“We have meanwhile set up a process and there are also independent institutions monitoring which objectives of our G7 meetings we actually achieve. When it comes to these goals we have a compliance rate of about 80%, according to the University of Toronto. Germany, with its 87%, comes off pretty well. That means that next year too, under the Japanese G7 presidency, we are going to check where we stand in comparison to what we have discussed with each other now. So a lot of what we have resolved to do here together is something that we are going to have to work very hard at over the next few months. But I think that it has become apparent that we, as the G7, want to assume responsibility far beyond the prosperity in our own countries. That’s why today’s outreach meetings, that is the meetings with our guests, were also of great importance.”

Chancellor Angela Merkel, Schloss Elmau, 8 June 2015

G7 summits are a moment for people to judge whether aspirational intent is met by concrete commitments. The G7 Research Group provides a report card on the implementation of G7 and G20 commitments. It is a good moment for the public to interact with leaders and say, you took a leadership position on these issues — a year later, or three years later, what have you accomplished?

Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme, in G7 Canada: The 2018 Charlevoix Summit
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“Addressing the adverse impact of human activity, such as litter and unsustainable fishing practices, on the marine environment: building on the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, we will accelerate action to tackle the increasing levels of plastic pollution in the ocean from all sources - land and marine - including by working through the UN Environment Assembly on options including strengthening existing instruments and a potential new global agreement or other instrument to address marine plastic litter, including at UNEA-5.”

G7 2030 Nature Compact

Assessment

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Background

Marine environments are essential to human well-being. They support livelihoods, provide nutrition and aid global climate regulation by absorbing heat and sequestering carbon dioxide (CO2). Marine environments are vulnerable to unsustainable human activity resulting in environmental degradation, pollution (including marine litter), overfishing and climate change. For instance, an estimated 11 million metric tonnes of plastic end up in the ocean each year where it ultimately harms marine life and damages habitats. Unabated climate change leading to “high climate warming scenarios” could result in a decrease of fish biomass of up to 25 per cent by the end of the century. This is compounded with the fact that approximately 33 per cent of fish populations are currently being harvested at unsustainable levels. Simultaneously, coastal hypoxic (low oxygen) zones caused by fertilizer run-off cause marine life to die or leave for water with higher oxygen content, putting ecosystems and livelihoods at risk. Such unsustainable human activity has already put an estimated 100 to 300 million people living in coastal areas at risk due to coastal habitat loss.

Given the importance of marine environments to human well-being, the health of marine environments and reductions to marine litter have repeatedly been an area of concern for the G7, as well as for the G20 (such as at the 2019 Osaka Summit) and the United Nations (with the United Nations Environment Assembly), among other organizations.

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As a reflection of its importance, the protection and fostering of marine environments is a key focus of the United Nations, featuring in its sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 14.1 which states “by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution,” as well as Goal 14.2 which calls for sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems including through restoration and actions to strengthen their resiliency.\(^{1067}\)

G7 leaders acknowledged the importance of protecting marine environments dating back to the 1989 Paris Summit.\(^{1068}\) While the G7 recognized the importance of marine biodiversity, health and sustainability as far back as the 1985 Bonn Summit (regarding the protection of water and seas) and 1987 Venice Summit (where it was mentioned in passing as part of a broader commitment to “encourage action” against climate change), it was not until the 1989 Paris Summit that the fostering of marine health was seen as an issue area of its own.\(^{1069}\) G7 members condemned the dumping of polluting waste into the ocean, recognized the importance of international co-operation in preserving and conserving marine environments, called for the United Nations to prepare a report on the state of the world’s oceans and encouraged countries to implement the international conventions for the prevention of oil pollution in the ocean and to make use of the latest monitoring and cleanup technologies.\(^{1070}\)

During the 1990 Houston Summit, the G7 called for the development of a strategy to address land-based sources of marine pollution, urged the entry into enforcement of the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) Convention on oil spills and expressed concern over the impact of environmental degradation of unregulated fishing practices on marine resources.\(^{1071}\) They further encouraged all countries to respect current conservation regimes. The G7 also highlighted the developmental pressures on estuaries, wetlands and coral reefs, and the destruction of biological diversity as a result of human activity. Finally, they also committed to expand projects to conserve biodiversity, assist developing countries in environmental efforts and work with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to achieve these objectives.

The 1991 London Summit saw the G7 seek to promote a comprehensive approach to the conservation and sustainable management of marine environments in the context of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.\(^{1072}\) G7 leaders also encouraged the implementation of measures to protect against overfishing and other harmful practices on marine life in accordance with international law. They also urged “control of marine pollution and compliance with the regimes established by regional fisheries organisations through effective monitoring and enforcement measures.”

At the 1997 Denver Summit, the G8 leaders reaffirmed the importance of the world’s oceans, stating their intention to “ensure an effective and integrated effort to deal with key issues, including sustainable fishing,


\(^{1071}\) Houston Economic Declaration, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 11 July 1990. Access Date: 19 September 2021. http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/1990houston/declaration.html#environment

shipping, marine pollution from land-based and off-shore activities.\textsuperscript{1073} They also agreed to “enhance cooperation in monitoring the ecology in the Northern Pacific.”

During the 2003 Evian Summit, the G8 committed to ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which established the legal framework for maritime activities.\textsuperscript{1074} UNCLOS “imposes duties on all states to ensure, through proper conservation and management measures, the long-term sustainability of fish resources,” and also outlines rules for the protection and preservation of marine environments, presenting states with duties to protect the oceans from various pollutants.\textsuperscript{1075} The G8 members also committed to developing and facilitating the use of diverse approaches and tools for the purpose of protecting sea and ocean environments, the elimination of illegal and unregulated fishing, as well as to the “urgent restoration and maintenance of fish stocks.”\textsuperscript{1076} The summit also resulted in measures to accelerate the phasing out of single-hulled tankers, act on the environmental threat posed by large cargo vessels and a commitment to address the risk posed by the carrying of oil by single-hulled tankers.

