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### **INFORMATION NOTE**

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**From:** General Secretariat of the Council

**To:** Delegations

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**Subject:** Second session of the Intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-2)

(Paris, France, 29 May - 2 June 2023)

- Compilation of statements by the EU and its Member States

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Delegations will find in the [Annex](#) for information a compilation of statements as delivered by the EU and its Member States during the abovementioned meeting.

**Second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-2)**

**(Paris, France, 29 May -2 June 2023)**

**- Statements made by the EU and its Member States**

EU+MS opening statement:

Mr Chair, distinguished delegates,

The EU and its Member States would like to thank France for its generous hospitality in hosting the second INC meeting in Paris, and the INC Secretariat for its diligent work in preparing for this meeting.

At the outset, let me express the EU and its Member States' full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We continue to condemn in the strongest possible way Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. The war violates international law and specifically the UN Charter. The war undermines international security and stability, causes immense human suffering and exacerbates the challenges the global environment community is seeking to address.

Plastics are and will remain an integral part of our economies and of our societies. Many of its uses are beneficial, but at the same time we need to recognise that plastic pollution heavily contributes to the triple planetary crisis, which is also a human health crisis. Biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution are exacerbated by the massive increase in plastic production as well as unsustainable consumption and use of plastics. Up to now, an estimated 139 million tonnes of plastic waste are lost to our economies and end up in the seas, oceans and rivers. Plastic materials and products are produced, designed, traded and handled in a global value chain. Solving the challenges with plastic pollution will require cross-border cooperation and coordinated global efforts and commitments.

While recognising the many valuable efforts that have been undertaken by a multitude of stakeholders, including the business community and civil society, at local, regional, national and international level. It is clear that much more needs to be done. We need to use established and innovative solutions. And we need to do it together. The EU and its Member States are determined to further support all efforts in developing an ambitious legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.

The new plastics agreement is our chance to introduce ambitious global rules that will protect the environment and human health by making our economies circular and less polluting.

What does being ambitious actually mean?

First, being ambitious means that we need to agree on clear and measurable objectives and obligations covering **all stages of the lifecycle of plastics**, starting with laying the ground for its sustainable production and consumption, in a science based manner and taking into account the precautionary principle. This will include reducing the supply of primary plastic polymers.

Furthermore, we need to eliminate and restrict chemicals and polymers of concern. We also need to phase out or eliminate plastic products that are problematic, avoidable and unnecessary and when needed replace them with sustainable options. Sustainability requires us to continually improve the plastic products that we do need. The design of our products must allow for a longer life cycle, promoting reuse and recycling as well as limiting the release of microplastics. And finally, in the downstream part of the life cycle, we need to make sure that this instrument enables environmentally sound management of plastic waste. This is a chance for our industries to spur transformation into a circular economy.

Second, being ambitious means that we need **legally binding obligations with specific targets throughout the life cycle**. A global legal framework will empower countries to take the right implementation measures to end plastic pollution. It also gives our businesses the opportunity to compete on equal terms, to grow and become sustainable together. By that, we will ensure a fair, equitable and inclusive transition for all our countries. A just transition that will leave no one behind.

Third, being ambitious means that we need to **act fast**. Plastic pollution needs an urgent response. The EU and its Member States are determined to provide this response together with all of you by the end of 2024. INC-2 is an important milestone in this process. We would like to thank the secretariat for their great work on preparing the Options Paper. The EU and its Member States welcome this comprehensive groundwork, and we believe that it is a good starting point for our work this week. We also need to agree on an efficient way forward. We need to conclude this meeting with a mandate not only for the Chair to prepare a zero draft, but also for the establishment of workstreams that can support our future meetings and undertake intersessional work, to make sufficient progress towards INC-3 and beyond.

Mr. Chairman, delegates,

We need to act together to end plastic pollution while continuing to benefit from the many positive contributions that plastics bring to our societies. We can turn a challenge into an opportunity when we join forces in our ambitions – at INC-2 and beyond. At this session of the INC we have the opportunity to advance our joint agenda and take a decisive step forward. Let us put this week to good use – the EU and its Member States are ready to engage and prepare the ground for action.

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#### General statement of the EU+MS on the Options Paper

Mr Chair, distinguished delegates,

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the INC Secretariat for their excellent work on preparing the Options Paper.

We believe that this is a comprehensive document, reflecting the views expressed in written submissions in a balanced manner. In particular, we are satisfied that contributions from stakeholders have been so well picked up by members submissions and by the Options Paper. As such the paper is a good starting point for our negotiations this week.

We find all the elements of the Options Paper to be equally relevant for the future agreement and equal time should be given for discussion on all of them. We are ready to swiftly move in to contact groups for a more indepth discussion. In so doing, it is our understanding that countries and stakeholders should be given the opportunity to express their preferences or concerns, with the options offered without either proposing specific legal drafting or getting into technical details of specific measures.

We have set ourselves an ambitious goal in concluding negotiations by the end of 2024. With this in mind we commend your leadership and support your suggestions, as expressed in the scenario note, to here in Paris agree on a mandate for a zero draft text of the instrument for consideration at the third session of the committee. We therefore believe that we need to use the contact groups to not only find convergence and gaps but also to deepen our understanding on how the different provision should be further developed to in the solidest possible way contribute to the objective of the agreement.

The EU and its Member States welcome the fact that the submissions by countries and stakeholders were so ambitious and that the Options Paper reflects the high level of ambition that we wish to see in the future instrument. We are convinced that we will find a lot of convergence with other members on this. We will listen carefully to the opinions of other . We are open to discuss these elements and we will be providing targeted comments during the week. Also, we would welcome and encourage input from all stakeholders on the options presented, especially in the contact groups, as their input can and should meaningfully inform discussions.

We are ready to support you, Mr Chair, and the co-facilitators in your efforts to achieve this. We are encouraging other members to do the same.

We believe that technical intersessional work will be central to the success of the negotiations. In considering such work we believe we need to look beyond the time period between INC 2 and INC-3. While considering limited time and resources between now and as we meet in Nairobi we hope that we can leave here with a clear path on intersessional work that could be further developed by future INC-meetings. The deliberations in the contact groups will be central in this task.

Mr Chair, esteemed colleagues,

With the possibility to have an exchange on the options Paper, we are one decisive step further in reaching an agreement to end plastic pollution. But there is still a long way to go until the end of 2024 and the world is watching us. So let's put this week to good use and demonstrate that the global community is resolute to complete its task – the EU and its Member States are ready to engage and prepare the ground for a new ambitious legally binding international instrument to end plastic pollution.

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### Closing statement

Mr. Chair, Madame Executive Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

As we have reached the end of this the second meeting of the INC, the EU and its Member States would like to express our deepest appreciation to your Chairmanship, for your efforts to lead us through this meeting. The circumstances were not easy indeed and despite the challenges we faced in the beginning of the session, we are encouraged that we managed to have substantive discussions.

We also thank the Secretariat for preparing this session and specifically for the potential options for elements paper that allowed us to prepare and engage in rich discussions.

The EU and its MS would also thank France, for your hospitality in hosting us in beautiful Paris.

Plastic pollution heavily contributes to the triple planetary crisis of, biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution, and could have a negative impact on human health. Global plastic production and consumption is set to triple by 2060 and plastic pollution is forecast to grow alongside production and consumption.

Mr. Chair, plastic pollution is a transboundary challenge that needs global solutions. The EU and its 27 Member States are fully committed and determined to this process, and we look forward to constructively engage with all Parties to move the process forward.

Time is short. We need to be bold and innovative and act without delay, and we must work together in a cooperative and constructive spirit to end plastic pollution.

I thank you.

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