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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
No. prev. doc.:	15409/23
Subject:	23rd Conference of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Portoroz, Slovenia, 4-8 December 2023): Portoroz Ministerial Declaration - Request by the Commission for authorization to sign a Non-Binding Instrument (NBI)

1. The Portoroz Ministerial Declaration is expected to be adopted at the 23rd Conference of the Contracting the Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (Barcelona Convention), which will take place in Portoroz, Slovenia, from 4 to 8 December 2023.
2. The Portoroz Ministerial Declaration constitutes a non-binding instrument that contains political commitments, in accordance with the Arrangements on Non-Binding Instruments (NBI) agreed by the Council, the Commission and the EEAS.¹

¹ 15367/17.

3. On 9 October 2023, the Council authorised the Commission to enter into negotiations on the Portoroz Ministerial Declaration.² A draft text of the Declaration was distributed to delegations on 31 October 2023 together with a call for comments.³ The Presidency submitted a compilation of Member States comments to the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention on 10 November 2023.⁴
4. On 20 November 2023, the Commission requested the Council's authorisation to sign the Portoroz Ministerial Declaration on behalf of the European Union and provided an updated draft of the Ministerial Declaration, as set in document ST 15409/23. The Working Party on the Environment examined the request at its meeting on 24 November 2023, and agreed on the Commission's request for authorisation.
5. The text of the draft Declaration is not final. Further changes to the text are likely to occur by virtue of the nature of the negotiations and finalisation on the spot may be required. In this case, changes can only be accepted to the extent that they are in line with existing Union policies and legislation as well as agreed positions of the EU and its Member States.
6. Against this background, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to recommend that the Council, as an A item at one of its forthcoming meetings, authorises the Commission to endorse the Portoroz Ministerial Declaration on behalf of the European Union at the Barcelona Convention COP 23.

² 13409/23.

³ WK 14198/2023.

⁴ WK 14871/2023.