

Welcome from Hanne-Grete Nilsen (Deputy Secretary)

The OSPAR Secretariat is run by the Executive Secretary, supported by four Deputy Secretaries on maximum six year contracts and seven permanent Assistants.

Deputies provide advice to main Committees and their Working Groups. This involves preparing meetings and documents, ensuring that the tasks on the work programmes of each Committee are delivered by the deadlines set out in the formally adopted annual meeting schedule, facilitating and coordinating the work of the Contracting Parties and making data and information available to OSPAR delegates and other interested parties.

Thus, the nature of the work of the Deputy is characterised by procedures, routine, team work, long and busy working hours. Even so, the job allows for personal initiative, creativity and involvement in developing tasks. In this capacity, I have engaged myself in developing the Ecological Quality Objective system as part of the implementation of the ecosystem approach, reporting on implementation of North Sea Conferences, developing the Quality Assurance handbook, analysing

implications of the REACH Regulation and strategic planning of OSPAR future work.

If time allows, Deputies may attend conferences and give presentations, but for the last two years, the preparation of the Quality Status Report 2010 and its underlying assessments has consumed most of our time. Currently, the review of OSPAR's strategies and the strategic planning for OSPAR work beyond 2010, including its role in the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, are proving to be interesting and demanding tasks.

The end of my six year's term is approaching rapidly and in 2010 I return to the Norwegian administration. It has been a pleasure serving the hazardous substances, radioactive substances and offshore industry committees and the working group on human activities.

This e-newsletter is intended to provide an update and flavour of some of our current key activities.

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QSR 2010: have your say!

OSPAR is finalising a major holistic assessment of the quality status of the North-East Atlantic - the Quality Status Report 2010. This assessment will inform the 2010 OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in Bergen on the environmental status and future actions for the protection and conservation of the North-East Atlantic.

The Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO) and the Management Group for the QSR (MAQ) achieved the compilation of the draft 1 of the QSR on 15 July 2009. This draft is currently under review by OSPAR Contracting Parties and results of this internal consultation will be discussed by ASMO in September in Bonn, Germany. A second draft will then be reviewed by a panel of scientific peer reviewers for two months. But it will also be submitted to a **public e-consultation for 4 weeks** via the [OSPAR Internet website](#) from **1 November 2009 to 30 November 2009**. Notification will be sent in good time and all contributions very much appreciated.

OSPAR develops a new ecosystem assessment approach

An OSPAR Workshop hosted by the Netherlands in Utrecht, from 9-13 February 2009, trialed a new method for ecosystem assessment as a contribution to the OSPAR QSR 2010. The Workshop prepared a series of assessments of the status of key species groups (fish, seals, cetaceans, seabirds) and habitat types at the OSPAR Regional scale. The results and method development may also be useful for Initial Assessments that EC Member states need to prepare under the EC Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) in 2012.

The Workshop benefited from a wide geographical spread of expertise (with over 60 delegates) drawn from across the OSPAR area providing in-depth specialist knowledge on the ecosystem components covered and human activity/pressures.

The methodology used had been developed by the University of Liverpool in cooperation with JNCC (UK). The workshop drew on the various assessments of human activities and pressures that have been prepared to support the QSR 2010

in combination with the expertise of the workshop participants. The results point to the current status of a component, recent trends in pressures affecting the component, and future prospects for the component.

The workshop also provides valuable experience for ecosystem assessments to support the implementation of the ecosystem approach in the OSPAR maritime area, which OSPAR will need to build on in the coming decade.

A full report of the workshop will be published on the OSPAR website in due course.





An update on the UN oceans informal consultative process from Alan Simcock (former Executive Secretary)

The tenth annual meeting of the UN's consultative process on all aspects of the world's oceans (held in New York - 17 to 19 June 2009) has confirmed that the process is serving a useful function and should continue. The process was set up by the UN General Assembly in 1999 to provide a forum in which all aspects of the oceans could be considered in an integrated way, rather than from simply the point of view of each UN specialised agency. As Chairman of OSPAR at that time I was nominated, along with the Samoan Ambassador to the UN, as co-chair of the first meeting.

For the tenth anniversary, the Consultative Process concentrated on whether it was providing added value. Delegations agreed that it had met its goal of facilitating the annual review by the General Assembly of developments in ocean affairs. Indeed, it had exceeded initial expectations. It had also had a re-invigorating effect on the debates of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea, which had become more focused and relevant.

The meeting emphasised the need for greater consideration of the social pillar of sustainable development (though still balanced with the environmental and economic dimensions): if sustainable development issues are not properly tackled, environmental protection can never be achieved. The meeting also emphasised that there should no longer be an emphasis on reaching agreed recommendations to the General Assembly, though any "natural consensus" should be highlighted.



Maritime Spatial Planning comes of age

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is a developing tool to implement ecosystem-based management by prioritising space for biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic development in marine environments. The beginning of the summer saw three events contributing to further acceptance of the need for such a tool to achieve sustainable goals for the North-East Atlantic.

In June 2009, the MSP initiative of the UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) issued a guide entitled "Step-by-Step Approach for Marine Spatial Planning toward Ecosystem-based Management".



This publication provides a comprehensive overview of MSP and focuses on describing a logical sequence of steps required to achieve desired goals and objectives for applying the

ecosystem approach to managing marine areas.

