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## Ministerial Meeting of the OSPAR Commission June 2025

### Vigo Declaration



OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine  
Environment of the North-East Atlantic

WE, **THE MINISTERS AND THE MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**, meeting within the framework of the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, assembled in Vigo, Spain on 26 June 2025, share the following objectives and adopt this Declaration:

**We recall** the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 adopted at our last Ministerial meeting in Cascais in 2021 and OSPAR's vision to achieve a clean, healthy and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic, which is productive, used sustainably and resilient to the effects of climate change and ocean acidification;

**We welcome** that good progress has been made by OSPAR in implementing its North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030;

**We highlight** OSPAR's Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023, the most comprehensive assessment to date of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic, as the evidence base for OSPAR's work;

**We recognise** that we are stronger, more effective and more efficient when we work together within the OSPAR framework and with other relevant competent international organisations, and that this collaboration has resulted in considerable progress in understanding, preventing and mitigating harmful anthropogenic impacts on the ecosystems of the North-East Atlantic;

**We recognise** the importance of OSPAR's work to keep abreast of new and emerging technologies and human activities which may result in pressures on the marine environment;

**We re-iterate** OSPAR's role in supporting the implementation of relevant goals, policies and agreements at global, European, regional and national level, including the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, the

Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Agreement under the Convention of the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 and the 1996 London Protocol, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships the Global Framework on Chemicals; the forthcoming UN Global Plastics Treaty and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive;

**We welcome** the Nice Ocean Action Plan of the 2025 UN Ocean Conference in particular the Nice wake up call for an ambitious plastics treaty as well as the commitments made to create new marine protected areas, to fight climate change, including by decarbonizing maritime transport, and to protect marine species. We commend the momentum of the Conference and active Ocean diplomacy that led to the ratification approval, acceptance or accession by 50 States and the European Union of the BBNJ Agreement and the commitments made by States to finalise—their ratification processes to support the entry into force of the BBNJ agreement as soon as possible;

**We emphasise** our deep concern over the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change which pose an imminent threat to the marine environment and humankind;

**We recognise** that urgent action is needed to halt the loss of biodiversity and to restore and protect the functioning of marine ecosystems by addressing current, new and emerging threats to the marine environment;

**We further recognise** the need to take all possible steps to prevent and eliminate pollution of the marine environment in all its forms, and from all its sources;

**We highlight** that climate change remains the existential crisis of our time and its effects on our ocean are profound. We **reaffirm** that the best way to protect the ocean from the impacts of climate change is to work through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement to limit the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

**We**

1. Welcome our **decision** to enlarge the OSPAR maritime area within Macaronesia as proposed by Portugal and Spain;
2. Recall the **agreed** process and timeline to develop and consider proposals to amend the OSPAR Convention to address offshore renewables, space launch vehicle debris, carbon dioxide capture and storage and hydrogen production and storage in relation to offshore oil and gas, and to clarify the scope of the provisions on land-based sources of pollution;
3. Are **determined** to enhance the effective protection of OSPAR Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction and will **continue** our efforts to work with relevant international organisations and instruments on a process to develop collaborative management plans;
4. Will **strengthen** the international visibility of OSPAR MPAs in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, by promoting the objectives of the Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction in the work of OSPAR and through cooperation and coordination with relevant international organisations and instruments;
5. Are highly **concerned** over the effects of discharges from all types of Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS) on board ships and recognize the need for global measures through the IMO while affirming OSPAR's mandate to adopt harmonized regional measures. As a first step, we **welcome** the adoption of a Decision to ban discharges from open and closed loop EGCS in internal waters and ports, and a Recommendation to ban discharges in territorial seas. Furthermore, we intend to extend the geographical scope of the Decision to territorial seas by 2027, subject to a further impact assessment. We will continue to **engage** with the IMO to address discharges beyond territorial seas, including in marine protected areas;
6. **Welcome** the adoption of an OSPAR Decision to prevent the release of polystyrene from pontoons and buoys and an OSPAR Recommendation to promote best practice for reducing marine litter which highlights OSPAR's leading role tackling marine litter through its Regional Action Plan;
7. **Urge** all members of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to conclude in 2025, adopt, ratify and swiftly implement the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, acknowledging that only coordinated global action across the full lifecycle of plastics, from production to waste management, will be instrumental in ending plastic pollution. We will review, by 2030, OSPAR's work to support the implementation of this instrument;
8. **Agree** to intensify our efforts to cooperate with OSPAR observer non-governmental organisations;
9. **Jointly decide** to take action to strengthen collaboration with organisations with whom we have agreements in place including the Arctic Council, the Bonn Agreement, the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Maritime Organisation and the

