



## **SUBMISSION BY CROATIA AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES**

Zagreb, 8 June 2020

**Subject: Submission informing the dialogue on the ocean and climate change to consider how to strengthen mitigation and adaptation action in this context**

*Disclaimer: this EU submission was prepared before COVID-19 impacted the international schedule of meetings and therefore within this submission changes in the international agenda because of COVID-19 have not been taken into account.*

### **Summary of key points for the EU**

- **The dialogue is an excellent occasion to build on the political momentum gained at COP25 on the ocean and climate change nexus based on the best available science. The year 2020 offers multiple occasions, within the existing activities of the UNFCCC and the work of other international organisations, that jointly can strengthen global ambition on climate change and for a healthy ocean.**
- **The IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere (SROCC) demonstrates that climate-resilient and sustainable development is only possible with immediate, drastic, coordinated and sustained mitigation measures to preserve the vital functions of the ocean, and emphasizes the urgent need for actions to reduce GHG emissions.**
- **The dialogue should underline that enhancing climate ambition will not only contribute to combatting climate change but also helps in pursuing a healthy ocean, while the ocean also offers solutions for climate adaptation and mitigation.**
- **Existing activities under UNFCCC, in particular on science, mitigation, adaptation and technology as well as under the Global Climate Action Agenda, provide space for integrating ocean related issues. We think it is important to continue to explore these existing opportunities, and that the dialogue should provide political impetus for further action on the ocean within these activities.**
- **The dialogue should bring together UNFCCC and other international organizations working on the ocean and climate nexus. The dialogue should encourage and guide these organizations to address and enhance action on climate change and the ocean.**

### **1. Introduction**

Strengthening the nexus between the ocean and climate change is a priority for the EU, and the EU believes that the dialogue provides an excellent opportunity to provide impetus for further action under existing UNFCCC activities and relevant international organisations.

There is growing political awareness of the importance of ocean as an integral part of the Earth's climate system, and of the need to ensure integrity of ocean and coastal ecosystems in the context of climate change ('ocean and climate nexus').

The ocean was identified as a priority of the Presidency at COP25, and it forms an important part of the COP25 outcome. Decision 1/CP.25 requests the Chair of SBSTA to convene at its 52<sup>nd</sup> session (June 2020) a dialogue on the ocean and climate change to consider how to strengthen mitigation and adaptation action in this context.

The IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC), which was released in September 2019 and presented at a SBSTA IPCC Special Event during COP25, emphasized the need to urgently enhance climate ambition and to be more determined in protecting ocean health.

The dialogue is all the more timely, as year 2020 is a 'super year for the ocean and for biodiversity', with many important international events taking place, and is a key year in terms of enhancing climate ambition

Our submission outlines the EU's view on how both UNFCCC and other international and regional organisations and fora play a role in strengthening mitigation and adaptation action in the context of climate change. Recognizing and maximizing synergies between the different fora and objectives, with the 2030 agenda for sustainable development being the overarching global framework, can create co-benefits between action for a healthy ocean and climate action. The EU calls for closer cooperation and synergies on ocean related issues among relevant UN conventions and other international and regional bodies and processes.

## **2. EU views on the organization of the dialogue**

The EU highlights that the dialogue should be guided by latest available science on the climate and the ocean nexus, and particularly by the IPCC's SROCC. The IPCC should be invited to set the scene for the dialogue and briefly present the main findings of the SROCC in the beginning of the dialogue (see part 4 of the submission).

We encourage the SBSTA Chair to structure the dialogue so as to facilitate focused and action-oriented discussion. In this respect, we would suggest to have space for addressing the current activities of UNFCCC that are relevant for the ocean-climate nexus, as well as opportunities for engaging with other international organisations on their role in this context.

It is important to allow and encourage participation of all relevant stakeholders in the dialogue enabling enhanced cooperation between different actors. In addition to Parties, representatives of relevant constituted bodies under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement and non-Party stakeholders, the dialogue should specifically call for participation of relevant international organizations and fora working on specific aspects of the climate and the ocean nexus, such as the UNCLOS, CBD, IMO and FAO (see part 6).

