



Welcome from Ulrich Sieber, HOD for Switzerland

The OSPAR Convention has a rare originality. It has been signed and ratified by three countries which are not coastal states to the OSPAR maritime area: Finland, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

Due to its location upstream on watercourses reaching the OSPAR maritime area, Switzerland joined the contracting parties of the previous Oslo and Paris Conventions in 1992 to sign the new OSPAR Convention. Switzerland is particularly attentive and involved in OSPAR's work on eutrophication, hazardous and radioactive substances. Although the protection of our inland waters remains our key concern, participation in the exchange of information and experience within the commissions for the protection of international waters, particularly where the reduction and avoidance of inputs of hazardous substances nutrients from industry, urban areas and agriculture are concerned, are of central importance.

After 10 years as Head of delegation for Switzerland, I have seen the major contributions of OSPAR in the protection and conservation of the marine environment. Its strengths include the comprehensive overview of impacts to the marine environment, which include influences from river catchments.

2010 is a key year for OSPAR, and Switzerland is participating actively in the preparations for the Ministerial Meeting of the Commission in September. A particular attention is being given to the new strategies, and the Ministerial Statement. This third issue of the OSPAR e-newsletter will inform you on the progress made towards September.

Ulrich Sieber, HOD for Switzerland

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Building up to the Ministerial Meeting

The preparation of the OSPAR Commission Ministerial Meeting - 20-24 September in Bergen, Norway - is high on everyone's agenda! At a policy level, delegations are very much involved in the design of new strategies and working structure to serve as a platform needed to help implement the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, together with detailed preparations for the Ministerial segment of the meeting.

Norway, as the host of the meeting, is taking care of the logistical aspects of the event, and will communicate in due course important practicalities to the Contracting parties and the OSPAR observers.

The Secretariat, together with Norway, is now elaborating the communication plan for the meeting. A [leaflet presenting the Ministerial Meeting](#) is available in an electronic version both in English and in French. In order to reach a wider audience and to complement the OSPAR website, a multimedia platform has been conceived to display interviews, video footage and photos illustrating OSPAR's work.

It aims to stimulate the natural interest of the wider community in marine issues by providing exciting visual products. The Secretariat has started contacting different delegations to gather these visual products which will help illustrate the diversity and complexity of the OSPAR maritime area.

North-East Atlantic Environment Summit

Ministerial Meeting of
the OSPAR Commission
Bergen, Norway,
20-24 September 2010

OSPAR's vision is of a clean,
healthy and biologically
diverse North-East Atlantic
used sustainably.

2010 OSPAR
COMMISSION



Quality Status Report 2010: the final push

In January OSPAR's designated subsidiary Committee signed off the Quality Status Report 2010, a major holistic assessment of the quality status of the North-East Atlantic. The Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO) discussed in September 2009 the 1697 comments received from Contracting Parties and Observers. After this internal consultation, the document was submitted to an external consultation which included a peer-review coordinated by ICES and a stakeholder e-consultation. The comments constituted very valuable inputs, and after they had been taken into account during the ASMO meeting in January, the Committee gave the green light for the next stage.

The QSR 2010 is now in a process of being made ready for publication and translated into French. In parallel, the electronic version, which creates a high level of interactivity and includes all the supporting assessments, is under development. The QSR 2010, in both versions, will be launched by Ministers during the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in September 2010.

OSPAR celebrates the International Year of Biodiversity

2010 is the [International Year of Biodiversity](#), and OSPAR has started to celebrate it with a major addition to its Marine Protected Areas Network. During the meeting of the Working Group on Marine Protected Areas, Species and Habitats (hosted by Germany on the Island of Vilm, 23-27 November 2009), Norway nominated three areas around the Svalbard archipelago for inclusion in the OSPAR network of MPAs.



Together, these three sites cover a surface area of 78 316 km², and consist of the marine parts of four existing nature reserves and seven national parks within the Svalbard archipelago.

The MPAs aim to protect and conserve several species and

habitats on the OSPAR list in a part of the OSPAR maritime area, but are also of particular importance as reference areas for studies of ecological effects of climate change, due to high projected rises in temperatures, and predominance of species and ecosystems that are sensitive to changes in ocean acidity.

Human activities such as shipping and tourism are increasing, and can potentially damage the unique wildlife of the archipelago. Management measures are already in effect by national regulations and are expected to be sufficient to fulfil the aims of the designation.



Post 2010 Biodiversity vision and target

The [Spanish presidency of the European Union](#) officially launched the international Year of Biodiversity at the European level with a Conference on the role of Protected Areas and Ecological Networks in Europe. The conference in Madrid, 26-27 January 2010, examined different networks, identifying gaps, assessing success and failures.

Buzz words included building coherence, greater integration with other policies, application of the ecosystem approach, ecological networks' contribution to economic concerns of local populations and implications of global change.

