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HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS DIALOGUE

HELPING DESIGN THE EUROPEAN OCEANS PACT

Date: 25 February 2025
Venue: Brussels
Rapporteur: NWWAC Secretariat

1 Welcome and opening

Introduction by Ms Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General DG MARE – moderator of the High-Level Roundtable

Ms Vitcheva welcomed all participants to the Roundtable meeting committed to the enduring health of the ocean. As announced by President von der Leyen the Oceans Pact is one of the Commission's priorities. It will provide a holistic and coherent approach across all policy areas, pursuing a number of strategic objectives:

- Ensuring a healthy and productive ocean
- Boosting the EU sustainable blue economy to contribute to the EU's agenda to reach high competitiveness and societal transition
- Expanding the marine knowledge framework
- Developing the resilience and unlocking the opportunities, ensuring prosperity of coastal communities, islands and cities

It will take a source-to-sea approach also addressing land-based pollution and include a roadmap with concrete measures to achieve the aims.

Mr Costas Kadis, European Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans

The Commissioner welcomed all participants to the Fisheries and Oceans Dialogue and thanked everyone for joining the meeting. Recognising the profound significance of the oceans, he emphasised the importance of engaging with all stakeholders on the design of the Oceans Pact. It is crucial that the EU oceans governance model be grounded in collaboration which will be its greatest strength. The call for evidence concluded on Monday, and the Commission's approach is to clearly reflect "*the aspirations and concerns of the people it seeks to serve.*"

More than 850 contributions were received. These will guide the crafting of policies and the subsequent implementation. Following the high-level event there will be further consultation opportunities, including the EU Ocean Days at the beginning of March. On 26 March a ministerial meeting will be held ahead of the UN Oceans Conference. When speaking of governance, the focus is often on EEZs and sea basins, but the oceans is one, interconnected and indivisible. Its current, ecosystems and life forms know no borders, no division, and the challenges it faces are shared challenges. It calls for a unity of governance and above all a collaboration across borders, Member States, scientists and stakeholders. The ocean speaks through its people, the fishers, the scientists, coastal communities, cities and islands, innovators. He urged everyone to consider the power of these voices when charting a way forward. By engaging deeply and respectfully, their legitimacy and impact are strengthened. This engagement is not a one-time act but a continuous process, a commitment to partnership. The challenges are monumental, and the effects of the crises are felt across the EU. But there are also immense opportunities. *"Together we have the tools, knowledge and will to turn the tide."* The Oceans Pact is a commitment to act as a united front, a pledge to embrace innovation, to support coastal communities and secure the future of the blue economy. Europe must lead the way when it comes to innovation. The resilience and sustainability of coastal communities, cities and islands are paramount. "*They are the stewards of the oceans, and their wellbeing must be at the heart of our efforts, from climate adaptation to sustainable fisheries, from equitable economic opportunities to preserving cultural heritage, we must ensure that no community is left behind*." He felt that key areas of interest for inclusion in the Oceans Pact had emerged:

- Developing a competitive and sustainable EU blue economy
- Protecting and restoring ocean health
- Building Europe's marine knowledge framework
- Establishing global ocean governance and diplomacy
- Enhancing resilience of coastal communities and cities
- Putting in place a governance model that will ensure implementation.

He recalled that the decisions being made will not only shape the future of the oceans but also the future of the people. Together an inclusive governance model can be built.

2 Ministers from the Trio Presidencies and the co-host of the UN Ocean Conference PL, DK, CY, FR

Mr **Magnus HEUNICKE**, Minister of Environment (online) (DK) welcomed the Commission's initiative of developing the Oceans Pact and its holistic approach. He focussed on three key points:

- The need to integrate environmental protection in all marine activities;
- The CFP is too complex and should to a greater extent support the countries to achieve GES.
- Coastal communities and healthy oceans are connected.

