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Improving International Ocean Governance - Two years of progress

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HIGH REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNION FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
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JOINT STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Accompanying the document

JOINT REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

Improving International Ocean Governance - Two years of progress

{JOIN(2019) 4 final}

INTRODUCTION

This Staff Working Document is the first in-depth analysis by the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) of the EU's international ocean governance agenda since its adoption on 10 November 2016. The document accompanies the Joint Report *Improving International Ocean Governance – Two years of progress*. It takes stock of the activities and achievements undertaken by the Commission's departments, the relevant European agencies and the EEAS on the actions set out in the 2016 Joint Communication¹. They are addressed under the guidance of the 2017 Council Conclusions² and the 2018 European Parliament Resolution³.

PILLAR 1: IMPROVING THE INTERNATIONAL OCEAN GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Ocean sustainability is a global challenge and a shared responsibility that requires a coherent governance framework based on international rules and a sound knowledgebase to inform the decision making process. Since adopting this agenda, the EU has used its presence in international and regional fora and its bilateral relations with key partners to make sure that existing rules are properly implemented and to fill any regulatory gaps.

Underpinned by its Global Strategy, the EU is supporting international bodies with a mandate relevant to oceans and building bridges among relevant actors and cross-sectoral initiatives, while ensuring that human activities at sea can operate in a safe and secure environment.

➤ **Action 1: Filling the gaps in the international ocean governance framework**

The EU has been actively promoting policy coherence and collective global accountability for oceans under the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Agenda. An important milestone in strengthening an international governance framework was the first ever UN Ocean conference in June 2017, on the occasion of which the UN General Assembly adopted a Call for Action. The EU welcomed the event and contributed 19 voluntary commitments to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 to 'conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.'

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the "Constitution for the Oceans", sets out the legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas and lays the basis for regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector. Given the need for a comprehensive global regime to better address the conservation and sustainable use of the biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, the EU and its Member States are actively engaged in developing an international legally binding instrument under the Convention.

Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the EU has supported the inclusion of relevant marine species in the international regime to ensure that wildlife trade is legal and sustainable. The EU has also renewed its financial support for the implementation of relevant CITES decisions, with an additional

¹ JOIN(2016) 49 final

² WK 8029/17 INIT

³ P8_TA(2018)0004

EUR 900 000 for 2017-2020. This has helped exporting countries to more effectively implement the CITES requirements, in particular for determining that traded marine specimens, including sharks and rays, were sustainably harvested and legally acquired. The EU and its Member States have also strengthened their efforts on enforcement and combating illegal trade, for example in CITES-listed European eel from EU countries to other parts of the world⁴.

The EU has supported global efforts to protect marine and coastal biodiversity under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through priority actions and a project for commercially-exploited marine species listed under the Convention. Moreover, the EU welcomed decisions by the 13th CBD Conference of the Parties on a new set of ecologically and biologically significant areas in the seas of East Asia, the North-West Indian Ocean and the North-East Indian Ocean; a voluntary specific workplan for biodiversity in cold-water areas; marine spatial planning; training initiatives; and a decision addressing impacts of marine debris and anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity.

Concerning deep-sea mining, the EU earmarked EUR 1.5 million under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) in 2017 to provide the International Seabed Authority with resources to develop a regional environmental management plan along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. In its work on deep seabed mining, the Commission has put emphasis on activities to ensure that deep-sea mining, if it is carried out at all, will be fully in line with the EU's commitment to sustainability in line with the precautionary and ecosystems based approach.

Furthermore, the EU has actively promoted the ratification of the International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention C188 since broader ratification of this Convention will ensure that fishermen have decent working conditions on board fishing vessels.

A number of EU Member States have ratified the 2012 Cape Town Agreement on fishing vessel safety, expediting the entry into force of this key international Convention. The Convention provides uniform principles and rules concerning the construction and equipment of fishing vessels directed to the safety of such vessels and their crews. While the technical requirements are already applicable within EU waters through Directive 97/70/EC, there is a need for safety and competition reasons to ensure these basic safety rules are made applicable internationally.

➤ **Action 2: Promoting regional fisheries management and cooperation in key ocean areas to fill regional governance gaps**

The EU took a leading role in the negotiations on the Agreement to prevent unregulated fishing in the High Seas of the Central Arctic Ocean. The signature of the Agreement in October 2018 marked a historic achievement and is a great example of successful regional cooperation. The Agreement will fill a significant gap in the ocean governance framework and safeguard the fragile Arctic marine ecosystems for future generations. It is a first step towards creating one or more Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) for the high seas portion of the central Arctic Ocean — an area

⁴ COM(2018) 711 final

of around 2.8 million square kilometres, roughly the size of the Mediterranean Sea. Under the Agreement, a joint programme of scientific research and monitoring will be established to better understand the marine Arctic ecosystem(s). The fishing moratorium has been agreed for a period of 16 years after the agreement is ratified, with a possibility to be extended, until scientific advice is available to determine sustainable fishing limits. This is the first example of prudent management whereby a management regime will be put in place before fisheries have started. These efforts are complemented by the EU's Copernicus Arctic — Monitoring Forecasting Centre, which provides daily forecasts and data on the whole Arctic to support climate and weather forecasting, maritime safety and sustainable marine resources management.

The EU has been a strong driver of strengthening existing regional fisheries management bodies and advocating regular performance reviews, including by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation. In CCAMLR, for example, the second performance review was done in 2017 following the EU's proposal. Subsequently, EUR 200.000 were provided to support the follow-up of to the recommendations for improving CCAMLR's performance.

For the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the EU achieved the adoption of new fisheries governance through the MedFish4Ever and Sofia declarations of 2017. These set out concrete actions to ensure sustainable exploitation of fish resources, including by combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Subsequently, the EU supported the work of the GFCM in order to facilitate the implementation of the actions envisaged in the Malta MedFish4Ever and Sofia Declarations. As a result, the first ever International Control Scheme in the Strait of Sicily was adopted in 2017 and implemented during 2018 in cooperation with EFCA. Also, under the EU's leadership, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) has adopted new conservation and management measures for key stocks (e.g. turbot, European eel, small pelagics in the Adriatic, deep water species, and hake in the Strait of Sicily).

Also, following proposals by the EU, a new port inspection scheme was adopted by SIOFA, the existing scheme under the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation strengthened and the Catch Documentation Scheme requirements in CCAMLR to improve catch traceability revised.

