



OSPAR
COMMISSION

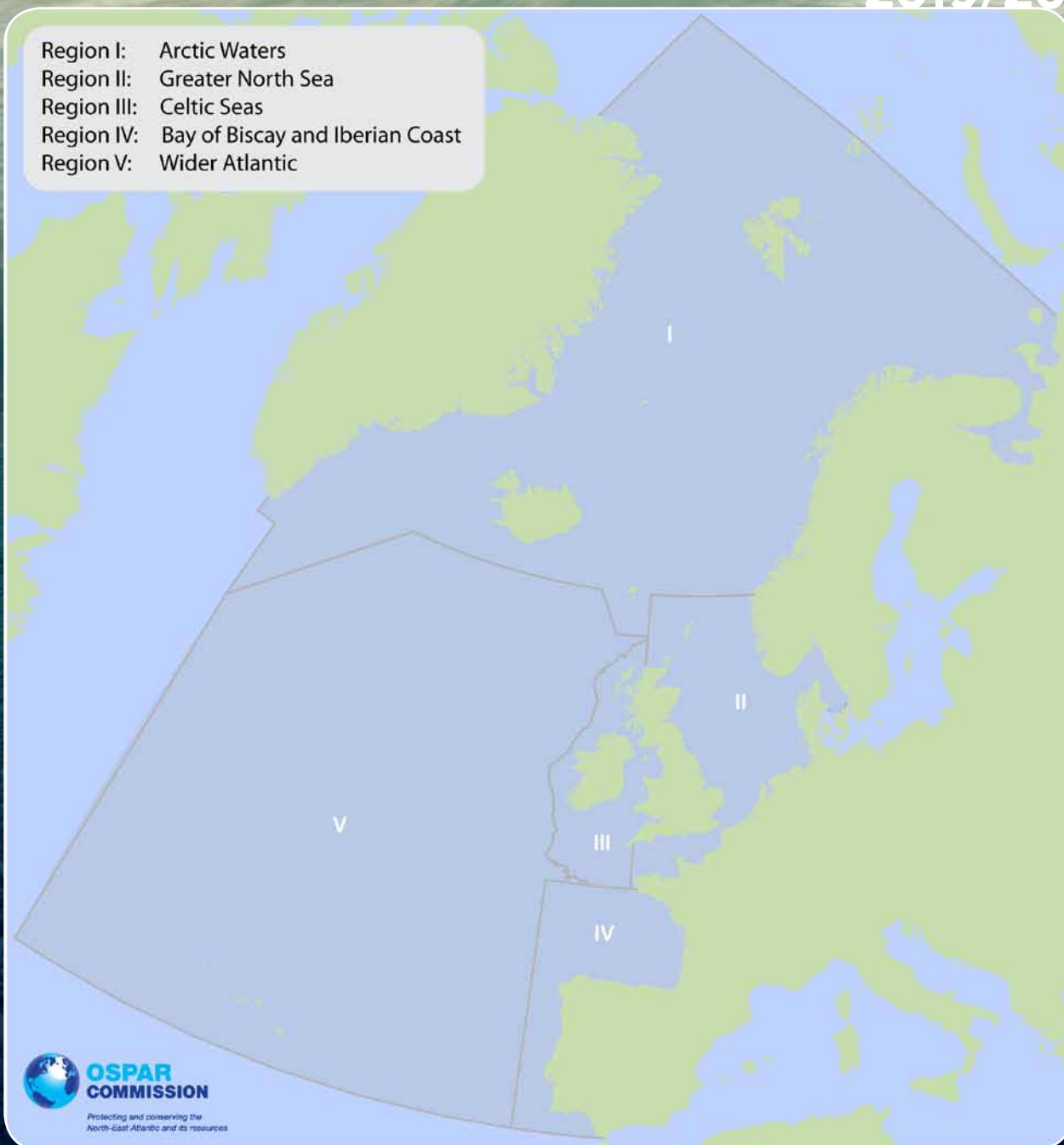
*Protecting and conserving the
North-East Atlantic and its resources*



ANNUAL REPORT 2019- 2020

OSPAR MARITIME AREA

- Region I: Arctic Waters
- Region II: Greater North Sea
- Region III: Celtic Seas
- Region IV: Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast
- Region V: Wider Atlantic



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COVID-19



Image: Gerd Altmann

Our thoughts go out to all those who have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This terrible virus has affected thousands of lives around the world and we hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. Inevitably, the restrictions imposed by governments impacted OSPAR's programme of meetings and our ways of working, most notably with the postponement of the Ministerial Meeting planned for June 2020. Fortunately, the flexibility, pragmatism and hard work of the Secretariat, the Contracting Parties and our Observers mean that, for the most part, we have been able to continue with our programme of work. It has not always been easy and has often been frustrating, but it is a testament to the commitment of everyone involved that we have not let the fallout from Covid-19 disrupt our important work to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.

MINISTERIAL MEETING POSTPONED

It was with great regret that the OSPAR Contracting Parties collectively took the decision to postpone the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting 2020 as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This difficult decision was made unanimously by the Heads of Delegation of the OSPAR Contracting Parties on 3 April. The planned launch of OSPAR's new strategy for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic (NEAES) 2020-2030, at the Ministerial Meeting was also postponed. Whilst the delay is regrettable, we will use the coming year to further develop the strategy and ensure it is consistent with and contributes to other major ocean-related international events that were also postponed: most notably the United Nation's (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP26.

OSPAR's Commission/Ministerial Meeting will kindly be hosted by the Government of Portugal from 21-25 June 2021. The meeting will review OSPAR's progress and celebrate its successes under its 2010-2020 NEAES. We will also look to the future with the launch of our new 2020-2030 NEAES and the work needed to protect and restore the amazing biodiversity of the North-East Atlantic.



OSPAR
MINISTERIAL
PORTUGAL | 2021



BIOGRAPHY

OF OUR NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, DOMINIC PATTINSON

For as long as I can remember I have been interested in the natural world. Whether it was watching birds in my back garden or rock pooling off the coast of Ile d'Oleron, I was always fascinated by nature and the thrill of discovering some new animal or plant. I studied Environmental Sciences at Southampton University and went on to join the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food which later became the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in the United Kingdom (UK). It will therefore come as no surprise to those that know me that I am thrilled to be taking on the role of Executive Secretary at OSPAR.

During my last seven years at Defra, I worked on both domestic and international marine environment policy. Many in the OSPAR family are well known to me already and I look forward to working with them in my new role and to building new relations with others to help OSPAR tackle pollution, manage our seas sustainably and to conserve and restore our marine environment. I am hoping that the negotiating skills I learnt growing up as the son of an English father and a French mother will stand me in good stead for the challenges to come!



OVERVIEW

OF OSPAR'S ACTIVITIES 2019-2020 – AN INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Welcome to this review of OSPAR's activities from July 2019 through to June 2020. As in previous years, the report highlights the activities of our Contracting Parties in the delivery of OSPAR's North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) and their obligations under the OSPAR Convention. We hope that you find it interesting and that it encourages you to explore our [website](#) where you can find out even more about the work of OSPAR and what we do to protect the marine environment.

