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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	List of commitments proposed for presentation by the EU at the 'Our Ocean Conference' (Oslo, 23-24 October 2019)

Delegations will find herewith the above-mentioned list of commitments proposed for presentation by the European Union at the 'Our Ocean Conference' (Oslo, 23-24 October 2019), as adopted by the Council (General Affairs) on 15 October 2019.

List of commitments to be presented by the European Union at the 'Our Ocean' Conference
(Oslo, 23-24 October 2019)

Background:

The Our Ocean Conferences are annually organised since 2014. The EU hosted one of these conferences in 2017 in Malta. As the previous conferences, the high-level 'Our Ocean' Conference of 2019 aims to identify solutions and commit actions in order to address some of the most important challenges the oceans are faced with, namely marine protection, marine pollution, climate change impact, sustainable fisheries. Norway has also chosen to maintain two additional themes that were introduced by the EU in 2017: blue economy and maritime security. The main deliverable of the conference this year is to announce various commitments not only from governments and international organisations, but also from the industry, the research community and civil society. The conference will be hosted by the Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soreide.

The conference complements the EU's Ocean Governance initiative¹, which sets out an agenda for ensuring the future of the oceans around the world. As it is one of the most important events on oceans this year, it presents a further opportunity for the EU to bolster its presence on the global stage as an ocean leader.

DG MARE, in close cooperation with the EEAS, has prepared a provisional list of commitments after consulting all relevant DGs. These commitments would be announced on behalf of the EU at the Conference. These commitments are actions that the EU is undertaking or has recently undertaken to strengthen ocean governance, in particular with regard to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and more specifically SDG 14.²

¹ 14332/16

² To be noted that the commitments are written in past tense. In the spirit of the previous editions, commitments will be, once announced at the conference, published on the conference website (<https://ourocean2019.no/commitments/>) and in relevant EU press material.

Proposed commitments:

Marine Protected Areas and Other Area-Based Management Measures

1. The European Union announced it would dedicate EUR 4 million to support a coherent and well-managed network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Mediterranean in 2019. The support will contribute to strengthening regional coherence and representativeness of MPAs and regional Integrated Monitoring and Assessment in support of Good Environmental Status in the region.
2. The conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ) is increasingly attracting international attention, as scientific information reveals the richness and vulnerability of such biodiversity, particularly in seamounts, hydrothermal vents, sponges and cold-water corals, while concerns grow about the increasing anthropogenic pressure posed by existing and emerging activities. To support enhanced governance, the sustainable use and conservation of open ocean marine resources and biodiversity, as envisaged in particular through the UNCLOS Implementing Agreement on BBNJ currently negotiated in the Intergovernmental Conference established by the UN General Assembly in December 2017, the European Union announced that it will invest EUR 4.1 million annually in its satellite-monitoring programme (Copernicus) for operating a global capacity for marine biogeochemistry ocean forecasting to understand and model the food web of major predators and marine mammals.
3. The European Union jointly with the Secretariat of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific group of states announced to dedicate EUR 9.2 million on supporting the implementation of Regional Seas Conventions (RSCs) in ACP countries (Carthage, Abidjan, Nairobi, Noumea). This programme will reinforce RSCs' frameworks and support the implementation of associated protocols, develop regionally representative networks of MPAs and reduce the influx of waste entering the marine environment.

4. Restoring and protecting marine biodiversity is one of the main priorities for Caribbean Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). The European Union announced that, in the framework of the Caribbean Regional OCTs Programme, EUR 16.5 million will be devoted to enhance the sustainable management of marine biodiversity, monitoring strengthening and improved measures against illegal fishing and pollution of coastal-marine ecosystems. The programme's main objective is to strengthen the capacity of OCTs to work together as a region for improving marine biodiversity resilience.
5. The European Union announced that it has committed EUR 10 million to promote integrated seascape management for sustainable development of local communities, combining activities addressing the expansion and management reinforcement of the Marine Protected Areas network, sustainable small-scale fisheries, and ecosystem management for climate change adaptation in the coral triangle (South-East Asia).

Climate Change

6. The European Union announced that it has dedicated EUR 12.8 million in 2019 for its Copernicus programme on sea ice and cryosphere climate monitoring in Arctic and Antarctic in addition to its annual EUR 2 million Copernicus programme for ocean and sea-ice monitoring and forecasting for the Arctic. The Copernicus climate service runs global seasonal forecasts and delivers long-term climate projection to support decision-making in the Arctic.
7. The European Union announced that it will allocate EUR 9.9 million in 2019 to the Joint Pacific Initiative on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Resilience launched by France to increase the capacities of 19 Pacific states and territories to adapt to the impact of climate change and other stressors; and to protect, restore, and enhance biodiversity in order to strengthen the resilience of their socio-ecological systems. The overall objective of this initiative is to make Pacific island ecosystems, economies and communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The programme is in line with the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific as well as the PIF Leaders' Blue Pacific identity. France, Canada and the EU are the three main contributors.

