

## Welcome from Victor Escobar, Chairman of the OSPAR Commission

Reading old OSPAR papers and having attended OSPAR meetings since 1993, I can identify four OSPAR ages. The first one (infancy) from the beginning to 1992 was the time for developing the legal framework, for finding the environmental objectives and the sense of its existence; between 1992 and 1998 (youth) OSPAR was very creative and active, testing in practice the Rio principles and agreeing programmes and measures for the protection of the marine environment even if there were some areas lacking, such as the biodiversity pillar and the procedures to ensure implementation; from 1998 until 2010 (adulthood) OSPAR developed a more strategic thinking once our Convention entered into force and the paramount importance of protecting its biodiversity and ecosystems was acknowledged; after the Ministerial meeting in Bergen in November 2010 (maturity) OSPAR with its new orientation, strategies and structure is looking for effectiveness and pragmatism.

In 2003 the Contracting Parties decided to use an ecosystem approach to the management of human activities. This fundamental orientation has a lot of consequences, one of them being the fact that it introduces an economic element for consideration. Thus the definition includes the concept of “sustainability of the use of goods and services”, this should be balanced with the understanding of the Ministers in 2010 that the marine environment has an intrinsic value beyond simple monetary economic benefit, or in other words the integrity of the ecosystems must be preserved. In that sense the OSPAR general obligation “to take all possible steps to prevent and eliminate pollution and take the necessary measures to protect the maritime area against the adverse effects of human activities”, continues to be our main goal and commitment, further reinforced by the fact that any economic evaluation should include the cost of inaction.

The Ministers in Bergen also decided to accept the role given to OSPAR by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive to act as the facilitator or platform for regional coordination. The role of the States and the distribution of responsibilities as Contracting Parties to the OSPAR Convention and as Member States of the European Union is a complex issue that merits consideration in depth. There is no doubt that ensuring consistency and coordination as well as avoiding duplication of actions by OSPAR States in both forums is a must. In addition, there is a risk of dilution of responsibilities once there are two forums (the European Union and OSPAR) in which the States should act and cooperate. The Contracting Parties have obligations under the two forums and if effectiveness must be sought, compliance with the obligations should be required. The way in which OSPAR will ensure Contracting Parties’ compliance with OSPAR obligations is a key issue for further reflection in the near future. In summary I would say that the maturity age has certain advantages including experience, knowledge, “savoir faire” and pragmatism, especially if the impetus of the former ages is kept. As a result we will have OSPAR for a long time and if it disappears the only reason will be that the problems that the North East Atlantic faces have been resolved.

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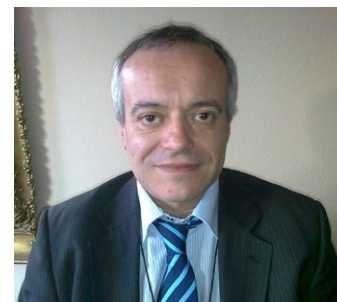
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## Informal meeting with representatives of littoral States of the Black and Caspian Seas

The transboundary nature of the marine environment merits collective action for its protection at international level. OSPAR operates at a regional level but within a global community where close cooperation with other international organisations is indispensable to protect the marine environment effectively. An example of this collaboration is the recent informal meeting (November 2010) held by the OSPAR Secretariat for high-level representatives from littoral States of the Black and Caspian Seas.

The gathering provided an opportunity for an informal exchange of views on a number of relevant issues, particularly in connection with the development of the oil and gas industry. The Secretariat provided an insight into the work of OSPAR in this field and discussed in detail the potential benefits of adopting some of the approaches in the development of the relevant legislation for the Caspian and Black Seas. Given the success of this approach, the Secretariat intends to continue to hold informal meetings of this kind on a regular basis.