A common theme of the OSPAR Commission and its Committees' work this year has been development of the next OSPAR NEAES which will run from 2020 to 2030. The last 12 months has seen the publication of key reports¹ on the state of the world's oceans, the impacts of climate change and on the devastating loss of biodiversity across the globe. Through its new NEAES, OSPAR will play an important role in helping to address those challenges, show how it is possible to balance economic growth with protecting and restoring the marine environment, and demonstrate the benefits of regional cooperation. That is why across the Committees, the goal has been to ensure that the proposed strategic and operational objectives in our new NEAES remain relevant and ambitious.

Another common theme has been work on the assessments that will feed into OSPAR's Quality Status Report (QSR) that will be published in 2023. This involves a huge effort from across the whole OSPAR community; by our scientific experts, our monitoring and data analysts, our policy officials and our stakeholders. It will build on our [Intermediate Assessment 2017](#) and we hope will set the benchmark for marine status assessments. Importantly, it will help

our Contracting Parties to meet their national, regional and international commitments in a more streamlined and cost-effective way. In particular, we have been working closely with the European Commission to ensure that those OSPAR Contracting Parties which are also members of the European Union are able to use the QSR 2023 in their reporting under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in 2024.

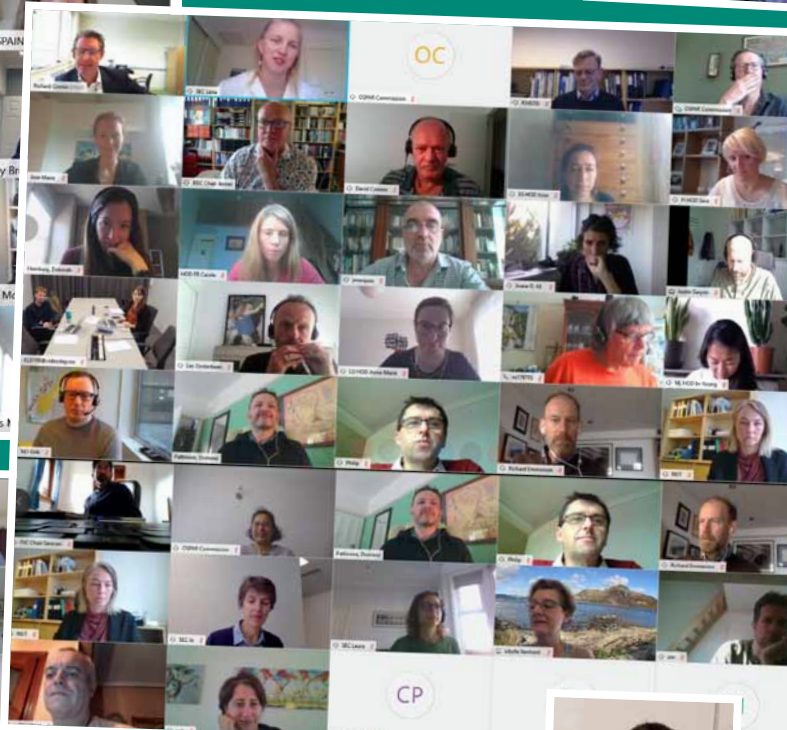
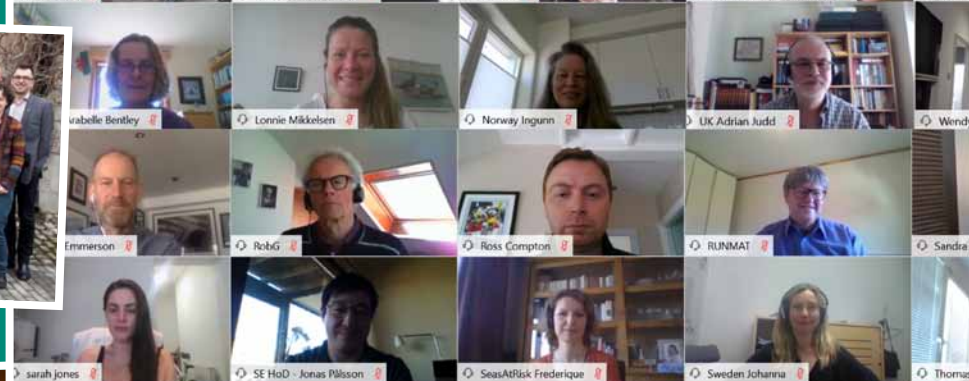
The rest of the report sets out the work of each of OSPAR's thematic Committees on Biological Diversity and Ecosystems; Environmental Impacts of Human Activities; Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication; Offshore Industry; and Radioactive Substances. In these sections you will find highlights of the work they have done this year.

We would both like to pay tribute to Susanna Salvador, our outgoing Executive Secretary, who left OSPAR in April this year. Susana joined OSPAR in 2017 and we are grateful for all her hard work in progressing OSPAR's objectives during her time with us. We wish her every success in her new role as Executive Secretary of ACCOBAMS.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their contributions over the past year. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have made this year particularly challenging and significantly affected how we work. Going forward, we are sure that there will be positive lessons learned about new ways of working, but we also look forward to a time when we can meet again in person and build and renew the relationships that are so important to our work. Stay safe!

¹ Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate

COMMITTEES



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES

OSPAR's Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee (EIHA) met online from 20-22 April to discuss a reduced but packed agenda.

In addition to ongoing work on EIHA deliverables for the Ministerial Meeting, EIHA also continued work for the QSR 2023 and agreed project plans for thematic assessments covering: marine litter; underwater noise; and selected human activities including shipping and mariculture.

With the end of OSPAR's current **Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter** (RAP-ML) in sight, EIHA made plans for the review of the effectiveness of the RAP-ML and began preparations for the drafting of a new or updated RAP. A scoping study on best practices for the design and recycling of fishing gear as a means to reduce quantities of fishing gear found as marine litter in the North-East Atlantic was also finalised and is looked at in more detail on the next page.

In line with EIHA's productive and sustainably used seas agenda, the revision to the Joint Harmonised Procedure (JHP) for the Contracting Parties of HELCOM and OSPAR on the granting of exemptions under International Convention for the Control

and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, Regulation A-4 was agreed. Work on underwater noise also advanced, with updates from the Co-convenors of OSPAR's group on noise; the UK's Nathan Merchant on the development of a common Indicator on the risk of impact from impulsive noise and draft assessment; and from the Netherlands Niels Kinneging on a common indicator on pressure from ambient noise.

After 10 years of outstanding chairing, Lex Oosterbaan (the Netherlands), informed EIHA that he had decided it was time for him to stand down. Marta Martínez-Gil Pardo de Vera (Spain) and Margot Cronin (Ireland) stepped down as Vice-Chairs. EIHA thanked all 3 for their dedication and wished them well in the future. John Mouat (United Kingdom) was elected as the new Chair of EIHA and will be supported by Hanne-Grete Nilsen (Norway).

EIHA will meet in autumn to discuss: new indicators and assessments for marine litter and underwater noise, a Recommendation to reduce the impact of plastic pre-production pellets, an assessment of Dumping and Placement of Wastes or Other Matter at Sea, and progress on offshore renewables, deep sea mining and munitions.

