

Statement by Switzerland at the OSPAR Ministerial, Vigo – 26 June 2025

Distinguished Ministers,
Esteemed Colleagues,

- On behalf of Switzerland, I would like to begin by expressing our sincere gratitude to the Government of Spain for the gracious invitation to participate in this Ministerial meeting, and for the excellent arrangements that have enabled us to gather here in Vigo. It is a privilege to join you in reaffirming our collective commitment to the protection of the North-East Atlantic marine environment under the OSPAR Convention.
- Switzerland warmly congratulates OSPAR and its members on the remarkable achievements over the past years, and for the strong engagement and deliberations over the last months. OSPAR's role as a regional steward of the marine environment is exemplary, particularly in the broader context of increasing global attention to the health of oceans and seas. The Convention's work demonstrates the power of regional cooperation to deliver tangible environmental progress.
- Nonetheless, we remain deeply concerned about the alarming state of many of the world's oceans and marine ecosystems. The ongoing loss of marine biodiversity, the pervasive and escalating threat of plastic pollution, and the need for the protection of the seabed are some of the critical challenges. These challenges call for urgent, coordinated international action and appropriate regulation of human activities impacting the marine environment.
- Although Switzerland is a landlocked country, we are profoundly committed to ocean protection. We recognize that the health of the oceans is intrinsically linked to global environmental sustainability and human well-being. Consequently, Switzerland actively participates in international discussions and negotiations related to marine protection and strives to contribute constructively to these efforts.
- In this regard, I would like to highlight the upcoming Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meeting on plastics (INC-5.2), which Switzerland will proudly host in Geneva this August. This meeting represents a critical milestone in our shared ambition to adopt a robust, legally binding treaty addressing the full life cycle of plastics. Our aim is to finalize the treaty this summer, ensuring, for the first time, a comprehensive global response to plastic pollution.
- We also welcome the strong emphasis placed by the third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) on science-based solutions and strengthened ocean

governance. We believe these priorities resonate fully with the objectives of OSPAR. Switzerland supports the momentum generated by the Conference and calls for enhanced coordination between global frameworks and regional conventions like OSPAR, as this is essential to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its achievement by 2030.

- Furthermore, Switzerland welcomes the adoption of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, the BBNJ Agreement. Our Federal Council has taken the decision to submit the Agreement to the Swiss Parliament for ratification. At present, we are engaged in preparing a comprehensive proposal, including the drafting of national legislation, consultations with Swiss Cantons and key stakeholders, and the establishment of the required institutional capacity to manage obligations under the Agreement.
- Switzerland recognizes the multiplicity of existing regional instruments regulating fisheries, marine conservation, and maritime zones. It is crucial that the parties to the BBNJ Agreement and regional schemes such as OSPAR establish effective mechanisms for coordination and cooperation. A coherent governance system with clear division of labor and responsibilities will maximize synergies, facilitate implementation, and enhance the protection of the High Seas.
- We look to OSPAR to proactively engage in such coordination, thereby reinforcing the Convention's contribution to comprehensive ocean governance.
- Looking ahead to OSPAR's core engagement, Switzerland reaffirms its strong support for the implementation of the revised objectives of the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy towards 2030. This strategy remains a cornerstone for guiding the effective management of marine protected areas, driving meaningful reductions in marine litter and water pollution, and safeguarding marine biodiversity, the seabed, benthic habitats, and other vital components of ocean health. It is essential to sustaining resilient marine ecosystems and securing their benefits for future generations.
- In conclusion, Switzerland reiterates its political commitment to the OSPAR Convention and to the protection of our oceans. We pledge to remain a reliable partner, working collaboratively with all OSPAR members to advance our shared goals.

Thank you for your attention.