



Press release

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OSPAR launches the Quality Status Report 2010

OSPAR Ministers celebrated publication of the Quality Status Report 2010 (QSR 2010) - milestone evaluation of the quality status of the North-East Atlantic. There are clear signs of improvement in the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic, but the loss of biodiversity has not yet been halted, with fishing and other human activities needing careful management. Climate change and ocean acidification present major environmental challenges over the long term.

The Quality Status Report 2010 (QSR 2010) is a major holistic assessment of the quality status of the North East Atlantic. The QSR 2010 examines all aspects of human influence on the sea, including contaminants, nutrient pollution and radioactive substances and the effects of human activities such as the offshore oil and gas industry, offshore wind farms, maritime transport, and fisheries. This comprehensive overview assessment with detailed supporting evidence also sets out progress against the OSPAR Strategies since the last QSR was published in 2000. It will guide OSPAR's work and strategies in the period post-2010.

Professor Colin Moffat, chairman of the OSPAR Environment Assessment and Monitoring Committee in charge of the preparation of the QSR 2010 said: 'Our seas are a precious resource which provide us with many benefits. However, we must look after them so that future generations can similarly benefit from what they provide. This means that we need to understand how our marine systems function, how they change and how we influence such changes. The QSR 2010 presents a clear picture of the status of the North-East Atlantic in 2010 and gives very clear direction on future priorities for the management of our marine environment. In presenting this information, we wanted to make it as accessible as possible and I am particularly excited by the e-QSR. This will make the findings, and all the underlying information, accessible at the click of a button. As such I hope that the QSR will raise awareness, not only of our concerns regarding the marine environment, but of the spectacular wildlife and different habitats that exist across the North-East Atlantic'

The QSR 2010 shows that OSPAR's actions are clearly helping to reduce pollution of the marine environment from land-based sources and sea-based activities. Inputs of nutrients, contaminants, key radioactive substances and pollution from oil and gas production have dropped and adverse effects from some pollutants are being reduced. But many problems persist.

The most widespread impacts on marine ecosystems result from fishing, despite improvements in management. Ocean acidification and the emerging impacts of climate change cause serious concern. A reduction in the decline of biodiversity is still to be achieved. Endangered habitats and species are still being damaged and targeted action is needed to protect them. The demands for marine space

and resources are intensifying, with the development of shipping, renewable energy, coastal defence and mineral extraction. Activities at sea have a range of impacts including introduction of noise, litter and non-indigenous species to the OSPAR area, which have impacts that are only beginning to be understood.

Erik Solheim, Norwegian Minister of Environment and International Development welcomed the report: 'Shared scientific knowledge and understanding of the state of the marine environment is crucial for policy making at all levels. The Quality Status Report (QSR) 2010 provides a holistic and science based evaluation of the environmental status of and the pressures that adversely affect the North-East Atlantic. With this comprehensive and jointly elaborated product before us, we can be all the more confident as we are about to agree on targeted OSPAR action for the next decade.'

The QSR 2010 is available as hard copy and as electronic version online at <http://qsr2010.ospar.org> and offline on DVD. The e-QSR offers a high level of interactivity with the series of thematic assessments which provide the scientific evidence for the QSR summary report. The "Key Findings" at <http://qsr2010.ospar.org> summarise the main facts on status, trends and recommendations.

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Note for editors

1. 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 Commission on behalf of the European Union.