*International Seabed Authority, and to reach out to other relevant competent international organisations such as the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna;*

*10. **Look forward** to continued sub-regional collaboration between OSPAR and the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative to maximise synergies and delivery of shared objectives;*

*11. **Adopt** OSPAR's North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030 – Progress report 2025, **welcoming** the good progress made in implementing the NEAES 2030 to date;*

*12. **Adopt** the updated NEAES 2030;*

*13. **Reaffirm** our commitment to continue to effectively implement the NEAES 2030;*

*14. **Reaffirm** OSPAR's commitment to ensure that the Sintra 1998 commitments to reduce the number of derogations to leave disused offshore installations in situ, are delivered as fast and as far as possible. In the light of progress in technology development we will **apply** and regularly monitor Agreement 2024-04: Guidance on the application of OSPAR Decision 98/3 on the Disposal of Disused Offshore Installations, with an aspiration to reducing derogation proposals for large steel jackets by 2028 or in case expectations are not met, to initiate a process by 2028 with a view to review Decision 98/3 categories by 2030;*

*15. **Reaffirm** our commitment to restore degraded benthic habitats in the North-East Atlantic in response to the evidence from the QSR23 that these habitats continue to be disturbed and degraded; **welcome** progress made to identify actions to reverse this situation and encourage OSPAR to develop an achievable, manageable and fully resourced Regional Action Plan on Benthic Habitats to be adopted as soon as possible;*

*16. **Welcome** the agreement of OSPAR's Regional Action Plan for underwater noise as an important contribution to reduce noise pollution in the OSPAR maritime area and look forward to its successful implementation;*

*17. **Reaffirm** our collective commitment to the international rules-based order and regional multilateral cooperation and **agree** to continue to support the International Seabed Authority (ISA) to adopt robust rules, regulations and procedures to ensure that the marine environment is effectively protected, noting the decision ISBA/28/C/24 where the Council considered that the commercial exploitation of mineral resources in the Area should not be carried out in absence of such rules, regulations and procedures. **Building** on our complementary competencies, and recognising ISA's unique mandate to organise, regulate, and control all mineral-related activities in the Area, OSPAR **commits** to apply the precautionary principle to deep-sea mining; and, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to **contribute** within its competency, with appropriate measures and with scientific information and knowledge in its maritime area to protect and preserve the marine environment;*

18. **Reaffirm** OSPAR's commitment to protect the Arctic marine environment, including through identification and consideration of priority sites with a view to their potential designation as marine protected areas (MPAs) or recognition as other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and **welcome** the efforts OSPAR has made to strengthen collaboration with the Arctic Council, Indigenous Peoples Organisations of the region and other relevant international organisations;
19. **Recognise** our strong commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and commit to the meaningful engagement of Arctic Indigenous Peoples in OSPAR's work;
20. **Commend** OSPAR's work to assess the effects of climate change and ocean acidification and are determined to take sustainable science-based and nature-based mitigation and adaptation measures to make the ocean more resilient to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification to help prevent biodiversity loss;
21. **Agree** to deliver the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment 2029 to inform the review of the NEAES 2030 and provide the evidence needed to inform the development of measures; and
22. **Commit** to meet again in 2030 to review progress and adopt OSPAR's next North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy.