

Draft Resolution on Marine Plastic Pollution

Submitted by the Czech Republic on behalf of EU Member States parties to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW)¹, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of the Great Britain and Northern Ireland

CONFIRMING that the impact of marine plastic pollution on cetaceans is a priority concern for the International Whaling Commission (IWC);

RECOGNISING that plastic pollution spans five of the eight priority areas of environmental concern identified by the IWC Scientific Committee and endorsed by the Commission in IWC Resolution 1997-7;

RECALLING the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, and especially Goal 14 to Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, which includes the following target 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution;

RECALLING Resolution 2018-3 on Ghost Gear Entanglement Among Cetaceans;

RECOGNISING the transboundary nature of marine plastic pollution and the importance of regional and international cooperation by IWC Contracting Governments and other International Organisations, bodies and instruments, including inter alia the UN Environment Assembly Programme (UNEA UNEP), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Arctic Council and International Maritime Organisation (IMO);

EMPHASISING the alarming scale of actual and projected increases in plastic pollution and the adverse impact of marine plastic pollution on cetaceans, which is more substantial than previously thought;

RECOGNISING the IWC's unique global role and mandate in understanding and addressing the impacts of plastic pollution on cetaceans that have serious conservation and welfare implications.

THEREFORE THE COMMISSION:

COMMENDS the adoption by the UN Environment Assembly of Resolution UNEP/EA.5/Res.14, which requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme agreeing to convene an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment;

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, ~~Greece~~, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden

DIRECTS the Secretariat to explore options for the IWC to engage as a stakeholder within the INC process, **as appropriate**;

ENDORSES the outcome of the December 2019 marine debris workshop, relevant reports of the Scientific Committee and the Conservation Committee workplan on marine debris (to be discussed at IWC68);

DIRECTS the IWC Secretariat to explore ways to increase collaboration and cooperation with relevant regional and international organisations **and bodies, including the Arctic Council, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)** to share information **that contributes to the** ~~avoiding overlap~~ **avoid unnecessary duplication of work and regulation**, and development of effective measures ~~and implement best practice~~ to prevent ~~or and~~ mitigate marine plastic pollution impacts on cetaceans, **avoiding unnecessary duplication of work and regulation and in addition to action encouraged in Resolution 2018-3**;

REQUESTS the Scientific Committee to consider ~~to contribute~~ **contributing to an the assessment understanding** of the impact of marine plastic pollution on cetaceans, including by the collection and collation of appropriate data from around the world;

REQUESTS the Scientific Committees to consider, **where appropriate data exist**, a global risk assessment identifying “hotspots” **of cetacean exposure to plastic debris**, potentially through the modelling of ~~increased~~ exposure levels of plastic ingestion and entanglement, **where feasible and appropriate**. This could integrate the biological characteristics of different species of cetaceans and plastic dispersion models.

~~REQUESTS~~ **ENCOURAGES** the Conservation Committee, Scientific Committee, and Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues Working Group to consider ~~to facilitate~~ **engaging, as appropriate, in pilot projects of other organizations or entities on gear marking of fishing gear that is known to lead to cetacean entanglement** ~~pilot projects on gear marking in hot spot areas of cetacean entanglement~~;

RECOMMENDS Contracting Governments to report relevant information on marine plastic pollution and plastic ingestion in stranded animals in their voluntary conservation and national Scientific Progress reports;

RECOMMENDS the IWC Secretariat to add marine debris mapping to its engagement with the Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) process;

REQUESTS the Secretariat to develop a strategy for the IWC to eliminate single-use plastics in all meetings and the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat.

REQUESTS the Secretariat to report back to IWC69 on progress made in the implementation of this Resolution.