The Oceans Pact should strive to align the many interests and initiatives in the marine area, finding the right balance between the need for marine protection and restoration while also allowing for ORE, fishing, extraction of minerals, defence. The Pact should consider the cumulative impacts of all these initiatives nationally and internationally taking into account ecosystem-based management information. A well-functioning blue economy requires simple, manageable and up to date legislation. Over the years the CFP has become increasingly complex leading to a high burden for fishers. Complex legislation must not hinder innovation and adaptation, resilience and competitiveness of the sector. Closer coordination of fisheries management and environmental policies is needed to allow both protection of the marine environment as well as fisheries resources.

Ms **Rikke Wetter Olufsen** (DK) added that the efforts are promoters of the sustainable use of the resources the ocean has to offer. The Ocean Pact should play a pivotal role in realising the potentials by aligning policies. It is crucial that the Pact facilitates incentives for early movers helping to build the sustainable competitiveness on the global stage.

Ms **Maria Panayiotou**, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (CY) stated that as an island nation Cyprus strongly supports the aims of the EU Oceans Pact addressing the challenge faced by coastal communities, e.g. biodiversity, climate change. The Oceans Pact should facilitate access to funding and create new opportunities for employment and business innovation. A robust framework should include the expansion of MPAs, the enforcement of regulations against overfishing, and substantial investment in habitat restoration. Enhancing climate resilience must be a core priority. The EU should take a leadership role in global ocean governance. Strengthening and simplifying the enforcement of the CFP is paramount, with a need for a shift to ecosystem-based strategies and addressing the increasing threat of alien invasive species. Biodiversity goals should be systematically integrated in marine activities. Strengthening knowledge networks is essential.

Ms **Marina Hadjimanolis**, Shipping Deputy Minister to the President (CY) added that it is of crucial importance to intensify efforts to protect the marine environment and prevent ecosystem degradation. She outlined the following key aspects which need to be addressed by the EU Oceans Pact:

- Addressing the issue of marine litter, plastic pollution and waste management
- Transition of shipping and ports to create a carbon friendly industry
- MSP: strengthening cooperation between EU Member States and international collaboration to foster a shared vision for a shared resource
- Investment in technologies to better understand the marine environment
- Open sharing of knowledge
- Access to finance
- Enhancement of blue careers, including gender equality
- Research and innovation
- Open and safe seas, ensuring effective control of borders

Mr **Jacek Czerniak**, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, felt that the Oceans Pact will provide opportunities for EU fisheries and the reform of the CFP. Fishers and their activities should be at the heart of the Oceans Pact. An appropriate approach

to stock management is needed including proportionate stock recovery measures. He underlined the importance of the scientific communities. Solutions need to be adjusted to the various maritime zones. The EU Oceans Pact should include specific actions for the regions taking into account the special characteristics and needs of the different zones. Administrative burdens need to be reduced, and life should be made easier for fishers. He pointed out that a lot of seafood is imported into the EU while sustainable fishing in the EU is supported by its fishing fleets.

Ms **Agnès Pannier-Runacher**, Ministre de la Transition écologique, de la Biodiversité, de la Forêt, de la Mer et de la Pêche (FR) outlined that the third UN Oceans Conference will take place in Nice with three special events held beforehand. She emphasised that the Oceans Pact should promote a level playing field. She urged the Commission to step up its action in favour of biodiversity, for example via "*adopting an implementing act on bottom trawlers to require them to install total exclusion devices*," followed by reciprocity measures for shrimp imports. The Oceans Pact should also support the acceleration of the decarbonisation of the maritime economy and improve collective resilience to climate change with an expectation for the CFP and the Clean Industrial Deal to adjust regulation and mobilise finance to enhance those orientations.