The EU provided EUR 17 million under the EMFF in 2017-2018 for improving governance, science and capacity building, and for strengthening compliance in the 18 RFMOs and tuna RFMOs in which the EU participates. This EU action has been paying off: at the end of 2018, 15 of the world's 18 emblematic tuna stocks were at sustainable levels, according to scientific advice. This funding was also used to support the creation, in 2018, of the regional database on fisheries data and statistics for the Western Central Atlantic. In nearly all RFMOs responsible for tuna management, the EU promoted a consistent approach to the management of fishing gear, notably by proposing the adoption of non-entangling designs to reduce impacts on by-catch species. Furthermore the EU supports the adoption of RFMO provisions to promote the use of biodegradable material.

In 2017 and 2018, the EU actively contributed to the preparation and adoption of proposals to improve the monitoring, control and surveillance framework in RFMOs including the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) in the Indian Ocean and in the Southern Ocean under CCAMLR

and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna. These included measures to: (i) make the procedure for listing IUU vessels in a number of RFMOs and the cross-listing of IUU vessels listed in RFMOs more efficient; (ii) address the involvement of nationals in IUU activities; (iii) integrate the Port State Measures Agreement; (iv) upgrade the requirements regarding vessel monitoring systems; and (v) strengthen the work of the compliance committees. The EU also successfully promoted the periodical undertaking of performance reviews in several RFMOs.

Additionally, the Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation funded the FarFish project, which supports RFMOs with basic scientific knowledge and tools for better fisheries management in international waters, and the SmartFish project, which will introduce and test new technologies to improve catch selectivity, fisheries data quality and management and advance monitoring and compliance with fishery regulations. The EU has also continued its strong support for strengthening the robustness of science in all RFMOs in order to promote the long-term sustainability of the stocks under their purview.

➤ **Action 3: Improving coordination and cooperation between international organisations and launching Ocean Partnerships for ocean management**

The success in strengthening regional ocean governance needs also to be driven by cooperation across sectors, among regions and between regional and global organisations.

The EU supported cooperation between the UN's International Labour Organisation, International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on labour challenges related to IUU fishing. It did so to help improve coordination and cooperation through and among the various bodies with a mandate relevant to oceans, as well as to highlight the links between fisheries governance, the seafood industry and forced labour.

Furthermore, the EU continued to support the so-called Kobe process, which aims to harmonise the activities of five regional fisheries organisations responsible for tuna management. EUR 400 000 were committed in 2018 to organising a series of tuna RFMO coordination meetings, in particular with the objective of reducing negative impacts of Fisheries Aggregating Devices (FADs) on the ecosystem and to identify best practices to increase survivability of sharks accidentally caught in tuna fisheries.

Cooperation between global and regional frameworks has also been essential to address underwater noise issues, increasingly acknowledged as a source of pollution. On this, collaboration between IMO and Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs) has been strengthened through the promotion of IMO's guidelines to reduce underwater noise from commercial shipping. The 19th meeting of the UN Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea focusing on 'Anthropogenic underwater noise' (18-22 June 2018) was also a good opportunity for Member States, the EU and various RSCs to present their actions at national and regional levels.

The EU committed to support the establishment of the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG) Marine Regions Forum at the Our Ocean conference 2017 in Malta by organising the first meeting of the PROG Marine Regions Forum jointly with Germany in 2019. This will be a cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder forum for dialogue to support integrated ocean governance for marine regions. The PROG is to promote

integrated regional models for ocean governance and to advance regional cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of marine ecosystems and resources. The EU has also been supporting processes like the collaborative arrangement between the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission. Furthermore, the EU participates in the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue by the CBD, which brings together Regional Seas Organisations and Regional Fisheries Bodies to accelerate progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals. The forthcoming EUR 10 million project for the African Regional Seas is an example of the EU's support for strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration across regions. Further efforts undertaken included closer collaboration between the EU and UN Environment at both global and regional levels, aiming at reinforcing integrated ocean governance under the EC-UN Environment Roadmap for Healthy and Productive Oceans, and further strengthening collaboration to achieve SDGs at the sea-basin level.

Cooperation within regions was also strengthened through the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive⁵ in close cooperation with relevant European RSCs. RSCs in the Baltic Sea, the North-East Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea have recently adopted their respective plans to achieve 'Good Environmental Status' or its equivalent in their waters. They cooperate with the relevant RFMOs on sets of measures to achieve a healthy and productive marine environment by 2020, based on monitoring and assessment. Qualitative assessments of the marine environment were produced by these conventions, thereby contributing to achieving this goal.

Further support of EUR 7.25 million was provided to the Barcelona Convention for developing monitoring and assessment capacities with the aim of measuring progress on achieving Good Environmental Status, advancing the implementation of the Regional Marine Litter Action Plan and further developing a network of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas. In the European Neighbourhood Policy South region⁶, the implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention through a support mechanism of EUR 4 million is helping to monitor and reduce marine pollution in the Mediterranean by producing and sharing environmental data, indicators and information.

In its bilateral relations, the EU has reached out to key ocean partners on upscaling existing relations into ocean partnerships. The feedback received has been very positive: the EU signed the first Ocean Partnership with China on 16 July 2018 and is expecting to sign a partnership with Canada in 2019. Ocean partnerships build on the principles, objectives and priorities of the international ocean governance agenda with the objective of promoting comprehensive dialogue and joint actions for ocean sustainability.

In addition, the EU continues to participate in the annual consultations at the United Nations on the UN General Assembly Oceans and the Law of the Sea Resolution. Such resolutions encourage states to work closely with and through international organisations, funds and programmes, as well as the specialised agencies of the UN system and relevant international conventions, to identify emerging areas of focus for improved coordination

⁵ Directive 2008/56/EC

⁶ The European Neighbourhood Policy-South region covers 10 non-EU Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia.

and cooperation and how best to address these issues. UN-Oceans is the interagency UN mechanism that seeks to strengthen the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of the competent UN organisations on oceans and law of the sea issues. The consultations on the 2019 Resolution will seek to update the terms of reference of UN-Oceans to reflect the latest developments on oceans and the law of the sea.

➤ **Action 4: Capacity building**

The EU has been actively engaged in promoting better ocean governance with third partners, programming EUR 590 million under its development policy for 2014-2020. This includes sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, marine protected areas and coastal zone management, climate mitigation in the maritime transport sector, harbour infrastructures and maritime security. In particular, the EU has committed EUR 35 million to the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership Programme (PEUMP)⁷ to support, in 15 Pacific states in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group. This funding will support sustainable management and the development of fisheries for food security and economic growth, while addressing IUU fishing, climate change resilience and conservation of marine biodiversity challenges. PEUMP will strengthen capacity building through education, training and research. The programme brings three regional agencies — the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Fisheries Forum Agency and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme— together with the University of the South Pacific and several non-governmental organisations. Regular sector policy dialogues between the EU and the Pacific countries will be organised in the framework of PEUMP.