The 2015 Schloss Elmau Summit saw a focus on marine litter, with the G7 members committing to take action to remove litter, improve education and outreach and address land and sea-based sources of marine litter, particularly focusing on plastic litter.\textsuperscript{1077} The G7 members released an action plan outlining various instruments for combating marine litter in conjunction with their commitment.\textsuperscript{1078} This action plan also recognized the global challenge presented by marine litter, encouraging the sharing of best practices with developing countries as well as the provision of international assistance and funding.

At the 2016 Ise-Shima Summit, the G7 members tied action towards reducing marine litter and ensuring marine environment health to resource efficiency, the three Rs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.\textsuperscript{1079} In the Leaders’ Declaration, the G7 affirmed their commitment to address marine litter, highlighting the importance of resource efficiency and the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) for reducing marine litter from land-based sources. The G7 also indicated their support for scientific work that enhances global observation and assessment of marine resources, allowing for management, conservation and more sustainable use of marine resources. The importance of addressing marine litter and maintaining healthy marine biodiversity was also a topic of discussion at the G7 Environment Ministers’ meeting.\textsuperscript{1080}

During the 2018 Charlevoix Summit, the G7 nations endorsed the Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities, which included provisions to address ocean plastic waste and marine litter.\textsuperscript{1081} In addition to commitment towards broad action towards healthy oceans and against marine litter,

\textsuperscript{1073} Communiqué, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 22 June 1997. Access Date: 20 September 2021. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/1997denver/g8final.htm
\textsuperscript{1077} Leaders’ Declaration: G7 Summit, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 8 June 2015. Access Date: 21 September 2021. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2015selmau/2015-G7-declaration-en.html
\textsuperscript{1078} Annex to the Leaders’ Declaration G7 Summit, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 8 June 2015. Access Date: 21 September 2021. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2015selmau/2015-G7-annex-en.pdf
\textsuperscript{1079} G7 Ise-Shima Leaders’ Declaration, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 27 May 2016. Access Date: 21 September 2021. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2016shima/ise-shima-declaration-en.html#development
\textsuperscript{1080} Communiqué G7 Toyama Environment Ministers’ Meeting, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 16 May 2016. Access Date: 21 September 2021. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/environment/2016-environment.html
\textsuperscript{1081} The Charlevoix G7 Summit Communiqué, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 9 June 2018. Access Date: 21 September 2021. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2018charlevoix/communique.html
and included as an annex for the Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities, the G7 members (with the exception of Japan and the United States) also endorsed the G7 Ocean Plastics Charter which problematizes and outlines methods to improve current ways of producing, using, managing and disposing of plastics for the good of marine environments and human health with the goal of a zero-plastic waste model.1082 Some of the actions committed to in the Ocean Plastics Charter include: making all plastics recyclable by 2030, reducing the use of single-use plastics and promoting the use of recycled plastic, as well as improving and expanding recycling infrastructure and promoting the research, development and use of new technologies for monitoring, removing and recycling plastics.1083

In the aftermath of the 2018 Charlevoix Summit, the G7 nations released the G7 Innovation Challenge to Address Marine Plastic Litter on 20 September 2018. The objective of the G7 Innovation Challenge was to incentivize the development of technological and social solutions for sustainable management of plastics with the goal of increasing resource efficiency and reducing marine plastic pollution.

At the 2019 Biarritz Summit, G7 leaders reaffirmed their commitment to biodiversity protection, ocean conservation and the fight against marine litter.1084 The G7 leaders reaffirmed their commitment to fund climate innovation and members discussed several initiatives already underway. They also listened to expert testimony and made an official statement welcoming the Osaka G20 Blue Ocean Vision and Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter.

During the 2021 Cornwall Summit, G7 leaders agreed to a shared global agenda which included the goal of protecting at least 30 per cent of global oceans by 2030.1085 This commitment was part of the larger G7 2030 Nature Compact, which also included provisions for restoring lost habitat and biodiversity and encouraged increased global cooperation for ocean protection and conservation.1086 The agreement also advocated building on the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision’s goal of reducing additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, accelerating action to tackle pollution from land and sea-based sources, encouraging and enforcing international legal action against illegal and unreported fishing and taking measures against overfishing. The G7 also published the “G7 Ocean Decade Navigation Plan” policy paper on 21 May 2021 under the UK presidency in which the G7 agreed to “collaborate and advance [their] collective work on ocean science, ocean observing and ocean action throughout the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).”1087 The G7 members committed to support the UN Ocean Decade and its outcomes which include: “A Clean Ocean where sources of pollution are identified and reduced or removed,” “A Healthy and Resilient Ocean where marine ecosystems are understood, protected, restored and managed,” and “A Productive Ocean supporting sustainable food supply and a sustainable ocean economy.”

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1083 Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 9 June 2018. Access Date: 21 September 2021. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2018charlevoix/oceans-blueprint.html
1084 Biarritz Chair’s Summary on Climate, Biodiversity and Oceans, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 26 August 2019. Access Date: 21 September 2021. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2019biarritz/chairs-summary-climate.html
Commitment Features

On 13 June 2021, G7 leaders at the Cornwall Summit adopted the present commitment: “Addressing the adverse impact of human activity, such as litter and unsustainable fishing practices, on the marine environment: building on the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, we will accelerate action to tackle the increasing levels of plastic pollution in the ocean from all sources - land and marine - including by working through the UN Environment Assembly on options including strengthening existing instruments and a potential new global agreement or other instrument to address marine plastic litter, including at UNEA-5.”1088

“Address” is understood to mean “to give attention to or deal with a matter or problem.”1089 “Adverse” is defined as “acting against or in a contrary direction” and “opposed to one’s interests.”1090 “Impact” is defined as “the force of impression of one thing on another: a significant or major effect.”1091 Taken together then, “adverse impact” means significant effects from a given action against the subject’s interests, which is the marine environment.

“Human Activity” is understood to mean action, defined as “to do something; to act in order to get a particular result” undertaken by humans.1092

Litter is defined as any solid material that is improperly disposed of and enters the natural environment.1093 “Marine Litter” in particular is defined as any “persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment from any source.”1094

“Unsustainable” is understood to mean “not capable of being prolonged or continued.”1095 “Fishing” is defined as the “the capture of aquatic organisms in marine, coastal and inland areas.”1096 “Practices” is better understood as “method” in this context which is defined as “a way, technique, or process of or for doing something.”1097 Taken together, unsustainable fishing practices are ways or techniques of capturing aquatic organisms that are not capable of being prolonged or continued.

