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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
Subject:	List of EU commitments for the 'Our Ocean Conference' (Palau, 13-14 April 2022) - approval

1. At its meeting on 14 February 2022, the Working Party on Maritime Issues (Integrated Maritime Policy) examined the list of voluntary commitments by the European Union proposed for presentation at the 'Our Ocean Conference' (Palau, 13-14 April 2022). Following that examination, the Working Party declared its support for the Presidency compromise set out in 6117/22.
2. At the meeting, it was recalled that the commitments are without prejudice to the division of competences between the European Union and the Member States.

3. The Permanent Representatives Committee is asked to approve the abovementioned list of commitments, as set out in the Annex to this document, and to forward it to the Council for adoption as an 'A' item at its next meeting.
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List of commitments to be presented by the European Union at the 'Our Ocean Conference' (Palau, 16-17 February 2022)

1. The European Union announces that, via the Horizon Europe programme, the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, Invest EU and other EU programmes, it will provide around €500 million in seed funding during the period 2021-23 for the Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030”. With its systemic approach, the Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” will address the ocean and waters as one and play a key role in achieving climate neutrality and restoring nature. It will help achieve the EU objectives of protecting 30% of the EU Member States sea area as well as restoring marine eco-systems and 25.000 km of free flowing rivers, prevent and eliminate pollution by reducing plastic litter at sea, nutrient losses and use of chemical pesticides by 50% and make the blue economy climate-neutral and circular with net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases.

Climate change

2. The European Union announces a contribution of EUR 55,17 million over two years to strengthen marine environmental monitoring and monitoring of climate change, through its satellite-monitoring programme (Copernicus) and Wekeo service that allows the international research community to access through a one-stop-shop all products describing the past, present and future of the earth system together with online tools for environmental science on cloud computing facilities. This activity will contribute to the implementation of SDG 14.a and the monitoring of the corresponding indicator.
3. The European Union announces the launch of the Kiwa Initiative - nature based solutions for climate resilience. This Programme aims at tackling climate change adaptation by protecting, developing and restoring terrestrial and marine biodiversity in the Pacific Region - both in Island States and in the OCTs. The Initiative is an innovative and ambitious partnership that brings together Australia, Canada, France, New Zealand and the EU. The total EU contribution is EUR 13.9 million and the total budget allocated to the initiative is EUR 35 million.

4. The European Union launched at the end of 2020, the satellite Sentinel6A, the third Copernicus satellite dedicated to ocean observations, built in cooperation with the United States for a value of EUR 255 million will be launched. This is the unique satellite allowing the calculation of sea level rise over decades with sub-millimetric accuracy. An annual budget of EUR 10 million is allocated to cover the costs of the satellite operations.
5. The European Union has committed to Ocean-Climate Research by allocating EUR 30 million of funding, in the 2021-2022 Work Programme of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, on the ocean carbon cycle and on key oceanic and polar processes driving regional & global climate change.
6. The European Union announces it has committed EUR 10 million for a research and innovation action for the assessment and prediction of the cumulative impact of direct and indirect stressors, including Climate change and acidification, on coastal and marine biodiversity, ecosystems and their services

Marine pollution - a clean ocean

7. In the context of its Circular Economy Action Plan, the European Union commits to present a new Sustainable Product Policy Initiative and legal proposal, as well as a renewed Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive, which will help modernize the EU's economy and draw benefit from the opportunities of the circular economy domestically and globally. A key aim of the new policy framework will be to stimulate the development of lead markets for climate neutral and circular products, in the EU and beyond. The implementation of the new Directive on Single Use Plastic Products and fishing gear, crucial to address the problem of marine plastic pollution, is now supported by guidance on the product scope and will be strengthened through extended producer responsibility for littering and the development, for the first time, of rules on measuring recycled content in plastic products.

