

COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2022/14**of 2 December 2021**

on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union at the 22nd meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols as regards the adoption of a decision to adopt Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 192(1) in conjunction with Article 218(9) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The amended Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean ('the Barcelona Convention') for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities ('the LBS Protocol') was concluded by the Union by means of Council Decision 1999/801/EC ⁽¹⁾ and entered into force on 11 May 2008.
- (2) Pursuant to Article 15(1) of the LBS Protocol, the meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols is to adopt regional action plans containing measures and timetables for their implementation.
- (3) During their 22nd meeting from 7 to 10 December 2021, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols are expected to adopt a decision ('the Decision of the Contracting Parties') adopting Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management ('the Regional Plans') in the framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol.
- (4) The Decision of the Contracting Parties relates to the protection of the environment, which is a shared competence between the Union and its Member States under Article 4(2), point (e), of the Treaty. The Decision of the Contracting Parties does not fall within an area which is largely covered by Union rules concerning such protection. The Union does not intend to make use of the possibility of exercising its external competence with regard to areas covered by the Decision of the Contracting Parties in relation to which its competence has not yet been exercised internally.
- (5) It is appropriate to establish the position to be taken on the Union's behalf at the meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, as the Decision of the Contracting Parties concerns the adoption of the Regional Plans that will be binding on the Union pursuant to Article 15(3) of the LBS Protocol.
- (6) Since the purpose of the Regional Plans is to update requirements regarding the protection of the Mediterranean Sea, modify the Union's international commitments and ambitions and improve the protection of the environment, the Union should support the adoption of the Decision of the Contracting Parties,

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision 1999/801/EC of 22 October 1999 on accepting the amendments to the Protocol for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution from land-based sources (Barcelona Convention) (OJ L 322, 14.12.1999, p. 18).

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The position to be taken on the Union's behalf at the 22nd meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols shall be to support the adoption of a decision adopting Regional Plans on urban wastewater treatment and sewage sludge management in the framework of Article 15 of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities.

Article 2

In the light of developments at the 22nd meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, refinement of the position referred to in Article 1 may be agreed to by the representatives of the Union, in consultation with Member States, during on-the-spot coordination meetings without a further decision of the Council.

Article 3

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, 2 December 2021.

For the Council
The President
J. VRTOVEC
