

## **Opening statement Sweden, State Secretary Anders Mankler**

- Ministers, colleagues, delegates, and observers. I would like to extend my warm thanks to Portugal and minister Serrao Santos for hosting this ministerial. And, it's a pleasure to see so many of you in person!
- It's really about time that we, the parties to Oskar, after eleven years can agree today on a package of decisions that sets Oskar in the front seat for ambitious and concrete measures for a healthy North-East Atlantic.
- Oskar needs to play a key role in addressing two of our global threats – the climate crises and the crisis of loss of biodiversity.
- The latest IPCC-report confirms that we must urgently and drastically scale up action to address climate change, to accelerate efforts to respond to the impacts that are already happening, and to prepare for them to get much worse.
- But, we can't solve the climate crises without healthy, sustainably used and well protected oceans. Strengthening the nexus between the ocean, biodiversity and climate is a priority for Sweden and we welcome that it's now also a priority for Oskar.
- Marine and coastal ecosystems play a critical role in absorbing carbon dioxide and heat and thus contribute to making other climate measures more effective. I therefore welcome that several objectives in the new strategy are addressing just this issue.
- It is also important that we address the ocean and climate-nexus in other relevant international fora. In June next year Sweden will host the UN meeting Stockholm+50 that could be a stepping-stone to keeping the 1.5-degree goal alive and to catalyse necessary transformative actions for a system change on all levels.
- The increased knowledge on the role of oceans to mitigate climate change also shows how important it is to increase our efforts on the more traditional Oskar work, such as protection of marine biodiversity and elimination of pollution of the ocean.
- Eutrophication is still a major stressor in Kattegat and Skagerrak. Measures to minimize eutrophication in this region is still an important part of our work within Oskar.

- Sweden welcomes that Ospar sets more ambitious objectives to reduce marine litter towards 2030 than the EU, but also that Ospar commits to actively work towards a global agreement on plastics to reduce plastic marine litter and microplastics. We are confident that such an agreement is an effective global response. It is vital that an intergovernmental negotiating committee for this purpose is decided on at UNEA 5:2 during spring 2022.
- We further welcome that Ospar agrees to join the High Ambition Alliance on chemicals and waste.
- These are two excellent and concrete examples of how Ospar contributes to forwarding global actions to tackle key challenges.
- An outcome of this meeting that I suspect will be noticed internationally is the decision of the NACES MPA. The decision shows that the parties to Ospars can compromise and agree also on difficult issues such as marine protection in areas beyond national jurisdiction – this is a major accomplishment.
- We should not stop here. I would like to stress the need for an ambitious global target of at least 30 percent marine protection within the CBD post-2020 framework for biodiversity and Sweden welcomes that Ospar now has set this goal for the Ospar maritime area.
- Ocean governance is complex with several regional and international competent organisations. Ospar has been a frontrunner in intersectoral cooperation, not least within the Collective arrangement. But, Ospar needs to continue to develop its cooperation with others for example with IMO and the Arctic Council.
- So, in conclusion, assuring healthy marine and coastal ecosystems by eliminating pollution, and by protecting and restoring biodiversity, will be vital for making climate measures more effective.
- Looking at the new strategy and the Ministerial declaration we have a lot of important work ahead of us towards 2030.
- I'm therefore glad that the commission meeting could agree on an increased budget for the Ospar secretariat. I know that they do a fantastic work!
- It's also necessary that all parties to Ospar, allocate the resources needed to implement both our common and national measures. The Swedish

government has since 2017 substantially increased the financial resources for marine and water management.

- Finally, I'd like to thank all the Ospar delegates who have been working hard to find common solutions and agreement in the run-up to this meeting!
- Thank you