Monitoring litter in the North-East Atlantic

2019 saw the publication of two updated OSPAR indicator [assessments](#) on marine litter. These assessments are being used to evaluate progress towards OSPAR's objective of substantially reducing marine litter.

The beach litter assessment adds an additional 4 years of data to the 2017 Intermediate Assessment, and reports some small but positive signs of improvement. Reductions in the total number of litter items occurring on 23% of survey sites were partially offset by increases recorded in 9% of sites. About 90% of recorded items are plastic.

The assessment of plastic particles in the stomachs of North Sea fulmars covers the period 2012 – 2016 and reported a statistically significant decline in ingested plastic mass and the percentage of birds with over 0.1g of plastic in their stomach. However, we remain short of achieving the goal of less than 10% of fulmars exceeding 0.1g.

These assessments will be updated for the QSR 2023 and will be complemented by assessments of litter on the sea floor and litter ingested by turtles. A thematic assessment will tie the themes together, and investigate how the implementation of the [European Union \(EU\)'s Single Use Plastics Directive](#), MSFD, PRF and OSPAR's RAP-ML translate into real world changes in the abundance and composition of marine litter.

90% of litter items recorded on OSPAR beach litter survey sites are made of plastic/polystyrene

2012 – 2016 data shows statistically significant decline in ingested plastic mass and the percentage of birds with over 0.1g of plastic in their stomach

Tackling fishing-related marine litter

One of the focus areas of OSPAR's RAP-ML is the need to find ways of reducing one of the main sources of marine litter - commercial fishing operations. Discarded or lost fishing gear containing plastic materials degrades slowly remaining in the marine environment for decades. Gradual shedding of microplastic fibres leads to ingestion by filter feeding organisms and fish. Netting made from low-density plastics continues to float on the surface and remains hazardous for marine animals (so-called ghost fishing) as well as posing security risks to vessels. Loss of fibres through abrasion further contributes to the presence of plastics in the ocean.

In 2020 OSPAR published a [scoping study](#) to look at the problems and solutions including: design and recyclability, improving end-of-life management of fishing gear, monitoring of gear placed on the market, and market and non-market incentives to encourage recycling. Information about the specific issue of dolly rope will be extracted from the scoping report and synthesised in a stand-alone publication for next year, given that this was identified as a priority. Further actions to reduce the impacts from the fisheries sector will be considered as part of the development of a new or updated marine litter action plan.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND EUTROPHICATION COMMITTEE

OSPAR's Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee ([HASEC](#)) met online, 23–25 March 2020 to address its reduced agenda. The focus was on developing and finalising deliverables for the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting.

HASEC recommended OSPAR should join the High Ambition Alliance (HAA) on chemicals and waste in support of an ambitious new global framework under the United Nations [Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management beyond 2020](#). In joining the HAA, OSPAR could influence the development of a new global framework aiming to reduce levels of hazardous substances. OSPAR and HAA Secretariats will collaborate in autumn 2020 to bring further information to the OSPAR Commission to inform a decision on whether to join the Alliance.

HASEC's scientific expert groups have already made great progress in developing the assessments that will contribute to the QSR 2023. There will be a suite of individual indicator assessments and three over-arching thematic assessments on hazardous substances inputs from the atmosphere and rivers, hazardous substances concentrations in the sea, and eutrophication.

The Secretariat has also been carrying out technical work to capture and make available online all of OSPAR's [Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme Appendices](#). This is valuable work to support our Contracting Parties that are EU member states. They can link direct to these tables when they report on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) to the European Commission.

HASEC is reviewing OSPAR's List of Chemicals for Priority Action ([LCPA](#)) and List of Substances of Possible Concern ([LSPC](#)) to harmonise the approaches and thresholds with those of other Regional Seas Conventions and the [EU REACH](#) (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation & restriction of Chemicals) regulations. Work is well underway, and the intention is to have up-to-date rationalised Lists in 2021.

The Chair of HASEC, Philip Axe (Sweden) has done an admirable job of leading HASEC since 2018 and Contracting Parties' support for his continuation as Chair until 2022 was unanimous. We are all very happy for Philip's ongoing guidance, support and leadership.

HASEC will hold a second online Committee meeting in autumn 2020 to address the outstanding actions.

Harmonised eutrophication assessment

OSPAR experts are working towards a new, more harmonised approach for assessing eutrophication status in OSPAR's Maritime Area.

Eutrophication is the result of excessive enrichment of water by nutrients, usually from land run-off. Enriching marine water with nutrients may lead to algal (phytoplankton) blooms, with the possible consequence of undesirable disturbance to the balance of organisms in the marine ecosystem and overall water quality. OSPAR's Common Procedure is a shared approach adopted by the Contracting Parties to assess eutrophication status. The results of the Common Procedure demonstrate the success of existing measures and inform decisions as to whether and where new measures are needed to remedy problems.