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“Building” is defined as “to develop according to a systematic plan, by a definite process, or on a particular base.”

“Building on” the Osaka Blue Ocean initiative in this context then means to work towards more expansive action using the Osaka Blue Ocean initiative as a base for future policy-making and action. The Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, first put forward at the 2019 G20 Osaka Summit, “aim[s] to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050 through a comprehensive life-cycle approach that includes reducing the discharge of mismanaged plastic litter by improved waste management and innovative solutions while recognizing the important role of plastics for society.”

“Will” is “used to talk about what is going to happen in the future, especially things that you are certain about or things that are planned.”

This verb indicates a high politically binding obligation meaning that it signifies a commitment and is a strong catalyst for compliance.

“Accelerate” is defined as “to bring [something] about at an earlier time” or “to hasten or progress the development of [something].”

This indicates that the commitment deals with some process that has already been started, in this instance what is being accelerated is action to reduce rising levels of plastic pollution.

“Instrument” is defined as “a means whereby something is achieved, performed, or furthered.” Instruments then are the means by which G7 members will comply with their commitments. This includes economic instruments at both national and international levels including taxes or tariffs, permits, subsidies, etc. It also includes actions such as budget allocations domestically and for international financing, international and domestic law-making, industry action-plans, etc.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines marine litter as “any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material which is lost or discarded and ends up in the marine and coastal environment.”

This includes “items that have been made or used by people and deliberately discarded into the sea or rivers or on beaches; brought indirectly to the sea with rivers, sewage, stormwater or winds; accidentally lost, including material lost at sea in bad weather (fishing gear, cargo); or deliberately left by people on beaches and shores.”

Other factors to consider when assessing marine health include pollution levels, ocean eutrophication (excessive algal or plant growth), marine area management, the creation of protected areas and conservation.

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The inclusion of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in the commitment marks it as a core international institution which is defined as “a separate international organization (as an organization) that has a particular focus on the issue in the commitment at hand.” According to the text of the commitment, the UNEA is a specified agent, which indicates that it is an institution that G7 members could work through in order to comply with the commitment. The term “including” indicates that greater weight should be placed on working through or with the UNEA in order to comply with the commitment. “UNEA-5” is also mentioned in the text and refers to the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the first session of which was held on 22 and 23 February 2021, with an additional assembly, dealing with more substantive matters that require in-depth negotiations, planned for the period from 28 February 2022 to 2 March 2022.

There are two component areas for this commitment, national action and international action. International action is emphasized in the text of the commitment through references to UNEA and UNEA-5, as well as through mentioning a “new global agreement.” Further, at the national and international level, compliance action can take the form of either strengthening existing instruments or creating new instruments that address the problem of marine litter and health.

To achieve full compliance, or a score of +1, G7 members must take strong and concrete action to strengthen existing instruments as well as work on a new global agreement through participation at UNEA-5. Referring back to the definition of instruments, concrete national actions to strengthen existing instruments include measures such as budget allocation, implementing policies, amending or creating new laws, providing technical or financial assistance to programs, projects and businesses, which includes subsidies or grants. International action meanwhile can include global law-making or revision to current laws, financing, as well as agreements or target-setting between nations.

For partial compliance, or a score of 0, G7 members take less than strong action to strengthen existing instruments or work on a new global agreement at UNEA-5. If a G7 member takes strong action in one area, say creating new instruments at the national level, but does not take action internationally or only takes partial or weak actions such as attending meetings or re-affirming the commitment, then the G7 member will be found to be in partial compliance. A G7 member will also achieve partial compliance if they fulfill all aspects of the commitment (national, international, strengthening institutions and creating new instruments) but only do so through weak actions that are not binding.

For non-compliance (−1), G7 members must take no action to strengthen existing instruments or create new instruments or agreements at either the national or international level.

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Scoring Guidelines

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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>The G7 member takes less than strong action to reduce marine litter in one or both of the constituent features and takes additional action to accelerate a reduction in marine pollution and increase overall marine health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>The G7 member takes strong and concrete action to reduce marine litter through strengthening existing instruments AND by working on a new global agreement through the United Nations Environment Assembly at UNEA-5 AND takes additional action to accelerate a reduction in marine pollution and increase overall marine health.</td>
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Canada: 0

Canada has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

On 15 June 2021, the Government of Canada launched the Ocean Partnership Forum under the Canada-EU Ocean Partnership Declaration to promote ocean sustainability through cooperation.\textsuperscript{1114} The joint statement also reaffirmed their intention to conclude, as soon as possible, a new agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea for conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. They aim to report on the progress on conservation and sustainable use of marine resources at the second UN Ocean Conference in 2022. This action is consistent with Canada’s commitment to increasing marine health.

On 13 July 2021, the Governments of Canada and the United States announced the signing of a four-year action plan to jointly protect and manage the health of the Salish Sea ecosystem.\textsuperscript{1115} In the action plan, Canada and the United States indicated that they will continue to collaborate with their partners through information sharing, improving transboundary coordination, and reporting on ecosystem health.

On 14 July 2021, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard Bernadette Jordan announced funding of CAD707,000 for oil spill and fisheries science research.\textsuperscript{1116} The funding supports two projects lasting between two to five years that focus on improving detection and cleanup of oil spills as well as improving the sustainability of fisheries. This is conducive to the goal of increasing marine health by investing in new technologies and research to reduce the impact or improve prevention of pollution from oil spills as well as improve sustainable harvesting of fish species.

On 22 July 2021, Minister Jordan announced a CAD976 million investment, allocated as part of the 2021 budget, for the purpose of continuing marine conservation efforts with the goal of protecting 25 per cent of


Canada’s oceans by 2025 and 30 percent by 2030.1117 Furthermore, a report titled, “The Current - Managing Oceans Act MPAs Now, For the Future” was launched to ensure that the government had been achieving their conservation targets.

