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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' (Bali, 29-30 October 2018)

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Delegations will find herewith the above-mentioned list of commitments proposed for presentation by the European Union at the 'Our Ocean Conference' (Bali, Indonesia, 29-30 October 2018), as adopted by the Council (General Affairs) on 16 October 2018.

**List of commitments to be presented by the European Union at the 'Our Ocean Conference'**  
**(29-30 October 2018)**

*Background:*

Following the 'Our Ocean Conference' organised by the European Union last year, Indonesia will host the fifth high-level 'Our Ocean Conference' in Bali on 29 and 30 October 2018. In the spirit of the previous editions since 2014, the conference aims to identify solutions and commit to actions in order to address some of the most important challenges the oceans are faced with: marine protection, marine pollution, climate change impact and sustainable fisheries. The themes that were added last year by the EU, the blue economy as well as maritime security, are maintained.

Participation in the conference complements the EU's Ocean Governance Initiative<sup>1</sup> from 2016, which sets out an agenda for ensuring the future of the oceans around the world. The main deliverable of the conference is the announcement of various commitments on actions that contribute to cleaner, safer and healthier oceans, in alignment with SDG 14 of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. These commitments will not only be sought from governments, but also from the industry, the research community and civil society.

This Conference is one of the most important events on oceans this year. The EU, as a previous host and an important ocean actor, should aim to announce a number of commitments related to these themes. The Commission 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<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 14332/16

<sup>2</sup> 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 web site (<https://ourocean2017.org/our-ocean-commitments>) and in relevant EU press material.

Proposed commitments:

**Blue Economy**

1. The European Union announced a joint action with China on marine data. The European Union will put forward EUR 3.5 million in support of this project.
2. The European Union announced that, following the signing of the Belém Statement in July 2017 by the EU, South Africa and Brazil, it continues to work towards an All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance by fostering enhanced cooperation frameworks with Atlantic partners. As part of the overall annual EUR 250 million invested in marine and maritime research projects from the Horizon 2020 Programme, the EU has allocated EUR 64 million for projects which will start in 2019 and 2020. This funding will go towards assessing ecosystems, seafloor mapping and developing innovative ecosystem-based aquaculture systems with the aim of having by 2020 more than 1000 research teams working from Antarctica to the Arctic. Furthermore, EUR 18 million will be allocated to ocean observations and a pilot blue cloud in 2019.
3. Following successful initiatives to foster marine research cooperation in its surrounding sea basins, such as the Baltic (BONUS) and the Mediterranean (Bluemed), the European Union announced to launch a specific research programme for the Black Sea sea basin.
4. The European Union announced that it will launch a EUR 18.4 million investment initiative in 2018 to promote a sustainable blue economy in the European Union. EUR 5 million of this amount is to be awarded to "Blue Labs" that are to research and develop products or services on innovative solutions in the maritime and marine field. A further EUR 6 million is to be awarded for the benefit of skill development in the blue economy. Finally, EUR 7.4 million is to be awarded to demonstration projects in the blue economy.

5. The European Union announced to launch four regional projects under its satellite monitoring programme (Copernicus) in Africa in February 2018. The projects, bringing together 18 African countries and the African Union with EU support, are to develop services related to fisheries and aquaculture, coastal vulnerability and risk management, coastal ecosystems monitoring, ship traffic monitoring and the development of regional ocean forecast centres in Africa and the Indian Ocean.
6. The European Union announced that it will support the fisheries sector of the Seychelles to further develop in a sustainable manner. The contribution of EUR 1.8 million is to upgrade the value chain of the country's fledgling fisheries and aquaculture sector, enhancing its competitiveness and bringing further quality jobs. The contribution is part of a wider EUR 10 million package that allows the Seychelles to reap the full potential of the current Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU, thus enhancing Seychelles' competitive integration into the regional and international trading systems. The Seychelles is an important seafood processing hub for the EU as well as a longstanding partner under the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements that the EU has with a number of third countries.

### **Climate change impacts**

7. The European Union announced to commit EUR 5 million to start designing new ocean forecasting models at the end of 2018. These models, based on big data computing, will be important for the further evolution of the marine services currently provided by the EU's satellite monitoring programme (Copernicus). Better forecasting means that the service can look a century ahead and can better aid decision making to tackle climate change impacts as well as build resilience to climate risks in the world, such as storm surges, coastal erosion and floods.

## Marine pollution

8. The European Union announced a project worth EUR 9 million to reduce plastic waste and marine litter in South East Asia. The project is to support a transition to sustainable consumption and production of plastic and contribute to significantly reduce marine litter, including by supporting European approaches, policies and business models. The project will focus on China, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, but is also to support indirectly countries in the Mekong Region and in the rest of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). As part of the recently launched plastics strategy, the EU is committed to working with partners around the world to come up with global solutions on marine pollution.
9. The European Union announced, as part of its plastics strategy, that it has initiated work on 1) new rules on packaging to improve the recyclability of plastics and increase the demand for recycled plastic, 2) new measures to curb plastic waste and littering, with a focus on single-use plastics and fishing gear (including a new legislative proposal published on 28 May 2018 and currently under discussion) and the use of microplastics in products and on 3) developing harmonised rules for the definition and labelling of biodegradable and compostable plastics.
10. The European Union announced further support for its plastics strategy by allocating EUR 100 million under its Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme to finance innovation on the development of smarter and more recyclable plastic materials, improving recycling chains as well as tracing and removing hazardous substances and contaminants from recycled plastics.
11. The European Union announced the upgrade of its mobile application (Floating Macro Litter Monitoring Application) monitoring riverine ocean pollution. While in the past the app was mainly used by scientists, version 2.0 will be made accessible to the general public. Not much is known about the amount of marine pollution coming from rivers, but by extending the app to a broader user audience, this knowledge is to further improve.