In addition, the EU will provide EUR 17 million to help Pacific countries address issues relating to health and well-being, marine litter and biodiversity conservation (PacWaste Plus programme⁸). This programme will support more recycling and circular economic development in the Pacific.

The EU also committed EUR 15 million under the PESCAO programme to improve regional fisheries governance in Western Africa⁹ and for the building of monitoring, control and surveillance capacities to deter IUU fishing. Furthermore, the EU has earmarked EUR 28 million to support the development of sustainable fisheries through the ECOFISH programme,¹⁰ supporting sustainable management and development of fisheries for food security and economic growth, while addressing climate change resilience and conservation of marine biodiversity. In particular, ECOFISH strengthens regional capacity to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in the African part of the Indian Ocean region and support concrete fisheries management and governance initiatives in small-scale marine and inland fisheries.

At national level, the new CAPFISH-Capture Fisheries programme¹¹ in Cambodia with a EUR 87 million budget aims at ensuring more sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive growth of Cambodia's freshwater and marine fisheries. It seeks in particular to

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/aap-financing-pacific-part2-annex1-c_2017_4903_en.pdf

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/aap-financing-pacificregion_2018part1-annex1-c_2018_204_en.pdf

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/annual-action-programme-2017in-favour-western-africa-action-document-improved-regional-fisheries_en

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/c-2018-4132-f1-annex_2-sustainable-fisheries.pdf

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/aap-financing-cambodia-annex1-c_2018_8706_en.pdf

strengthen the management, conservation and control systems in Cambodia's inland and marine fisheries, help the private sector develop and improve the livelihoods of fishing communities.

In addition, in February 2018 the EU launched four regional projects in Africa under its Copernicus satellite-monitoring programme. These bring together 18 African countries and the African Union to develop services related to fisheries and aquaculture, coastal vulnerability and risk management, monitoring of coastal ecosystems and of shipping traffic, and to develop regional ocean forecast centres in Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Jointly with the EU, the World Bank has devised an innovative Blue Economy Development Framework to help coastal states make the transition to 'blue' economies. Multi-dimensional diagnostics will help governments of the South Atlantic, Southeast Asia, the Gulf of Guinea regions and Small Island Developing States to develop evidence-based investment and policy reform plans for their coastal and ocean resources and to generate more value from 'blue' sectors.

The EU has also provided support to EFCA to undertake various capacity-building actions for fisheries inspectors in non-EU countries. Training has been delivered to Mediterranean and Black Sea countries, with specific training provided to Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Ukraine in 2017. EFCA is expected to extend its support for capacity building under the PESCAO and ECOFISH projects and to additional non-EU countries in the Mediterranean Sea under MEDFISH4EVER. EMSA is providing technical assistance in the Mediterranean through the EUR 4 million EuroMed Transport Maritime Project (SAFEMED IV). With a view to implementing the maritime aspects of the UfM Regional Transport Action Plan 2014-2020, the overall objectives of the project are, inter alia, improved maritime safety, improved security of ships and port facilities, reduced pollution to the marine environment, improved level of maritime training and qualification of seafarers, improved living and working conditions on board ships.

Lastly, the EU will invest EUR 9.2 million to support the work of RSCs in ACP regions.¹² The EU and the ACP Group of states, representing the large majority of Small Island Developing States, stand united in promoting effective global actions to manage and use the world's oceans and their resources in ways that keep the oceans healthy, productive, safe, secure and resilient. On access to, use, and management of vital marine resources, they have agreed to cooperate to increase convergence towards mutual commitments and undertake tangible actions to strengthen ocean governance worldwide. A new Support Programme of EUR 35 million for ACP Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Coastal Countries will contribute to the sustainable development of ACP SIDS and coastal countries by supporting and improving the protection, management and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources at regional, national and local levels, through targeted capacity building, strengthening knowledge-based decision-making, grass-root pilot projects, and enhancing intra- and inter-regional cooperation for environmental sustainability.

The EU has taken concrete steps to extend the scope of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) to broader maritime issues. In this context, a list of concrete project proposals to support SDG14 implementation is now being reviewed together with SFPAs

¹² <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2018/EN/C-2018-8738-F1-EN-ANNEX-7-PART-1.PDF>

countries. The Seychelles and Mauritius have already identified developing their 'blue' economy as a priority under their SFPAs. Overall, by November 2018, ten SFPAs were in place with an overall budget of EUR 135 million per year. Three additional SFPAs have been negotiated and should enter into force in the near future.

In the Mediterranean, the SWITCH-MED programme has been implemented by the EU in close cooperation with the UN with the objectives of creating jobs and boosting the economy in the Mediterranean, while contributing directly to reducing pollution from industrial activities and increasing the re-use and recycling of material to limit waste. During its first phase (2014-2018), the project contributed to saving natural resources (water, energy and raw material) for an annual amount of more than 41 million euros in 125 businesses and generated 30 000 jobs. The measures implemented by the industries will save annually around 700 GWh of energy, 3 500 000 m³ of water and 33 000 tons of raw material. It will avoid more than 190 000 tons of CO₂ and more than 19 000 tons of solid waste. Because of its impact and its success, SWITCH will be continued and several countries in the Mediterranean region transposed the project into their national cooperation framework. The Switch initiative was launched by the Commission to enhance international progress towards a green transition. Regional programmes exist also in Asia and Africa.

➤ **Action 5: Ensuring the safety and security of seas and oceans**

The EU plays an important role as a global maritime security provider, in line with its Global Strategy and relevant EU regional policies, in particular for the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea. In this context, the EU committed EUR 29 million under the Support to West Africa Integrated Maritime Security (SWAIMS) EDF-funded project to support the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Integrated Maritime Strategy and improve maritime security and safety in the Gulf of Guinea. Furthermore, starting in 2019, an EUR 8.5 million project aiming at "Improving Port Security in West and Central Africa" will support partner countries in West and Central Africa in their capacity to adequately address increasing vulnerabilities related to port security through assistance to comply with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) standards and through support to increase resilience and preparedness to crisis such as attacks or explosions. The pilot phase will focus on West and Central Africa.

Progress in implementing the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) was presented in June 2017 with the second implementation report on the EUMSS action plan, in particular in terms of increased cross-sectoral cooperation¹³. On 26 June 2018, the Council revised the EUMSS Action Plan and the accompanying Council Conclusions. It did so to ensure that the policy response remains fit for current and future challenges, in line with political priorities in a rapidly changing security environment, and to take account of recently adopted EU legislation, policies and other security and defence initiatives. Whereas the original 2014 EUMSS Action Plan addressed global challenges through horizontal actions, the revised one takes a more tailor-made approach through regional responses in EU sea basins like the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and internationally in the Gulf of Guinea, Horn of Africa-Red Sea and Southeast Asia.