On 4 August 2021, the Government of Canada announced that new vessels will be used to respond to large whale and marine mammal incidents such as fishing gear entanglements in order to ensure the safety of marine mammals.1118 The CAD379,000 investment will also increase the overall capacity and resources to train rescue and response teams so they can “safely disentangle large whales.” Furthermore, investments in more vessels will ensure that marine mammal teams respond to rescue efforts more efficiently and effectively. This action is conducive to reducing the impact of marine litter on marine animals, increasing overall marine health.

On 10 August 2021, the Government of Canada announced the Call for Proposals for the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk to “support the recovery and protection of aquatic species at risk by enabling multi-species, place-based and threat-based approaches to recovery.”1119 The CAD29 million fund will take place over five years and prioritize the protection of the Atlantic salmon, Pacific Salmon and North Atlantic right whales in Newfoundland, Labrador and the Arctic. This action is conducive to the goal of increasing overall marine health through the protection of vulnerable marine animals.

On 11 August 2021, Minister Jordan announced the CAD20 million Whalesafe Gear Adoption Fund and a first call for proposals for the fund.1120 The fund will help fisheries adopt whalesafe gear in advance of the 2023 ban on fishing gear that is not whalesafe and is conducive to Canada’s commitment to protect and improve overall marine health through encouraging sustainable practices and protecting marine animals.

On 11 August 2021, Minister Jordan announced CAD8.7 million in funding for Ocean Networks Canada to support their research in collecting and sharing data on ocean conditions.1121 Ocean Networks Canada provides research for the purpose of understanding the potential challenges of protecting marine environments. Furthermore, the Government of Canada is developing an initiative called the Blue Economy Strategy which seeks to secure future federal investments for the protection of Canada’s coasts and waters.

On 12 August 2021, Minister Jordan announced an investment of CAD228,000 over three years to further assess how population sizes of Canadian Arctic species are affected by climate change.1122 The project aims to find new data on the genetics, health and populations of Narwhals, bowhead whales, and belugas in order to preserve and protect these species and prevent population decrease due to environmental changes and climate concerns.

On 16 November 2021, the Government of Canada, on behalf of the Canadian Coast Guard, announced a CAD2 million contract Navenco Marine Inc. for the production of offshore booms.\textsuperscript{1123} In the event of an oil spill, the booms will be used to prevent pollution from spreading from the source and to help recover the spilled pollutants. The funding contract is part of Canada’s Oceans Protection Plan and thus is conducive to the commitment to take actions that improve or sustain marine health.

On 30 November 2021, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry François-Philippe Champagne announced a CAD3.5 million investment in Montréal-based Polystyvert through Sustainable Development Technology Canada.\textsuperscript{1124} The company will use the investment to complete the scale-up of its patented recycling technology to enable the full circular economy of polystyrene which will help keep polystyrene out of the oceans.

On 2 December 2021, Minister Champagne and Minister of Natural Resources Jonathan Wilkinson announced an investment of CAD2.8 million in Open Robotics through Sustainable Development Technology Canada.\textsuperscript{1125} The investment helps the company continue to advance its cleantech solution for gathering ocean data and protecting the marine environment with its SeaSense initiative, which aims to protect the marine environment with the latest generation of zero-emission autonomous vessels, artificial intelligence and advanced sensors.

On 15 December 2021, the Government of Canada launched the Call for Proposals to support marine conservation efforts across Canada.\textsuperscript{1126} The first national Call for Proposals provides access to CAD5 million in funding for marine conservation projects and CAD20 million “for specific agreements to support ocean conservation and planning in regions across Canada.” These initiatives contribute to the government’s marine conservation efforts to protect 25 per cent of Canada’s oceans by 2025, and ultimately 30 per cent by 2030.

On 20 December 2021, the Government of Canada, on behalf of the Canadian Coast Guard, announced a CAD6 million contract for three offshore skimmers to GRiffin Engineered Systems Inc. and a CAD3.5 million contract for five high-speed sweep systems to Navenco Marine Inc.\textsuperscript{1127} These vehicles will help the Canadian Coast Guard contain oil spills and recover the spilled oil.

Canada has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5. It has strengthened existing instruments through the allocation of funding towards capacity building, research, development and uptake of new technologies and litter reducing methods. This is also conducive to accelerating the reduction of marine

pollution and increasing overall marine health. In addition to this, Canada has signed agreements with its allies to work together for the conservation of marine environments and has indicated its intent to work on new international treaties. However, Canada has yet to take action regarding establishing a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

Thus, Canada receives a score of 0.

Analyst: Nual Anwar

France: 0

France has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

On 19 June 2021, France sent a team of marine conservation experts to Sri Lanka in cooperation with Italy and the European Union under the United Nations Environment Programme to assist Sri Lanka in addressing the environmental impact of the MV X-Press Pearl disaster. The team is working closely with the Sri Lankan government to plan ways to mitigate the adverse effects of the 348 tons of oil and billions of small plastic pellets that have spilled into the Indian Ocean and will produce a report with recommendations for cleanup measures and preventative measures for future maritime incidents.

On 19 July 2021, the Government of France reaffirmed their commitments to protecting oceans and biodiversity in the final declaration of the France-Oceania summit. The declaration recognizes the importance of the ocean in combating climate change and preserving biodiversity and calls for more action to protect the ocean. Additionally, the declaration advocates for 30 per cent of the ocean to be designated as marine protected areas and to work towards an international treaty that recognizes the ocean in areas beyond national jurisdiction as a global common to be preserved. It targets illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices and indicates the intention to work together to remove the products of IUU fishing from trade flows, as well as build capacity to prevent IUU fishing through training and using technology such as satellites to reinforce maritime surveillance. The declaration also supports launching intergovernmental negotiations on global plastic pollution to create binding agreements and protect marine ecosystems, particularly at the second session of UNEA-5.

On 10 September 2021, the World Conservation Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), hosted by France in Marseille, released the Marseille Manifesto. France as the host country committed to increase its national protected areas, achieving 30 per cent of protected areas nationally by 2022 and 5 per cent of its Mediterranean maritime area under strong protection by 2027, as well as to help advance the international agenda for the protection of the oceans by organizing a One Ocean Summit and

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also promote a treaty on plastic pollution. The IUCN also adopted resolutions regarding protecting deep-ocean ecosystems through a moratorium on seabed mining and for biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

On 17 September 2021, France partook in the Athens Declaration which emphasized the importance of protecting the Mediterranean and its biodiversity. In the declaration, the southern countries of the European Union agreed to work together on regional climate challenges and also stressed the importance of maritime areas as both suffering from the effects of climate change and as a crucial area to act on in order to mitigate its effects. The declaration also reaffirmed the parties’ commitment to protect marine biodiversity.

On 1 October 2021, France, as part of the Contracting Parties of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Commission), agreed on the establishment of the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount (NACES) marine protection area and adopted the OSPAR Environment Strategy for the period of 2021 to 2030. The OSPAR Environmental Strategy is based around four themes: clean seas, biologically diverse seas, productive and sustainably used seas and seas resilient to climate change and ocean acidification. It will track various aspects of ocean health, including the reduction of marine pollution, particularly by instituting standards and certification schemes to reduce the entrance of plastic pellets into the marine environment.

On 26 November 2021 Minister of State for Tourism Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne chaired a meeting of the Indian Ocean Commission. In the meeting Lemoyne announced a workshop devoted to strengthening capabilities for preventing and responding to marine pollution.

On 26 November 2021, France and Italy signed a treaty wherein they agreed to increased bilateral cooperation. The treaty also emphasized the importance of working together in the management of protected areas and reaffirmed the goal of preserving and cleaning the Mediterranean. The signing of the treaty indicates France’s willingness to cooperate on an international level on the issue of marine health.

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On 30 November 2021, the France Ocean Committee met and expressed interest in several new measures for protecting marine biodiversity. These projects include accelerating the creation of educational Marian areas, increasing efforts against marine litter, and establishing working groups to increase biodiversity awareness around marine infrastructure projects.

On 22 December 2021, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian visited Costa Rica where discussed cooperation on environmental challenges including ocean protection. Among the topics discussed was the goal to expand the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People goal which aims to conserve 30 per cent of the sea by 2030 and preparations for the Ocean One Summit set to be held in Brest on 11 February 2022.

France has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5. Rather than providing funding for research or capacity building for existing instruments, France’s actions have focused on forming agreements and agreeing to long term goals at a regional and international level. Some of France’s actions also involve sending aid to other countries, like Sri Lanka, in dealing with marine pollution. However, France has yet to take action regarding establishing a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

Thus, France receives a score of 0.

**Analyst: Luke Ovenden**

**Germany: 0**

Germany has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

From 6 July 2021 to 15 July 2021, Germany attended the annual UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the principal body concerned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Germany presented its second voluntary national review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and underscored the need to address three environmental crises in particular as the globe emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic: the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, and the increase in marine litter. This action demonstrates transparency in reporting its implementation of the SDGs and reaffirms its commitment to addressing the marine litter crisis on the national level.

From 1 September 2021 to 2 September 2021, Germany organized the Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution organized in partnership with the governments of Ecuador, Ghana and Vietnam.


and sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).\textsuperscript{1142} Representatives of the four governments developed a ministerial statement to be forwarded to the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) calling for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) towards a new global agreement to combat marine litter and plastic pollution. This action demonstrates Germany’s commitment to addressing marine health on an international level, endorsing the creation of a new concrete instrument through the UNEA.

On 1 October 2021, Germany, as part of the Contracting Parties of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Commission), agreed on the establishment of the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount (NACES) marine protection area and adopted the OSPAR Environment Strategy for the period of 2021 to 2030.\textsuperscript{1143} The OSPAR Environmental Strategy is based around four themes, clean seas, biologically diverse seas, productive and sustainably used seas and seas resilient to climate change and ocean acidification.\textsuperscript{1144} It will track various aspects of ocean health, including the reduction of marine pollution, particularly by instituting standards and certification schemes to reduce the entrance of plastic pellets into the marine environment. This action demonstrates Germany’s commitment to addressing ocean litter and marine health on a regional and national level.

On 25 November 2021, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research launched a webinar series on “Plastics in the Environment,” to share research and collaborative projects on the issue.\textsuperscript{1145} These webinars cover topics from fighting against plastic pollution in the North Sea and Baltic Sea to identifying microplastics in wastewater.

On 20 October 2021, members of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM), whose Chairmanship is currently held by Germany, presented the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) for the period of 2021 to 2030 with an emphasis on combating ocean pollution caused by marine litter and eutrophication caused by over-fertilization.\textsuperscript{1146} HELCOM, further, updated its Marine Litter Action Plan that by 2025 30 per cent, and by 2030 50 per cent, less litter should end up on Baltic Sea beaches. In addition, the HELCOM partners endorsed the call for a new global agreement on marine pollution drafted at the Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution. This action again demonstrates Germany’s concrete regional leadership and national commitment to combating marine litter.

On 10 February 2022, the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Svenja Schulze announced an additional EUR20 million funding for the World Bank’s PROBLUE fund.\textsuperscript{1147} This funding is aimed at promoting efforts to combat marine litter and marine pollution as well as encouraging the sustainable management of marine and coastal environments.


\textsuperscript{1147} Federal government goes on the offensive for clean oceans, the protection of marine biodiversity and against marine litter, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Berlin) 10 February 2022. Translation provided by Google Translate. Access Date: 8 March 2022. https://www.bmz.de/de/aktuelles/aktuelle-meldungen/bundesregierung-geht-in-die-offensive-fuer-saubere-ozeane-104052
Germany has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5. Rather than providing funding for research or capacity building for existing instruments, Germany’s actions have focused on forming agreements and agreeing to long term goals at a regional and international level. However, Germany has yet to take action regarding establishing a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

Thus, Germany receives a score of 0.

**Analyst: Abigail Potter**

### **Italy: 0**

Italy has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

On 19 June 2021, Italy sent a team of marine conservation experts to Sri Lanka in cooperation with the European Union and France under the United Nations Environment Programme to assist Sri Lanka in addressing the environmental impact of the MV X-Press Pearl disaster.\(^\text{1148}\) The team is working closely with the Sri Lankan government to plan ways to mitigate the adverse effects of the 348 tons of oil and billions of small plastic pellets that have spilled into the Indian Ocean and will produce a report with recommendations for cleanup measures and preventative measures for future maritime incidents.\(^\text{1149}\)

On 22 June 2021, Prime Minister Mario Draghi and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen announced the approval of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) as part of the Next Generation EU economic recovery project, marking the beginning of the “Italia Domani” or “Italy Tomorrow” plan to boost the nation’s digital and environmental transitions.\(^\text{1150}\) The plan includes EUR191.5 billion with EUR68.6 billion being allocated to the green revolution and ecological transition sector which tackles issues such as plastic waste management, monitoring marine and coastal areas, and protecting marine habitats.\(^\text{1151}\) EUR400 million is being invested in increasing the protection for the seabed and restoring marine habitats using new technology.\(^\text{1152}\) This action indicates Italy’s ongoing commitment to protecting ocean health by providing funding for conservation, waste management and pollution control.

On 13 July 2021, the Council of Ministers signed a decree banning large ships from entering the Venetian lagoon from 1 August 2021 to protect the “local landscape and environment.”\(^\text{1153}\) The ban prevents ships


heavier than 25,000 tons or longer than 180 meters from entering parts of historical Venice. This action indicates Italy’s ongoing commitment to protecting ocean health.

On 19 July 2021, the Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) announced the beginning of a dissemination campaign titled “The sea you don’t expect.” The campaign aims to share research conducted by experts in the field of monitoring ocean health to raise awareness on the importance of the marine environment to our well-being.

On 2 September 2021, Minister of Ecological Transition Roberto Cingolani signed a decree to invest EUR27 million in “plastic eating” eco-compactors which allow for more efficient plastic recycling. The “Mangiaplastica” program aims at reducing plastic waste and promoting the nation’s goal of creating a circular economy. This investment is consistent with Italy’s commitment to reduce plastic pollution.

On 17 September 2021, Italy partook in the Athens Declaration which emphasized the importance of protecting the Mediterranean and its biodiversity. In the declaration, the southern countries of the European Union agreed to work together on regional climate challenges and also stressed the importance of maritime areas as both suffering from the effects of climate change and as a crucial area to act on in order to mitigate its effects. The declaration also reaffirmed the parties’ commitment to protect marine biodiversity.

On 28 September 2021, Minister Cingolani signed the publication of circular economy decrees, introducing EUR2.6 billion in funds for improving waste management systems for plastics, paper and cardboard and textiles. EUR1.5 billion is earmarked for the construction of new waste management plants, EUR600 million for the modernization of existing plants and EUR500 million for monitoring and prevention mechanisms. The investment addresses the problem of rising plastic pollution.

On 26 November 2021, Italy and France signed a treaty wherein they agreed to increased bilateral cooperation. The treaty also emphasized the importance of working together in the management of protected areas and reaffirmed the goal of preserving and cleaning the Mediterranean. The signing of the treaty indicates Italy’s willingness to cooperate on an international level on the issue of marine health.

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On 9 December 2021, the Ministry of Ecological Transition and ISPRA signed protocols on marine habitat restoration marking the beginning of close collaboration between the two entities in carrying out the NRRP. Specifically, the ministry and ISPRA will handle the EUR400 million investment in monitoring coastal ecosystems and restoring the surrounding seabed.

On 9 December 2021, the Ministry of Ecological Transition signed a decree allocating EUR2 million to co-finance research projects aimed at “developing technologies for the prevention, recovery, and treatment of waste.” The ministry aims to incentivize eco-innovation to achieve a sustainable circular economy. This is conducive to the goal of reducing the amount of litter and pollution in the ocean.

On 13 December 2021, President of ISPRA Prefect Stefano Laporta and Chief of Defense Staff Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone signed a five-year agreement encouraging collaboration between ISPRA and the military in the planning and implementation of activities. The agreement includes protection of the soil, air, marine and coastal environment with ISPRA providing technical support in monitoring potentially environmentally hazardous operations undertaken by the military. This is conducive to preventing or reducing the impact of human activities on the marine environment.

On 17 December 2021, the Ministry of Ecological Transition approved the funding of EUR198,135 to Tuscia University as part of the initiative to fund research aimed at reducing single-use plastic waste. The research will explore the possibility of integrating single-use plastic PPE in reinforced asphalt. This is conducive to reducing the amount of plastic pollution that ends up in the oceans.

On 24 December 2021, the Ministry of Ecological Transition, ISPRA, and Ministry of Defense signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate in constructing a multipurpose naval vessel with state-of-the-art ocean research capabilities. The vessel will be available to ISPRA to conduct research activities in the Mediterranean Sea such as monitoring the seabed and marine habitats. The ship will be built with particular emphasis on reducing its impact on the environment with low levels of underwater noise and electric propulsion.

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1164 Call for the co-financing of research projects aimed at the development of technologies for the prevention, recovery, recycling and treatment of waste not falling within the categories already served by supply chain consortia, for the eco-design of products, Ministry of Ecological Transition (Rome) 9 December 2021. Translation provided by Google Translate. Access Date: 8 January 2022. https://www.mite.gov.it/bandi/bando-il-cofinanziamento-di-progetti-di-ricerca-volti-allo-sviluppo-di-tecnologie-la


Italy has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5. It has strengthened existing instruments through the allocation of funding towards research on waste reduction and plastic pollution reduction and has invested heavily in the protection and restoration of the marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea as part of the NRRP. This is also conducive to accelerating the reduction of marine pollution and increasing overall marine health. In addition to this, Italy has collaborated with other countries, like Sri Lanka, in dealing with marine pollution and has worked closely with its allies under the United Nations Environment Programme. However, Italy has yet to take action regarding establishing a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

Thus, Italy receives a score of 0.