The EU believes it would be useful to allow some time for interactive discussions and possibilities to comment on the interventions in the dialogue.

The EU welcomes information from the Chair of SBSTA on his intent and expectations for the Dialogue as soon as possible after the analysis of the submissions that should inform the Dialogue.

### **3. EU expectations of the dialogue**

Firstly, we expect the dialogue to deliver, based on the scientific findings in particular from the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere, a strong encouragement to all Parties to enhance mitigation and adaptation action so as to achieve the long term goals of the Paris Agreement as well as to enhance actions for healthy oceans. The dialogue should underline that UNFCCC Parties by being more ambitious will not only contribute in combatting climate change but also help in pursuing a healthy ocean, while the ocean also offers solutions for climate adaptation and for mitigation.

Secondly, as set out in part 5 of this submission, the dialogue should recognize how the existing activities of UNFCCC provide space for integrating ocean related issues. The dialogue should provide political impetus for further action on the ocean and climate change within these existing activities.

Thirdly, the dialogue should bring together the UNFCCC and other international organizations working on the ocean and climate nexus. The dialogue should encourage and guide other organisations and the UNFCCC on addressing the nexus and pursuing more ambition and action. It should enhance the understanding about the existing synergies on ocean and climate change related issues among relevant UN Conventions and with other international and regional ocean-related processes, as well as about the opportunities for achieving closer cooperation and synergies among them. Part 6 sets out the EU expectations for several of these international organizations.

The existing SBSTA item “Cooperation with Other International Organizations” provides for a good window for the UNFCCC to report back on cooperation with other international organisations in the field of the ocean and climate nexus.

### **4. The IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere underpinning the work for the dialogue on the ocean and climate change**

The EU underlines the importance of best available science underpinning climate action. The ocean is an essential part of the climate system. It is taking up about one third of the anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> and more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system thereby dampening global warming, but resulting in significant negative impacts on the ocean (ocean warming, acidification, deoxygenation, resulting in loss of ecosystems and biodiversity) and contributing to sea level rise. Societies as well as marine and coastal ecosystems depend directly or indirectly on the ocean, for instance for food production or renewable energy but also for livelihoods such as tourism and marine transport. We welcome the IPCC Special Report on “The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate” (SROCC). It provides an important, authoritative and timely scientific assessment in support of the work of the UNFCCC and other international fora. It complements the IPCC 1.5 °C Special Report by adding detailed information on oceans related issues, as does the Special Report on “Climate Change and Land”. We look forward to considering the information of the SROCC under all relevant activities of the UNFCCC.

The SROCC highlights that many aspects of the cryosphere and the ocean are particularly affected by climate change: Global sea level is rising at an accelerating speed and the absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> and heat into the ocean has led to progressive acidification, warming and loss of oxygen. Such impacts are already affecting humans and societies and will become even more challenging with further warming. Current emissions will continue to lead to long-term consequences well beyond 2100 due to system

inertia; this applies in particular to ocean warming, permafrost thawing and possible carbon release, and sea-level rise possibly resulting in multi-meter rises in the long term. Extensive adaptation measures and the reduction of non-climatic stress factors can largely preserve the stability of ecosystems and their services to humans, but *only if* global warming is sufficiently limited.

The report shows that climate-resilient and sustainable development is only possible with immediate, drastic, coordinated and sustained mitigation measures to preserve the vital functions of the ocean.

## **5. How existing UNFCCC activities and the Global Climate Action Agenda address the ocean and climate nexus**

The UNFCCC offers many activities and agenda items within which ocean and climate change are and can further be addressed. The EU thinks it is important to highlight these existing activities, and to explore how to further enhance action on climate change and ocean related issues through these.