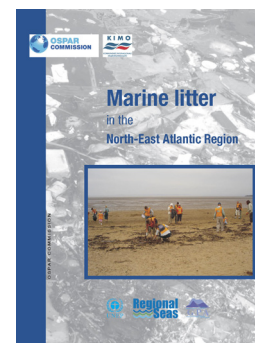
In a session examining diversity of approaches but coherence of goals, both OSPAR and UNEP-MAP set out experiences of establishing marine protected areas. As such OSPAR is helping to contribute towards setting up the global and European policies related to biodiversity beyond 2010. The European Commission presented a first communication of the issue and the contribution of ecological networks and protected areas in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Programme of Work was also a key theme.

Litter never stops, by Lex Oosterbaan

The development of the Quality Status Report 2010 has put the marine litter issue high on OSPAR's agenda. With financial support of UNEP and the OSPAR Commission an Assessment has been prepared by KIMO International "[Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic Region](#)" serving two purposes: as a background document for the marine litter paragraph in the QSR 2010 and as a background document for the Marine Litter Global Overview Package from UNEP. Under the umbrella of OSPAR's Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Litter (ICG-ML), co-led by the Netherlands and Belgium a second background document for the QSR 2010, a synthesis report on additional analysis of OSPAR beach litter 2001-2007, will be submitted to BDC 2010. ICG-ML is now preparing actions and proposals for the Ministerial Meeting in September. One

action will be the launching of the OSPAR Beach Litter Monitoring Guideline.

The work carried out by the group has been acknowledged by the European Commission who invited three members (and one observer) in an Expert Group to develop guidance for the Good Environmental Status in relation to marine litter. A lot of work has been done, a lot of work still has to be done. Litter never stops.



Lewis Pugh rewarded

Three personalities have recently accepted an invitation to join the OSPAR community and share their experiences about the North-East Atlantic. Alongside Jostein Gaarder, the author of Sophie's world, and Maud Fontenoy, first woman to row the North Atlantic from west to east, Lewis Pugh who undertook the first swim across the North Pole has joined the adventure. They will all be present in September in Bergen

Lewis Pugh has recently been honoured as a [World Economic Forum Young Global Leader](#) in 2010. The World Economic Forum rewards each year up to 200 outstanding young leaders from around the world for their professional accomplishments, commitment to society and potential to contribute to shaping the future of the world with the Young Global Leaders. For 2010, the Forum has selected 197 Young Global Leaders from 72 countries and all stakeholders of society (business, civil society, social entrepreneurs, politics & government, arts & culture, and opinion & media).



The importance of oceans, coasts and small island developing states in the climate regime was the focus of this important side event during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15), convened by the Global Forum, the European Environment Agency and the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia, in Copenhagen.

Dr Biliana Cicin-Sain, Chair of the [Global Forum](#), introduced the day as an important opportunity to retain references to oceans and coasts in the international climate debate and to provide a platform to craft an integrated programme by 2013 emphasising the positive marine contribution to mitigation and the needs for funds for coastal adaptation. Expert panels were convened to set out clearly the role of oceans on climate change phenomena; the implications of climate change on the world's oceans and coastal communities; crafting mitigation and adaptation responses; and next steps for the oceans community.

Held at the European Environment Agency the day also emphasised the need for sufficient funding to support worldwide mitigation and adaptation actions. It was acknowledged that coastal communities are at the frontline of climate change impacts. The ocean has experienced profound change, increasing acidity, altered circulation patterns, temperature increases and a rise in sea level – all of which impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The day used web technology to relay expert messages to a global audience highlighting the direct link between climate change, ocean health and human well-being.

Alan Simcock, former OSPAR Executive Secretary and former co-chair of the UN open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, chaired a panel on ocean-based mitigation responses. Panellists included the present OSPAR Executive Secretary and representatives of IMAREST, IMO, IUCN and industry (see mitigation section below).

OSPAR will also participate in the Global Forum's major [Global Ocean Conference](#) in May 2010 hosted by the government of France, the Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission and UNESCO.

COPENHAGEN OCEANS DAY – Panel on Oceans-Based Mitigation Responses to Climate Change by Alan Simcock (former Executive Secretary)

The Panel considered the mitigating role of what happens on, and in, the oceans and seas under three aspects – first, the role of marine ecosystems in mitigating the impact of atmospheric CO₂ and the threats to them; secondly, specific mitigation measures that can be taken in marine space; and thirdly, the measures that can be taken in industries operating on the oceans and seas.

In all this, the Panel emphasised the importance of sustained observation of the oceans and seas, in order to understand their role and how this may change. The UN Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the Marine Environment can play an important role in this.

The role of marine ecosystems and the threats to them

Both the open ocean and coastal marine ecosystems play vital roles as natural carbon sinks. Coastal marine ecosystems (e.g. mangroves, seagrass beds, kelp forests and tidal marshes) have a greater capacity (per unit of area) than terrestrial carbon sinks in achieving long-term carbon sequestration in sediments. They should be treated the same way as terrestrial carbon sinks such as forests. Controls parallel to those on land should apply any activities which harm their function (such as land-reclamation and coastal development).