¹³ WK 10494/18 INIT

Cooperation between EMSA, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and EFCA is well established and is leading to concrete and tangible results. This interagency cooperation has been tested for 18 months through a project to strengthen synergies between them and enable them to better support the activities of more than 300 civilian and military coastguard authorities in the Member States. Progress has been particularly notable on exchanges of information and sharing of assets for multipurpose missions. For example, in the first 10 months of 2018 EFCA received 964 vessel-sighting forms from the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, mainly for the Mediterranean Sea area.

As from 2018, EFCA chartered and managed the multipurpose offshore patrol vessel Lundy Sentinel. This additional control capacity supported Member States in all relevant sea basins in carrying out fisheries surveillance and control as well as other coastguard functions. In line with interagency cooperation, the Lundy Sentinel was available to support border surveillance, including any emergency response and rescue operations.

On maritime awareness, the EU continues to promote a coherent approach to maritime surveillance across the EU by fostering better complementarity of information exchange, building upon existing mandatory systems in Union law and voluntary initiatives such as the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE), in line with action A.2. 1 of the EUMSS Action Plan. CISE has been further developed in particular through the EU CISE 2020 Pre-Operational Validation project. A transitional phase is to be put in place (2019 – 2020) building on the results of the EUCISE2020 and with the involvement of EMSA in order to reach operational capacity post-2020. The Commission will then examine the need for a policy initiative to support its operational implementation, taking into account the review conducted in 2018 to assess the progress of CISE development in the 2014 – 2018 period.

As initially planned, the Copernicus programme supported safety at sea. It did so by delivering daily marine environmental forecasts for ship routing or offshore operations (e.g. currents, waves, sea levels, temperatures, ice) and by supporting operations at sea from EMSA covering European regional sea basins, but also international trade routes and worldwide hotspots on request. For example, services were delivered on request to the UN Office of Drugs and Crime and in support of an international search and rescue operation in the South Atlantic in 2017.

Lastly, the Copernicus programme continued to support EU agencies such as EMSA, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and EFCA as well as EU Member State authorities and regional partner organisations in improving maritime safety and border control activities, identifying and combating illegal fishing worldwide, and detecting and combating oil pollution through space observation and data intelligence.

PILLAR 2: REDUCING PRESSURE ON OCEANS AND SEAS AND CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY

➤ Action 6: Implementing the COP21 Agreement and mitigating the harmful impact of climate change on oceans, coastlines and ecosystems

The EU has recognised the importance of the oceans and climate issue and is committed to engaging in this domain. The EU is promoting and developing ocean-related action to

implement the Paris Agreement, such as nature-based solutions and ocean-based renewable energy.

These elements were reiterated in the new strategic vision for achieving a climate-neutral Europe by 2050 adopted by the Commission in November 2018¹⁴. It lists the overriding priorities that should guide the transition to a climate-neutral Europe. These include (i) promoting a sustainable bio-economy; (ii) diversifying agriculture, animal farming, aquaculture and forestry production, further increasing productivity while also adapting to climate change itself; (iii) preserving and restoring ecosystems; and (iv) ensuring sustainable use and management of natural land and aquatic and marine resources. Healthy coastal ecosystems absorb emissions and help communities adapt to climate hazards. In addition to climate benefits, protecting coastal ecosystems will also help reverse the trend of marine biodiversity decline.

Since 2017, the EU has dedicated specific funding to restore marine and coastal ecosystems in different regions around the world, including the Mediterranean, Southeast Asia, and the ACP countries for a total of more than EUR 90 million. Furthermore, the EU is promoting offshore wind and ocean energy for providing clean energy to islands and coastlines in the EU and across the world. For instance, in line with the revised Renewable Energies Directive, the EU is mobilising technical expertise to help India launch the tender of its first offshore wind farm this year and to support the development of a new offshore wind energy market, aligned with best environmental, societal and technical practices. The EU has earmarked EUR 2.3 million for this purpose.

Furthermore, the Clean Energy for EU Islands initiative, launched in May 2017, aims to accelerate the clean energy transition on EU islands, ensuring they have secure and low-cost energy and creating local jobs. In June 2018 the secretariat of the initiative was tasked with creating a database of best practices that will be shared with island states across the world.

Reducing shipping emissions is also of prime importance in the fight against climate change. The April 2018 IMO agreement on an initial strategy on reducing CO₂ emissions together with ambitious targets for the maritime sector is a significant step forward. For this initial strategy to succeed, it is now crucial that effective and substantial reduction measures are developed and swiftly adopted and put in place from 2023. The EU is committed to continue playing an active role and pursuing strong global action on shipping emissions.

Against this background, the EU has committed EUR 10 million¹⁵ to establish, in cooperation with IMO, a global network of Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres in five regions: Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific. The objective is to help countries improve the efficiency of shipping, and thus limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their shipping sectors, through technical assistance and capacity building. Furthermore Horizon 2020 and its successor programme Horizon Europe will support the development of the innovative solutions necessary to substantially decarbonise shipping in line with the IMO's initial CO₂ reduction strategy.

¹⁴ COM(2018) 773 final

¹⁵https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/capacity-building-climate-mitigation-maritime-shipping-industry_en

For example, EUR 20 million will be invested within the final calls of Horizon 2020 to support the decarbonisation of long distance shipping.

At the IMO, the EU successfully insisted on a reduction in sulphur in shipping fuel effective from 1 January 2020. This 2020 global sulphur cap on fuel and a complementary ban on the carriage of non-compliant fuel oil for combustion purposes were adopted by IMO in October 2018, also effective from 1 January 2020.

Lastly, the European Commission renewed its commitment to the ocean and climate agenda at the 23rd and 24th annual conferences of the UN Climate Change Convention by taking part in their Oceans Action Days and organising the first ever dedicated EU Oceans Action Day.

➤ **Action 7: Fighting illegal fishing and strengthening the sustainable management of ocean food resources globally**

In 2018, the Commission proposed modernising and simplifying the way fishing rules are monitored and complied with within the EU by revising the 2009 Fisheries Control Regulation¹⁶. Among other things, the Commission proposed amending the provisions on the registration and weighing of catches in order to obtain more complete and reliable fisheries data. It also proposed strengthening the rules on serious infringements and sanctions to ensure that they are applied equally to all operators.

Furthermore, since the adoption of the IUU Regulation, the EU has entered into dialogue on IUU fishing matters with more than 50 countries in all the major fishing regions¹⁷. Thanks to these dialogues, 14 countries have successfully reformed their control and management systems in line with their international obligations as flag, coastal, port and market states responsibilities¹⁸. The EU also signed a Joint Statement with South Korea on efforts to combat IUU fishing. This signature resulted from the good results of the EU-Republic of Korea Working Group established after the lifting of the IUU 'yellow card' in April 2015.

