



**Brussels, 30 May 2017
(OR. en)**

9819/17

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: List of voluntary commitments proposed for presentation by the EU on the occasion of the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (the Ocean Conference, 5-9 June 2017, New York)

Delegations will find herewith the text of the above-mentioned list of voluntary commitments, in view of the presentation by the EU on the occasion of the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (the Ocean Conference, 5-9 June 2017, New York) as adopted by the Council (Competitiveness) on 29 May 2017.

List of voluntary commitments proposed for presentation by the EU on the occasion of the UN Ocean Conference (New York, 5-9 June 2017)

Background:

The UN Ocean Conference (hereafter 'the Conference') with the overarching theme “Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14” will take place on 5-9 June 2017 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. One of the foreseen outputs of the Conference are voluntary commitments.

As explained in the concept note published on the Conference's website, voluntary commitments are commitments voluntarily undertaken by States and Non-State actors, individually or in partnership, that aim to contribute to the implementation of SDG14. Any voluntary commitments made within the framework of Agenda 2030 (i.e. implemented after September 2015) targeting SDG14 can be registered as voluntary commitment for the Conference.

Voluntary commitments should be registered in The Ocean Conference Registry of Commitments before 9 June. A list of voluntary commitments will be produced at the end of the Conference for inclusion into the final report of the Conference.

The following voluntary commitments are in addition to the voluntary commitments of individual Member States.

Proposed voluntary commitments:

1. The European Union (EU) commits approximately EUR 6 million in 2017 to improve governance, science and capacity building, as well as increase compliance in the 18 Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and tuna RFMOs in which the EU participates. The EU acknowledges its responsibility to promote sustainable fisheries and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries.
2. The EU commits to strengthening regional cooperation to support implementation of SDG 14 in contribution to strengthened regional ocean governance in the forthcoming period. In this regard, EUR 400,000 was provided to UNEP Regional Seas Programme to deliver, in cooperation with relevant partners, a comprehensive report on the best practices of institutional cooperation and policy-interactions, guidance for policy-makers in support of implementation of ocean-related Agenda 2030.
3. The EU commits EUR 15 million for the improvement of regional fisheries governance in Western Africa with the aim to develop a regional fishing policy, putting in place a regional coordination against Illegal Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing and improving fish stock management at regional level (PESCAO programme).
4. The EU commits to prevent and significantly reduce marine litter in EU Member States' waters by 2020, including by establishing a Union-wide quantitative reduction headline target for marine litter. The proposal for an EU Plastic Strategy will contribute to this effort and will comprehensively address the problems caused by the leakage of plastic, including microplastics in the marine environment and is to be finalized by the end of 2017. The EU's Circular Economy Strategy will reinforce the implementation of the 3 'R's (reduce, reuse, recycle). The EU is addressing the issue of sea-based sources of marine litter through the implementation of the Port Reception Facilities Directive which aims to reduce the discharges of ship generated waste and cargo residues into the sea and which is currently being reviewed. The EU will provide financial support, notably under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, to promote marine litter clean-up as a complement to prevention measures, in particular through providing support for increasing capacity to collect marine litter and to increase the availability of data on litter concentrations in seas around the EU.