8. Through its 2021 Zero Pollution Action Plan the EU commits to substantially improve the coastal and marine environment for its benefit as well as the one of its neighbours. In particular, by 2030, the EU aims to reduce by 50% nutrient losses, chemical pesticides and antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture; by 50% plastic litter at sea; by 30% microplastics released into the environment. The EU also commits to significantly reduce total waste generation and by 50% residual municipal waste.
9. The European Union commits to support the ongoing efforts of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to submit a formal proposal at IMO in 2022, for the designation of a sulphur emission control area across the Mediterranean Sea as a whole and the preparation of its entry into force as soon as possible. This aims to minimize shipping emissions and achieve significant health and environmental benefits.
10. The European Union commits to support the scaling up of the “Plastic Pirates – Go Europe!” initiative, an international citizen science campaign launched by Germany, Portugal and Slovenia, targeting young people and pupils to investigate plastic pollution of rivers and coastal areas and raising citizen awareness.
11. The European Union commits to EUR 3 million for an action supporting the development and implementation of a policy vision and the transition needed to reach clean EU Member States seas, cutting across behavioural, social-economic and governance spheres.

Sustainable blue economies

12. The European Union announces that it will invest around EUR 1.26 million in the establishment of an EU-wide Ocean Literacy initiative, in the form of a coalition of engaged parties encompassing civil society, diverse organisations, projects, youth and schools (from kindergarten to high schools, including vocational schools). The initiative will promote the awareness and the engagement of all parties involved on ocean literacy and enhance the understanding of how we influence the ocean and how the ocean influences us, hence contributing to the sustainable management of the ocean.
13. The European Union will contribute EUR 1 Million to the UNESCO’s international engagements on Ocean Literacy.

14. The European Union announces that it will support sustainable blue economy in the European Union through a EUR 22.86 million investment initiative. The Blue Economy Window will support market realisation of new business models, products and services with a particular focus on the sustainable use of marine resources and improved livelihoods and jobs.
15. The European Union will invest around EUR 2.2 million for the creation of an Observatory on the Blue Economy which will enable a more comprehensive and integrated approach to data collection and foster the expansion of a sustainable blue economy and to complement the Union initiatives to up- and reskill the blue economy workforce.
16. The European Union will contribute EUR 2.437 million to develop the BlueInvest platform which assist in helping small enterprises to put innovative products and services from the blue economy on the market and increase investment in the sustainable blue economy.
17. The European Union announces that it will continue supporting the WestMed assistance mechanism. In 2017, with 10 countries (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Spain, Portugal and Tunisia), it launched the initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean (WestMed). This initiative has built bridges between Southern Europe and North Africa to achieve a safer and more secure maritime space, promoting a smart and resilient blue economy and improving governance at sea. WestMed has generated 15 innovative projects worth about EUR 24 million.
18. The European Union announces the launch of the Go Blue Kenya programme, with an EU contribution of EUR 25 million. This programme will contribute to coastal economic development in an inclusive, integrated, participatory and sustainable manner through strengthening inclusive and sustainable blue economy value chains; ensuring an integrated approach to sea-land planning and management in a participatory and inclusive manner, especially for women and young people; and strengthening the effectiveness and integration of maritime law enforcement.

19. Through the EU Research and Innovation Programme Horizon Europe (2021-2027), the EU has committed for 2021-22 EUR 36 million in support to a thriving European blue bio-economy and EUR 100 million for innovative governance (including a partnership between the EU and its Member States for a climate neutral sustainable and productive blue economy in line with and in support of the European Green Deal). These activities will be carried out together with our international partners in the frame of the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, the BLUEMED Initiative, and the ongoing work in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. All this will also fully support the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
20. The European Union has committed in 2021 EUR 17 million under the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Framework Programme to fund a pilot project, “Iliad”, on the development of a Digital Twin of the Ocean.
21. The European Union announces that it will continue to support and enhance the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance. Under the development of the All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Forum, the European Union has launched a second cohort of All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Ambassadors for the period 2020-2022. In addition, the European Commission will further enhance marine research and innovation cooperation with Morocco, and Small Island Developing States.
22. The European Union announces that it will invest further EUR 6.5 million to ensure open access to harmonise marine data and observation through EMODnet, the European Marine Observation and Data network. In the next phase of its implementation, EMODnet will support all marine sectors by the provision of more integrated data, in an uninhibited and easy to access manner. The European Union also commits to support the further development of international collaboration regarding marine observation and data through EMODnet.