### **5.1. Science – policy interface**

The Convention calls on Parties to promote and cooperate in research, systematic observation and the development of data archives. The SBSTA Agenda Item “Research and Systematic Observation”, with its annual Research Dialogues and Earth Information Days, results from this objective. The 11<sup>th</sup> Research Dialogue (at SBSTA50) addressed the theme “Role of the ocean in the climate system”.

The Paris Agreement calls for an effective and progressive response to the urgent threat of climate change based on best available scientific knowledge. The need to enhance and strengthen research, climate services and knowledge sharing is specifically recognized. The relevance of science for effectively and efficiently implementing the Paris Agreement is increasingly recognized across the work streams, as highlighted most recently in decision 1/CP.25.

At SBSTA51, the SBSTA-IPCC special event “Unpacking the new scientific knowledge and key findings in the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate” took place, with IPCC experts presenting scientific knowledge assessed in the report and Parties reflecting on how the findings presented can support the UNFCCC process and action under the Paris Agreement.<sup>1</sup>

### **5.2. Global Climate Action Agenda**

The Global Climate Action Agenda (GCAA) addresses the nexus on the ocean and climate change as part of one of the seven thematic areas – oceans and coastal zones. Success stories on climate action on the ocean, both at local and global level, have been showcased during the Marrakech Partnership Climate Action Days at COP 23, 24 and 25. Lessons learned and best practices were shared and there was particular emphasis on raising awareness on the latest scientific knowledge, on the need for urgent adaptation, the usefulness of ecosystem-based approaches and nature based solutions with climate co-benefits. The online UNFCCC Global Climate Action Portal (NAZCA) contains cooperative initiatives on oceans and coastal zones, with 46 actors representing 54 actions. The initiative 'Because the Ocean', supported by 39 signatories, contributes to raising awareness and enhancing the understanding of the nexus with climate change and the UNFCCC process.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unfccc.int/event/srocc-special-event>

The EU expects the GCAA to continue to enhance global climate action and to promote higher ambition. We would like to see a clear and stronger focus, more political involvement and a stronger follow-up of actions. We see the ocean and climate change nexus as a theme that needs continuation within the future Action Agenda and that should address both adaptation including nature based solutions and also mitigation, focusing for instance on enhancing action on tackling emissions from shipping and the promotion of marine renewable energy.

### 5.3. Mitigation

Marine mitigation measures, for example renewable energy and restoration of vegetated coastal ecosystems, have an important potential to contribute to the achievement of Parties' NDCs. The EU and several of its Member States are pursuing domestic policies and measures in this area as part of efforts to achieve our NDC.

#### *Marine Renewable Energy*

The IPCC SROCC notes that marine renewable energy can support climate change mitigation, and that the emerging demand for alternative energy sources is expected to generate economic opportunities for the ocean renewable energy sector, although their potential may also be affected by climate change.

The EU is a leader in the development of offshore wind energy, accounting for 79% of global cumulative installed capacity. The EU is also a leader in ocean energy, with 78% of global installed capacity located in European waters<sup>2</sup>. The **offshore wind** sector in Europe has been operating for over 20 years. As of January 2018, 4150 offshore wind turbines in 94 wind farms across 11 countries in European waters were fully grid connected, with more awaiting connection or under development. While most turbines are fixed to the ocean floor, new technologies for floating offshore wind farms are already a reality<sup>3</sup>. A number of initiatives in the EU and its Member States are working on accelerating cost reductions and improving conditions for both ocean energy and offshore wind energy, including as part of the Strategic Energy Action Plan (an initiative to promote cooperation on low-emission energy technologies among EU Member States, as well as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey)<sup>4</sup>. By contrast, **ocean energy**<sup>5</sup> technologies are less developed, but have important potential to supply electricity. They can offer stability and complementarity in the energy mix in large energy systems, as well as powering remote areas and islands. Ocean energy could also be used to supply direct potable water and to meet thermal energy service needs, in particular cooling services.