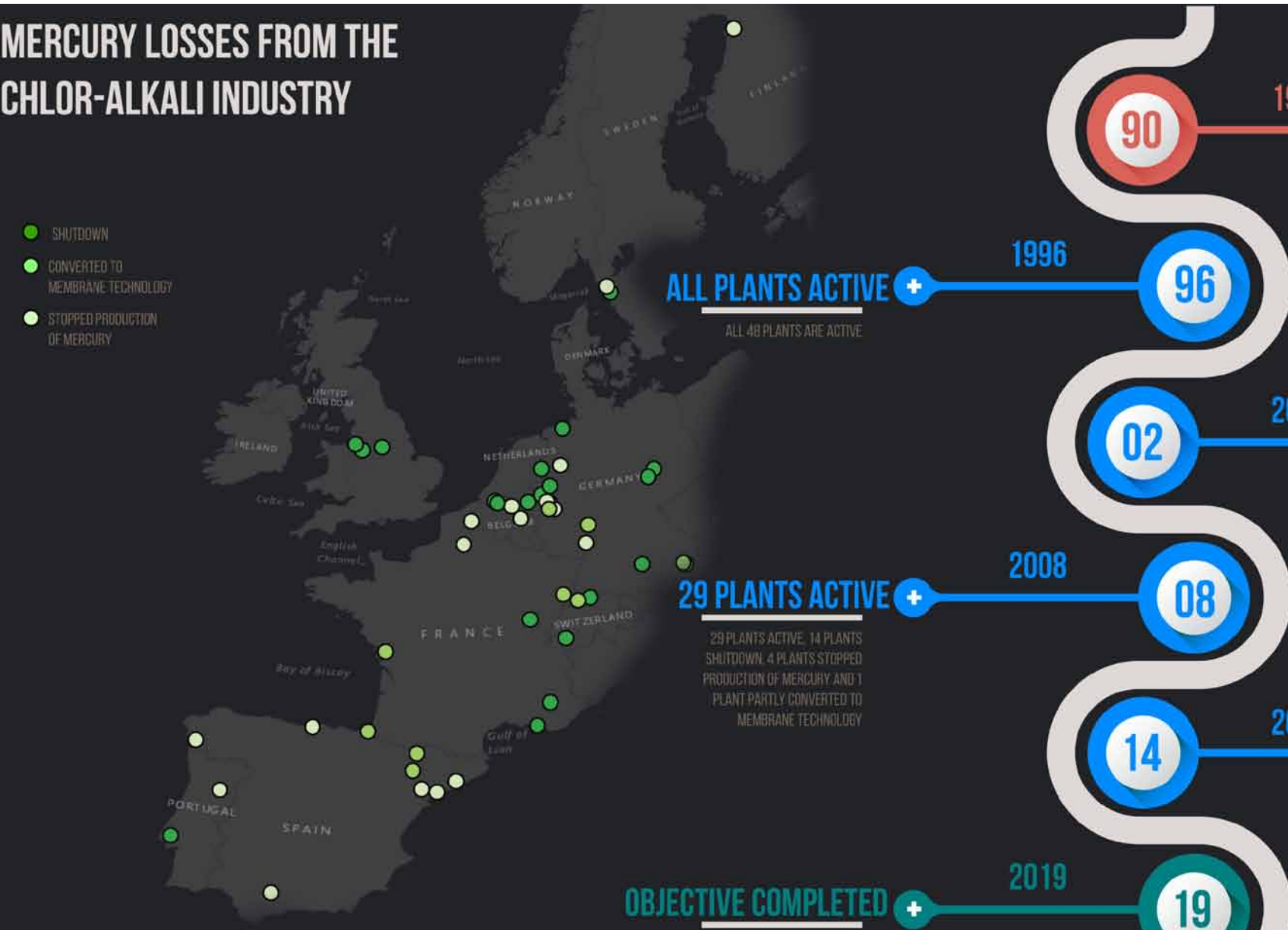
OSPAR experts are currently revising the Common Procedure. In the first step, ecologically relevant assessment areas are being delineated. Next, area-specific assessment values for the eutrophication indicators need to be agreed, including for OSPAR's common indicators of nutrient inputs, nutrient concentrations, chlorophyll-a and dissolved oxygen concentrations. The Common Procedure will be conducted in a transparent way via a new, online assessment tool (COMPEAT²) being developed by ICES. Each step of the process will be open to scrutiny making for a more robust process that will also save our Contracting Parties' time and resources.

² Common Procedure Eutrophication Assessment Tool

Image: Wera Leujak

MERCURY LOSSES FROM THE CHLOR-ALKALI INDUSTRY

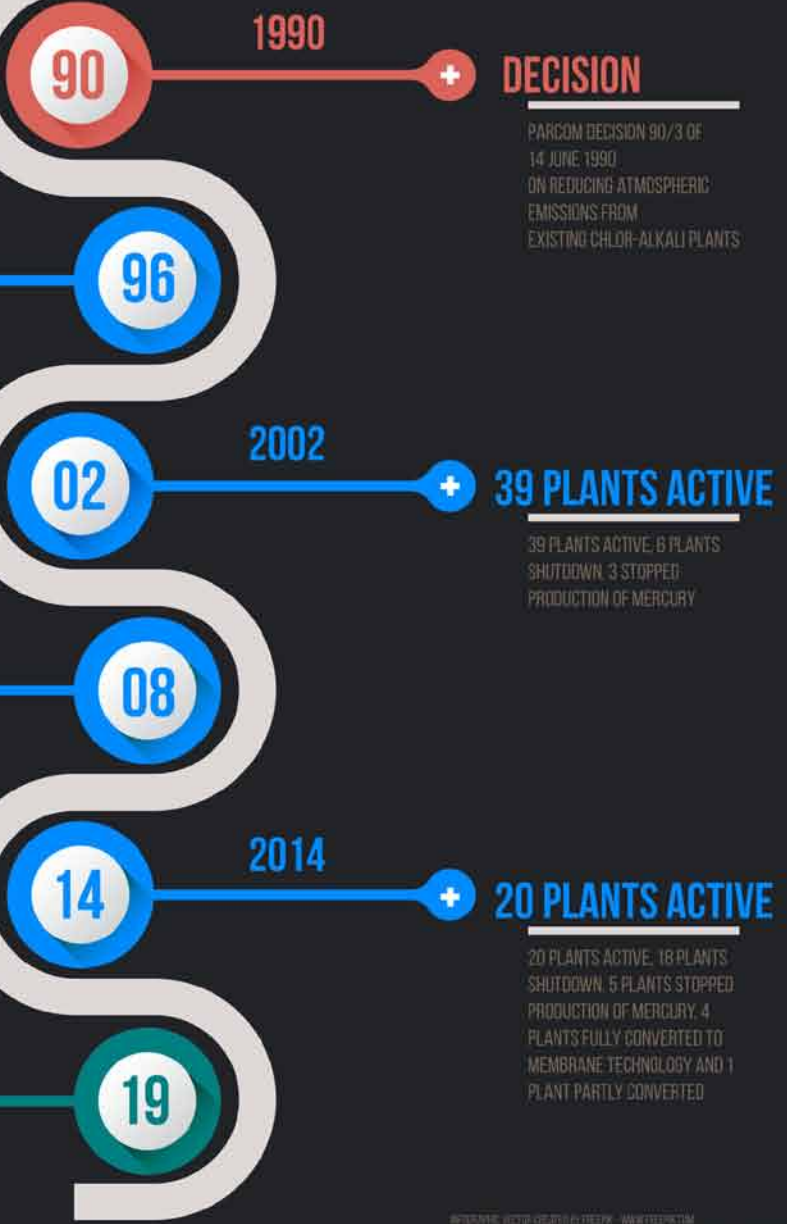
- SHUTDOWN
- CONVERTED TO MEMBRANE TECHNOLOGY
- STOPPED PRODUCTION OF MERCURY



ALL PLANTS ACTIVE
ALL 48 PLANTS ARE ACTIVE

29 PLANTS ACTIVE
29 PLANTS ACTIVE, 14 PLANTS SHUTDOWN, 4 PLANTS STOPPED PRODUCTION OF MERCURY AND 1 PLANT PARTLY CONVERTED TO MEMBRANE TECHNOLOGY

OBJECTIVE COMPLETED
ALL MERCURY CELL CHLOR-ALKALI PLANTS SHUTDOWN, STOPPED PRODUCTION OF MERCURY OR CONVERTED TO MEMBRANE TECHNOLOGY



DECISION

PARCOM DECISION 90/3 OF 14 JUNE 1990 ON REDUCING ATMOSPHERIC EMISSIONS FROM EXISTING CHLOR-ALKALI PLANTS

“RECOMMEND THAT EXISTING MERCURY CELL CHLOR-ALKALI PLANTS BE PHASED OUT AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE.”

MAP: VECTOR CREATED BY FREEM - WWW.FREEM.COM
DATA: UNEP, DANISH, © SPONSORED BY DANISH, AND THE DANISH CHLOR-ALKALI INDUSTRY

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS



Image: Pixnio

OSPAR's Biological Diversity & Ecosystems Committee ([BDC](#)) met online from 23-26 March 2020 with a curtailed agenda.