Other threats also risk impairing the natural functions of all marine ecosystems. Acidification from absorption of atmospheric CO₂ is now a growing and serious threat. Human activities that disrupt marine ecosystems (e.g. polluting discharges, over-fishing, excessive CO₂ emissions) must be controlled to ensure the ecosystems' continued proper functioning. And such conservation is justified as well through the economic and social benefits that it will provide.

Mitigation measures in marine space

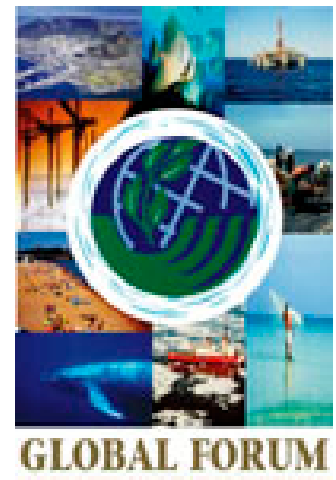
The sea bed offers significant scope for mitigation measures through carbon capture and sequestration. CO₂ emissions from fossil-fuel power plants can be captured, transported and sequestered in the voids left by offshore oil and gas extraction. But such measures need carefully agreed standards and regulation for site selection, operation and long-term monitoring.

Marine space also offers mitigation through tapping new renewable power sources – winds, waves and tides. Again carefully agreed standards and regulation are needed to protect marine ecosystems and other sea-based activities.

Regional seas agreements can provide appropriate standards and regulation in both cases. Marine spatial planning is also needed to regulate potential conflicts over locations.

Mitigation measures in sea-based activities

Shipping creates nearly 3% of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. The International Maritime Organization is working on control measures. These need to be supported and applied urgently and effectively, alongside improvement of enforcement of existing standards on other ship-based pollution. At the same time, given the ever-increasing amount of ship movements, new technologies need to be developed towards the goal of the "clean ship". Offshore oil and gas industries also need to work towards comparable goals.





Investigation and prosecutions of maritime pollution offences

It has long been recognized that international rules for the protection of the marine environment against impacts from shipping will only be effective if properly enforced. The [North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors \(NSN\)](#), a body associated to the OSPAR Commission, therefore promotes cooperation between practitioners involved in international prosecution of maritime pollution cases. The aim is to ensure efficient gathering of evidence, achieve comparable levels of fines and to learn from each others experiences.



A recent key product, together with the [Bonn Agreement](#), has been the publication of the North Sea Manual on Oil Pollution Offences. This manual provides practical guidance to support detection of offences, the collection of evidence and the imposition of penalties.

At the last meeting of NSN, 13-14 January 2010 in Paris, participants discussed cooperation with [INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Programme](#) to prevent illegal oil discharges from vessels. A new issue on NSN's agenda is marine litter and the investigation and prosecution of garbage pollution offences. To further broaden its scope, NSN has now invited all OSPAR Contracting Parties beyond the North Sea to get involved in the network. Today already Spain is actively participating as observer in NSN.



News from the OSPAR Community

At the end of last year two longstanding and highly valued contributors to the work of OSPAR changed responsibilities within their administrations, thus taking a break from OSPAR work. Gert Verreet, former Deputy Secretary and Chairman of EUC, moved back to Belgium from his secondment to the European Commission and is now involved with preparing for the forthcoming Belgian Presidency of the European Union. Els de Wit, Head of Delegation for the Netherlands and OSPAR Vice-Chair, took up a new portfolio in the Netherlands dealing with national provision and innovation for sustainable transport. We thank them sincerely for all their contributions to OSPAR and wish them both every success.



Luisa Rodriguez Lucas, new deputy secretary

Dear colleagues, as you know I have recently joined the OSPAR Commission as Deputy Secretary. I have joined a team covering the work developed by three committees, namely the Offshore Industry, the Hazardous Substances, and the Radioactive Substances Committees. I am very happy to be back to the area of policy making. Policy advice is not an area strange to me since I had a previous experience in shaping environmental public policy while serving for several years as a legal adviser to the Spanish Ministry of Environment.

Getting into policy advice came as a natural outcome after a successful researcher career. After completing my Ph D thesis in offshore pollution in my home country (Spain) I was invited to participate as a Fulbright researcher scholar in the National Pollution Funds Centre (NPF), in the US where I conducted a comparative study between the international liability regime governed by the IOPC Funds and the US regime under the Oil Pollution Act.

I am very pleased to be part of the OSPAR family. In the next few years I hope to be able to make a successful contribution towards achieving OSPAR mission.



Forthcoming OSPAR events

In the lead up to the OSPAR Commission Ministerial Meeting, OSPAR has rescheduled some meetings.

27 – 28 April 2010	Drafting Group for the Biodiversity Strategy	Secretariat, London
21 June 2010	JL	Secretariat, London
22 June 2010	ICG Bergen	Secretariat, London
23 June 2010	HODs	Secretariat, London

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