In the process of expanding offshore wind energy as well as any other ocean energy, it remains important to bear in mind the compatibility with requirement of nature conservation targets, and making use of relevant assessment procedures

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<sup>2</sup> EU figures refer to 2018, and to the 28 Members States of the EU at that time.

<sup>3</sup> Project Windfloat Atlantic co-funded by the NER300 Programme started operation in 2019

<sup>4</sup> See for example the SET implementation plans for ocean energy and offshore wind energy available at <https://setis.ec.europa.eu>

<sup>5</sup> Ocean energy technologies include: waves; tidal range; tidal currents; ocean currents; ocean thermal energy conversion; salinity gradients (exploiting the difference in salt concentration between seawater and river water) and algal biofuels.

### ***Conservation and restoration of Coastal Ecosystems***

As noted in the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere, restoration of vegetated coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, tidal marshes and sea grass meadows, could provide climate change mitigation through increased carbon uptake and storage of around 0.5% of current global emissions annually. Improved protection and management can avoid or at least reduce carbon emissions from these ecosystems, whereas their destruction sets free the CO<sub>2</sub> previously stored. Together, these actions also have multiple other benefits, such as providing storm protection, improving water quality, and benefiting biodiversity and fisheries.

Some guidance on how to monitor the changes in emissions and removals from such measures is available in the 2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands. Experience in using this guidance is also scarce. Further development of the guidance will likely be necessary when more experience in the use of the IPCC Wetlands supplement is available.

### **5.4. Adaptation**

The EU sees nature-based solutions<sup>6</sup> as cost-effective solutions to achieve multiple objectives, including on climate change, biodiversity and resilience against disasters. This is particularly true for coastal ocean ecosystems, such as mangroves, sea grass meadows, salt marshes and coral reefs, whose conservation, restoration and sustainable use can improve the resilience of coastal communities to slow onset events and extreme weather events, and provides benefits in terms of biodiversity. The Global Commission on Adaptation identified mangrove protection, in particular, as one of the top five actions for its cost-benefit ratio in terms of adaptation. In 2017, the EU dedicated 90 million EUR to restoring marine and coastal ecosystems around the world.

Dealing with the ocean-climate nexus poses particular challenges for low-lying coastal communities and for developing countries with coastlines, especially coastal Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, many of whose economies, societies and entire existence are dependent on a healthy, well-functioning ocean. The EU will continue to provide support to these Parties, in and outside the Convention, to help with mitigation and especially adaptation-related challenges in ocean related fields.

### ***National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and Adaptation Communications***

National Adaptation Plans and Adaptation Communications offer tools to address ocean related adaptation issues and promote ocean-based solutions. We encourage Parties to communicate their actions and plans on enhancing and protecting the role of the ocean in the climate system, as well as on maintaining and restoring ocean ecosystem services and reinforcing the resilience of coastal areas.

The protection of coastal ecosystems is crucial to livelihoods and adaptation: those ecosystems are highly efficient at protecting the coast from sea level rise and other consequences of climate change.

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<sup>6</sup> Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are defined by IUCN as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”.

### ***Nairobi Work Programme***

The Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) plays a unique role as a knowledge-to-action hub for adaptation and resilience. NWP works on several thematic areas, including oceans, which will continue to be one of the focus areas in 2020, along with biodiversity and ecosystems.

At COP25, the 13<sup>th</sup> NWP Focal Point Forum focused on oceans, a theme aligned with NWP thematic area “oceans, coastal areas and ecosystems, including mega deltas, coral reefs and mangroves”. The Focal Point Forum considered also the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere and the challenges countries face dealing with the oceans-climate nexus.

Among the main conclusions from the debate were the need of communities’ feedback on policy implementation, the importance of monitoring, reviewing and assessing adaptation projects and the need to consolidate information both socioeconomic and biophysical. From the EU perspective, it is particularly important to promote participatory and inclusive governance and to find synergies across different agendas such as the SDGs. The work done by the NWP may be complemented by the Platform of Science-based Ocean Solutions, launched at COP 25, which will enable exchanging best practices and solutions for dealing with the interactions between climate change and the oceans and coastal areas.