The European Commission, in close cooperation with OSPAR and the University of the Azores, held a second Workshop on key principles for Maritime Spatial Planning in S. Miguel, Azores, Portugal on 2-3 July 2009. The Workshop discussed the relations between marine spatial planning and the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

In the OSPAR maritime area, national systems for MSP have been or are being developed to help reduce potential conflict. OSPAR ICG-MSP met in the Azores in July 2009 to share experiences and discuss the future challenges in developing MSP across the Regions. Attention will now be given to a [Preparatory Call](#) issued by DG-MARE on 31 July 2009 on Maritime Spatial Planning in the North Sea / North East Atlantic. It aims to gather practical knowledge and experience in the implementation of MSP in a cross-border context.



MEPC59 climate crunch

The 59th Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), 13-17 July 2009, focussed on climate change issues. IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos explained that IMO is now ready to play a key role in regulating green-house gas emissions from international shipping. The MEPC agreed a package of technical and operational measures to reduce greenhouse gases from international shipping. These measures are intended to be used for trial purposes until the Committee's sixtieth session in March 2010. Nonetheless, IMO will report on this progress to the United Nations climate change conference (COP 15) which will take place in Copenhagen in December 2009. The OSPAR Shipping Assessment contribution to the QSR 2010 will provide a platform for closer interaction with IMO and renewed impetus to follow up commitments made in the North Sea Conferences.



Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

A succession of major events for the marine community will take place in 2009-2010. Amongst others, it is worth noting the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen (December 2009), the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, and the 50 years anniversary of the UNESCO-IOC (May 2010).

The [Global Forum](#) is particularly active in preparing the participation of ocean-related groups during the forthcoming UNFCCC negotiations. Its goal is to highlight the necessity of considering the climate change impacts on the oceans within the Convention, and to support amendments to the Kyoto Protocol which aim to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) from international shipping. To raise public awareness on these issues, the Global Forum will also organise a side event called "Oceans Day" during this meeting.

This step will be followed in May 2010 by the [Fifth Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands](#), in Paris. A series of conferences set up by the Global Forum will be articulated

around three themes.

"Ensuring survival" will deal with the outcomes of the Copenhagen negotiations for the oceans.

"Preserving life" will celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity by discussing progress to stop loss of biodiversity, and the implementations of Networks of Marine Protected Areas.

Finally, to mark the 50th anniversary of the UNESCO-IOC, Ocean and Coastal Management issues will be the centre of "Improving Governance". OSPAR 2009 agreed that the Secretariat should ensure an appropriate contribution on the QSR 2010 and its contribution to emerging policy issues affecting the oceans at global, regional, and national levels.



European FP7 projects

The 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2007 – 2013) is the European Union's main instrument for funding research in Europe. Several projects funded by FP7 have strong synergies with current topics of interest to OSPAR.

Two projects, with which OSPAR has already been involved, are covering deep-sea issues: **HERMIONE** (Hotspot Ecosystem Research and Man's Impact on European Seas) aims to improve the knowledge of the functioning of deep-sea ecosystems and their contribution to the production of goods and services. This project continues and adds to successful work undertaken by the **HERMES** project.



EUROSITES (Integration and enhancement of key existing European deep-ocean observatories) is designed to enhance the existing deep ocean observatories and perform a small number of specific science missions to form the basis for greatly improved and novel monitoring capability.



Two new projects focus on marine ecosystems. **MEECE** (Marine Ecosystem Evolution in a Changing Environment) will study the responses of the marine ecosystem in a holistic manner to climate changes and human pressures. KnowSeas (Knowledge based sustainable management for Europe's Seas) aims to examine and model the economic and social consequences of changes in the ecosystem.



40 years Bonn Agreement

This year the **Bonn Agreement** celebrates 40 years of successful international cooperation in maritime pollution, prevention, preparedness and response during its Annual Meeting of Contracting Parties, 7-9 October 2009 in the former German federal capital of Bonn.

The Bonn Agreement Contracting Parties help each other in combating pollution in the North Sea Area from maritime disasters as well as chronic pollution from ships and offshore installations. They also carry out surveillance as an aid to detecting and combating illegal or accidental pollution at sea.



The Bonn Agreement stand at Interspill 2009, Marseilles.

Although the North Sea is one of the world's busiest shipping routes, the measures to reduce oil pollution from maritime activities have been successful. The number of slicks detected has reduced since 1990 by about 50%.

The OSPAR Commission cooperates closely with the Bonn Agreement via the **North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors (NSN)**, reciprocal exchanges of information and the combined Secretariat-function of the OSPAR Secretariat and the Bonn Agreement.

As the international maritime sector and European maritime policy are in a process of change, the Bonn Agreement is currently taking stock of its achievements and considering future developments.

Forthcoming OSPAR workshops

Over its next meeting cycle, OSPAR will organise five workshops for participants from Contracting Parties and Observers. Relevant experts from other organisations will also be invited.

7-9 September 2009	Transboundary nutrient Modelling	Brussels, Belgium
15 September 2009	Socio-economic analysis	Stockholm, Sweden
14-16 October 2009	OSPAR workshop on actions and measures in relation to the OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats	Paris, France
14-16 October 2009	ICES/OSPAR Workshop on assessment criteria for biological effects measurements	Aberdeen, UK
February-March 2010	Informal stakeholder meeting on management options for CGFZ	Venue to be confirmed

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