Sustainable Fisheries

8. The European Union reaffirmed its support to strengthen the performance of the 18 Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and tuna RFMOs in which the EU participates by committing EUR 10.6 million in 2019 to improving governance, science and capacity building, as well as increase compliance.
9. The European Union reconfirmed its responsibility to promote sustainable fisheries by contributing EUR 725.000 in 2019 to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to further global action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries.
10. The European Union announced that it will dedicate EUR 40 million in 2019 to support Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Value Chains in ACP countries. Building on value chains approaches developed by the European Commission, FAO and the Secretariat for the ACP group, this action will contribute to economic growth, job creation, food and nutrition security by improving the economic, social and environmental sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture value chains in a number of ACP countries.

Marine Pollution

11. The European Union announced a contribution of EUR 800.000 in 2019 to its satellite-monitoring programme (Copernicus) for oil pollution detection and response as operated by the European Maritime Safety Agency.
12. The European Commission announced that it will contribute to the fight against marine pollution by promoting the reduction of waste generated on board ships and managing of waste in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner. Ships, which reduce the amount of waste produced on board or handle the waste in an otherwise sustainable manner, will be rewarded for these efforts through a reduction of the waste fee that they have to pay when calling in an EU port.

13. The European Union announced that countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea and the European Commission will launch at the ECOMONDO trade fair in Italy on 7 November 2019 a pilot initiative for a plastic-free, healthy Mediterranean Sea under the umbrella of the BLUEMED initiative. This pilot initiative aims at mobilising key actors to tackle plastic pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by: (i) stock-taking of on-going relevant initiatives in the region; (ii) checking the progress made in setting up local/national hubs in the participating countries, and (iii) discussing the connection of the different country hubs, projects and initiatives. It will test and demonstrate the involvement of many different stakeholders on land and at sea to prevent plastic marine litter and reduce existing marine litter, a pilot that could serve as model in other regions of the world.

Sustainable Blue Economy

14. The European Union announced support for the sustainable development of the ocean energy sector by investing EUR 2.300.000 on strengthening the evidence base on environmental impacts and promoting the inclusion of ocean energy development into Maritime Spatial Planning.
15. The European Union announced that it will launch a EUR 22.86 million investment initiative in 2019 to promote sustainable blue growth in the European Union. The Blue Economy Window will support market realisation of new business models, products and services with a particular focus on the sustainable use of marine resources and improved livelihoods and jobs.
16. The European Union announced that it has allocated EUR 75 million from the European Fund for Strategic Investment for investments in blue economy companies that contribute to objectives such as low carbon emissions, circular economy and ecosystem conservation.

17. The European Union announced that it has contributed EUR 35 million to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway by supporting protection, management and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity through targeted capacity building, strengthening knowledge-based decision-making, grass-root pilot projects, and enhancing intra- and inter-regional cooperation for environmental sustainability. In addition, the programme will provide a platform for sensitizing all relevant stakeholders and promoting dialogue on issues relevant to the development of SIDS and coastal countries. The project will be implemented by the RECs (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Indian Ocean Commission, Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States).

18. The European Union announced that it will invest over the next two years more than EUR 600.000 to strengthen the scientific knowledge base underpinning its Blue Economy policy. Blue Economy sectors will be rigorously assessed against social, environmental and economic criteria with respect to their past, current and future socio-economic impact to support the exploitation of oceanic assets in a sustainable way, i.e. without damaging the benefits to future generations. Particular attention will be paid to analysing common innovation priorities, strengths and bottlenecks of smart specialisation in coastal regions as well as looking at current and future Ocean Energy employment and supply chain engagement.

19. The European Union announced that it will invest in 2020 over EUR 250 million as part of the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, with specific focus on:
 - a) Fisheries in the full ecosystem context,
 - b) Technologies for ocean observation and a pilot action for the removal of marine plastics and litter,
 - c) Understanding exposures and impacts of micro- and nano-plastics on human health, renewable (offshore) energy and renewable fuel production and decarbonising shipping,
 - d) Under water noise mitigation and environmental impact,

- e) Advancing climate services and Climate Resilience of European coastal cities and settlements,
 - f) Understanding the polar processes in a global context in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions, and
 - g) Boosting emerging intelligence technologies: new techniques for creating and using dynamic models of environmental evolution or radically novel approaches to resilient, reliable and environmentally responsible in-situ monitoring.
20. The European Union announced the launch of the All-Atlantic Youth Forum at the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Event on 6-7 February 2020 in Brussels. This Youth Forum follows on from the first All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Ambassador Summer School, 23–27 August 2019 in Galway, Ireland and is an example of how the EU works together with its trans-Atlantic partners to empower the next generation of leaders for sustainable development along and across the Atlantic Ocean. This Youth Forum marks a further milestone in implementing the Galway and Belém Statements by fostering enhanced cooperation frameworks with our key Atlantic partners.

Maritime Security

21. The European Union announced an annual EUR 6.5 million in 2019 for its Copernicus maritime surveillance service operated by EMSA to support joint maritime security operations at sea with Frontex and with partner countries in the Indian Ocean, west and central Africa.
22. The European Union announced a EUR 28 million programme to improve Port Security and Safety of Navigation in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean. The programme adopted in 2018 will support reinforcing Maritime Affairs Authorities and Port Authorities' capacities for addressing navigation safety, maritime and port security and exchange of maritime raw data and information. The expected results are the reduction of non-International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) compliant vessels, a more secure and monitored port environment, and a better understanding of traffic patterns and increased risk management capacities.
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