Since 2016, five non-EU countries have been pre-identified by the EU as having vessels that engaged in IUU activities and have received a warning ('yellow card'). Furthermore, two countries have been blacklisted ('red card') after failing to address their problems in tackling IUU fishing, leading to an export ban to the EU. Since 2016, six countries have seen their pre-identification or identification revoked. A further seven remain pre-identified and three remain identified and blacklisted. Meanwhile, the EU is developing an electronic catch certification system (CATCH) to strengthen Member States' controls on the legality of fish products exported to the EU market. The CATCH version 1.0 will be presented in the first half of 2019.

The EU has also engaged in multilateral action, in particular:

- The creation of a global fleet register. The EU has actively participated in the work of the Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical Advisory Working Group and

¹⁶ COM/2018/368 final

¹⁷ (EC) No 1005/2008

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/illegal-fishing-overview-of-existing-procedures-third-countries_en.pdf

three specialised Core Working Groups. This work is important to ensure optimal technological compatibility between the FAO and the data providers of the Global Record as promoted by the EU. The Global Record is a fundamental tool for fighting IUU fishing as it makes information available.

- The allocation of a unique vessel identifier (IMO number) to commercial fishing vessels. IMO numbers are applied to fishing vessels above 100 GT.
- By playing a leading role in the negotiations that led to the adoption of Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes at FAO in July 2017.
- By effectively strengthening cooperation with INTERPOL on IUU fishing-related issues and efforts to increase cooperation between Member States and INTERPOL. The European Commission will pursue its efforts.

Following the entry into force in June 2016 of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, the EU has promoted further ratification of the agreement worldwide and volunteered to host the Port State Measures Agreement Review Conference in 2020. In line with part VI of the Agreement, the EU has furthermore granted a contribution of EUR 1.525 million through the EMFF to FAO's capacity-building programme. The 12-month 2018 project will support up to eight developing countries in strengthening national policy, legislative frameworks and national means and competencies to combat IUU fishing. This will be done through port state measures and complementary coordinated monitoring, control and surveillance operations, measures and tools, including the Global Record. An important deliverable of the project will be the establishment of a FAO capacity-development portal. This is to provide transparency and information on relevant capacity-development initiatives under projects and programmes by donors, international financial institutions and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations.

In addition, as stated under Action 4, the EU is providing dedicated development funding to Africa, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean region to support the development and management of sustainable fisheries. This includes action to help increase capacity to combat IUU fishing.

Since mid-2016, EFCA, supported by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), has implemented a pilot project called Integrated Maritime Services to assist and increase IUU deterrence worldwide (e.g. West African coast, North Atlantic and Arctic areas).

Lastly, since 17 January 2018 a new EU Regulation on the Sustainable Management of External Fleets¹⁹ applies. The Regulation on the Sustainable Management of External Fishing fleets is of prime importance in strengthening the EU's role as a key global actor in international fisheries. Its objective is to put in place a comprehensive system of fishing authorisations for EU vessels to fish outside Union waters. The system applies wherever the fishing activity takes place, based on strict eligibility criteria, in order to ensure that fish are caught in a sustainable manner. This covers any situation where an EU vessel is fishing outside EU waters.

¹⁹ (EU) 2017/2403

In the framework of the Trade and Sustainable Development Chapters of its Free Trade Agreements, the EU also negotiates provisions that aim to eliminate trade in products stemming from IUU fishing.

➤ **Action 8: Banning harmful fisheries subsidies**

In October 2016 the EU tabled a comprehensive proposal at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which was aligned with the 2020 deadline set in target 14.6 of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The objective was to achieve an agreement at the WTO Ministerial Conference MC11 held in Buenos Aires in December 2017. With this objective in mind, the EU put forward a revised proposal at the WTO in July 2017 to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing, and require states to refrain from introducing new subsidies of this kind. The proposal also contained provisions on strengthening transparency and guidelines on special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries. Despite the efforts undertaken by the EU and other members, a binding agreement could not be reached and discussions were postponed until the next Ministerial Conference. The EU remains actively engaged in efforts to reach an agreement to ban fisheries subsidies that contribute to overfishing, overcapacity and IUU fishing by 2020 at the latest.

Following the same line, the Commission's proposal for the post-2020 EMFF²⁰ proposes to maintain the ban on capacity-enhancing subsidies for the EU fleet.

➤ **Action 9: Fighting marine litter and the 'sea of plastic'**

In response to SDG 14 target 1 and as part of its Communication on Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy²¹, the Commission adopted a Communication setting out an European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy²² and presented a legislative proposal for a new Directive on Port Reception Facilities²³ as part of the strategy in January 2018. The legislative proposal seeks to ensure that all waste from ships, including fishing vessels and recreational craft is delivered to adequate port reception facilities. The new Directive, expected to enter into force in the first half of 2019, will be a key instrument to address marine litter from sea-based sources. This provides a comprehensive approach to curbing leakage of plastic waste and microplastics into the environment, notably the marine environment, irrespective of their source.

As a follow-up, in May 2018 the European Commission proposed new rules targeting the 10 single-use plastic products most often found on beaches and seas in Europe, as well as lost and abandoned fishing gear²⁴. This initiative also complements the proposal for a review of the Fisheries Control System, which will improve the rules on reporting lost fishing gear, e.g. through the introduction of e-reporting, and on its retrieval.

Leading by example, the Commission has phased out all single-use plastic cups in water fountains and vending machines in all its buildings and at all meetings. It achieved this by, among other things, improving its green public procurement in 2017.

²⁰ 2018/0210 (COD)

²¹ COM(2015) 614 final

²² COM(2018) 28 final

²³ COM(2018) 33 final

²⁴ COM(2018) 340 final

As the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy requires improved mapping and monitoring of marine litter, the EU secured specific funding, through the EMFF, to develop marine litter baselines as part of the implementation of the Marine Framework Directive. Maps of litter distribution with common standards are now available through the European Maritime Observation and Data Network (EMODnet). Additional financing of EUR 2 million through the EMFF was earmarked in 2017 to support the reduction, monitoring and quantification, removal and recycling of marine litter. The EMFF also envisages investment of EUR 22 million to support fishing for litter operations. In addition to the EMFF, other EU funding programmes like Horizon 2020, LIFE or the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) also finance actions to prevent, reduce and retrieve marine litter. For instance, since November 2016 the EU has funded four projects on marine litter (CLAIM, GoJelly, TOPIOS and CM) worth a total of EUR 13 million through Horizon 2020. The projects will improve the understanding of marine litter pathways and develop technologies to remove marine litter and microplastics. Marelitt Baltic Sea funded with EUR 3 million through the ERDF developed an action plan called “The Baltic Sea Blueprint” which provides guidance on mapping, retrieval, recycling and prevention of lost fishing gear. Another EUR 2.4 million through the ERDF support the CleanAtlantic project. It aims at improving capabilities to monitor, prevent and remove marine litter.