After several years of intensive work by seabird and policy experts, BDC finalised the nomination proforma for a 'North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount Marine Protected Area (MPA)'. It compiles the relevant scientific and technical information for a proposed new MPA in the middle of the Atlantic, beyond areas of national jurisdiction. In the final phase, BDC worked to integrate information gathered through an open and inclusive consultation process with other competent authorities. This proposal will now be considered at the next OSPAR Commission meeting. If designated, this MPA would be the largest OSPAR MPA.

BDC finalised work on two new draft Recommendations for species from the [OSPAR list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats](#). The draft Recommendation on houting, *Coregonus lavaretus oxyrinchus*, and the draft Recommendation on the Azorean Barnacle, *Megabalanus azoricus* are the last two Recommendations to be developed for the features currently on the OSPAR list of threatened and/or declining

features. The Recommendations include actions to be taken by specific Contracting Parties to protect these two species, as well as collective protective actions.

Another huge undertaking for Contracting Parties was the implementation reporting against all OSPAR Recommendations on threatened and/or declining species and habitats. The information from over 50 Recommendations will be analysed in the coming meeting cycle, with a view to providing the first comprehensive overview of the actions taken by OSPAR on the protection and conservation of features identified for priority action.

BDC will organise a second meeting in the autumn of 2020 to address the important issues which were not covered under the curtailed agenda, including the new status assessments of listed and or declining species and habitats, assessment values and extension of common indicators, and planning of thematic assessments.

BDC was grateful to Jeroen Vis of the Netherlands for his able and enthusiastic chairing throughout the online meeting.

Incidental by-catch of birds and marine mammals workshop



The OSPAR-HELCOM workshop attracted over 50 participants from the Contracting Parties: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Observers: ICES, BirdLife International, CCB, WWF as well as specially invited expert guests.

OSPAR has committed to halt and prevent loss of biodiversity by ensuring effects of human activities and pressures on the marine environment do not adversely affect species. To better understand the pressures from human activities that affect highly mobile species such as marine mammals and seabirds, cross-border cooperation is essential. In light of this, neighbouring Regional Seas Conventions OSPAR and HELCOM organised a joint workshop from 3-5 September 2019 in Copenhagen, Denmark to share knowledge on incidental by-catch in fisheries which is believed to cause significant pressure in the North-East Atlantic Ocean and in the Baltic Sea.

The workshop provided a forum for experts from both regions to share experiences of the best indicator assessment methods, discuss methods for identifying the areas where marine mammals and seabirds may be at highest risk of incidental by-catch, and work together to identify data deficiencies which need to be addressed to enable a robust regional assessment.

The workshop developed concrete recommendations on technical developments towards data collection, as well as strategic proposals for conservation objectives and common indicator approaches. Seabird and marine mammal specific assessment methods were considered, and the best available approaches were identified as being similar but not identical due to their differing ecologies and data-availability. The workshop also proposed a conservation objective for the Regional Seas Conventions which would provide a foundation for developing an indicator that includes a value against which an assessment is made.

OSPAR and HELCOM have arranged joint workshops to address specific technical issues in the past with great success. With this workshop on incidental by-catch assessment, we again demonstrated the value of bringing together our shared expertise to solve common issues.

OFFSHORE INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

OSPAR ACTIVITIES 2019/20



OSPAR's Offshore Industry Committee (OIC) met in Copenhagen (Denmark) from 10-11 March 2020. The meeting was finalised online.

OIC discussed progress against the 2019-2020 Work Programme, concluded the review of progress made against the NEAES 2010-2020, finalised objectives to be addressed under the new NEAES 2020-2030, planned OIC work to feed into the QSR 2023, and considered the outcome of the informal meeting on comparative evaluation of decommissioning options in support of derogation proposals under OSPAR Decision 98/3.

Following a review, OIC amended two Recommendations: OSPAR Recommendation 2012/5 for a risk-based approach to the Management of Produced Water Discharges from Offshore Installations, and OSPAR Recommendation 2001/1 for the Management of Produced Water from Offshore Installations.


Work to harmonise OSPAR's Harmonised Mandatory Control System

(HCMS) for the use and discharge of offshore chemicals and the EU's REACH will continue intersessionally and include a review of all underpinning Recommendations and Agreements.

OIC finalised the 2018 annual report on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations. The draft assessment of the impacts of discharges of oil and chemicals in produced water on the marine environment was also presented and it was agreed that the finalised report will feed into QSR 2023. Work will continue throughout the year to produce OIC's thematic assessment for the QSR 2023 which will look at the impacts of the offshore oil and gas industry on the marine environment.

The Chair of OIC, Saravanan Marappan (United Kingdom), has been leading OIC since 2017 doing a very thorough and efficient job. He was re-elected by acclamation as Chair and Mikael Palme Malinovsky (Denmark) as Vice-Chair for the next two intersessional periods.

Disposal of Disused Offshore Installations



Since 1998 the dumping, and leaving wholly or partly in place, of disused offshore installations has been prohibited in the North-East Atlantic under OSPAR Decision 98/3 on the Disposal of Disused Offshore Installations. However, a Contracting Party may give permission to leave installations or parts of installations in place in certain cases. More than 1350 offshore installations are operational of which around 170 have been decommissioned, including 9 derogations granted by the United Kingdom and Norway.

During 2019, a consultation process on the United Kingdom's intention to issue a permit for leaving *in-situ* the footings of the Brent Alpha steel jacket and Brent Bravo, Brent Charlie and Brent Delta gravity based concrete installations was undertaken. As part of the consultation process, a formal objection was raised by Germany and supported by Belgium, the European Union, the Netherlands and Sweden. A special consultative meeting was requested to be convened under OSPAR Decision 98/3.

The **special consultative meeting** was held in London on 18 October 2019 where OSPAR Contracting Parties, Observers and the operator discussed: the comparative assessment methodology used by the operator; the long term risk to the marine environment due to hazardous substances and oil residues left in the cell tank structures; and the risk to shipping and fishing due to the leaving in place of the gravity based concrete installations.

The process was considered by the Chair of OSPAR and all participants as a step forward in agreeing common OSPAR standards for comparable challenging decommissioning cases. The United Kingdom, in accordance with Decision 98/3, will further engage in discussions with parties before taking a decision on whether to issue the permit for derogation. Germany declared its full support and willingness to further consult both bilaterally and within an OSPAR context in order to seek a viable and agreeable solution to the questions discussed.

OSPAR maintains an Offshore Oil and Gas Offshore installations inventory detailing installations from OSPAR Contracting Parties with Offshore Oil and Gas industry: namely Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom.

RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCE COMMITTEE



OSPAR's Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC) met in Paris from 11-13 February. RSC worked further on the text for its operational objectives under the NEAES 2020-2030 and reached a common understanding following 2 years of intense discussions.

RSC welcomed the developments from the intersessional working group to produce a method to assess that concentrations above historic levels are close to zero (ICG-CTZ) and agreed to include the proposed qualitative assessment in the next periodic evaluation and to finish the overall methodology by 2021 in the form of an Agreement.

RSC also addressed the work under the intersessional working group on the modelling of additional concentrations of NORM in seawater from discharges of produced water

from the offshore oil and gas sector (ICG-MOD) which will develop an Agreement for the methodology for the far field assessment by 2021.

RSC agreed Terms of Reference to commence work on the Fifth Periodic Evaluation (5PE) of progress against the current Radioactive Substances Strategy. The 5PE will conduct a robust assessment of progress made in the reduction of radioactive discharges and concentrations in the marine environment and will provide the scientific basis for RSC's contribution to the QSR 2023.

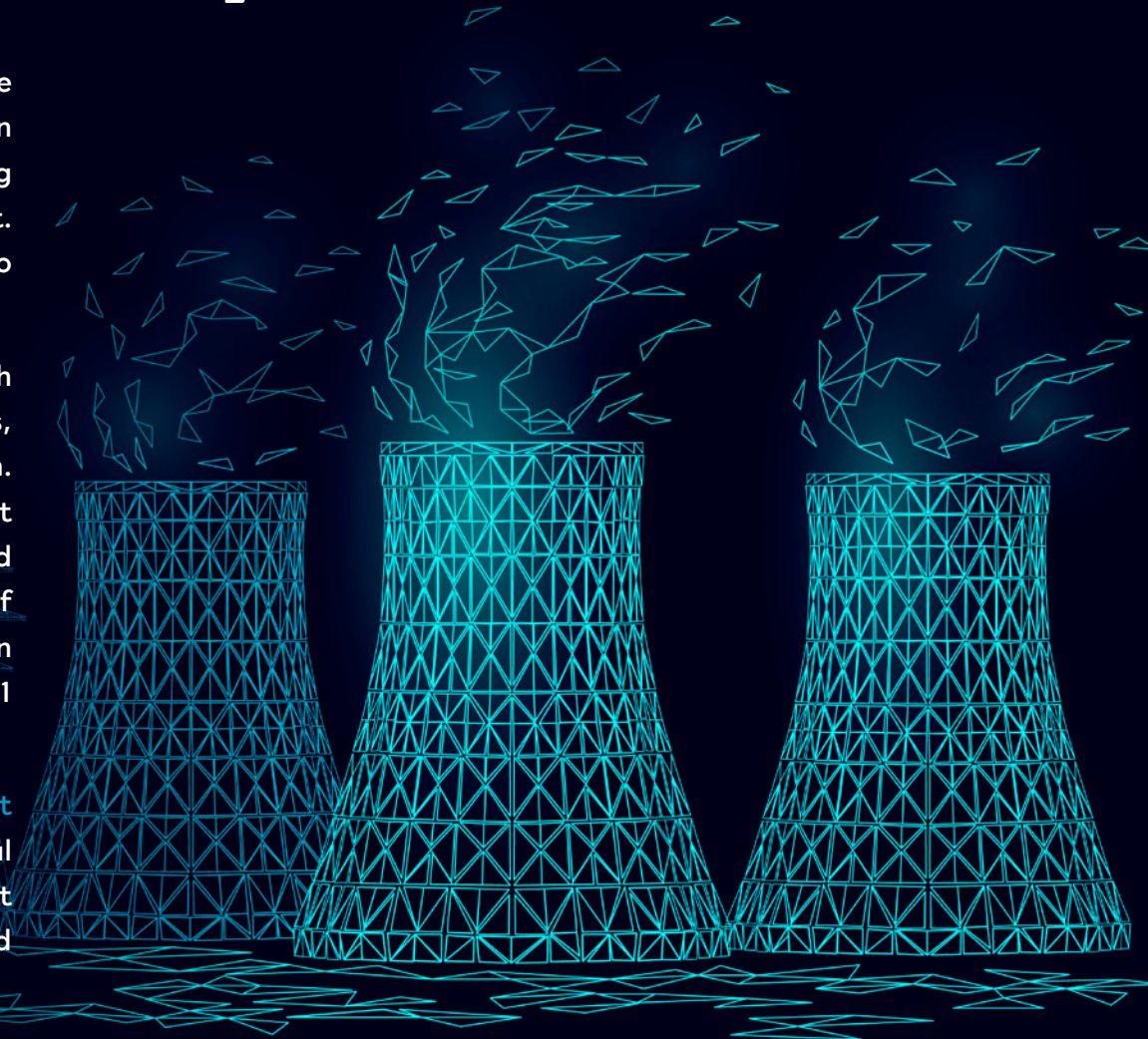
The Chair of RSC, Justin Gwynn (Norway), has led RSC's work since 2011 and was re-elected as Chair. Kins Leonard (United Kingdom) was again elected as Vice-Chair.

Applying Best Available Techniques in the nuclear industry

PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 concerns the use of Best Available Techniques (BAT), to minimise and, as appropriate, eliminate any pollution caused by radioactive discharges from all nuclear industries, including research reactors and reprocessing plants, into the marine environment. The Recommendation requires Contracting Parties with nuclear facilities to report on the implementation of BAT every 4 years.

This year saw the completion of the 7th and final round of reporting, with reports submitted by, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The information submitted in the reports follows OSPAR Agreement 2004-03 on "Guidelines for the submission of information about, and assessment of, the application of BAT in nuclear facilities". The preparation of the reports is a huge undertaking by Contracting Parties, and efforts have been made to streamline the process through OSPAR Recommendation 2018/01 which supersedes PARCOM Recommendation 91/04.

The 7th round country reports are complemented by an [overview report of national statements](#) which includes information on the national arrangements for the implementation of BAT, the systems and abatement techniques to reduce discharges, the effectiveness of BAT in reducing liquid discharges as well as conclusions.



OSPAR PUBLICATIONS

TITLE

PUBLICATION NUMBER

Biodiversity Committee

Assessment Sheet on the Status of the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas in 2019

754/2020

Background Document for Houting - Wadden Sea population of (*Coregonus oxyrinchus*)

755/2020

Background Document for Azorean barnacle (*Megabalanus azoricus*)

756/2020

Environmental Impact of Human Activities

Scoping study on best practices for the design and recycling of fishing gear as a means to reduce quantities of fishing gear found as marine litter in the North-East Atlantic

757/2020

Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee

Atmospheric Deposition of Nitrogen to the OSPAR Maritime Area in the period 1995-2017

758/2020

Comprehensive Study on Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges (RID) – 2018 data report

759/2020

Background document for Canadian Federal Environmental Quality Guidelines (FEQGs) for Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDEs) in sediment and biota

760/2020

Background document on background assessment concentrations for Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDE) in sediment

761/2020

Swedish quality standard for TBT in sediment

762/2020

EAC audit trail

763/2020

TITLE

PUBLICATION NUMBER

Offshore Industry Committee

OSPAR report on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations in 2018

764/2020

Assessment of the impacts of discharges of oil and chemicals in produced water on the marine environment (JAMP Product: O-2)

765/2020

Radioactive Substances Committee

Annual report on liquid discharges from nuclear installations in 2018

766/2020

Annual report on discharges of Radionuclides from the Non-nuclear Sectors in 2018

767/2020

Belgian report on the implementation of PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on Radioactive discharges to the OSPAR Commission on the application of Best Available Technology in nuclear facilities

768/2020

Spanish report on the implementation of PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on Radioactive discharges to the OSPAR Commission on the application of Best Available Technology in nuclear facilities

769/2020

Portuguese report on the implementation of PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on Radioactive discharges to the OSPAR Commission on the application of Best Available Technology in nuclear facilities

770/2020

Overview of national statements on the 7th round of implementation of PARCOM Recommendation 91/4

754/2020

INTERNATIONAL



COOPERATION

1. OSPAR RELATIONSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES



Bonn Agreement Ministerial

OSPAR RELATIONSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES

The Bonn Agreement

OSPAR gathered with ministers from around Europe in Bonn (Germany) on 11 October 2019 on the invitation of German Federal Minister Andreas Scheuer to celebrate 50 years of successful cooperation in dealing with pollution of the North Sea by oil and other harmful substances. Within the framework of the Bonn Agreement, Ministers renewed and expanded their commitments for the protection of the Greater North Sea and its Approaches.

