



40th North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission Annual Meeting

OSPAR Commission Statement

9 - 12 November 2020

Madam President, distinguished NEAFC Contracting Parties, Observers, and colleagues,

The OSPAR Commission welcomes this opportunity to participate in this year's Annual Meeting of NEAFC.

This time last year I reported on OSPAR's plans for its Ministerial meeting. This year I am very pleased to be able to report that finally, after two postponements, OSPAR held a very successful Ministerial meeting on 1 October in Cascais, Portugal. A number of important deliverables were agreed at the meeting. Ministers and the European Union Commissioner adopted the [Cascais Declaration](#) which, amongst other things, reaffirmed their commitment to the obligations of the OSPAR Convention including to take all possible actions to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, to prevent and eliminate pollution and to address the effects of climate change and ocean acidification on the marine environment. The Ministerial Declaration included a commitment to work collaboratively with others and specifically committed OSPAR to intensify efforts to cooperate with other competent organisations through the Collective Arrangement.

The Ministerial meeting also agreed a new OSPAR [North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy](#) (NEAES) 2030. The Strategy is the means by which OSPAR's 16 Contracting Parties will implement the OSPAR Convention until 2030. It sets out a series of time-bound operational objectives that OSPAR Contracting Parties will implement over the next decade. It includes commitments to reduce beach litter by at least 50% by 2025 and by 75% by 2030 and to extend OSPAR's network of marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures to cover at least 30% of the OSPAR maritime by 2030. As a concrete step towards this commitment, OSPAR designated the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Sea basin (NACES) MPA in the area beyond national jurisdiction, which will cover nearly 600,000 km² and protect a vitally important area for seabirds. OSPAR is very grateful for the input NEAFC, as well as other competent authorities, provided to the work of drafting the technical document that underpins the designation of this MPA.

As highlighted in the Ministerial Declaration, OSPAR regards the Collective Arrangement as an important mechanism for collaboration with NEAFC, and other competent organisations. I very much hope that we can agree on a date for the next meeting. Issues we think we could usefully



discuss include other effective area-based conservation measures, vulnerable marine ecosystems and consider next steps to be taken using the shared knowledge base on deep-sea elasmobranchs which was delivered by ICES in 2020 based on a joint OSPAR-NEAFC request.

Thank you.

[Dominic Pattinson](#)
Executive Secretary
OSPAR Commission