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# FUTURE PROOFING THE OSPAR CONVENTION

## Why is this important?

The 2021 Cascais Declaration highlighted the “Significant and growing challenges that require individual and collective action” and noted “... a growing demand for additional goods and services from the ocean, including renewable energy, blue carbon storage, and food production. We will not be able to meet those demands and our ambitions on sustainable use if we do not meet climate resilience, biodiversity protection and pollution prevention targets.” Amending the OSPAR Convention to provide the necessary legal basis for sustainably managing these growing challenges will ensure that OSPAR can take the necessary measures, where they are needed, to achieve its objectives

## What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR has reviewed the risks from new, emerging and increasing pressures on the marine environment and has identified potential gaps in the scope of the OSPAR Convention that could prevent OSPAR from fully addressing these pressures now and in the future. To address these potential gaps, OSPAR Contracting Parties have identified 4 areas where the OSPAR Convention could be amended. These are:

- offshore renewables: the most significant, increasing human activity in the OSPAR Maritime Area. The scale of offshore energy installation is expected to increase greatly in the next decade and beyond, primarily offshore wind in the Greater North Sea and the Celtic Seas;
- aquaculture: OSPAR's 2023 Quality Status Report identified aquaculture as a high or medium intensity human activity in most OSPAR Regions. The activity is expected to increase in all regions up to and beyond 2030;
- space launch vehicle debris: launching of space rockets is a relatively new and expanding activity in the OSPAR Maritime Area. This growing trend is likely to lead to increased pressures on the marine environment, mainly due to falling debris from space launch vehicles; and
- carbon capture and storage and hydrogen production: OSPAR's current mandate does not entirely cover the range of pollution and environmental impacts arising from carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) and hydrogen production and storage (HPS).

Ministers will agree on which of these issues need to be addressed and the process and timeline for amending the Convention.

## How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

Amending the Convention will allow OSPAR to take measures, where they are needed, to protect the OSPAR Maritime Area from new, emerging and increasing pressures. It will ensure that the economic opportunities from these growing activities can be fully exploited while ensuring that any impacts on the marine environment are minimised and managed sustainably.

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