The [Black Sea Commission](#) is also giving formal consideration to an application to become an OSPAR Observer. This status would allow both Commissions to strengthen their cooperation and information exchange, particularly in the context of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive



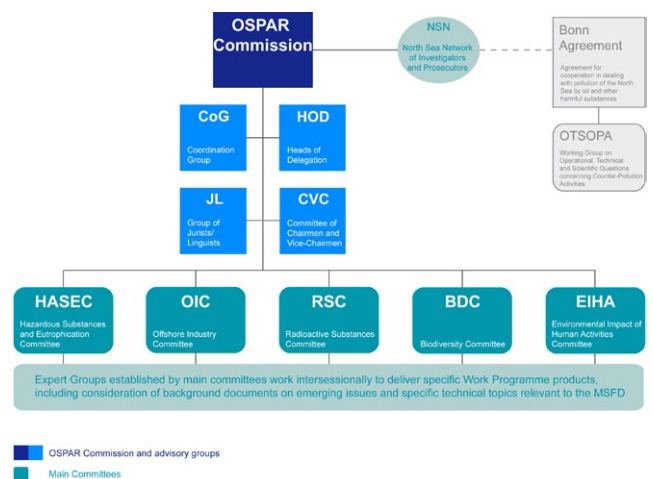
OSPAR Ministers at their meeting in Bergen on 23-24 September 2010 adopted the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (Agreement 2010-3) and a renewed Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) 2010-2014 (Agreement 2010-4). The former sets out OSPAR's vision, objectives, strategic directions and key actions for the period up to 2020. Part I of the Strategy gives prominence to the overarching implementation of the ecosystem approach and the need for integration and coordination of OSPAR's work across themes and groups. Part II contains the five thematic strategies. The Strategy describes OSPAR's role in facilitating the regional coordination by OSPAR Contracting Parties of their implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) incorporating OSPAR's MSFD roadmap.

To deliver the Strategy, OSPAR 2010 agreed a new working structure. A new OSPAR Coordination Group (CoG) has been established at advisory level. OSPAR Committees have been reorganised, combining the tasks of the Hazardous Substances Committee, Eutrophication Committee and those relating to the monitoring and assessment of hazardous substances and eutrophication (previously a responsibility of ASMO) into one new Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee (HASEC). The former Biodiversity and Ecosystems Committee (BDC) has been split into a new BDC which deals with the protection and conservation of marine nature (the former 'MASH' group) and a new Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee (EIHA) which deals with maritime activities, marine spatial planning and economic and social analysis.

OSPAR's expert group layer has also been reorganised with two confirmed Working Groups – Working group on Monitoring and Trends and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (MIME) and Working Group on the Inputs to the Marine Environment (INPUT), both reporting to HASEC. All other expert groups (ICGs) are established by the main Committees

and approved by the OSPAR Commission annually. These deal with pertinent and developing issues including refining OSPAR's Eutrophication Common Procedure, the coordination of biodiversity assessment and monitoring, marine litter, development of a risk-based approach towards environmental impacts of the oil and gas industry etc.

In support of CoG's coordination activities and to allow for flexible response within the tight timeframe prescribed by the MSFD, CoG 2010 set up an intersessional correspondence group ICG-MSFD, which will provide the link between the EU Common Implementation Strategy process and regional coordination of relevant Member States within OSPAR. The ICG is tasked to prepare advice on all MSFD related issues and will meet every three months.



 **CBD COP 10 on marine and coastal issues, by Tim Packeiser (Germany)**

The [tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD COP 10\)](#), held on 18-29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, adopted some [ground-breaking decisions](#), including several on marine and coastal issues.

The encompassing Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 sets out 20 headline targets for 2015 or 2020, many of them with relevance to the work of the OSPAR Commission. *Inter alia*, with a view to reducing the direct pressures on biodiversity it has been agreed to aim at bringing to zero the rate of loss of natural habitats and to prevent introduction and establishment of invasive alien species by 2020. Already by 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are to be minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning. Furthermore, by 2020 the extinction of known threatened species is to be prevented and their conservation status improved.

After lengthy negotiations, COP 10 has also reconfirmed the goal that at least 10 % of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. This, however, means a postponement of the previously agreed target date (2012) to 2020, but it is still considered ambitious in the light of the current coverage of marine protected areas which remains at 1.17 % of the global oceans and at 3.1 % of the OSPAR maritime area.

In addition, the Decision on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity provides for an in-depth review of the progress made with regard to the relevant programme of work and in turn highlights issues that need enhanced attention. The most controversial debates centred on the process of supporting the protection of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. In the end, COP 10 found consensus on a process for identifying ecologically and biologically significant areas (EBSAs) through a series of regional workshops and subsequent collation of site-specific data in a central repository currently under development at the CBD Secretariat. Work under CBD ultimately aims to provide scientific information to the United Nations General Assembly as well as global and regional organisations competent for implementing management measures in these areas.

Collectively, the goals and targets on marine and coastal issues agreed upon by CBD COP 10 either reinforce or complement the North-East Atlantic Strategy previously adopted by the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in September 2010.





In the previous issue of the e-newsletter, we presented the development of OSPAR Decisions and Recommendations. Exceptionally this year 6 Decisions and 20 Recommendations (16 new and 4 updates) were examined, discussed and adopted by the Ministerial Meeting of the OSPAR Commission.

These texts covered a wide range of aspects in the protection of marine biodiversity targeting species and habitats, or human activities.

The decisions are legally binding, and they will enter into force on the date mentioned in the text.

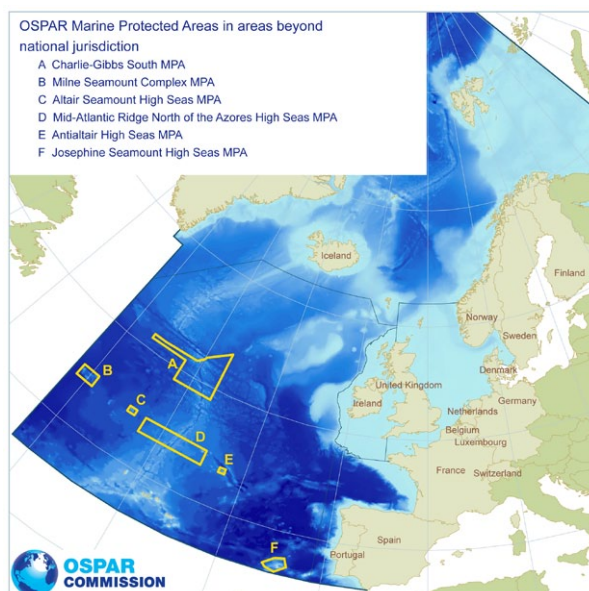
As for the Recommendations, although not legally binding, the Contracting Parties are asked as far as possible to report on the implementation of the measures, using a format set out in the text.

### Decisions

2010/1	Establishment of the Milne Seamount Complex Marine Protected Area
2010/2	Establishment of the Charlie Gibbs South Marine Protected Area
2010/3	Establishment of the Altair Seamount High Seas Marine Protected Area
2010/4	Establishment of the Antialtair Seamount High Seas Marine Protected Area
2010/5	Establishment of the Josephine Seamount High Seas Marine Protected Area
2010/6	Establishment of the Mid Atlantic Ridge North of the Azores High Seas Marine Protected Area

### Recommendations

2010/1	Recommendation on the strategy for the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme
2010/2	Recommendation amending OSPAR Recommendation 2003/3 on a Network of Marine Protected Areas
2010/3	Recommendation on a Harmonised Offshore Chemical Notification Format (HOCNF) (supersedes Recommendation 2000/5 from 1 January 2011)
2010/4	Recommendation on a Harmonised Pre-screening Scheme for Offshore Chemicals (supersedes 2000/4 from 1 January 2011)
2010/5	Recommendation on the assessment of environmental impacts on threatened and/or declining species
2010/6	Recommendation on furthering the protection and restoration of the common skate species complex, the white skate, angel shark and basking shark
2010/7	Recommendation on furthering the protection and restoration of orange roughy in the OSPAR maritime area
2010/8	Recommendation on furthering the protection and restoration of <i>Lophelia pertusa</i> reefs in the OSPAR Maritime Area
2010/9	Recommendation on furthering the protection and restoration of coral gardens in the OSPAR Maritime Area
2010/10	Recommendation on furthering the protection and restoration of deep-sea sponge aggregations
2010/11	Recommendation on furthering the protection and restoration of seapen and burrowing megafauna communities in the OSPAR Maritime Area
2010/12	Recommendation on the Management of the Milne Seamount Complex Marine Protected Area
2010/13	Recommendation on the Management of the Charlie Gibbs South Marine Protected Area
2010/14	Recommendation on the Management of the Altair Seamount High Seas Marine Protected Area
2010/15	Recommendation on the Management of the Antialtair Seamount High Seas Marine Protected Area
2010/16	Recommendation on the Management of the Josephine Seamount High Seas Marine Protected Area
2010/17	Recommendation on the Management of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge North of the Azores High Seas Marine Protected Area
2010/18	Recommendation on the prevention of significant acute oil pollution from offshore drilling activities
2010/19	Recommendation on the reduction of marine litter through the implementation of fishing for litter initiatives
2010/20	Recommendation on an OSPAR framework for reporting encounters with conventional and chemical munitions in the OSPAR Maritime Area (replaces 2003/2 from 1 January 2011)



## **EMODNET by Iain Shepherd (European Commission)**

It is universally acknowledged that the hardest and most time-consuming part of marine assessment at a sea basin level is finding, accessing and processing the data. In some countries there are 50 institutions holding data – all in different formats, with different qualities and with different policies regarding distribution and re-use. The European Commission's "[marine knowledge 2020](#)" initiative, adopted in September 2010, aims to make life easier for users by assembling the relevant data at sea-basin level, checking their quality and making them available to users without restriction. The aim is to lower the costs for data users, increase innovation and reduce uncertainty in the behaviour of our seas and oceans. Consortia are presently assembling bathymetric, geological, physical, chemical and biological parameters. Each is testing the concept of a [European Marine Observation and Data Network](#) for two or three sea basins but all cover the North Sea.

Some consortia are already delivering data through portals and about €6,500,000 has been spent so far. The European Commission has proposed to follow up this preliminary effort with higher resolution data, more parameters and more sea-basins in the period 2011-2013. As well as assembling data the Commission will set up sea-basin "checkpoints" to obtain an overview of what is being collected and to see how it satisfies the needs of private and public users. Existing organisations with a sea-basin mandate such as Regional Sea Conventions, Regional Advisory Councils for fisheries and EUROGOOS would be expected to contribute. A decision by the Council of the European Union and Parliament on the Commission's proposal is expected in Autumn 2011.

The OSPAR Secretariat has been actively engaged with EMODNET working group meetings and lessons learned will be fed into the ongoing review of data handling within OSPAR.



## **EurOCEAN 2010**

Marine scientists from across Europe gathered in Ostend at the [EurOCEAN 2010](#) Conference to discuss the future priorities for European marine research in the coming decade and unanimously agree that the Seas and Oceans are one of the grand challenges for the 21st Century.

At the two-day event, high-level speakers presented a state-of-the-art overview of major marine and maritime research and technology, outlining their proposals for Europe's "Blue Future". [The Ostend Declaration](#), adopted at the EurOCEAN 2010 Conference, is the outcome of a thorough preparatory process, an open on-line consultation organised prior to the event and active discussions during the conference which allowed a solid consensus to be reached amongst the broader marine and maritime science community, policy-makers, stakeholders and the 430 participants present at the conference. [Professor Colin Moffat presented](#) the QSR 2010 and highlighted future scientific challenges that OSPAR has identified through undertaking the QSR process.

EurOCEAN 2010 Conference was a Belgian EU Presidency event, organised in close collaboration with the European Commission and the [Marine Board-ESF](#).



## **Audrey signing off**

As I was editing this fifth edition of the e-newsletter, David has asked me to add a short article about some of my achievements over the last three years. Indeed, the time has come for me to move on to my next position on 1st April 2011, within my national administration the French Defence Procurement Agency, to work on naval information systems.

Although a sensible choice in terms of career progression and a very new and exciting project, I will deeply miss the OSPAR Commission.

The visible side of my work within the Secretariat, has seen the successful implementation of the Communication Strategy, a new brand, a new website, more regular press releases and e-newsletter. The highlight of course, being the communication aspects of the Ministerial meeting, which demanded long days, hard work and meticulous preparation. The OSPAR witnesses in particular were challenging, but listening to these exceptional individuals address the meeting was amazingly fulfilling and inspiring.

On the less public side of my work, the QSR2010 required the individual preparation of more than 80 maps and graphics, both in English and French, which on most occasions required me to create and recreate the graphics many times until they were just right! This didn't include those needed to support other assessment reports, working hard to ensure the data was accurate, and the presentation was the best it could be given

our limited resources. This whole process was conducted with the full cooperation and support of numerous interested parties and individuals.

My final task over the remaining few weeks within the Secretariat will be to provide a concise data handling preparatory study. My work supporting the QSR, following up of EU working group DIKE and projects such as EMODNET has given me a comprehensive overview of where we are and I will aim to provide OSPAR with a useful document for preparing the future of data handling.

It has been an exceptional time for me professionally; I have learnt a lot in terms of the marine environment of course but also working processes and methods. Intergovernmental organisations have a very peculiar way of working, where the work of experts in their field meets with diplomatic objectives and that's where the negotiation starts, and the skills and experience I have acquired will undoubtedly stand me in good stead for the future and continue to be useful throughout my career. It has been a pleasure to meet so many passionate and dedicated individuals, who only prove every day that cooperative work does in fact work.

