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PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF THE NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC

Marine Policy makers from around Europe gathered in Paris for the annual meeting of the OSPAR Commission for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.

Following a busy week of discussions, OSPAR agreed to host a Ministerial meeting in Portugal in 2020 where they will adopt a new strategy to protect the North-East Atlantic. OSPAR also elected a new Chair and Vice-Chairs and adopted a range of policy actions.

OSPAR updated measures requiring countries to prevent and eliminate pollution caused by radioactive discharges from the nuclear sector by applying the best available techniques (BAT) and the best environmental practice (BEP). It was also announced that 17 new Marine Protected Areas were added to OSPAR's network this year bringing the total to 465, covering 6.3% of the North-East Atlantic.

The Commission also gave consideration to a possible enlargement of OSPAR Maritime Area to cover the Macaronesian region in the future.

OSPAR nominated Richard Cronin (Ireland) as its new Chair. He said that OSPAR Contracting Parties should *"take time to celebrate the successes of the Commission"* before going on to remind participants that they should *"...be proud of the solid foundation of intergovernmental trust and cooperation for which the OSPAR Commission is known"*. He believed cooperation was vital to the health of the North-East Atlantic, but that only by strengthening commitment and developing ambitious visions to protect the marine environment can progress be made.

Sesselja Bjarnadóttir (Iceland) and John Clorley (United Kingdom) were elected as vice-Chairs.

ENDS

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.
2. More than 30 international non-governmental organisations are involved in OSPAR as official Observers. They represent a broad range of interests and expertise related to the marine environment and the uses of

marine resources. Many contribute information, insights and standpoints. This is much appreciated feedback from civil society and the economy. The OSPAR Commission greatly values these partnerships that help inform its decisions and other results. (See list on OSPAR website at <http://www.ospar.org/organisation/observers>).

3. The OSPAR Maritime Area