The meeting renewed and expanded The Bonn Agreement's Strategic Action Plan and welcomed the accession of Spain. The meeting also extended the scope of action of the Agreement to prevent unlawful aerial emissions caused by shipping. Ministers welcomed a range of major commitments to address new trends in maritime transportation and other maritime activities such as offshore oil and gas exploitation.

Arctic Council

OSPAR engages with the Arctic Council as OSPAR Region I covers Arctic waters. OSPAR shares information, experience and practices with the Arctic Council Working Groups on Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Emergency, Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) and Monitoring and Assessment (AMAP).

OSPAR participated in the EPPR Working Group Meeting held on 4-5 December 2019 in Reykjavik, Iceland. The meeting agreed to establish a new Radiation Expert Group (RAD EG) under EPPR WG and it was agreed that OSPAR and RAD EG should coordinate in the future, share information and identify common areas of interest to avoid duplication.

OSPAR and AMAP's hazardous substances experts continue to closely collaborate on assessment procedures, including extraction and compilation of relevant data, and methods and processes for providing AMAP's Region I information and data for OSPAR's QSR 2023. Through this collaboration with AMAP more Region I data will be available and the assessment products from the statistical analysis will contribute to OSPAR's annual hazardous substances assessment and to the QSR 2023.

For the first time, OSPAR was represented at the CAFF Board meeting, held 3-5 February 2020, in Gällivare, Sweden. OSPAR presented ongoing work and activities and it was found that concrete collaboration could be taken forward on assessment and conservation of specific seabird species as well as a general sharing of data and assessment information. CAFF had been invited to provide a similar presentation at BDC 2020 in Reykjavik.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES

United Nations

UN General Assembly

OSPAR provided an annual report of its main activities as a contribution to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/19 of 10 December 2019, entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea". The report was agreed through written procedure by HOD and submitted 12 June 2020.

United Nations Environment Programme

Last year, in the margins of the Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) held in Nairobi, Kenya, the Coordinators of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans present, met and agreed to put together a global outlook report to showcase Regional Seas work at the UN Ocean Conference in June 2020.

The report presents an analysis to highlight the role that Regional Seas Conventions have played in supporting Contracting Parties to conserve and sustainably use the marine and coastal environment.

Given the delay of the UN Oceans Conference due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the report has now been scheduled for publication at the UNEA-5 conference. The report will be accompanied by extensive online material for outreach purposes.

Convention on Biological Diversity

OSPAR collaborated in a workshop to facilitate the description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant marine Areas (EBSAs) in the North-East Atlantic, which was held in Stockholm from 22-27 September 2019 as a technical level 5-day workshop. It followed a training day and a preparatory meeting between Secretariats. The workshop completed [templates for the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria](#) and successfully identified 17 proposed candidate EBSAs. The arrangement of the workshop as a CBD process where OSPAR and NEAFC collaborated was a successful set-up. The proposals for new EBSAs were prepared by the CBD Secretariat for submission to CBD meeting SBSTTA 23 in November 2019.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES

European Union

OSPAR and the Bonn Agreement Secretariat participated in the 16th Inter-Secretariat meeting between Regional Agreement Secretariats, DG ECHO and EMSA held on 5 February 2020 in Brussels, Belgium. EMSA gave an overview of their new structure and informed that the unit of sustainability would take care of pollution prevention and response including regulation and covering amongst other items: the revised Port Reception Facilities legislation, the review of the Ship-Source Pollution Directive, alternative fuels, ballast water management, anti-fouling systems and emerging issues such as underwater noise, marine litter, NOx and particles. The meeting agreed that OSPAR could join as a regional convention dealing with the impact of human activities in the sea and that litter would be addressed in the future in these meetings if finally covered by EMSA as decided by the Administrative Board.

HELCOM

Specific cooperation with HELCOM in different areas of interest is being covered throughout the OSPAR Committees.

The OSPAR/Bonn Agreement Secretariat participated in the 27th Meeting of HELCOM Response Working Group held on 26-28 February 2020 in Vejle, Denmark to present the outcome of the Bonn Agreement Ministerial Meeting. The draft of the Joint HNS Response Manual under the West MOPoCo Project was presented. OSPAR/Bonn Agreement and HELCOM together with REMPEC are beneficiaries of the project and contributing as regional agreements to produce a harmonised manual.

North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

The NEAFC PECMAS meetings consider scientific issues underlying NEAFC recommendations, including collaboration with OSPAR. The meeting was held 1-2 October 2019 and allowed for follow up of technical discussions initiated during the meeting under the collective arrangement, including: updates on the developments of the OSPAR nomination proforma for the NACES MPA; marine litter and OSPAR's work on design of fishing gear; and proposed ongoing discussion on other effective area-based conservation measures. OSPAR and NEAFC continue to share information in an open and constructive manner and the collaboration remains strong. More information on this meeting is found on page 28. ■

2. PARTICIPATION AT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Regional Workshop to facilitate the description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas in the North-East Atlantic Ocean

The UN global Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) embark on a programme of identifying Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in the world's oceans.

OSPAR and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) worked with the CBD and the ICES to develop 10 EBSA proposals of which 4 were refined through an ICES review in 2014. In 2018, OSPAR and NEAFC asked CBD to establish a new process to finalise the proposals for EBSA in the North-East Atlantic, in line with the approach taken in consecutive regional EBSA workshops. This was completed through a Regional Workshop to facilitate the description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas in the North-East Atlantic Ocean, 22–27 September 2019, kindly hosted by the Government of Sweden. During an intensive week marine scientists and policy experts described 17 areas that met the scientific EBSA criteria (Figure 1).

The technical proposals for these 17 areas were approved by the 23rd CBD Subsidiary Body on scientific, technical and technological advice (SBSTTA) in November 2019, and they will be forwarded to the CBD COP15 meeting for a final policy decision on their possible inclusion in the CBD global EBSA repository.

