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Background

A [Consultation on International Ocean Governance](#) has been initiated within EU by the Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. All citizens and organisations are welcome to contribute to this consultation. Contributions are particularly sought from stakeholders, private and public, as well as international governmental and non-governmental organisations. The consultation will close on 15 September 2015.

The aim of this consultation is to gather input on how the EU could contribute to achieving better international governance of oceans and seas to the benefit of sustainable blue growth. On the basis of the results and other sources of data and information, the European Commission will consider how best to develop a more coherent, comprehensive and effective EU policy on improving the international ocean governance framework.

The attached document contains the letter to HELCOM from the European Commission, concerning the Consultation.

Action required

The Contracting Parties/Member Countries might wish to take part in the consultation (closing 15 September 2015) and share their opinions on the subject at the Meeting.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate C - Quality of Life, Water & Air
ENV.C.2 - Marine Environment & Water Industry

Brussels,
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Ms. Monika Stankiewicz
Helsinki Convention (HELCOM)
Executive Secretary
HELCOM Secretariat Baltic Marine
Environment Protection Commission
(Helsinki Commission)
Katajanokanlaituri 6B FI-00160
Helsinki, Finland

Dear Ms. Stankiewicz, *Dear Monika,*

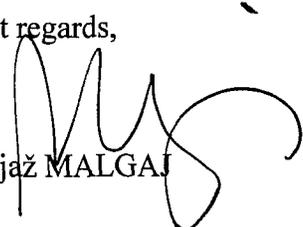
The European Union and the Regional Seas Conventions have been closely cooperating for many years to jointly address the growing pressures on oceans and seas that are putting the marine and coastal environment and ecosystems at risk, often eroding the growth base for a sustainable blue economy.

Our mutual objective is to explore solutions for conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal environment. Climate change, illegal fishing, uncontrolled economic activities, marine litter are only some of the challenges that need to be addressed through global cooperation. The existing international ocean governance framework could be ineffective in addressing such challenges, particularly in the 60 per cent of the oceans that are beyond national jurisdictions.

At the World Ocean Summit in June 2015, Commissioner Karmenu Vella, launched a public consultation, the aim of which is to collect views on how the EU could contribute to achieving better international governance of oceans and seas to the benefit of the sustainable blue growth. On the basis of the results, the European Commission will consider how best to develop a more coherent, comprehensive and effective EU policy on improving the international ocean governance framework.

We consider Regional Seas Conventions an important partner and contributor to regional ocean governance and therefore, we would like to invite you to take part in this discussion with your invaluable experience and knowledge via the online public consultation¹, which will run until 15th September 2015. The consultation will be complemented by a "listening tour" during which Commissioner Vella will personally engage with stakeholders and international partners to gather their views and discuss possible ways forward.

Best regards,


Matjaž MALGAJ

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/maritimeaffairs_fisheries/consultations/ocean-governance/index_en.htm