



KIMO International Statement to the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting 2021

KIMO International affirms its support of OSPAR's continued commitment to the protection and restoration of the North-East Atlantic area, and welcome OSPAR's role as coordinator of regional input into implementation of the UN Global Goals, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life below water.

KIMO International commends OSPAR's efforts towards completion of the Quality Status Report 2023, integration of new objectives into the North East Atlantic Environmental Strategy 2020-2030 and identification of priorities that will focus action on the achievement of OSPAR's objectives for a clean, healthy, biologically diverse sea, used sustainably.

KIMO International supports OSPAR's commitment to protect the ocean from the impacts of climate change by working through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the Paris Agreement to limit global warming.

KIMO International welcomes OSPAR's interest to explore ways to engage with municipalities, and the public, private and third sector more closely in implementing the NEAES 2020-2030.

KIMO International believes that the key to effective action is a long-term approach that enhances cross-border and cross-sector cooperation, strengthens partnerships and increases linkages across policy, research and implementation. This approach embraces the potential for innovation and sustainable economic growth, as well as restoration of good environmental status of the marine environment. Catalyzing and supporting the involvement of local stakeholders – cities, municipalities, NGOs, industry, entrepreneurs, innovators, citizens – is fundamental to achieving this sustainable future.

Municipalities play a key role

Investing in clean and healthy waters will boost jobs and economic activity in municipalities. Addressing the pollution that affects the North-East Atlantic area should not be seen as a cost, but as an opportunity to create local jobs and increase socio-economic benefits.

The coastal municipalities in the North-East Atlantic area play a crucial role in creating a safe and healthy environment for the population. It is their role to implement national laws and to drive local voluntary actions that reduce marine pollution and mitigate the effects of climate change. The municipality serves as the key stakeholder, having comprehensive knowledge of the local area's coastal and riverine waters. Municipalities can coordinate effective initiatives, drive impact and influence the behaviour of local businesses, marine



industries and citizens. Municipalities procure and invest in technology that will clean up local waters. Municipalities cooperate with hinterland municipalities to reduce the impacts of pollution by addressing both sources and pathways.

Citizens' engagement with locally driven initiatives plays a vital role, together with cooperation beyond municipal borders. Examples include KIMO's Fishing for Litter project, a simple, effective initiative that reduces marine litter and changes behaviour through engagement with key stakeholders in the fishing industry, ports and harbours, and the numerous beach clean-up projects that take place in coastal municipalities that also raise public awareness of pollution and marine litter in the North East Atlantic area.

KIMO International believes that national and regional agencies should inform, educate, support and adequately fund municipalities, thus empowering them to be more strategic about what actions they focus on to safeguard their waters and coastlines and to fulfil their role as local implementers. This work, from informing to implementing, can be supported by international networks and organisations such as KIMO International, NGOs and other local actors who seek to promote collaboration among a range of stakeholders from the public and private sector.

Considerations for implementation of the NEAES 2020-2030

Being aware of the harmful effects of marine pollution on the environment and on human health and the socioeconomic losses that it causes to activities in the OSPAR maritime area (fishing, shipping, tourism, recreation), KIMO International urges OSPAR to intensify the commitments of the NEAES 2020-2030 through setting measurable, achievable goals that will facilitate concrete actions.

KIMO International strongly urges OSPAR to consider the following actions to support the vital work done at local level:

- Engage more closely with municipalities and other local actors to implement the NEAES 2020-2030 commitments by increasing and improving information sharing from national and regional agencies, thus empowering municipalities to take concrete actions to restore the status of the marine environment;
- Adopt a multilevel governance approach to implementing local measures, so that the important work done by municipalities is valued and supported by regional, national and internal levels;
- Explore synergies with a broader cross-sectoral range of organisations and businesses, including innovative companies, OSPAR observers and international networks to support local level work through projects, collaborations and partnerships;
- Set specific, measurable targets and concrete actions for awareness raising and education, particularly in riverine and hinterland municipalities, and support them to make changes for positive environmental benefit;



- Lack of coordination in multilevel governance has led to poor compliance and delays in implementation of measures. A cohesive, inclusive governance structure should be implemented to slow down ecosystem decline and accelerate creation of new socioeconomic opportunities;
- Ensure sufficient funding is allocated and available to municipalities and other stakeholders, and is accessible via innovative or streamlined mechanisms, so they can take rapid actions that mitigate pollution and restore the North East Atlantic area.

KIMO International

KIMO is an international network of local governments, working together for healthy seas, clean beaches, and thriving coastal communities.

With over 80 member municipalities in nine countries, we represent more than five million citizens in Europe.

Contact

KIMO International
c/o Shetland Islands Council
8 North Ness Business Park
Lerwick, Shetland
ZE1 0LZ. UK
E-mail: info@kimo.shetland.org
www.kimointernational.org
Facebook: KIMO International