Ms **Maria Demanaki**, former Commissioner Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, agreed with Commissioner Kadis adding that existing legislation is already ambitious and contains a lot of targets. She recalled that this is not the first time that the Commission tried to establish something such as an Oceans Pact. However, there is still fragmentation because of lack of political will and spirit of cooperation. She felt positive about this initiative because of the unity displayed between Council, Commission and Parliament. She called for concrete steps in relation to:

- Implementation and coherence
- Regionalisation and international policy

Mr **Karmenu Vella**, former Commissioner, felt that the Member States must translate the actions of the Oceans Pact into local measures and that having dedicated ocean ministers is essential. He referred to the need to use OECMs to assist with the protection of marine biodiversity. The Oceans Pact must prioritise competitiveness and support aquaculture. Existing funding disparities between agriculture and aquaculture must be addressed, and SSF should be supported in becoming more low impact.

3 Chairs of the EP Committees and Intergroup (PECH, ENVI, TRAN, ITRE, SEARICA), former Commissioners

Ms **Carmen Crespo Díaz** (PECH) emphasised the role of the Parliament as a co-legislator. She outlined the importance of the oceans for the blue economy, competitiveness and innovation while calling for support for the fishers as well the protection of the marine environment. She recalled the three sustainability dimensions of the Oceans Pact which need to be balanced. Coastal communities are involved in the improvement and economic activities in the ocean. More funding is needed for scientific research to acquire the knowledge for good decision

making. The Oceans Pact also needs to promote the consumption of fish as a healthy food source as well as addressing the level playing field. Bottom-up governance must be promoted supporting also the smallest communities and regions. All agencies must collaborate closely, and the Oceans Pact must contribute to generational renewal.

Mr **Thomas Bajada** (SEARICA) felt that the Oceans Pact was more than just an opportunity to talk about the oceans. He added that ocean policies have been fragmented for too long, and the crises of climate change, biodiversity and livelihoods call for action. He outlined three key areas in which real change can be made:

- A pollution free ocean
- Building ocean resilience
- Marine prosperity areas

"*Fishers must be partners in this transition, not casualties*."

4 First stakeholder round: European Institutions and services: EESC, CoR, EIB, EIF, Advisory Councils, International Organisations, Think Tanks, Foundations and Research community

Mr **Peter Schmidt**, President of the Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment Section of EESC, welcomed the holistic approach of the EU Oceans Pact which also must be inclusive. Policy coherence means to bring this not only into the EU but into the international context. Governance means the coordination of existing policies and implementation of what already exists. Duplication must be avoided. MSP must be improved through cooperation among the cities and regions with the involvement of stakeholders. An inclusive body should be established to foster this process.

Ms **Mätta IVARSSON,** Committee of the Regions, stated that protection of the oceans is not only an environmental necessity but also an economic and social one to ensure the continued resilience of local communities. A stronger link is need between MSFD and MSP objectives. Clear enforcement mechanisms are essential to ensure real progress. Local and regional authorities should play a major role. Coastal communities are particularly diverse and tailored polices are necessary.

Mr **Ambroise Fayolle**, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank, stated that the EIB is the largest supporter of investment in the blue economy. He felt that the blue economy was highly relevant in order to improve EU competitiveness, delivering the EU Green Deal, and security challenges. EIB could roll out relevant financial tools, as well as improve coastal resilience with loans from the EIB.

Mr **Manuel Barange**, FAO, outlined that world fisheries production has remained stable since 2000 but declined in the EU by 2,4% per year. The world's aquaculture production has grown 5% per year globally since 2000, but in the EU, it has declined by 0.4% annually. The EU accounts for 33% of all imports of aquatic animal products by value, and in 2022 had a balance deficit of 23 billion dollars. This net imbalance has been growing by 5.2% per year since the year 2000.

This means that while in the year 2000 the EU produced 80% of its aquatic food consumption, by 2021 this figure decreased to 50%. He felt that this demonstrated three things:

- Supporting sustainable and growing fisheries and aquaculture should be part of the EU Oceans Pact.
- Social sustainability of the sector is at risk and needs support to enhance its safety and working conditions, improve hygiene and food safety and attract a younger generation by promoting a positive narrative of the sector.
- Europe should support sustainable fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture development beyond its borders.