5. The EU is dedicating EUR 1 million to launch twinned marine protected areas in Europe and Africa, North America, and South America by 2017.
6. The EU commits to follow an ecosystem approach to achieve the good environmental status of EU Member States' marine waters by 2020, notably by working at the regional and EU level and contributing to the coordinated achievement of the targets of SDG14.
7. The EU, in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO), commits to work on accelerating Maritime/Marine Spatial Planning processes worldwide. In this regard, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC/UNESCO) and the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission (DG MARE) adopted on 24/03/2017 a "Joint Roadmap to accelerate Maritime/Marine Spatial Planning processes worldwide", which will contribute to outlining a vision and a role for MSP in implementing Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, and in particular the dedicated goal SDG 14, in a comprehensive, consistent and holistic way, both within the EU and beyond at the international level. This roadmap identifies common priorities and concrete proposals for actions to be implemented in the coming years to encourage the development of marine/maritime spatial planning.
8. The EU commits to fully deploy its European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) by 2020. This network consists of more than 160 organisations assembling marine data, products and metadata which will make these fragmented resources more available to public and private users relying on quality-assured, standardised and harmonised marine data which are interoperable and free of restrictions on use.
9. The EU commits to allocate additional funds to a number of SDG14 related research and innovation projects, notably on the relationship between oceans and human health (EUR 2 million), removal and re-use of marine litter (EUR 26.5 million) and sea food safety (EUR 7 million). The EU will continue its ground-breaking cooperation with the USA and Canada in the North Atlantic to implement the Galway Statement on Ocean Research Cooperation and work towards an All Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance.

10. The EU commits to fostering action, including through the BEST initiative which promotes the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystem services including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories of EU Member States. These actions are supported by European Regional Development Fund programmes and Cohesion Fund, as well as by the 11th European Development Fund, where biodiversity is a priority for the Regional Indicative Programmes in Pacific, Caribbean and Indian Ocean.
11. The EU announced its First State of the Ocean status report, delivered through its Copernicus Marine Environment Monitoring Service (CMEMS) for monitoring the conditions of the oceans. The EU announced that this report will be updated annually.
12. The EU commits EUR 420,000 (USD 470,000) for a modernization project to update the European Fisheries Control Agency application to provide EU Member States the ability for worldwide vessel tracking.
13. The EU, together with its Mediterranean partners, has endorsed MedFish4Ever Declaration, which set out a detailed work programme for the next 10 years. In particular, the EU, as a signatory to the Declaration, commits (1) by 2020 to ensure that all key Mediterranean stocks are subject to adequate data collection and scientifically assessed on a regular basis; (2) to establish multi-annual management plans for all key fisheries; (3) to eliminate illegal fishing and to that end, ensure that, by 2020 all States have the legal framework and the necessary human and technical capabilities to meet their control and inspection responsibilities; (4) to support sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture by, *inter alia*, streamlining funding schemes for local projects related to low-impact techniques and fishing gear, social inclusion and the contribution of fishermen to environmental protection.
14. The EU commits to promoting a structured dialogue on cruise tourism between cruise operators, ports and port cities, in order to enhance synergies in the sector. In this regard a first Pan-European dialogue conference was organized in March 2015, followed by regional dialogues for the Mediterranean (2015) and the Baltic Sea (2016). A regional dialogue for the North Sea, the Atlantic and the Arctic will be organized in 2017.

15. The EU commits to present a series of studies on biodiversity conservation in Africa, Asia and Latin America as part of the "Larger Than " series, parts of which will contribute to the enhancement of the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. These studies will centralise and transfer scientific and research knowledge, which will be essential for the provision of strategic advice to states and non-state actors on issues which are directly related to the implementation of some SDG14 targets and other ocean related SDGs.
16. The EU commits to support the CITES Secretariat with EUR 1 million for a programme designed to enhance the capacity of developing countries to implement their obligations under CITES for marine species and promote synergies between CITES, FAO and RFMOs.
17. The EU commits EUR 60 million to support the management of protected areas, including Marine Protected Areas, in ACP Countries through the BIOPAMA II – Biodiversity and Protected Areas in ACP Countries. From this amount, EUR 20 million is reserved to fund Ocean Related Activities.
18. The EU commits EUR 8.5 million for the launching of a call for proposals that will be focused on conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity in the Caribbean Sea Basin.
19. The EU commits approximately EUR 6 million to protect fisheries livelihoods in Ghana and Somalia. In Ghana, two projects will support co-management approaches in fisheries to ensure greater environmental sustainability and social equity in Ghana's fishery sector. In Somalia, the project will support artisanal, small-scale fisheries production, processing and trade to contribute to livelihoods, food security and improved nutrition for populations.