### ***The Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage***

The Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage deals with slow-onset events, including sea level rise and acidification, through one of the five strategic workstreams of its 5-year rolling workplan. The dedicated expert group of the ExCom issued a call for abstract for a special journal edition on emerging understanding about slow onset events, which will help to identify the gaps and challenges in understanding slow onset events and their local, national, and regional impacts, and possible approaches to manage these.

The ExCom also developed a Slow-Onset events database, as part of the implementation of its initial two-year workplan. This database maps 164 organizations working on slow onset events, including those relevant for ocean acidification and sea level rise.

## **5.5. Technology**

The development and deployment of new technologies, including ocean renewable energy, has an essential role to play in meeting global climate change objectives, as well as contributing to new jobs and sustainable economic growth.

The Technology Mechanism, with its two operating bodies- the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), works inter alia to facilitate enhancing technology development and transfer to developing countries. TEC analyses issues and provides annual policy recommendations supporting country efforts to enhance climate technology development and transfer. TEC also produces policy briefs to enhance information sharing on climate technology development and transfer. Many of these are relevant to technologies such as offshore wind and ocean energy. Work has been done i.a. on coastal zone technologies. TEC continues to address Technology Needs Assessments (TNAs), many of which have featured technologies relevant to the ocean-climate nexus.

The CTCN delivers tailored capacity building and technical assistance across a broad range of mitigation and adaptation technology and policy sectors by harnessing the expertise of a global

network of technology companies and institutions. The Global network has also members from different institutions dealing with coastal zones, oceans and marine issues who bring in the expertise on oceans. The CTCN has responded to technical assistance requests regarding various aspects of coastal zone management.

As one of its core services, the CTCN creates access to information and knowledge on climate technologies. The CTCN hosts resources on blue carbon, ocean energy and other topics relevant to the ocean-climate nexus. For example, in January 2020 a joint webinar of the CTCN and Ocean Accounts “Introduction on Ocean Accounting - managing our impacts on the ocean” was held, open for public to participate.

Finally, the ExCom is collaborating with the TEC to develop a joint Policy Brief on technologies for averting, minimizing and addressing Loss and Damage in coastal zones. The scope of the joint policy brief is to explore technology options to observe and assess climate impacts on the coastal sector, including those associated with slow onset events.

## **6. How other international (global and regional) processes and bodies can best contribute**

There is a wide range of multilateral actors and processes involved in addressing the ocean, such as the ocean as part of sustainable development, protecting the marine environment, or addressing emissions from shipping. Below we highlight the most relevant international processes and activities and clarify what the EU expects from these, in terms of their contribution on the ocean and climate change nexus.

### **6.1. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The overarching global framework for addressing both the ocean health and climate change and its interlinkages with other policy areas is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically, SDG14 on Life below water aims at the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

For the EU the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals is essential. The International Ocean Governance Agenda adopted in 2016 is an integral part of the EU response to the 2030 Agenda. It recognised the impacts of climate change on the oceans and called for specific actions. Furthermore, the recent EU Green Deal proposal (December 2019) presents itself in the context of the implementation of the United Nation’s 2030 Agenda.

The EU Green Deal proposal recognises the role of oceans in mitigating and adapting to climate change as well as the role of a sustainable blue economy in that context. It also acknowledges that lasting solutions to climate change require greater attention to nature-based solutions including healthy and resilient seas and oceans. The Commission will analyse the findings of the SROCC and propose measures in the maritime area. This will include ways to manage maritime space more sustainably, notably to help tap into the growing potential of offshore renewable energy.

The United Nations High Level Ocean Conference in Portugal in June 2020, on implementation of SDG14, will be an important opportunity to highlight the urgency action on ocean issues. It should spur action to reach the targets of SDG14 by 2020 and 2025.