The AC statements can be found in the Members Area on the NWWAC website when available.

Ms **Yobana Bermudez** (Chair MAC)

Mr **Emiel Brouckaert** (Chair NWWAC)

Mr **Giampaolo Buonfiglio** (Vice Chair MEDAC)

Mr **Gonçalo Carvalho** (Vice-Chairperson Working Group 3 Chair and Former PelAC Vice-Chair)

Mr **Ruben Farias** (Vice – President CCRUP)

Mr **Kenn Skau Fisher** (Chair NSAC)

Mr **Sergio Lopez**, Chair CC-SUD /SWWAC)

Mr **Iván López Van Der Veen** (Chair LDAC)

Mr **Brian Thomsen** (AAC)

Mr **Jarek Zieliński** (Chair BSAC)

Ms **Fiona Grand**, European Marine Board, highlighted that in situ ocean observation, data collection, marine knowledge and research and innovation should be key pillars of the EU Oceans Pact. She urged the Commission to take action towards the implementation of the EU initiative on ocean observations, to recognise the essential role of coordination of ocean observation, to deliver marine knowledge and enable the objectives of the European ocean observing system network, and an open, accessible and fit for purpose digital twin of the ocean. The Oceans Pact should also ensure integrated and adaptive land-sea policies through harmonised governance standards and policies.

Mr **Thorsten Kiefer**, JPI Oceans Secretariat, emphasised the need to strengthen science based marine knowledge calling on prioritising marine knowledge development via for example strong EU research programmes and private sector involvement. He added that it is essential to prioritise ocean observing and stewardship with support for sustained long-term observing. He concluded stating that the Coeans Pact needed "*sharp teeth*".

Mr **Colm Lordan**, ICES ACOM Chair, felt that the Oceans Pact's objectives align with ICES aims. He highlighted three key recommendations for the Oceans Pact:

- Leveraging and strengthening existing data collection and integration

- Promoting integrated governance: ICES framework could be used to better align specific goals especially when building EBM systems
- Reinforcing the use of science in ocean management and transboundary collaboration

Mr **Tiago Pitta e Cunha**, Oceano Azul Foundation, presented three key messages:

- Taking lessons from the past (EU integrated maritime policy)
- Important to address the deepening ocean crisis (rising sea temperatures, oxygenation, importance of the ocean system to the earth's ecosystem)
- Seeing the Pact as a dynamic framework using building blocks: foreign policy for multilateral ocean agenda; strategic effort for marine research; industrial policy for sustainable and innovative blue economy; vital space for EU security

A binding and comprehensive long-term instrument is needed.

Mr **Filip Reinhag**, CPMR, stated that the Pact should become the basis for a deep ongoing dialogue to address present and emerging challenges. A clear roadmap is needed framing these reflections:

- Blue deal 2035
- Strengthen ecosystem-based approach across all policies, not just maritime ones
- Enhance the role of maritime regions and better acknowledge the competence of the regions

Mr **Toste Tanhua**, GEOMAR, addressed the various challenges facing the marine environment and stated that a comprehensive understanding is needed through sustained ocean observing. 40 years ago, when UNCLOS was negotiated, ocean observing was not fully understood, but today it is necessary to support the blue economy and inform all stakeholders as well as innovation. Within the framework of EU legislation there is no one overarching piece addressing ocean observing, an issue which needs to be resolved.

Mr **Rüdiger Strempel**, Executive Secretary Helsinki Convention (HELCOM) Secretariat, outlined the alignment between HELCOM and the aims of the Oceans Pact and referred to the 2023 Baltic Sea Action Plan. He felt that the Ocean Pact could be a win-win opportunity for the Baltic Sea and the Commission.

