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PROPOSAL

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	2 July 2026
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	COM(2026) 333 - Annex
Subject:	ANNEX to the Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the European Union, in relation to matters falling within its competence, at the next three meetings of the International Whaling Commission, including related inter-sessional meetings

Delegations will find attached document COM(2026) 333 - Annex.

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ANNEX

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to the

Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION

on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the European Union, in relation to matters falling within its competence, at the next three meetings of the International Whaling Commission, including related inter-sessional meetings

Annex

1. The overarching objective of the European Union in relation to the International Whaling Commission ('IWC') is to ensure an effective international regulatory framework for the conservation and management of whales, guaranteeing a significant improvement in the conservation status of whales and other cetaceans and bringing all whaling operations under IWC control.
2. At its next three biennial meetings and any related inter-sessional meetings as from the adoption of the current position, the Member States acting jointly in the interest of the Union shall take the following position on proposals for amendments to the Schedule of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) as well as on IWC Resolutions and Decisions:
 - (a) seek to bring all whaling operations under IWC control;
 - (b) support the maintenance and full implementation of the moratorium on commercial whaling in the Schedule, and the adoption of complementary measures to promote compliance by IWC Members with that moratorium, including national provisions prohibiting operators under their jurisdiction from participating in, supporting or financing commercial whaling activities;
 - (c) oppose any proposal for new types of whaling not envisaged in the ICRW, that could undermine the moratorium and/or potentially lead to threats to whale stocks;
 - (d) support and promote proposals aiming to end the conduct of whaling outside IWC control, including scientific research whaling not undertaken in line with Article VIII, thereby ensuring that all scientific research takes place in line with the ICRW, its Schedule and Special Permit provisions;
 - (e) support proposals aiming to promote non-lethal scientific research and to make the IWC review process for whaling under Special Permit effective and transparent, in line with the ruling of the International Court of Justice (Whaling in the Antarctic, Australia v Japan: New Zealand Intervening, Judgment of 31 March 2014), and to promote the implementation and full application of relevant IWC Resolutions;
 - (f) support proposals for the management of aboriginal subsistence whaling (ASW), in line with the ICRW and its Schedule, that:
 - (i) ensure that the conservation of the relevant stock is not compromised, having due regard to the precautionary principle and the advice of the Scientific Committee;
 - (ii) ensure that whaling operations are properly regulated and catches remain sustainable within the scope of subsistence needs for local use;
 - (iii) ensure that whale killing methods are as humane as possible in line with IWC rules, and guidance and best practices developed by the IWC's Working Group on Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues;
 - (iv) take account of the needs of Indigenous Peoples while also recognising that whales are migratory species and, therefore, migrate to other range States where they may also have socioeconomic and cultural importance;

- (g) support all proposals for the creation of whale sanctuaries in line with IWC rules;
- (h) support efforts and initiatives to further develop the IWC's role in promoting the conservation of cetaceans and their habitats, by better understanding and preserving the role cetaceans - particularly great whales, but also small cetaceans - play as key components of healthy ecosystems, their crucial function in carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, and climate regulation, and to improve co-ordination and collaboration between the IWC and other organisations to strengthen the global system for cetacean conservation;
- (i) support the further development and full implementation of the IWC's non-lethal human-cetacean interaction frameworks and tools (e.g., the Whale Welfare Assessment Tool, the Strandings and Entanglement Initiatives, and the IWC's guidance on whale-watching, vessel-strike avoidance and noise mitigation) in line with high welfare standards, to enhance capacity-building, incident reporting and multi-stakeholder collaboration;
- (j) support initiatives aimed at understanding and monitoring the health and welfare threats faced by cetaceans, including the potential cumulative impacts of these threats, as well as proposals aimed at securing improvements in welfare standards;
- (k) support proposals to improve the governance of the IWC, in line with best practices in other multilateral agreements and their governing bodies, including mechanisms for ensuring increased transparency, accountability, compliance and enforcement, thereby reinforcing the IWC's legitimacy and the integrity of its decision-making process and promoting more efficient use of resources;
- (l) support proposals aiming to consolidate the transparency of the assistance scheme for strengthening the capacity of governments of limited means to participate in the work of the IWC (e.g., the Voluntary Assistance Fund and similar support measures), while requesting transparency from those donors directly financing the participation of delegates from countries outside the assistance scheme;
- (m) support proposals that strengthen the dialogue and cooperation with civil society and further contribute to improving the involvement and participation of civil society organisations in IWC work at all levels, in line with common practices in other multilateral agreements.