Furthermore, the EEA has developed a Marine Litter Watch mobile app to strengthen the knowledge base and provide support to policy making. The EEA citizen science project has been monitoring beach litter since 2015 and thereby providing data for EU legislation and helping to change human behavior in order to prevent and reduce litter in our oceans.

On the regional front, the EU has actively supported the development and implementation of action plans against marine litter in the Northeast Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Baltic under the RSCs. The EU has also provided funding of EUR 1.4 million for a Barcelona Convention project implementing the Mediterranean Action Plan and supporting the development of such a plan for the Black Sea, which was adopted by the Black Sea Commission in 2018. Furthermore, the EU has proposed the adoption of measures to prevent marine pollution associated with fishing activities in all RFMOs to which it is Party. In addition, almost EUR 1 million has been dedicated under the EMFF to promote the development and testing of biodegradable materials in the construction of fish aggregating devices in all tuna RFMOs.

On the international front, at the third UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) in December 2017 the EU supported the adoption of the UNEA Resolution on marine litter and microplastics. This promotes the development and implementation of action plans for preventing marine litter and the discharge of microplastics. It also calls for accelerated action and strengthened partnerships to combat marine litter and microplastics, as well as the establishment of an Ad Hoc Open Ended Expert Group to identify potential options for continued work for consideration by UNEA. The EU is actively participating in this expert group and seeking ways to improve international governance to address the marine litter and microplastics challenges that build on existing instruments and address the gaps. The EU supported the 'marine litter lab' campaign together with partners in 2018.

Furthermore, during FAO technical consultations held in February 2018 the EU was actively engaged in the adoption of Voluntary Guidelines on the marking of fishing gear. The guidelines provide guidance on how to implement a gear marking system, how to

control and enforce it, and how to report and recover abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear. The EU supported the endorsement of these Voluntary Guidelines by the FAO's Committee on Fisheries in July 2018. The EU also supported requesting FAO to develop a comprehensive global strategy to address such gear and encourage states to develop action plans to deal with it.

Under the G7, the EU was also actively engaged in the negotiations on the Ocean Plastics Charter, which builds on the objectives of the EU Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy and on its life cycle approach to plastics management. The Charter was endorsed by the EU together with the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Moreover, through the Partnership Instrument the EU is supporting a dedicated project worth EUR 9 million to address marine litter at source in hot-spot countries and rivers in East and Southeast Asia. The EU will furthermore provide EUR 17 million to help Pacific countries build waste management programmes and address issues relating to health and well-being, marine litter and biodiversity conservation.

As regards the issue of marine litter from ships, the EU is involved in the discussions in the IMO on the newly established action plan on marine litter, which was adopted by the IMO in October 2018. Under this action plan, measures will be developed in the coming years to reduce marine plastic litter from fishing vessels, as well as from other ships, to improve the effectiveness of port reception facilities, and to enhance understanding, public awareness, and training of seafarers.

Lastly, Europol, with the support of EFCA, EMSA and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency collaborated with INTERPOL in an unprecedented international law enforcement operation to fight maritime pollution in 2018. The operation, code-named 30 Days at Sea, brought together some 276 law enforcement and environmental agencies across 58 countries to take targeted action to tackle crime against marine pollution law. The results were outstanding, with 3 891 actions worldwide detecting 356 pollution incidents. These led to 120 arrests and 436 administrative cases of prosecution for illegal discharges of oil and garbage from vessels, shipbreaking, breaches of shipping emissions regulations, river pollution and land-based run-off into the sea.

➤ **Action 10: Promoting maritime spatial planning (MSP) at global level**

The European Commission has been jointly working with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) under the March 2017 Joint Roadmap that sketches out a vision and a role for MSP in implementing Agenda 2030.

Based on the experience of the EU and IOC-UNESCO, the Commission aims to develop together with IOC-UNESCO a set of guidelines focusing in particular on cross-border MSP. In May 2018 the Commission and IOC-UNESCO launched the International MSP Forum that will work on these guidelines. To this end, under the EMFF the Commission has granted a EUR 1.4 million contribution to IOC-UNESCO. This includes two pilot projects on MSP cooperation, in the Western Mediterranean and the Southeast Pacific.

Moreover, the EU is supporting MSP in the South-Western Indian Ocean through a project coordinated by the EU outermost region of Reunion Island. This project, with an EU contribution of around EUR 1 million, is supported by the intergovernmental organisation of the Indian Ocean State Islands.

➤ **Action 11: Achieving the global target of conserving 10 % of marine and coastal areas and promoting the effective management of marine protected areas (MPAs)**

The EU has been a strong advocate for the delivery of the global targets to establish and conserve Marine Protected Areas under the CBD and other relevant fora. It cooperates closely with relevant regional and global organisations for that. The EU has already designated 10.8% of its marine and coastal areas as MPAs, primarily through the Natura 2000 network, and is actively engaged in putting in place adequate conservation measures for them. It is also promoting the effective management of MPAs in various regions and countries.

The EU provides support for MPAs through a number of its financing instruments available for different categories of beneficiaries (e.g. the LIFE programme, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, the Global Public Goods and Challenges programme and the Partnership Instrument). It has also regularly supported the work programmes dedicated to coordinated action on MPAs of the RSCs to which it is party.

In addition, the EU, in collaboration with all the RSCs where it is a contracting party, has been developing studies to establish coherent and effective networks of MPAs and thus maximise their ecological and socio-economic benefits. For instance, an ongoing project focused on the Mediterranean Sea will analyse the coherence of MPA networks providing indicators and examples that can be applied in other regions. The final results will arrive, and a final conference will be held, in the first half of 2019.

