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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Report on the annual meeting of the Commission for the conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) - Information from the Spanish delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Spanish delegation on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 17 December 2020.

Report on the annual meeting of the Commission for the conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

- Information from the Spanish delegation -

On 27-30 October, Spain chaired the 39th meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).

The Commission, which includes the European Union and eight of its Member States (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden), meets annually between October and November at the organisation's headquarters in Hobart, Australia. However, CCAMLR-39 was held as a virtual meeting due to the limitations imposed by COVID-19.

During the meeting, discussions continued on the ongoing work to guarantee the sustainable and respectful management of Antarctic marine living resources, to give continuity to scientific research in the Antarctic Ocean, and to ensure its proper preservation through Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

During the meeting, a large majority of members expressed their intention to support the expansion of MPAs. The three proposed MPAs on which the discussion focused are: the East Antarctic, the Weddell Sea region and the Western Antarctic Peninsula. However, some members, in particular China and Russia, are not yet entirely convinced of joining a future agreement to expand MPAs in Antarctica.

The year 2021, which marks the 30th anniversary of the 1991 Madrid Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty, will be an excellent opportunity to take decisive steps aimed at building the consensus that will enable the creation of new MPAs.

Moving towards this goal will require political will and involvement, reinforced diplomatic and scientific efforts and a scaling up, throughout 2021, of proactive work to help facilitate an agreement on the declaration of new MPAs in Antarctica.

Spain now hands over the Presidency of the CCAMLR Commission for the period 2020-2022 to Sweden, a country with which Spain hopes to work intensively alongside the rest of the EU Member States to achieve these objectives.