12. The European Union announced to support a waste management programme for the Pacific region. The EU will provide EUR 17 million to support Pacific countries in addressing issues relating to health and well-being, marine litter and biodiversity conservation.
13. The European Commission, together with the United Nations Environment Programme and with the support of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, the European Union of Aquarium Curators, the World Association of Zoos & Aquariums, the US Aquarium Conservation Partnership and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, announced that they will coordinate a global coalition of 200 aquariums by 2019 to raise public awareness about plastic pollution. Aquariums will be engaged in permanent activities in their facilities and in communication actions via all possible channels. They will be invited to change their procurement policies, for example in canteens and shops, to eliminate all single use plastic items. They will also be encouraged to ally with all potential partners and multipliers, such as sponsors, funders and NGOs, to maximise impact by promoting best practices in behavioural change on a local, regional, national and global scale.

## **Marine Protection**

14. The European Union announced a project worth EUR 9 million to protect marine ecosystems and to promote exchange of knowledge on the effective management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) between Atlantic and South East Asia Regions. Marine Protected Areas can play a catalytic role in promoting stability through fostering better cooperation and understanding between countries and communities across borders.
15. The European Union announced that it has launched a new version of the [Digital Observatory for Protected Areas](#) (DOPA) Explorer, providing the most advanced global information system characterising the world's terrestrial, marine and coastal protected areas. DOPA Explorer pulls together data from multiple sources, including from International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the EU. The latest version of the online database (<http://dopa-explorer.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>) includes a completely revised interface that can be used on multiple devices (PCs, tablets and smartphones).

16. The European Union announced to finance a regional support programme for the sustainable management of natural resources in Pacific Overseas Countries and Territories. With this support, worth EUR 7 million from the 11th European Development Fund, reef and lagoon resources and aquaculture are to be managed in a more sustainable, integrated and adaptive way for Pacific island economies facing severe difficulties from climate change.

### **Sustainable Fisheries**

17. The European Union announced a 36-month project to be implemented together with the government of Indonesia on trade in wildlife products. Among others, the project is to focus on the protection of the Banggai Cardinalfish (*Pterapogon kauderni*). Native to Indonesia, this iconic species has become a very popular aquarium fish among fish keepers worldwide, but as a result, its wild population has been steadily declining according to the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species. The joint project is to facilitate science on the species, their sustained protection as well as develop alternatives for wild harvesting.
18. The European Union announced its ECOFISH initiative. With a contribution of EUR 28 million, the project is to support sustainable management and development of fisheries, while addressing climate change resilience and enhancing marine biodiversity. In particular, ECOFISH is also to ensure that capacity is strengthened to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing in the East Africa-Southern Africa-Indian Ocean region, and to support concrete fisheries management and governance initiatives in small-scale inland and marine fisheries.
19. The European Union announced that it will commit more than EUR 11 million in 2018 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 support is also to contribute to further cooperation between the different tuna RFMOs under the Kobe process. The EU acknowledged its responsibility to promote sustainable fisheries and combat IUU fisheries.

20. The European Union announced that legislative proposals have been tabled to strengthen the enforcement of fisheries controls proposing improvements to modernise and simplify the way in which fishing rules are monitored and complied with in the EU. Improving the way in which the EU can monitor the enforcement of EU rules on fisheries will intensify the fight against IUU fishing. The proposals will also further support the effective implementation of the landing obligation, which comes fully into force as of next year and requires that fishermen land all catches to stop the wasteful practice of throwing unwanted fish back to the sea.
21. The European Union announced that it will contribute a minimum of EUR 500.000 in 2018 to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to further to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fisheries.
22. The European Union announced a 33 % increase, worth EUR 2.8 million, for the 2018 budget of the Copernicus maritime security service to support IUU fisheries detection and deterrence. This top-up will allow the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) to further carry out fisheries controls via satellite, including tackling IUU fisheries in different parts of the world. The total budget for Copernicus maritime security service for 2018 will be EUR 7.9 million.
23. The European Union, as one of the ten signatories to the recently agreed Agreement to prevent unregulated fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, will contribute EUR 1 million for scientific support to the Agreement. Collecting expert scientific advice will be crucial to improve the understanding of the ecosystem(s) of the marine Arctic and, in particular, of determining whether fish stocks might exist in this area that could be harvested on a sustainable basis. The EU has also offered to host the Sixth Meeting of Scientific Experts on Fish Stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean, a meeting of science experts to support the implementation of this agreement, at the site of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in Ispra (Italy) in 2019.