The North-East Atlantic is a well-studied area of the ocean world, but even here, OSPAR comes up against the barrier of insufficient knowledge of the ecosystems to fully apply an ecosystem approach to managing human activities. OSPAR applies the precautionary principle to management of human activities and aims to increase availability of information to inform and sustain policy decisions. The outputs of the EBSA workshop are foreseen to provide helpful information to the future work of OSPAR.

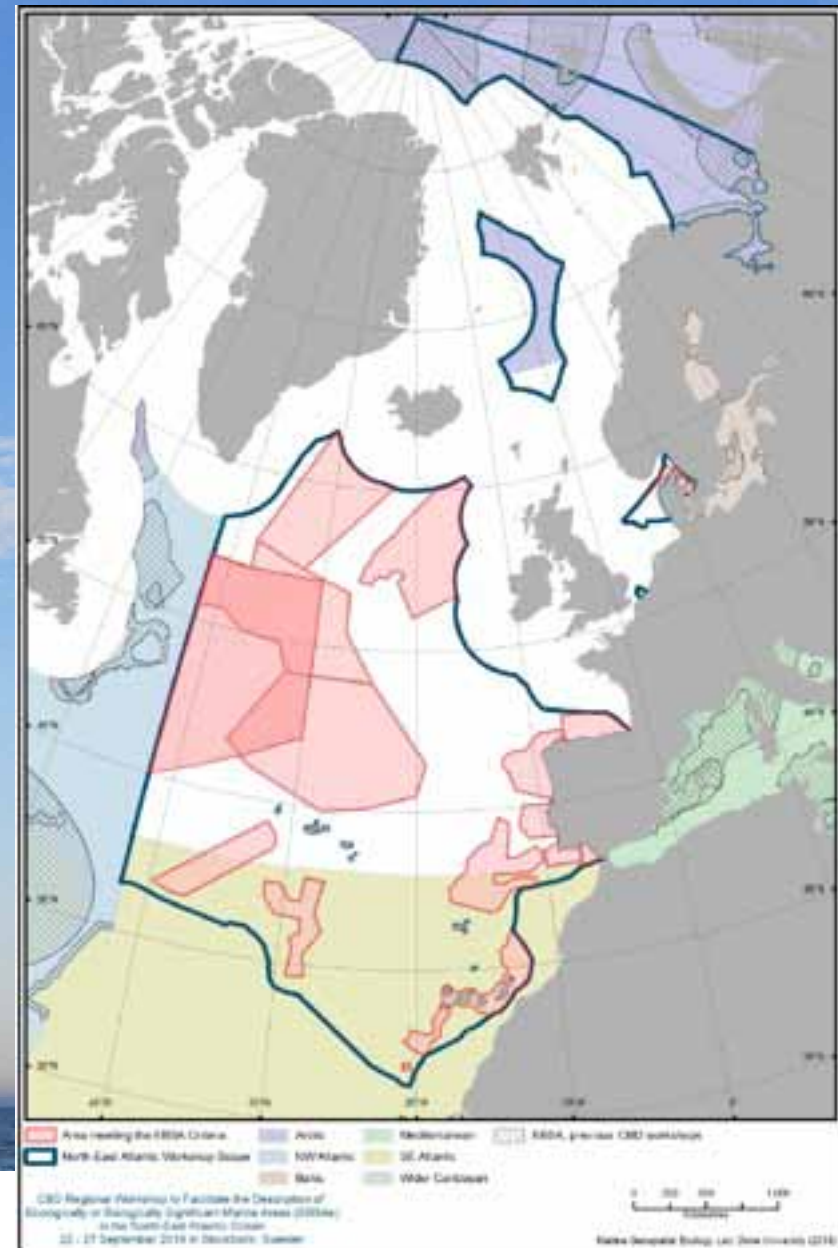


Figure 1.
The scientific workshop to describe areas of Ecologically or Biologically Significant marine areas in the North-East Atlantic identified 17 areas that met the scientific criteria.

OSPAR PARTICIPATION AT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Organisation	Meeting title and date	Key message
JOMOPANS	Advisory Board Meeting 7 October 2019	The meeting reviewed progress in delivery of the JOMOPANS project – to establish ambient noise monitoring in the North Sea. This has involved country-led monitoring according to agreed standards and procedures and the application of a web-based GES tool developed by Michael Carter Ltd. It integrates information from mapping, measurements and biological data and it presents cross sections through all the JOMOPANS maps (estimated: 1500 maps).
NEAFC	PECMAS meeting 9 October 2019	The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) PECMAS meeting considers scientific issues underlying NEAFC Recommendations. There are standing agenda items on collaboration with OSPAR. Thus, this engagement is a reflection of 'business as usual' for OSPAR Secretariat.
North Sea Wrecks Interreg project	Advisory Board Meeting 21-22 October 2019	Main elements of the project are to improve the data on wrecks containing munitions. This includes looking at historic archive data (e.g. to find out what munitions each ship was carrying at the time of their sinking). Expert risk assessments are carried out of a selection of wrecks, including survey work and toxicology tests of mussels and fish. These will be used to build a decision support tool that can give preliminary risk rating for all wrecks (using machine learning). The risk ratings would cover issues such as safety of navigation, environment, food safety and personnel safety. Another work package is aimed at identifying any legal gaps and making policy recommendations. A final package will focus on communications and awareness raising, including a travelling exhibition.

PARTICIPATION AT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Organisation	Meeting title and date	Key message
iFADO	5th iFADO meeting 28 October 2019	By filling current technical gaps, iFADO is using the MSFD implementation to demonstrate the application of innovative products. The project combines traditional in situ monitoring with cost-effective, state-of-the-art technologies: remote sensing, numerical modelling and emerging observation platforms such as gliders and oceanic buoys. iFADO is developing tailor-made and innovative products to meet the challenge of monitoring the European Atlantic area.
Clean Atlantic	5th Coordination meeting 2-3 December 2019	The main purpose of the meeting was to report on progress against the various work packages. There are 8 work packages which link with the OSPAR ML RAP, MSFD EU TG-ML and the Atlantic Maritime Strategy. The project members presented fantastic progress on the expected deliverables.
Arctic Council	Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) 4-5 December 2019	OSPAR considered common work on radiation issues and also informed the meeting about the OSPAR Ministerial meeting and the new strategy that will be delivered.
Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna	Board meeting 3-5 February 2020	OSPAR presented ongoing work and activities as a basis for identifying areas of work where synergies could be identified.

PARTICIPATION AT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Organisation	Meeting title and date	Key message
MEDREGION	Annual General Assembly 17 February 2020	OSPAR participated in two workshops. The first was about how to select and aggregate indicators to assess good environmental status. The second explored the effects of pollution upon biodiversity.
Arctic Council	Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME) February 25th 2020	OSPAR attended a marine litter workshop and shared experience from the OSPAR Marine Litter Regional Action Plan, including the grouping and management of the themes within the plan, and the setting of outcome-based objectives which could be monitored through indicators, as well as having impact measures more closely aligned to the strategic actions.



OSPAR'S VISION IS OF A HEALTHY AND DIVERSE NORTH EAST ATLANTIC ECOSYSTEM, USED SUSTAINABLY

The 1992 OSPAR Convention is the current instrument guiding international cooperation on the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.

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