

Commissioner Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

2 February 2022

Subject: Open letter regarding Heartbeat of the Ocean

Dear Commissioner,

In November 2021, we travelled from Madrid to Vilnius to create a huge mural, called “Heartbeat of the Ocean”. We are a group of street artists, called Boa Mistura - which means “good mixture”, reflecting our diverse backgrounds and pathways. We have created massive outdoor artworks all over the world to bring beauty and a message to our streets and connect people.

But nothing connects people like the ocean. It is the source of all life on our planet and produces half the oxygen we breathe. The ocean is a great reservoir for biodiversity, is the second largest store of carbon on Earth and has absorbed over 90% of the human created heat. Without the cooling effect of the ocean, the global temperature would be 35 degrees warmer - that is, all of us would be dead.

The mural of sea creatures in Vilnius shows and celebrates the Ocean as the heart of the planet. Without a healthy ocean, we cannot have a healthy planet – no heart, no life. Our mural in Vilnius is our message to the world: ‘Save the Ocean to Save the Climate’.

The mural depicts whales, fish, and other ocean creatures with hands supporting them to express the love and respect humans should have for oceans. It is not only a gift to the people of Vilnius, but to all people. We need people around the world to understand that a healthy ocean is critical to a healthy planet and climate action.

Why Vilnius? “Heartbeat of the Ocean” has a special message for you as Lithuania’s European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries: the future of Europe’s fish and ocean life are in your hands. This is not just a good line for social media - it is also a deeper message and an urgent call for action. In Vilnius we painted in sub-zero temperatures to communicate our message, now we call on you to take decisive and bold action to protect the ocean, and so safeguard the lives and communities who depend on it... and that means all of us.

You can start in 2022, by ending the fishing that is destroying the ocean. This needs to include a “just transition” for those who are dependent on fishing. By ending destructive and over-fishing and restoring the health of the ocean, we improve the chances for the future of humanity. This sounds wild, but that is what is at stake, and Commissioner you are in the extraordinary position of being able to deliver on that. We will keep spreading the message, if you please deliver on the action.

Yours sincerely,

BOA MISTURA

The Boa Mistura team

Madrid,
Spain