The European Commission has furthermore dedicated EUR 1 million to an MPA twinning project on best practices and networking for MPA managers in the Atlantic area from Europe to Africa, North America and South America. As a result of the project, the networks drafted a Common Strategy for a continued partnership and issued a Call for Joint Action at the Fourth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC4) held in Chile, which generated political impact. This followed joint statements issued at the international parks congress in Hawaii in 2016 and the New York SDG 14 conference in June 2017. The Commission will provide further support for the effective management of MPAs in the Atlantic and Southeast Asia. It committed EUR 10 million to the action in the coral triangle focusing on an integrated seascape management for sustainable development of local communities, combining activities addressing the expansion and management reinforcement of the MPAs network, sustainable small-scale fisheries, and ecosystem management for climate change adaptation.²⁵ Support has also been provided to the management of protected areas, including MPAs, in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries through the programme BIOPAMA II (Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme)²⁶. Out of the total amount of EUR 60 million, it is estimated that EUR 20 million would be used to fund ocean related activities. The action is structured around the work of a series of Regional Observatories (RO) for protected areas across the ACP managed by regional institutions, and housing Regional Reference

²⁵ Annual Action Programme 2018 of the GPGC-MIP 2014-2020

²⁶ Annual Action Programme 2016 in favour of intra-ACP cooperation to be financed from the 11th European Development Fund; https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/ad-1-2aap-intra-acp-2016_en.pdf

Information systems (RRIS) with tools and services that stakeholders can use to monitor and report on the status of biodiversity and PAs and for informed decision-making.

EUR 3 million were granted to the Barcelona Convention to promote an ecologically representative and efficiently managed network of MPAs in the Mediterranean. The EU is supporting work to promote MPAs in the Mediterranean through three ongoing scientific projects (PROTOMEDEA, MANTIS, SAFENET). It is also contributing to biodiversity conservation through other spatial-management areas. For example, the EU strongly supported the adoption by GFCM in 2017 of the Jabuka/Pomo Pit Fishing Restricted Area, which is recognised as an essential nursery and spawning ground in the Mediterranean. Lastly, a strategy is being developed to identify priorities for supporting the establishment of MPAs in Africa.

PILLAR 3: STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL OCEAN RESEARCH AND DATA

➤ Action 12: A coherent EU strategy on ocean observation, data and marine accounting

Reliable and accessible ocean data are key to ensuring safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans. As oceans have no borders and are intrinsically linked, cooperation with international, regional and bilateral partners is necessary to bring together separate marine data holdings to create a common picture that can help build an evidence-based approach for tackling the pressures on the oceans.

In this context, EMODnet and Copernicus share many facilities. Work is underway to assess their compatibility with major data platforms operated by countries on other continents such as the United States, Japan and Australia. EMODnet is contributing to the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans, the international effort to map seabeds.

Furthermore, the EU is developing a joint action that will enable ocean data cooperation between the EU and China. It will connect EMODnet with China's National Marine Data and Information Service, providing equal access and equal levels of openness to data and data products from European and Chinese providers. Data products will be developed and made available equally through the EMODnet portal and the Chinese networks. The EU has earmarked EUR 3.5 million for this purpose. This project should be seen as the first phase of a long-term ambition to create an international marine data network that would cover oceans globally.

Moreover, in November 2018 the European Commission and partners organised a European Ocean Observing System conference to consider needs, gaps, economic benefits and alignment of different communities. The participants called for better coordination between communities on fisheries, research, environment, etc.

In the international framework the Commission is working with its international partners in the All Atlantic Research Alliance, the G7 initiative "Future of the Seas and Oceans", the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Group on Earth Observations (GEO)/Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) Framework to improve ocean observations and data handling. Furthermore, under the Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020 new projects on ocean observations have been funded (for example ODYSSEA, EUR 8 million).

Work has been also progressing on scanning priorities for marine accounts and developing experimental marine ecosystem accounts. Some test cases, such as sea-grass,

fish biomass and seafloor integrity accounts, are being developed in the EU project on Integrated Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services Accounting as well as by the EEA.

Lastly, as a follow up to the relevant Our Ocean Conference commitment in 2017, the EU launched its WISE–Marine portal, drawing on existing reporting by EU Member States, European data infrastructures and data obtained from the RSCs. The sections of the portal on ocean governance and SDG 14 will now be further strengthened.

➤ **Action 13: Strengthening investment in ‘blue’ science and innovation**

In accordance with the European Cloud Initiative Communication²⁷, the EU is developing a pilot Blue Cloud, which will be part of the European Open Science Cloud. Through Horizon 2020, the EU has provided funding for the SeaDataCloud project as well as for the Innovation Booster for Blue Cloud Pilot initiative. Furthermore, the EU has published a call for research proposals for oceans observations and forecasting. These will be important building blocks for developing this thematic cloud, which will bring together existing scientific clouds and research infrastructures and support the development of cloud-based services, bringing all the advantages of this new technology to scientists.

The EU has worked collaboratively with its G7 partners to advance plans for global action on ocean observation. Projects on integrated ocean observing systems for the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Arctic are under way. In 2017, the EU provided EUR 10 million to finance several research infrastructure projects (ARICE and EUMarineRobots).

➤ **Action 14: International ocean research, innovation and science partnerships**

The EU has pursued the implementation of activities under the All Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance. This was initiated with the signature of the EU-US-Canada Galway Statement on Atlantic Ocean Cooperation in 2013 and complemented with the signature of the EU-Brazil-South Africa Belém Statement on Atlantic Research and Innovation Cooperation in July 2017. The cooperation now covers the Atlantic Ocean from the Arctic to Antarctica. The EU has allocated over EUR 60 million for 2018-2019 to support this cooperation through Horizon 2020. In parallel, the EU has supported the development of the South-South Science Plan under the leadership of Brazil and South Africa. This will further expand the work of the Alliance by promoting frameworks for closer cooperation. Cooperation on marine research and innovation will help to tackle the challenges linked to the Atlantic, including ocean observation, food security, polar research and climate variability. Furthermore, in 2018 the EU signed a bilateral Administrative Arrangement on Marine Research and Innovation Cooperation with Argentina and the Republic of Cabo Verde.

Lastly, an international seabed mapping working group was set up under the Galway Statement to help coordinate the mapping activities of the three partners, including ship time and data sharing, and to identify priority areas for mapping in the Atlantic.

The EU also remains engaged in global alliances, notably in the development of the Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Action on ocean sustainability that will provide

²⁷ COM/2016/0178 final

a solution-oriented and transdisciplinary approach to research. Linked to the Copernicus Marine Service, the EU and international partners also continued their efforts on open access and interoperability of data. This was done in, for example, the GEO/GEOSS and the European Global Ocean Observing System.

Concerning the Mediterranean, all members of the Union for the Mediterranean are now involved in the BLUEMED initiative. This promotes cooperation in marine research and innovation with the aim of keeping the Mediterranean Sea healthy, productive and resilient. The EU is supporting this initiative through Horizon 2020 with over EUR 50 million.

The EU has also launched a specific programme for the Black Sea. A 'vision paper' on a common maritime and research agenda for the Black Sea was endorsed in 2018. The strengthening of data collection and scientific evaluation in the Black Sea is also supported by a dedicated GFCM scientific project (BlackSea4Fish) and the development of the Aquaculture Demonstrative Centre in the Black Sea. Both actions are financially supported by the EU.

