Feedback from European Marine Board to European Commission's Roadmap on 2030 Climate Target Plan (6 April 2020)

We welcome the ambition to include the contribution of all sectors of the economy and society for an increased climate target for 2030, to prepare the EU for the transition towards climate neutrality by 2050. But in the current roadmap, only maritime transport is considered while the rest of the blue economy and general seas and ocean are not considered. The ocean has taken up between 20–30% of total anthropogenic CO2 emissions since the 1980s (IPCC figures) and ocean-based mitigation options could reduce global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by nearly 4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) per annum in 2030 and by more than 11 billion tonnes per annum in 2050, relative to projected business-as-usual (BAU) emissions (Hoegh-Guldberg. O., *et al.* 2019). Reductions of this magnitude are larger than the emissions from all current coal fired power plants world-wide and more than China's total emissions in 2014.

We request the inclusion of the ocean and seas, the blue economy and ocean-solutions into the EU's 2030 Climate Target Plan, as almost half of the EU population lives less than 50 km from the sea and majority of large urban areas are concentrated along the coast (Eurostat figures). In addition, Tyedmers, *et al.* (2005) calculated that fishing fleets consume the same quantity of oil as the whole of the Netherlands. By limiting the action on the blue economy to maritime transport, the fisheries (or other) fleets are not considered.

The Climate Target Plan also referred to the land use sector and agriculture only for food provision, but the ocean-based food system (wild capture fisheries, aquaculture, and shifting human diets towards food from the sea) should be considered for climate action as well. The EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU) provides a unique opportunity to address climate action at European coasts. Effective Maritime Spatial Planning integrates many activities affecting ocean and coastal areas, and prioritization of renewable energy and nature conservation can be explored.

In addition, the Plan also should include the impact that changes to more sustainable fisheries and aquaculture production might have on exporting the problem to third countries. If the future Marine Spatial Plans exclude food provision in European Waters what will be the impact on North African countries if fishing fleets need to provide fish from there?

Nature conservation is not highlighted in the Roadmap, but referred to as "natural sink", even though nature remains the biggest ally to store carbon from the atmosphere. Restoration of vegetated coastal ecosystems, such as tidal marshes and seagrass meadows (coastal 'blue carbon' ecosystems), could provide climate change mitigation through increased carbon uptake and storage of around 0.5% of current global emissions annually (IPCC). The paper by Duarte *et al.* (2020) shows the key opportunities of saltmarsh, seagrass, kelp and oyster reef restoration all pointing to the importance of Blue Carbon and coastal defences as well as water quality improvement and coastal protection, which will be important in the future. There are guidelines on how to include coastal wetlands in a country's greenhouse gas inventory, which remain voluntary to adopt (Guidelines on The 2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands (Wetlands Supplement)), but should be made more explicit in this Plan.

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Climate change is a trans-boundary problem, but the actions and solutions has to be enforced at national and local level. The Roadmap should refer to which mechanisms will be in place to follow up and support implementation at EU Member State level.

Finally, an assessment on the society readiness to implement this higher level of ambition is crucial for the success of the 2030 Climate Target Plan, especially as investment by households and businesses are expected to rise the most. Developing a communication strategy to EU citizens will be needed, and lessons could be learned from the COVID-19 crisis, as citizens were able to accept difficult decisions with regard to their social life and ability to work, for the larger goal of sparing the health system.

Detailed recommendations on what to do to include the ocean as a solution to climate change can be found at Hoegh-Guldberg. O., *et al.* 2019. ‘‘The Ocean as a Solution to Climate Change: Five Opportunities for Action.’’ Report. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. Available online athttp://www.oceanpanel.org/climate and on the actions and opportunities for protection of saltmarshes, seagrass meadows and oyster reefs in Duarte *et al.* 2020 “Rebuilding marine life.” Nature 580 (2020) 39-51.