*Analyst: Kenji Tan*

**Japan: +1**

Japan has fully complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

On 20 August 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched the “Marine Initiative” to further the realization of the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” which aims to phase out marine litter by 2050. The “Marine Initiative” focuses on combating plastic litter through the management of wastes, recovery of marine litter, innovation and empowerment. The plan includes official development assistance focused in Southeast Asia, providing developing nations with technical expertise, national action plans, and waste management frameworks.

On 31 August 2021, the Ministry of the Environment launched the “Demonstration Project for a Plastic Resource Circulation System toward a Decarbonized Society” and selected six projects to implement to improve Japan’s recycling techniques. These projects include developing chemical recycling systems for plastic composite materials and new technologies for difficult-to-recycle plastics which contribute to a reduction in marine plastic litter. This is consistent with Japan’s aim to reduce marine litter as part of the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision.”

On 6 December 2021, the Government of Japan submitted a draft resolution to the United Nations Environment Programme on “an international legally binding instrument on marine plastic pollution” to be discussed at UNEA-5. The framework is based on the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision approved in June 2019, aiming to eliminate additional plastic litter by 2050 while acknowledging its uses in society. The resolution

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focuses on plastic waste management in a life-cycle approach with emphasis on both upstream and downstream stages of plastic handling to promote resource efficiency and a circular economy.

On 14 January 2022, the Cabinet approved an ordinance ordering businesses to reduce 12 types of disposable plastic materials, including straws and cutlery, starting April 2022 in a push to protect the marine environment.\textsuperscript{1175} The government is allowing businesses flexibility in how they carry out such measures with options ranging from sustainable alternatives to plastic to providing customers incentives to not use disposable plastics.

Japan has fully complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5. Domestically, Japan has passed legislation to limit the use of plastics in society and has worked to improve waste management infrastructure to better recycle the plastic that already exists. Internationally, Japan is taking a leading role in advocating for a legally binding instrument for countries to agree to during UNEA5.2 to ensure there is a global effort to protect the ocean.

Thus, Japan receives a score of +1.

\textit{Analyst: Kenji Tan}

**United Kingdom: 0**

The United Kingdom has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

On 18 June 2021, the Government of the United Kingdom announced that it would provide marine pollution expertise to help respond to the X-press Pearl disaster.\textsuperscript{1176} The Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science will provide expertise and analytical capacity to support plastic pollution monitoring, as well as environmental and socioeconomic impact assessments in cooperation with the Sri Lankan government.

On 13 July 2021, the Government of the United Kingdom announced EUR16.2 million in funding in order to increase marine protection, tackle plastic pollution and the decline of global coral reefs.\textsuperscript{1177} The funding is part of the government’s Blue Planet Fund. The projects receiving funding include the Ocean Country Partnership Programme, which will help developing countries access and partner with British scientists to better manage marine protected areas and develop our understanding of the impacts of climate change and contaminants in the ocean.

On 13 August 2021, the Government of the United Kingdom announced that a share of the Blue Planet Fund’s GBP16.2 million will go towards the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) to help developing


countries combat plastic waste.\textsuperscript{178} This aims to protect marine species living in coastal regions and reduce mismanaged waste across several countries.

On 15 August 2021, the Government of the United Kingdom announced a trade ban on the import and export of detached shark fins and products containing them.\textsuperscript{179} The government intends this ban to help with shark conservation efforts, noting that the presence and variety of sharks in marine areas acts as a key indicator for ocean health and that sharks play a vital role in marine ecosystems by helping to maintain healthy levels of fish below them in the food chain.

On 25 August 2021, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) announced four funding rounds amounting to GBP6.1 million in to support key areas of the marine and fisheries sector.\textsuperscript{180} The funding rounds are delivered by the MMO on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as part of the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme and, in addition to supporting fishing businesses, will look to fund projects that contribute towards protecting the marine environment and deliver world class science and technological advancements.

On 1 October 2021, the United Kingdom, as part of the Contracting Parties of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Commission), agreed on the establishment of the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount (NACES) marine protection area and adopted the OSPAR Environment Strategy for the period of 2021 to 2030.\textsuperscript{181} The OSPAR Environmental Strategy is based around four themes, clean seas, biologically diverse seas, productive and sustainably used seas and seas resilient to climate change and ocean acidification.\textsuperscript{182} It will track various aspects of ocean health, including the reduction of marine pollution, particularly by instituting standards and certification schemes to reduce the entrance of plastic pellets into the marine environment.

On 9 November 2021, the Government of the United Kingdom announced that the Environment Act has become law.\textsuperscript{183} The goal of the act is to “restore natural habitats, increase biodiversity and reduce waste.”\textsuperscript{184} Through the act, the government is introducing the Deposit Return Scheme for plastic containers where a deposit fee will be placed on containers in order to encourage recycling.\textsuperscript{185} The government is also introducing the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme which entails that packaging producers will cover

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the cost of recycling and disposing of their packaging. Furthermore, the Act will ensure that water companies do not discharge pollution such as sewage into rivers and coastlines.\textsuperscript{1186}

On 17 November 2021, the Government of the United Kingdom launched the Blue Shield Programme which tackles “illegal fishing and unlawful marine activities” around the UK Overseas Territories.\textsuperscript{1187} The programme will identify unregulated, unreported or otherwise illegal fishing activities which are harmful to marine health and threaten the sustainability of fish populations. The programme includes drone technology and satellite surveillance data to monitor all maritime activity across the UK Overseas Territories to manage any harmful fishing practices in oceans.

The United Kingdom has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5. The UK has taken measures to strengthen existing measures by allocating investments for research, setting regulations for companies to reduce emissions and marine pollution, and has further cooperated with other countries in order to protect endangered species, their habitats, and marine ecosystems. However, the United Kingdom has yet to take action regarding establishing a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

Thus, the United Kingdom receives a score of 0.

\textit{Analyst: Nual Amwar}

\textbf{United States: 0}

The United States has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

On 13 July 2021, the governments of the United States and Canada announced the signing of a four-year action plan to jointly protect and manage the health of the Salish Sea ecosystem.\textsuperscript{1188} In the action plan, Canada and the United States indicated that they will continue to collaborate with their partners through information sharing, improving transboundary coordination, and reporting on ecosystem health.

