



IWC/63/OS Poland

**63rd ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION**

**OPENING STATEMENT BY POLAND ON BEHALF
OF THE EU AND ITS MEMBER STATES**

At this meeting, Poland, currently holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, will be speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. In this context, we note that Greenland and the Faeroe Islands are Danish Overseas Territories but not European Union Territories. Should divergences arise between the interests of the European Union and those of the afore-mentioned territories, Denmark may need to intervene on their behalf to pursue the latter's interests.

We wish to express our gratitude to the States of Jersey, for your generosity and hospitality in hosting this meeting and for the very warm welcome we have all received from the people of the Channel Islands.

The EU and its Member States are strongly committed to the protection of whales. Today, more than ever, we are convinced that effective conservation and management of whales can only be ensured through good co-operation at international level.

Three years ago, at the 60th Annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission, IWC parties agreed to launch a new process that should move forward discussions and determine the future directions of the IWC. Last year, in Agadir, the parties decided to take a pause and let the essence of the important exchanges that took place over the past years mature into specific thoughts on the possible ways forward. One way that we believe the IWC could move forward is with governance reforms and suggesting ways for improving the overall effectiveness of the Commission.

We are convinced that discussions at this 63rd annual meeting will prove crucial if this process is to be ultimately successful and if the IWC is to transform itself into a fully functioning international agreement that can ensure the effective conservation and management of whales worldwide, bringing all whaling operations under its control and guaranteeing a significant improvement in the conservation status of whales in the long term. To this end, we are committed to working with all IWC members in the following days, focusing once again on the issues that are important for this Commission.

We note a number of proposed amendments to the Schedule. Our position on some of these amendments has been stated in the past and remains, in essence, unaltered. Thus, we would, in principle, welcome the creation of a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary, just as we would still not be in a position to support the introduction and allowance of any new types of whaling. Although we understand this IWC meeting may not be the most appropriate time to engage in discussions on specific issues, we would like, however, to express our willingness to continue working on the 'future of the IWC' process, and on proposals relating to this process, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the future work of the Commission. We hope that at this 63rd Annual Meeting we can continue to build trust and have an open dialogue on proposals relating to the 'future of the IWC'. It is important that by the end of this week we obtain some tangible results.

Therefore, we look forward to a series of fruitful exchanges over the following days that could guide us towards a successful outcome of this 63rd Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission in Jersey.