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## OSPAR welcomes new global agreement to protect marine biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

Today, Saturday 4 March at 2200 EST, the United Nations concluded the text of a new global agreement (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement) that will provide stronger protection of marine biodiversity in the High Seas. The OSPAR Commission's 16 Contracting Parties welcome this historic moment and look forward to working with other international instruments, frameworks and bodies to deliver the objectives of the new Treaty.

The new Agreement will provide an important legal basis for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction that complements the work that OSPAR is undertaking in the North-East Atlantic region.

The OSPAR Commission established the first network of ecologically coherent Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in ABNJ in 2010, and has, to date designated a total of 8 MPAs in ABNJ covering more than 1 million km<sup>2</sup> of the OSPAR Maritime Area. The most recent being the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Sea basin MPA. This MPA, designated in 2021, is around the size of France and protects a vitally important foraging area for seabirds in the high seas.

OSPAR believes that cooperation is the cornerstone of effective protection and sustainable use of the ocean, and that cross-sectoral and interregional cooperation and collaboration are fundamental to achieve these goals. The new BBNJ Agreement re-enforces this point and should act as a driver for improved global coordination and cooperation.

The OSPAR Commission stands ready to support the implementation of this new UN Agreement. It will continue working towards strengthened ocean conservation with other international and regional bodies to facilitate cooperation and coordination between legally competent authorities on area-based management to help implement the ecosystem approach in the North-East Atlantic region.

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### Note for editors

1. The [OSPAR Commission](https://www.ospar.org/) is the regional mechanism by which 15 Governments (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) and the European Union cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic, including marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

2. The resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction met in New York from 20 February to 3 March ([Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction | \(un.org\)](#))
3. OSPAR's North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030 details the commitments that OSPAR Contracting Parties have made to protect and conserve the North-East Atlantic and can be viewed here [www.ospar.org/convention/strategy](http://www.ospar.org/convention/strategy)
4. The OSPAR Commission network of North-East Atlantic Marine Protected Areas (MPA) now comprises 583 MPAs covering a surface area of 1.5 million km<sup>2</sup> or 11% of the North-East Atlantic. This includes 8 MPAs in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.