23. The European Union will continue to support a level-playing field based on decent work and social sustainability in the Blue Economy by promoting the ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the relevant international conventions, such as the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, No. 188, internally, in its contribution to regional fisheries management organisations and in its bilateral agreements and cooperation with partner countries. This includes a EUR 10 million contribution to a project promoting decent work for migrant workers in the fishing and seafood processing industry in South East Asia, in close cooperation with the ILO and with the support of the International Organisation for Migration and the UN Development Program.
24. The European Union commits to implement the revised Atlantic Action Plan that aims for a sustainable, resilient and competitive blue economy in the EU Member States Atlantic area, covering France, Portugal and Spain – including their outermost regions in the Atlantic Ocean – and Ireland. The revamped action plan will give new impetus to the Atlantic maritime strategy and will promote a socially inclusive sustainable model of regional development and job creation that safeguard marine and coastal environments and secure a healthy ocean. Concrete actions will address the following challenges: 1) the reduction of CO2 emissions and the development of renewable energy by supporting research and investment in marine renewable energy; 2) the fight against marine pollution by promoting sustainable shipping and coordinating actions against marine litter; 3) the creation of new jobs by addressing the skills gaps in the blue economy sectors and by supporting cooperation between EU training centres and businesses; 4) the adaptation to climate change by improving coastal observation and designing and promoting cost effective coastal protection measures.

Marine protected areas and biodiversity

25. In her “State of the Union” of 15 September 2021, the President of the Commission has announced that the EU will double its external funding for biodiversity, in particular for the most vulnerable countries. This commitment covers both terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

26. The European Union announces a contribution of EUR 4 million to RECI - Restauration des Ecosystèmes Insulaires de l'Océan Indien. This initiative will contribute to the ecological restoration of threatened island ecosystems and in particular the fight against invasive exotic species, which have a significant negative impact on endemic flora and fauna and in particular bird populations.
27. The European Union announces that it will support biodiversity Actions for Mozambique with a contribution of EUR 13 million. These actions aim at protecting biodiversity and improving the livelihoods of rural communities through sustainable management of natural resources in 3 target areas of Mozambique, among which Ilhas Primeiras e Segundas (APAIPS - one of Africa's largest protected marine zone) and its adjacent coastal areas.
28. The European Union announces that, at the end of 2021, a new initiative to support the sustainable development of Pacific island states and the coastal countries will be launched. This new Programme will support the implementation of strategies on coastal zone management and ecosystem-based management and will also promote urgent action to protect coral reefs and other vulnerable marine ecosystems. The programme, which has a budget of EUR 12 million, will be implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).
29. The European Union announces EUR 23 million in research and innovation for the exploration, better understanding and valuing of coastal and marine biodiversity, ecosystems processes and services, and for the improved science based identification of future protected areas for achieving the targets of the EU biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and for maritime spatial planning based on holistic ecosystem approach.
30. The European Union announces EUR 10 million for a large demonstration of measures and management for coastal and marine ecosystems restoration and resilience in simple socio-ecological systems, typically insular, and recommendation for upscaling to more complex socio-ecological systems.

31. The European Union announces the establishment of an EU-wide ‘Blue Parks’ initiative to provide new restoration and conservation opportunities, as well as expand networks of marine protected areas under the Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters.
32. The European Union commits to a contribution of EUR 500 000 to support the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative (SsKi) seeks to fill the gaps in knowledge of seabed ecosystems, their connectivity and the interrelation between endemism of species and conglomeration of seabed minerals.