On 16 September 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, and the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women Marise Payne and Minister for Defense Peter Dutton committed to taking greater action to protect oceans and biodiversity.\textsuperscript{1189} The Secretaries and Ministers committed to conserving 30 per cent of global land and oceans as well as fighting marine plastic pollution in the Indo-Pacific by invigorate existing ocean related partnerships.

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On 7 October 2021, President Biden signed a proclamation restoring protections for the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Monument. The 4,913 square mile area which contains a diverse amount of marine life will be protected from harmful activities including injuring or disturbing monument resources, drilling or dredging. Commercial fishing will be prohibited in the area, with fishing for red crab and American lobster to be phased out by September 15, 2023, recreational fishing in the area will continue.

On 2 November 2021, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference, the United States announced its membership of the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel). The Ocean Panel aims to promote effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity for ocean habitats and the ocean economy. By joining the Ocean Panel, the United States is indicating its willingness to cooperate internationally in order to protect and preserve the ocean environment.

On 6 November 2021, the Government of the United States announced the passing of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Included in the deal was a provision for the investment of USD17 billion in port infrastructure improvements to reduce congestion and emissions and drive electrification. Another USD1.959 billion was provided for environmental programs that protect estuaries, rivers and US coastal waters. The act also sets aside US100 million for pollution prevention, US275 million for “Save Our Seas 2.0” for cleaning up marine debris and US75 million for the RECYCLE Act.

On 16 November 2021, the Assistant Secretary of State Daniel J. Kritenbrink and Assistant Secretary of Defense Ely S. Ratner issued a statement during the United States-Philippines Bilateral Strategic Dialogue that the U.S. and Philippines are working towards the sustainability of marine resources. This includes rehabilitating coastal marine and terrestrial ecosystems, adopting transformative ocean science solutions. Additionally supporting the long-term sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture.

On 18 November 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke at an ocean plastics event announcing the United States would launch multilateral negotiations on ocean plastic pollution at the UN Environmental

Assembly in February 2022. The goal of these negotiations would be to protect oceans for microplastics and remove persistent plastic waste.

The United States of America has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5. The US has cooperated internationally to conserve areas of the ocean from plastic pollution and harmful fishing. Additionally, the US has also acted domestically to ensure the protection of habitats by designating protected marine areas and has set aside funding to reduce pollutants of the marine environment and update marine port infrastructure. However, the US has yet to take action regarding establishing a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

Thus, the United States receives a score of 0.

Analyst: Luke Ovenden

European Union: 0

The European Union has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

On 19 June 2021, the European Union sent a team of marine conservation experts to Sri Lanka in cooperation with Italy and France under the United Nations Environment Programme to assist Sri Lanka in addressing the environmental impact of the MV X-Press Pearl disaster. The team is working closely with the Sri Lankan government to plan ways to mitigate the adverse effects of the 348 tons of oil and billions of small plastic pellets that have spilled into the Indian Ocean and will produce a report with recommendations for cleanup measures and preventative measures for future maritime incidents.

On 14 July 2021, the European Commission adopted a package of proposals to update its climate policies in line with its emission reduction goals. The adopted measures include an increase to emissions reduction targets for each member state for maritime transport emissions and waste industries as well as the launch of the FuelEU Maritime Initiative which will encourage the uptake of sustainable fuels used for maritime transport as well as the uptake of zero emission technologies by setting a cap on the amount of greenhouse gas energy usable by ships.

On 29 September 2021, the European Commission adopted five new EU Missions as part of the Horizon Europe funding programme which will support research to deliver on the Commission’s main priorities. This includes the mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” focused on marine health. Planned under this mission is the joint provision of EUR500 million in seed funding, from the Horizon Europe programme.

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the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, Invest EU and other European Union funding programmes between 2021 and 2023. There are also plans to establish the “EU-wide ‘Blue Parks’ initiative” which will provide new restoration and conservation opportunities across the European Union. Finally, the mission will also support effective water management by instituting a digital knowledge system that includes a digital model of the ocean and improved environmental monitoring of ocean health.

On 1 October 2021, the Contracting Parties of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Commission) presented the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) for the period of 2021 to 2030. The OSPAR Environmental Strategy is based around four themes, clean seas, biologically diverse seas, productive and sustainably used seas and seas resilient to climate change and ocean acidification. It will track various aspects of ocean health, including the reduction of marine pollution, particularly by instituting standards and certification schemes to reduce the entrance of plastic pellets into the marine environment. The plan will help European Union Member States protect their marine waters and achieve the commitments under the EU Biodiversity Strategy. This plan demonstrates the European Union’s leadership in coordinating concrete action to address ocean litter and marine health at the regional level.

On 20 October 2021, Contracting Parties of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) presented the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) for the period of 2021 to 2030 with an emphasis on combating ocean pollution caused by marine litter and eutrophication caused by over-fertilization. HELCOM, further, updated its Marine Litter Action Plan that by 2025 30 per cent, and by 2030 50 per cent, less litter should end up on Baltic Sea beaches. In addition, the HELCOM partners endorsed the call for a new global agreement on marine pollution drafted at the Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution. This action again demonstrates the EU’s concrete regional commitment to combating marine litter.

On 25 November 2021, the European Commission announced EUR290 million in funding for 132 environmental projects as part of the LIFE Programme. Projects selected include LIFE ECOREST which seeks to mitigate the impact of port noise on marine animals, LIFE SeaBiL which

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seeks to reduce the impact of marine litter on seabirds and LIFE SEA.NET which seeks to complete the implementation of the Natura2000 protected area network.¹²⁰⁹

The European Union has partially complied with its commitment to address the adverse impact of human activity on the marine environment, with a particular focus on dealing with plastic pollution through strengthening current instruments and working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5. The European Union has taken action to address ocean health, by financing research, monitoring and cleanup projects as well as updating maritime and waste emission reduction targets for member states and has taken action to reduce marine litter on the regional level, but has not yet taken concrete action in working on a new global agreement at UNEA-5.

Thus, the European Union receives a score of 0.

*Analyst: Abigail Potter*

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