FURTHER ACTIONS ADVANCING OCEAN GOVERNANCE

Complementing the international ocean governance agenda, the EU has taken further initiatives since its adoption that help to strengthen international ocean governance. As a proactive supporter of the Our Ocean Conferences, the EU hosted the fourth such conference, in Malta in 2017. The conference gathered over 400 commitments from nearly 1 000 representatives of international institutions, governments, businesses, non-governmental organisations, foundations and research institutes from 112 countries around the world to conserve and sustainably use the oceans and their resources. Financial commitments totalled more than EUR 7 billion. The EU itself announced over EUR 550 million in EU-funded initiatives in 36 commitments to tackle global oceans challenges, while the overall commitments of the EU and its Member States amounted to over EUR 2.8 billion. At the 2018 Our Ocean conference in Bali, the EU committed to a total of EUR 300 million on initiatives related to marine pollution, marine protection, the 'blue' economy, sustainable fisheries and climate change impacts.

The IMO adopted in 2017 more stringent rules on the safety of passenger ships based on a proposal made by the European Commission and EU Member States to the IMO in January 2016. The proposal was based on extensive research funded by the EU and studies commissioned by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). The input provided to the IMO has driven the efforts to upgrade international standards for the damage survivability of passenger ships. The new IMO requirements for passenger ships improve the survivability of all kinds of passenger ships engaged in international voyages.

Also in 2018, the Commission introduced measures to encourage sustainable finance to promote sustainable use of marine resources under its action plan on sustainable finance. In response to a growing need for finance and investment guidelines to underpin a sustainable 'blue' economy, a partnership between the Commission, WWF, the Prince of Wales's International Sustainability Unit and the European Investment Bank developed 14 voluntary Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles for financial institutions and investors in the 'blue' economy and proposed to create a taxonomy for classifying economic activities that are considered environmentally sustainable including activities for the sustainable use and protection of marine resources.

Furthermore, at the 2018 European Maritime Day in Burgas, Bulgaria, to showcase cross-border cooperation around the Black Sea the six coastal countries and the Republic of Moldova endorsed the Ministerial Declaration *Towards a Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea*. Through the ‘Facility for Blue Growth’ — an EU-funded assistance mechanism — administrations and stakeholders in the region get support to identify common priorities for cooperation at sea-basin level, laying the foundation for developing a common maritime agenda for the Black Sea by 2019.

Reacting to the need to strengthen ocean research, the EU has invested over EUR 260 million per year under Horizon 2020. Research and innovation projects on oceans funded under Horizon 2020 cover a wide range of topics. They include analysis of marine ecosystems, clean shipping, underwater noise, marine pollution, its effects and ways to address it, and research to support maritime spatial planning. In addition, the Group of Chief Scientific Advisers (Scientific Advice Mechanism) to the European Commission published a report entitled *Food from the Oceans* in 2017. This addresses how the oceans can make a sustainable contribution to food security through fisheries and aquaculture.

The EU invested EUR 23 million in the Copernicus Marine Service annually in 2017 and 2018 to provide global observation, forecasting and analysis of the state of the oceans, including climate change effects. As highlighted by the 2016 EU space strategy and in the recent OECD report on the ocean economy in 2030, space technologies and Copernicus can play an essential role in fostering the ‘blue’ economy. In 2017, the availability of Copernicus marine and maritime security services was estimated to have generated approximately EUR 380 million in business returns for 12 key applications, with an annual average growth rate of 14 % since 2012. For example, the services increased the productivity of fish farmers by 5 %, cut overall fuel consumption by major ship operators by 1 % and reduced the number of accidents at sea.

The Copernicus Marine Service provides support to a variety of policies and initiatives, including the Global Climate Observing System implementation plan, the G7 ‘Future of the Seas and Oceans’ initiative and Agenda 2030, including SDG14. To help strengthen international data cooperation and exchange, Copernicus signed cooperation arrangements with Brazil, Chile, Columbia, India, Serbia, Ukraine and the African Union in 2018 to encourage the use of Copernicus data and the internationalisation of European earth observation companies.

The European Parliament voted to earmark EUR 1.3 million in the EU's 2018 budget to finance a pilot project entitled ‘Ocean Literacy for All’. This reflected the growing importance of increasing awareness of ocean issues in order to support EU policy goals, the need for more civil engagement and the need to encourage coordination among existing initiatives. The project will pave the way towards establishing the European Ocean Alliance, a European platform for awareness raising, ocean advocacy, community building and resource sharing. This will help the public and economic and political actors to become informed ocean advocates and actors for ocean protection and more sustainable use of ocean resources.

Finally, the European Union is contributing to the second UN World Ocean Assessment currently prepared and has also begun to prepare its contribution to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021 – 2030), following the call for expression of interest sent by the lead agency, the IOC-UNESCO.

CONCLUSION

This first progress report confirms the EU's global leadership in ocean policy by showcasing major achievements in delivering actions across all three priority areas of the international ocean governance agenda and beyond.

As a reliable partner and a strong voice in international fora and processes, the EU is committed to maintaining its commitment to advancing ocean governance and the delivery of SDG14.

The high level of complexity and often cross-cutting structural nature of current and emerging issues in ocean governance require long-term commitment. While there is progress in protecting the world's oceans, the increasingly adverse impacts of climate change together with overfishing and marine pollution continue to pose a challenge to the health and sustainable use of oceans. The results of the UN's first World Ocean Assessment emphasise the need for global action given that the oceans' carrying capacity has been reached.

LIST OF ACCRONYMS

- BBNJ:** Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
- CBD:** Convention on Biological Diversity
- CCAMLR:** Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
- CISE:** Common Information Sharing Environment
- CITES:** Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
- EEA:** European Environment Agency
- EFCA:** European Fisheries Control Agency
- EMFF:** European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
- EMODnet:** European Marine Observation and Data Network
- EMSA:** European Maritime Safety Agency
- EUMSS:** EU Maritime Security Strategy
- ERDF:** European Regional Development Fund
- FAO:** Food and Agricultural Organisation
- GEO/GEOS:** Group on Earth Observations/ Global Earth Observation System of Systems
- GFCM:** General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
- ILO:** International Labour Organisation
- IMO:** International Maritime Organisation
- IOC-Unesco:** Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of Unesco
- IUU:** Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
- MPA:** Marine Protected Area
- MSP:** Maritime Spatial Planning
- PEUMP:** Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership Programme
- RFMO:** Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
- RSC:** Regional Seas Convention
- SDG:** Sustainable Development Goal
- SFPAs:** Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements
- SIOFA:** Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
- UNEA:** UN Environment Assembly
- WTO:** World Trade Organisation