Sustainable fisheries

33. Through its work programme for 2021, the EU has committed about EUR 13 million in voluntary contributions to international organisations and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) to, amongst others, strengthen data collection, scientific research and science-based decisions, the monitoring of fishing activities, improving the performance of those organisations, the undertaking of regular performance reviews and contributing to the fight against IUU fishing.
34. The European Union has committed EUR 60 million in the 2021-2022 Work Programme of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation on fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly sea food systems, from primary production to consumption. Furthermore, it allocated EUR 57 million for research and innovation on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
35. The European Union announces a contribution of EUR 12 million to FISHGOV.2. The objective is to improve food security, livelihoods and wealth creation in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, aligned with African Union’s 2063 Agenda, through evidence-based African Union decisions on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture policies, coherence and coordination of fisheries and aquaculture policies in Africa with the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy (PFRS) and other AU priorities and adequate representation and participation of Africa in international fisheries and aquaculture fora and other relevant global instruments.

36. The European Union will contribute EUR 2.4 million to develop scientific advice for fisheries beyond the EU Member States waters and develop and implement of the Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring for High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean.

Maritime security

37. The European Union announces a EUR 7.5 million project in 2020 (CRIMARIO II) to support partner countries in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia, to adequately address maritime security challenges in a comprehensive manner, encouraging cross-sectorial and interregional approaches. The project's duration will be four years (2020-2024).
38. The European Union announces a EUR 8.5 million programme (WECAPS) aimed at helping partner countries in West and Central Africa to address increasing vulnerabilities related to port security. The program will be for two years (2020-2022). It supports port security in West and Central Africa countries through capacity building, support to establishing public-private partnerships and twinning with European Member States ports.
39. The European Union announces a EUR 10 million programme named PASSMAR (Programme to the Maritime Security Strategy in Central Africa) to support the region by reinforcing the institutional, legal and operational framework for cross-border maritime cooperation.
40. The European Union commits EUR 20 million to a Regional Programme for Maritime Security in the Red Sea. With a focus on five coastal countries, namely Eritrea, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia and Yemen, this new programme aims to enhance maritime and port security of navigation in the Southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden regions.
41. The European Union announces a EUR 5 million project Critical Maritime Routes Law Enforcement Agencies Phase III (CRIMLEA III). With a focus on selected countries (namely, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Mauritius, Seychelles and Tanzania) the project aims to reduce maritime insecurity in Eastern Africa and Indian Ocean region by reinforcing the capacity of law enforcement agencies in selected countries to effectively detect and investigate maritime-based organized crime threats, such as piracy, armed robbery, or the trafficking in weapons and drugs.

42. The European Union commits EUR 8.5 million to a project on "Enhancing security cooperation in and with Asia – ESIWA" aimed at strengthening cooperation with Asian countries in several security-related areas, in particular maritime security. In partnership with France and Germany, this project, with a total budget of EUR 14.085 million, will support deeper cooperation on maritime security with regional partner countries based on identified needs and opportunities, through professional exchanges, capacity building and strengthen and generating information to feed back into political processes.
43. The European Union announces the development of a new tool named “Coordinated Maritime Presence” (CMP) aimed at promoting international cooperation on maritime security. This project will be based on the voluntary contribution of the EU Member States and will rely on the coordination of the presence of EU Member States naval assets in a given maritime area in order to bolster maritime awareness in this area and promote international cooperation at sea, especially with regional and coastal countries.
44. The European Union announces a EUR 4 million programme (GOGIN+) aimed at improving maritime security and safety in the Gulf of Guinea in order to favour blue economy and economic development of the countries. To this end, GOGIN+ enhances the operationalization and sustainability of the YARIS regional maritime information-sharing and coordination platform. The programme will be implemented over 14 months (2021-2022).
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