Mr **Dominic Pattinson**, Executive Secretary OSPAR Convention Secretariat, echoed the alignment of the regional sea conventions with the EU Oceans Pact. Collaboration is key for both, and he agreed that taking advantage of the blue economy is only possible if the ocean is healthy and used sustainably. He felt that over the past 20 years these aims have been spoken about without much progress being made. He pointed out the need for:

- Implementation of measures as a priority
- Governance: working across Member States and institutions as well as internationally
- Global stage: Oceans Pact leading internationally
- People are needed for implementation

5 Second stakeholder round: NGOs, Blue Economy Industry Associations, Regional organisations

Ms **Monica Verbeek**, Executive Director Seas at Risk, stated that the organisation's Blue Manifesto identifies three key supporting aspects for the Oceans Pact:

- Advancing implementation and enforcement of existing policies
- Strengthening policy coherence with legally binding targets
- Enabling a just transition to low impact activities with adequate financial support via an oceans fund

Mr **Jacob Amstrong**, Ocean Policy Manager WWF European Policy Office, echoed the recommendations made in Seas at Risk's Blue Manifesto adding the need to:

- Enshrine ecological targets into law
- Making ocean data more coherent
- Strengthen the implementation of the CFP

Ms **Anais Berthier**, Associate Director for the EU ClientEarth, added the Blue Manifesto recommendation regarding an ecosystem approach to implementation and enforcement stating that an action plan is needed for all ocean related policies:

- Provisions for increased resources for investigating non-compliance
- Pledge more funding for MS enforcement of ocean policies
- CFP must be implemented and enforced, not revised
- Effective use of MSFD
- Global biodiversity framework
- Measurable, tangible, binding as well as intermediate targets

Mr **Ariel Brunner**, CEO BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, commented that his organisation is also a signatory to the Blue Manifesto and repeated the need to put things in the right order with a healthy ocean being of highest priority. He stated that a solid approach to the ecology of the oceans is needed referring to the need for implementation of the Nature Restoration Law and leveraging of the energy transition.

Ms **Vera Coelho**, Europe CEO Oceana, one of the developers of the Blue Manifesto, echoed the need for strengthening and implementation of existing policies and targets and recognition that a healthy ocean is the basis for a sustainable future. She added that where overfishing has stopped and stock restoration has been achieved in the EU, it has benefitted fishers. Political commitments must be translated into binding targets. A fair allocation to fishing opportunities is needed with priority given to those fishing activities with low impacts.

Ms **Gaelle Haut**, Surfrider Europe, repeated that all recommendations from the Blue Manifesto should be implemented. Sectors concerned go beyond the blue economy and the fisheries sector, and an end should be made to the laissez-faire attitude regarding offshore oil and gas exploration. Binding measures are needed for reducing pollution at source in addition to measures for mitigating climate change, including the protection of blue carbon systems and implementation of nature-based solutions.

Ms **Stephanie Ghislain**, Eurogroup for Animals, recommended that welfare legislation is needed for aquaculture. Aquatic animal welfare standards should be extended to imported products. The expansion of carnivorous aquaculture should be stopped, for example octopus farming. Animal welfare should also be integrated in fisheries policy ensuring humane capture and slaughter.

Ms **Agata Meysner**, President Generation Climate Europe, stated that intergenerational fairness must be at the heart of the Oceans Pact. There is a need to prioritise the wellbeing of communities and respect the limits set by the planet's boundaries. Overconsumption must be addressed, e.g. deep-sea mining. The Pact must regulate what is taken but challenge the system that demands more is taken and recognise the ocean as a global common good.

Ms **Pegah Moulana**, Secretary-General Youth and Environment Europe YEE, referred to ocean literacy as an important aspect for training and education, formally or informally. Green skills and upskilling must be taken into consideration in the Oceans Pact.

Mr **Cor Blonk**, Secretary of Labor affairs PFA, Chair of the EU Social Dialogue Committee in the Fisheries sector, felt that fishermen are treated as second class citizens. Balanced attention must be given to the protection of the planet as well as the position of the fishermen. Training is needed for safe navigation and sea survival, but the STCWF is only ratified by 10 EU Member States and not translated into an EU Directive.

