



North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

22 Berners Street
London W1T 3DY
United Kingdom

t: + 44 (0) 20 7631 0016
f: + 44 (0) 20 7636 9225
e: Hinfo@neaftc.org
www.neaftc.org



**OSPAR
COMMISSION**

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

New Court
48 Carey Street
London WC2A 2JQ
United Kingdom

t: +44 (0)20 7430 5200
f: +44 (0)20 7430 5225
e: secretariat@ospar.org
www.ospar.org

Press release

NEAFC Contact number **Kate Partridge +0044 (0) 207 631 0016**

OSPAR Contact number **Audrey Baconnais-Rosez +0044 (0)20 7430 5200**

Fisheries and Environment bodies join forces to strengthen protection of the North-East Atlantic

NEAFC and the OSPAR Commission have delivered a breakthrough initiative by announcing plans to promote mutual cooperation towards the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in the North-East Atlantic.

For the first time in the North-East Atlantic, the Commissions in charge of fisheries management and protection of the marine environment are working together. Previously they could have been seen as working towards diverse goals. But now a converging vision of a healthier North-East Atlantic has encouraged them to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MoU covers not only national maritime areas, but also areas beyond national jurisdiction. It is essential to stress the geographic overlap between the areas covered by both Conventions, from the North Pole to the Azores. The shared goal is to conserve living resources of the sea.

How do the two Commissions plan to do this?

- by ensuring there is a free flow of information between NEAFC and OSPAR
- by highlighting other human activities that may effect the marine environment
- by pro-actively undertaking spatial planning
- by working together to enhance knowledge and understanding of fish and other marine species populations, abundance and distribution in order to better protect them

Kjartan Hoydal, Secretary of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and Professor David Johnson, Executive Secretary of the OSPAR Commission say:



“This is a momentous occasion. Our Commissions have taken a serious step towards our common goal of protecting the diversity of marine resources at the same time sustaining our fishing industry.”

The MoU text is available on the Commissions’ websites (www.neafc.org and www.ospar.org). For further information, please contact Kate Partridge at the NEAFC secretariat or Audrey Baconnais-Rosez at the OSPAR secretariat.

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Notes for editors

1. The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission was formed to recommend measures to maintain the rational exploitation of fish stocks in the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. Most of this area is under the fisheries jurisdiction of NEAFC’s Contracting Parties (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the EC, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation), but four large areas (including the area around the North Pole) are international waters and constitute the NEAFC Regulatory Area. NEAFC’s primary objective is to ensure the long-term conservation and optimum utilization of the fishery resources, providing sustainable economic, environmental and social benefits.
2. The OSPAR Commission was set up by the 1992 OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, which unified and up-dated the 1972 Oslo and 1974 Paris Conventions. It brings together the governments of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, together with the European Community.
3. NEAFC and OSPAR have complementary competences for fisheries management and environmental protection respectively in the North East Atlantic.