

Press release

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OSPAR and HELCOM experts cooperate on assessing marine biodiversity

Experts from the North-East Atlantic and the Baltic regions will meet on Wednesday 1 October 2014 in Gothenburg, Sweden to initiate cooperation on biodiversity indicators. The session will take forward the policy ambitions of all the twenty countries in the OSPAR and HELCOM Regional Seas Conventions (RSC).

There are many species that move between the North-East Atlantic and the Baltic Sea, including bird and fish species. Cooperation on activities to monitor and assess the state of these highly mobile animals and other biodiversity is crucial for a wider understanding of the marine environments of the North-East Atlantic and Baltic Sea.

Both OSPAR and HELCOM see that there is a strong need to cooperate on the implementation of their respective Regional Seas strategies and action plans, as well as the coherent implementation of other activities in the two areas such as the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. This is the first meeting to bring together biodiversity indicator experts from these two sea areas.

It is hoped that the meeting will improve awareness, communication and coordination between experts working on similar issues for future knowledge and experience exchange and for cooperation on shared challenges. Close cooperation between Regional Seas Conventions delivers value at the same time as ensuring the best possible development of indicators, monitoring and assessment. This meeting is the first of many steps towards longer term ambitions for streamlining relevant biodiversity indicators between OSPAR and HELCOM.

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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 updated 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. More than 30 international non-governmental organizations are also involved in OSPAR as official Observers, representing a broad range of interests and expertise related to the marine environment and the uses of marine resources.

2. The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, usually referred to as HELCOM, is an intergovernmental organization of the nine Baltic Sea coastal countries and the European Union working to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution and to ensure safety of navigation in the region. Since 1974, HELCOM has been the governing body of the 'Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area', more commonly known as the Helsinki Convention.