International ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans in the context of the 2030 SDGs

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the own-initiative report by José Inácio FARIA (EPP, PT) on international ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Committee on Transport and Tourism, exercising its prerogative as an associated committee in accordance with Article 54 of the Rules of Procedure, also gave its opinion on the report.

The environmental health of the oceans is under significant threat and at risk of being irreversibly damaged unless targeted and coordinated efforts are undertaken by the world community.

Members welcomed the joint communication on international ocean governance and the actions proposed, which highlight the EU's commitment to achieving the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and seas and marine resources as identified in **SDG 14 of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** .

Reiterating the strong maritime dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly for Goal 14, Members called on the Commission to:

- put forward legislative proposals where appropriate, and work with Member States in order to improve cooperation in areas such as ocean research;
- follow up the joint communication on ocean governance by publishing a progress report on the measures reviewed and a precise timetable for future measures;
- promote international action to monitor the impact of the warming of the oceans, rising sea levels and **acidification** of water;
- develop ocean partnerships with key players in the form of multicultural cooperation mechanisms or bilateral dialogues aimed at ensuring better coordination and cooperation for the successful implementation of the ocean-relevant SDGs, the promotion of sustainable blue growth as well as the preservation, conservation and restoration of marine ecosystems and biodiversity, while also reducing pressure on the oceans and seas and creating the conditions for a sustainable blue economy;
- support the stepping-up of international initiatives to combat trafficking in human beings by maritime routes;
- support an **international moratorium on commercial deep-sea mining exploitation licences** until such time as the effects of deep-sea mining on the marine environment, biodiversity and human activities at sea have been studied and researched sufficiently and all possible risks are understood;
- help set up pilot projects to collect **marine litter** through beach clean-ups and fishing for litter campaigns, and to provide financial support to fishermen in Europe for the collection of marine litter;
- propose new legislation to address **microplastic pollution** in all its forms, and specifically by **banning microplastic ingredients** in all personal care products and by ensuring that all businesses that handle plastic production pellets implement proper protocols for minimising pellet leakage;
- consider introducing a Europe-wide system of **deposits on non-reusable drinks containers**, on the German model;

- continue the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in all regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and other relevant fora.

Member States are urged to:

- make further efforts for the timely implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in order to achieve good environmental status for marine waters for 2020;
- swiftly implement the Framework Directive establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management, in order to permit the full and harmonious development of the various maritime activities;
- support innovative technological and financial initiatives addressing ocean and sea pollution, so as to promote efficient recovery systems for waste from shipping, in particular plastic waste, in ports and harbours, to raise awareness within the shipping sector of the consequences of disposing of plastic waste in the sea, and to overcome the major obstacles existing to the implementation of MARPOL;
- respect their duty under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to protect and conserve the marine environment and its living resources and their duty to prevent and control marine pollution.