

## Statement to the Ministerial Meeting 2021 of the OSPAR Commission

Friday 1 October 2021

Cascais, Portugal

The Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS) is extremely grateful for this opportunity to express a view at this important meeting.

First, we are reassured that impacts from climate change on the marine environment are at the top of your agenda. ACOPS would like to emphasise that the effect of climate change, that is the introduction of heat and energy into the ocean are also pollution under Part XII of UNCLOS. The obligation of states to take all necessary measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment must be fulfilled with due diligence. States must do the utmost they can to reach this result.

Second, you have rightly identified underwater noise as an essential concern. In addition to the increase in density of noisy activities at sea, the increase in the temperature of seawater and ocean acidification are further worsening this issue. We urge OSPAR to continue to prioritise this work and to cooperate and consult with other bodies.

Our third point touches on this last concern. OSPAR is a leader and there is an immense opportunity for the learning from this body to be passed on effectively to other regional seas. We feel that your learnings, process, framing of issues and templates as well as common indicator and threshold methodologies can be shared and valued by other parts of the world. ACOPS pillars are sound science, the rule of law and collaboration. We see OSPAR as a successful and useful model and we hope to support you in this sharing process.

In conclusion, we commend you for your foresight and very much hope that you will bring to fruition your push to ensure that the declaration on protection of a certain square meters of maritime areas always includes the 3-D nature of the marine environment and ensures the protection of marine ecosystems as a whole, as UNCLOS and the OSPAR Convention envisaged.