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) aims at enhancing marine and maritime research and knowledge of the impact of activities at sea. Furthermore, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration offers an opportunity for the restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems as well as for addressing climate change and ensure food security.

## **6.2. The Law of the Sea and Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction**

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out the legal framework within which all human activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. The negotiations on an implementing agreement under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) should result in an effective framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. The EU aims to have an ambitious international legally binding BBNJ instrument agreed by 2020.

From the ocean and climate nexus perspective, the main added value of the Implementing Agreement is in the identification, designation and establishment of globally recognized Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) through which one or several sectors or activities are managed, in line with relevant criteria that are based on the best available scientific information.

Furthermore, the Agreement is to contribute to the implementation of the EU's international commitments related to the creation of a global network of effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

In addition, the Agreement is to facilitate the evaluation of the cumulative impacts of different human marine activities taking place in the same high seas area, with a view to preventing adverse effects on marine biodiversity, including from new and emerging activities, and also taking due account of the current state of the environment as well as the cumulative effects of other threats such as climate change.

Having procedures in place that allow for the establishment of marine protected areas in the high seas can further contribute to the post-2020 biodiversity targets on protected areas that are to be set under the Convention on Biodiversity. This can also contribute to further operationalizing the circumstances that would trigger the conditions for as well as set out the procedures how to conduct environmental impact assessments can make a very strong contribution to protecting and restoring marine ecosystems. These in return can strengthen the adaptive capacity of the ocean to the impacts of climate change.

## **6.3 Convention on Biological Diversity and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**

One of the key multilateral deliverables this year is the adoption of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity In October 2020.

The EU expects the adoption of an ambitious post 2020 global biodiversity framework, with as far as possible measurable targets and indicators. The EU underlines the urgent need for transformative change to achieve the 2050 Biodiversity Vision, that biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people. The first draft of the post-2020 biodiversity framework includes a 30% marine protected area target. For the EU, and to avoid “paper parks“, it is important that an ocean protection target is not only quantitative, but also includes qualitative indicators. Indeed, an effective management of MPAs is an absolute condition for ensuring that MPAs reach their protection objectives. Furthermore, the management of marine protected areas needs to consider the impacts of climate change on its targets and implementation.

The Global Biodiversity Framework should stress the interlinkages between climate change, land and ocean degradation and biodiversity loss and to address them in a coherent and integrated way. The framework should address the main drivers for these issues as identified by the IPBES Global Assessment. It implies that of a large part of climate change mitigation, adaptation and risk reduction could be addressed through Nature Based Solutions with safeguards. It is important to take this into account when setting out how biodiversity, ecosystems can contribute to achieving the long term objectives of the Paris Agreement as well as to achieving the Nationally Determined Contributions.

The framework should also set concrete targets on the protection of marine areas including through a strict protection status as well as on the restoration and a truly sustainable use of marine ecosystems.

#### **6.4 IMO and reducing GHG emissions from shipping**

The EU welcomed the adoption by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2018 of its Initial Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions and its agreed objective of reducing GHG emissions by at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008 and of phasing them out as soon as possible in this century, as a contribution of the sector to the Paris temperature goal. .

The EU believes it is important that the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) rapidly implements its Initial Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Ships, consistent with the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement, and also adopts short term measures as quickly as possible to ensure emission reductions already prior to the adoption of the revised Strategy in 2023.

The IMO should continue reporting on their work to address greenhouse gas emissions at future sessions of UNFCCC. We also encourage the IMO to enhance the work on how their mitigation targets and their activities to achieve these targets contribute fairly to keeping global temperature rise well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to stay below 1.5°C.

#### **6.5 FAO**

The Paris Agreement explicitly recognizes the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change.

