- a. The digital ocean and water knowledge system
- b. Broad public mobilisation and engagement

2) Submitted actions are required to contribute at least to objective II, to prevent and reduce pollution. Contributions to more objectives will be considered an asset.

3) The following will be considered as assets:

- Drive the ecological/energy/circular transition of the island and/or
- Increase the resilience/connectivity/self-sustainability of the island and its infrastructures and/or
- Drive the social transition and leaving no one behind. This implies a large involvement of the local communities, with actions co-designed and co-implemented with stakeholders, ensuring local business participation and citizen engagement and outreach.

Award Ceremony

The “Mediterranean Blue Islands” special prize will be conferred **on May 31**, in the context of the [High-Level Event Mission 'Restore our Ocean and waters by 2030' - The Mediterranean lighthouse in action organised by the European Commission in Palermo on May 30-31, 2023](#).

The high-level event ([link](#)) represents an opportunity to witness the political commitments of the Mediterranean countries towards the Mission and to present the actions and initiatives which contribute to the Mission objectives that may be scaled up and replicated in other sea basins.

The award ceremony will aim at gathering all EU islands that contribute to the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters, establishing the first community of islands for this Mission. All islands who adhered to the mission Charter will be invited and recognised for their adhesion.



The programme of the event will include:

I. Panels with examples of actions by islands to implement the ecological/circular/energy transitions for sustainability and increased resilience.

This session will showcase some examples of actions submitted by islands to the [Charter of the Mission](#) "Restore our Ocean & Waters" and allow to exchange best practices.

II. Awards ceremony Med Blue Champion Islands.

This ceremony will celebrate the islands with different type of awards and recognitions:

- 1) **Mediterranean Blue Islands special prize** – as EU pilot islands for the Mission Ocean and Waters – by European Commission and BlueMissionMed.
- 2) Recognition to all islands who adhered to the Mission Charter, as members of the 'Coalition of Islands for the Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters'.

