## PRESSEINFORMATION ##

**Seven-Point-Strategy for saving the oceans**

**Critique by conservationists for UN World Oceans Day: „The EU has a central responsibility for overfishing and for marine litter pollution”**

**Munich / Zurich / Brussels, 3. June 2021**. On the occasion of the UN World Oceans Day on 8 June the conservation charities Pro Wildlife and SHARKPROJECT call on the European Union to follow a Seven-Point-Strategy in order to meets its responsibility to protect the seas: “The EU is a significant player for overfishing and polluting the oceans. But now the EU has promised its Green Deal and is finalizing its Biodiversity Strategy”, states biologist Dr Sandra Altherr with Pro Wildlife. Dr Iris Ziegler, SHARKPROJECT, adds: “2021 is a fateful year for marine protection: At key conferences on biodiversity and fisheries the EU will set the course, whether or not it takes protection of marine biodiversity seriously.”

Pro Wildlife and SHARKPROJECT have sent seven precise postulations for marine protection in 2021 to the Vice President of the EU Commission, Frans Timmermans, who is coordinating the EU Green Deal:

1. **Stop harmful subsidies**: For 20 years the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is disputing a reform of the subsidies policy for commercial fisheries. Already in Summer 2021 a decision could be made – and a strong and clear position of the EU is needed, to finally ban subsidies e.g., for further expansion of the global fishing fleet and its fishing capacities, as well as for harmful fishing methods. The EU’s own fleet consists of more than 81,000 vessels and ships of different size, including 19 super trawlers of more than 100 m length.
2. **Transformation of the EU Fisheries to an ecosystem-friendly fishery**: Total ban for highly destructive fishing methods (such as bottom trawling, deep sea fisheries below 400 m, super trawlers, longlines with shark fishing wires); minimization of bycatch via technical innovations, and ecologically sustainable fishing quotas, which enable an enduring and qualitative recovery of fish stocks.
3. **An immediate retention ban for the endangered mako shark:** At the crucial ICCAT meetings in July and November 2021 the EU must finally support a full retention ban for the North Atlantic, as recommended by science, instead of sticking to its proposal of a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 500 tonnes (288 t of which as share for the EU). Spain and Portugal are among the world’s biggest mako shark fisheries. “It is hard to believe that the EU still insists on its 500 tonnes target although even under a zero quota it will take at least 50 years before the overfished stock will recover. The risk to lose this top predator is huge. We need to listen to the scientists and must no longer leave the decision with the managers. Otherwise, it will be too late”, explains Ziegler.
4. **Complete shark-finning ban:** Since2003, shark finning is prohibited within the EU, since 2013, sharks must be landed with fins naturally attached, to allow identification of caught number and species. But the EU legislation has loopholes, controls are insufficient, and the EU remains to be a hub for the international trade in shark fins. Pro Wildlife, SHARKPROJECT and other NGOs are requesting a tightening of the EU finning regulation, which will safeguard better supervision.
5. **Strong commitment against commercial hunting of whales & small cetaceans:** Preparations for the conference of the International Whaling Commissionin 2021 will be coordinated already in 2021. Pro Wildlife calls on the EU to take a strong position against commercial whaling by Norway and Iceland in European waters and against directed catches of small cetaceans. According to a report by Pro Wildlife about 100,000 dolphins and porpoises are annually hunted worldwide.
6. **Expansion of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):** In the frame of the CBD biodiversity conference in October and additionally for its own EU Biodiversity Strategy the EU needs to set up more marine protected areas and to request a 30 percent coverage of global oceans as MPAs. In those MPAs, commercial fishing, mining, drilling, or other extractive activities. (no-take-zones). MPAs must be better connected (corridors) and should reflect and cover the diversity of marine ecosystems.
7. **Export ban for plastic waste:** While the EU since 1 January 2021 has reduced its exports of plastic waste in accordance with the Basel Convention, this is insufficient. Instead of exports of recyclable plastic waste, the EU needs to pass a full export ban. “We must not export our litter problem into poorer countries”, states Altherr.

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**More information:**

<https://www.prowildlife.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Seven-point-plan-for-healthy-oceans.pdf>

\* ICCAT = International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, which is also managing shark fisheries in the Atlantic.

Webinar on the precarious situation of the mako shark: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L73TwNlYWb4>

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Pro Wildlife is a German-based charity, committed to protect wildlife and their habitat. This includes documentation & investigations, advocacy, strengthening national and international regulations, ensuring their implementation and funding vital conservation projects. In order to achieve better protection of wildlife we are accredited observers at CITES (the International Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), the IWC (International Whaling Commission), and ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, which is also managing shark fisheries in the Atlantic).

SHARKPROJECT is a species conservation organisation founded in 2002 that works to protect over 500 shark species and the marine ecosystem. All employees work on a voluntary basis. All donations directly benefit shark conservation projects and the associated education and information work. In addition to the umbrella organisation SHARKPROJECT International, there are currently country organisations in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, as well as embassies in Czech Republic and Slovakia. Since 2016, SHARKPROJECT has been a full member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the world's largest network for environmental and species protection. Please find more information at: [www.sharkproject.org](https://eur04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sharkproject.org%2F&data=04%7C01%7Csandra.altherr%40prowildlife.de%7C9f43f008feb94dba0ea708d921ba0462%7C49416839dc374409a92122404d459ffa%7C0%7C0%7C637577905090206457%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=01VMhuK3qJqXxngQg%2FhxQW75xfQZam2EAxoHGyZNflk%3D&reserved=0)