I am sure that in the not too distant future I will come back to the marine and maritime fields, But until then I wish you all the very best of luck in this collective endeavour.

## Emily Corcoran, new Deputy Secretary

As a new face in the Secretariat, I have been invited to introduce myself and let you know what I will be working on here in the Secretariat.

On arriving at New Court at the start of November last year, it was clear that I have some big shoes to fill, with the departure of my incredibly accomplished predecessor. I will be picking up on much of the work that has been so well looked after by Dr Richard Emmerson and as such, my responsibilities will be to support the work of the Biodiversity Committee, the newly promoted Environmental Impact of Human Activities Committee as well as involvement with Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee and our relationship with ICES. This is indeed a full and varied programme of work, and one that reflects my particular area of experience in marine biodiversity assessment and policy guidance.

Over the past decade or so I have pursued a career concerning the management of the marine environment, including biodiversity monitoring and assessment based in Europe, Africa and Asia, working with governments, intergovernmental agencies (e.g. UNEP, FAO) and NGOs. This has included development of stakeholder engagement in natural resource management policy development, contributing to global marine assessment processes, monitoring of regional initiatives in progressing toward environmental targets and facilitating international partnerships and collaborations in tropical coastal ecosystem management.

Working with UNEP-GRID-Arendal, communication and provision of evidence-based knowledge for decision-making was our major objective, ensuring that policy guidance was based in sound science and that complex concepts could be made accessible to non-specialists – exemplified by the high profile Rapid Response Assessment series, to which I have contributed to as lead and co-editor. I now look forward to being able to use this global perspective and network in supporting the work of the OSPAR Commission.

So now I am nearly three months in, I think I am almost there with adjusting from UN acronyms to OSPAR acronyms, although for those of you I will see in the coming weeks and months, I do ask your indulgence and request a restriction of no more than 2 acronyms per sentence. Thank you to all at the Secretariat, and those of you at my first meetings for being so welcoming and I am very much looking forward to our work ahead.

## Bonn Agreement Action Plan adopted at Ministerial Meeting in Dublin

Ministers and Senior Government Officials of the [Bonn Agreement](#) Contracting Parties, at a meeting in Dublin on 24 November 2010, adopted an ambitious [Bonn Agreement Action Plan](#) to further improve the protection of the coastal and marine environment against pollution by oil and other harmful substances from shipping, offshore oil and gas operations and other maritime activities. Alongside the Action Plan ministers also adopted the [Dublin Declaration](#), a political statement reaffirming the goals which have been pursued over the last successful 40 years of cooperation, and setting out ambitious commitments for the years to come. The meeting also welcomed the accession of Ireland to the Bonn Agreement, and a realignment of national zones of responsibility following which the size of the Bonn Agreement maritime area has more than doubled, now comprising about 1,586,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Only recently the importance of efficient pollution preparedness and response work was underlined by the accident on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico. It is clear that despite the decrease in the number of observed spills in the Bonn Agreement area, one of the world's busiest international shipping areas, risks will always remain.

One of the main elements of the Action Plan will be a Bonn Agreement area-wide risk assessment, *inter alia* taking into account the environmental sensitivity and adequate balances of resources at the regional and sub-regional level. The meeting also agreed to strengthen cooperation with the OSPAR Commission as regards pollution from shipping, offshore oil and gas operations and other maritime activities.

The Chair of the meeting, Mrs Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Co-operation Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, welcomed the Action Plan saying: "The experience gained and results achieved over the last 40 years have to be acknowledged but they also have to pave the way to achieving further goals and vision of the Bonn Agreement. It is therefore very timely that the Bonn Agreement engages to further enhance cooperation through the newly adopted Bonn Agreement Action Plan, strengthening not only response, but also adequate prevention and preparedness actions."

## Forthcoming conferences

3 - 4 February 2011	Symposium on Marine Protected Areas on the high seas	The Zoological Society Of London
20 - 25 March 2011	Fifth International Marine Debris Conference	Honolulu, Hawai'i
29 - 31 March 2011	Exploring the Role of MPAs in Reconciling Fisheries Management with Conservation	Bergen, Norway
14 - 15 April 2011	Third International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions	Sopot, Poland
14 - 18 May 2011	International Marine Conservation Congress, Making Marine Science Matter	Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

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