FAO prepared in 2018 a Technical Paper “Impacts of Climate Change on fisheries and aquaculture: synthesis of current knowledge, adaptation and mitigation options”. It recognizes the significant role

that fisheries (both marine and inland) and aquaculture play in addressing the challenges of food security and climate change. It is intended to guide countries in developing their adaptation and mitigation actions. This Technical Paper and the FAO's work on climate change was presented at the Committee on Fisheries. The Committee, to which the EU is a member, commended the role FAO played in UN fora and processes devoted to fisheries and aquaculture, climate change, SDGs and biodiversity. It advised FAO to increase its leadership role in these processes, as well as its coordination and cooperation with other relevant bodies.

Furthermore, the Committee recognised the important role of the ocean on climate change and the impacts of climate change on the ocean, fisheries and aquaculture. It requested that FAO provides guidance, including a more detailed roadmap and technical guidelines on adaptive management measures in response to the impacts of climate change on fisheries resource.

In November 2019, the FAO International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability was also partly dedicated to providing evidence on how to adjust fisheries management to account for climate change-driven changes in the abundance, distribution and seasonality of fish and fisheries resources, and the consequences of such adjustments for the sustainability of resources and dependent communities.

## **6.6 Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and Regional Seas Conventions**

According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) are the bodies responsible for the sustainable management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. They play a critical role in promoting the preservation and restoration of marine ecosystems and biodiversity, while contributing to food security, fair, healthy and sustainable food systems, the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, as well as sustainable growth and jobs. Climate change is already having an impact on the distribution of fish stocks and their migratory patterns, which will affect the ability of RFMOs to manage the stocks under their purview. At the same time, RFMOs will play a key role in putting in place measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change on fish stocks and marine ecosystems. Halting overfishing and sustainable use of fish resources can increase the climate resilience of fish populations and of marine ecosystems.

The EU is the largest participant in RFMOs and contributes actively to the work of those organisations. In this context, the EU has been supportive of efforts to include the ocean-climate change nexus into their work. The adoption by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) of a resolution on climate change at its 2020 meeting is a recent example of the type of initiative that can progress work on climate change within RFMOs. The EU urges RFMOs to strengthen work on climate change by monitoring the effects of climate change on fish stocks and ecosystems and by taking effective action to mitigate the impacts of climate change. RFMO should also integrate climate change considerations into their scientific advice and decision-making, and further implement the ecosystem approach in fisheries management.

### **Regional Seas Conventions**

Regional Seas Conventions (RSCs) have mandates to work on biodiversity conservation, pollution prevention, as well as on adaptation to climate change vulnerability and sea-level rise, by means of relevant Area-Based Management Tools, including Integrated Coastal Zone Management approaches, as well as through regional frameworks for climate change adaptation. With such instruments, the RSCs in close collaboration with Contracting Parties work on vulnerability and hazard assessments of

coastal zones and provide a regional framework for coastal zone management as well as prevention, mitigation and adaptation measures to address the effects of natural disasters, coastal erosion and climate change, in general.

As there is the need for multidisciplinary efforts to adapt to, and mitigate the impacts of, climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems, and the services they provide to human well-being, as well as, to enhance the ecosystems that can provide natural solutions, the RSCs have been highlighting the importance of collaboration and coordination among international and regional organizations, governments, civil society and the private sector. The Regional Seas Conventions should be supportive to the governments in the relevant marine region that implement the policy for the protection of the marine environment and adaptation to climate change.

### **6.7 The Antarctic Treaty System**

The Antarctic Treaty System is the main international governance instrument for protecting and governing Antarctica. Within the Antarctic Treaty System, the objective of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) is to ensure the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources and of the ecosystem of the seas surrounding Antarctica. The Southern Ocean represents approximately 15 percent of the world's ocean area and is home to biodiversity that is, in many ways, unique.

CCAMLR agreed in 2009 to establish a representative network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Southern Ocean. The EU and its Member States have proposed to create two MPAs, in East Antarctica and in the Weddell Sea. Given the key role of MPAs in strengthening resilience by protecting and restoring ocean ecosystems, the EU calls on all CCAMLR Members to support the adoption of these MPAs at the annual meeting in October 2020.