

Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

2023/0353(NLE) - 24/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 556 votes to 36, with 38 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Parliament **gave its consent** to the conclusion of the agreement.

As a reminder, the High Seas Treaty, or formally known as the Agreement on Law of the Sea in the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), was concluded on 4th March 2023 in New York and adopted by UN Parties on 19 June 2023. It took almost 20 years to negotiate. It will have a game-changing impact on strengthening Ocean governance. It will do so in particular by promoting greater High Seas biodiversity conservation, as well as equity and Ocean justice through its provisions on financing, capacity-building, technology transfer, the equitable access and sharing of marine genetic resources and ensuring the interests and contribution of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are recognised.

The Treaty plugs many governance gaps in the ocean governance framework, especially as it provides a mechanism for identifying, establishing and managing representative networks of marine protected areas, while not undermining the mandate of competent organisations.

The Agreement covers four areas:

- marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits;
- measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas;
- environmental impact assessments;
- capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.