Mr **Jean Paul Cadoret**, Vice-President European Algae Biomass Association EABA, referred to the contribution of algae farming to food security, climate mitigation, biodiversity restoration, waste management, economic growth and job creation, innovation, energy transition.

Mr **Pierre Tardieu**, Wind Europe, called on the systemic and holistic approach of ocean governance as no single sector can claim owning the ocean. He felt that the MSP Directive was an extraordinary tool for offshore wind development to be delivered on time and transparently supporting a sea basin approach. He felt that sometimes the designation of Renewable Acceleration Areas is not necessary as the process has been clear from the start.

Mr **Javier Garat Pérez**, Vice-President EU Network of Maritime Clusters, identified that collaboration and exchange of best practices and dialogue with stakeholders is vital and that the Oceans Pact can recognise the role of maritime clusters. His main messages included:

- Competitive blue economy: real balance between economic, social and environmental dimensions
- Level playing field: align EU and international legislation, simplification of CFP, development of EU action on blue food
- Research innovation and investment
- Human resources

Mr **Rémi Gruet**, CEO Ocean Energy Europe, outlined that wave and tidal are new clients using port spaces and infrastructure needing existing blue economy skills. Ocean energy needs political support but not funding.

Mr **Tim Heddema**, Vice-President Europeche, recalled the contribution of EU fisheries to the EU economy. Seafood should be part of the new EU food strategy, and the Oceans Pact should

boost a competitive low carbon blue economy. Seafood imports should adhere to EU standards, and an EU action plan for blue foods should be developed by the Commission with adequate funding assigned. The Oceans Pact should prioritise generational renewal and incentives the harmonisation of training standards and recognition of certification. Emissions have been reduced by 52%, and work will continue. But the sector is small and needs adequate funding for decarbonisation.

- Need for the Oceans Pact to foster truly inclusive and holistic policy, especially in MSP
- Shape and form of the Oceans Pact; global action is needed but the current governance framework needs to work better/

Mr **Christophe Tytgat**, Chairman of VARD -SEA Europe, recommended that:

- Maritime manufacturing industry should be included in the Oceans Pact
- Europe needs a competitive maritime strategy
- An industrial alliance on blue economy value chains should be established

Mr **Robert Marx**, President EBI – European boating industry, stated that EU recreational boating is an economic powerhouse, globally competitive and contributes to a healthier and happier lives. He urged that boating, water sports and nautical tourism should be included in the Oceans Pact. Simplification of regulations, investment for modernisation of marinas and circular economy legislation regarding disposal of boats are needed.

Ms **Szilvia Mihalffy**, Federation of European Aquaculture producers FEAP, stated that fish farmers see their job as a lifestyle. The Oceans Pact must make aquaculture and blue food production a priority in support of EU food security, but there is a lack of EU and Member State coherence. Clear commitments, simpler licensing and faster permits are needed. Imported products must follow the same sustainability rules as EU products.

Mr **Sotirios Raptis**, ECSA – Shipowners, recalled the level of climate ambition by the EU shipping industry to be carbon neutral by 2050. The EU capacity for clean fuels and clean tech must be supported. Access to finance for key investments is essential.

Ms **Isabelle Ryckbost**, Secretary General ESPO – Sea Ports, pointed out that the ports are the connector for supplying technology for sustainable use of the maritime space. The Oceans Pact must look at the spatial challenge as new energies will come with the need for space in ports. Coherence between different stakeholder and policies is essential. Ports are facilitators for the blue economy with their individual responsibilities and histories.

Mr **Gwen Pennarun**, Vice-President of Low Impact Small-Scale Fishers LIFE, stated that small scale fishing is a state of mind, investing in future generations and playing a role as guardians of the marine ecosystem. He felt that the voices of small-scale fishers are often ignored. Fishers of tomorrow are today's youth and part of the social fabric contributing to food security.

Ms **Cécile Fouquet**, European Mollusc Producers Association EMPA, commented that mollusc farmers are reliant on clean waters therefore clear allies for the future of the oceans producing oysters, clams, and algae for example. She pointed out that shellfish farming is in steady decline over the past 20 years though it can contribute to the future of the oceans, recommending:

- Healthy oceans are needed – there is a clear link between land and sea and the Oceans Pact must be linked to the water resilience initiative
- Recognise and compensate shellfish farmers for the contribution to the ecosystem
- Support sustainable development of aquaculture in Europe with measurable objectives and continuous political support

Ms **Livia Spera**, General Secretary European Transport Workers Federation ETF, stated that one of the problems in fisheries is to put together the various actors who look after the wellbeing of fishers. Coherence is needed here as well as with the clean industrial deal. Issues such as shortage of workers and improving working conditions must be addressed. There is a need for new skills, for accompanying those that cannot be reskilled. Just transition does not happen without a concrete framework. The shortage of workers is due to the worsening of working conditions, and conditionalities should be introduced to guarantee working conditions are improving.

Mr **Esben Sverdrup Jensen**, President European Association of Fish Producers Organisations EAPO, stated that fisheries is a renewable resource if managed responsibly. Fish production and fisheries must be at the centre of the Oceans Pact. "*No other source of protein has an equally low climate footprint. It is impossible to replicate the unique health and nutritional values found in seafood*." Everything that impacts the marine environment affects the viability of the fishing industry and vice versa. The EU fishing community is committed to continuing its journey towards carbon neutrality as evidenced in the participation in the Energy Transition Partnership. The sector is also committed to minimising its impact on the marine environment and securing ecosystem-based management. He stated that the Oceans Pact provided a unique opportunity to minimise environmental impacts through meaningful coherence in future legislation and to remove the many regulatory barriers that limit the sector's ability to reduce impacts, develop and embrace new technologies, the sectors ability to adapt to climate change, to contribute to science, and to stay competitive in the global markets for seafood and for qualified labour. An intelligent review of the CFP and supporting legislation must be at the core of the Oceans Pact.

Ms **Despina Symons**, EBCD, recalled the multiple pressures faced by the oceans which demand a comprehensive and integrated approach to ocean governance recommending:

- To go beyond sector specific approaches and establish a multi-sectoral platform
- To apply ecosystem-based management
- To ensure science-based decisions through enhancement of data collection and sharing
- To move towards an inclusive Oceans Pact that recognises fisheries and aquaculture as key to food security
- To ensure a balance between conservation and sustainable use
- That OECMs are part of the 30 by 30 agenda

Mr **Guus Pastoor**, AIPCE CEP, commented that there are a lot of opportunities for seafood in the future mentioning:

- The need for a policy to increase the ranking of seafood production when looking at other marine activities

- The need to position seafood as a crucial alternative in the protein transition as part of an overarching food strategy in the EU
- The need to incorporate the external dimension in the EU's policy, make the processing sector more competitive

Mr **Patrick Child**, DG ENV, reassured participants that the Commission is working together on this topic as well as the water resilience strategy to ensure these are fully joined up. "*There is a huge potential in unlocking the sustainable blue economy in line with the principles of the competitiveness compass,"* as well as the upcoming bioeconomy strategy and the Circular Economy Act. "*As we are making a Pact for the Oceans, let's also commit ourselves to keeping the Pact."*

6 Closing remarks

Mr **Costas Kadís**, European Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans, thanked everyone for their contributions and felt encouraged by the level and quality of interventions. He assured participants that comments and suggestions will be taking into account while shaping the Oceans Pact. This meeting was only the first step in the development and invited everyone to participate in the Fisheries and Oceans Dialogue on 05 March to strengthen the bonds of collaboration which are essentials for success. He felt that there was consensus about the main aim of the Oceans Pact.

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