



BRUSSELS
**MINISTERIAL
MEETING 2018**
HELCOM

Statement by The OSPAR Commission

Agenda Item 4
Statements by HELCOM Observers

OSPAR Statement

Ministerial Meeting of HELCOM

Brussels, 6 of March 2018

Dear Chair of HELCOM, distinguished Ministers, EU Commissioner, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my gratitude for providing me the privilege to give a statement on behalf of OSPAR Commission. The Chairman of OSPAR and I are very pleased to participate at HELCOM's annual and Ministerial meeting.

The OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic aims to take all possible steps to prevent and eliminate pollution and the necessary measures to protect the North-East Atlantic from the adverse effects of human activities, while restoring marine areas which have been adversely affected, so as to safeguard human health and to conserve marine ecosystems.

HELCOM and OSPAR share a common vision of an ecosystem approach to managing human activities impacting on the marine environment, resulting in good environmental and ecological status which are necessary to support sustainable economic and social activities.

HELCOM and OSPAR have also the advantage of counting on the role of some countries that are Contracting Parties to both Conventions and have contributed towards the enhancement of common knowledge. With the Kattegat, the two Conventions share a particular transition area, where the North Sea and the Baltic Sea connect and therefore where the most opportunities for cooperation exist.

Like HELCOM, OSPAR is committed to contribute to a marine environment free of anthropogenic eutrophication, hazardous substances and adverse cumulative impacts from the different human activities, such as the introduction of marine litter, non-indigenous species and underwater noise. The need to reduce the loss of biodiversity also implies halting the decline and contributing to the recovery of threatened or declining species and habitats.

Regular assessments of the marine environment are therefore essential to prepare for action, while also providing accessible relevant data in a wider context, in particular the United Nations and its overwhelming preparatory work leading up to a second global integrated marine assessment in 2020.

OSPAR congratulates HELCOM for the State of the Baltic Sea report, while acknowledging the cooperation on common indicators in both HOLAS II and OSPAR Intermediate Assessment 2017.

As stated in the Letter addressed by OSPAR to the Chair of HELCOM, in December 2017, there is a long history of close collaboration for many years, but the last 4 years intensified efficiency gains, good examples are the joint requests to ICES, the work on indicators, the sharing of databases, the jointly developing measures on Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter. Also in the development of effective measures regarding invasive species, underwater noise and migratory birds, cooperation is an advantage.

On the engagement in the global process of fulfilling the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 14, OSPAR welcomes further cooperation with HELCOM on existing work and the identification of new issues of common concern, to '*conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*'.

Amongst a wider scope of opportunities and collaborative activities where both organizations may join efforts in the future, some steps on specific areas may be further developed through cooperation at thematic, regional, European and global levels.

Given the two Convention areas are connected, OSPAR is interested in exploring further collaboration with HELCOM on biodiversity matters, in particular on monitoring procedures, data management and data sharing regarding seabirds and mammals, but also on MPA networks as an opportunity for seeking connectivity, coherence and lessons to be learned on effective management.

Joint concerted action is of utmost interest on common aspects related to the environmental impact of human activities, in particular on marine litter and the implementation of our respective Regional Action Plans, but also on underwater noise, where the sharing of information and methodological developments may contribute to an harmonized work in this emerging field. Enhanced collaboration on knowledge and measures on non-indigenous species may also result in harmonised outcomes as those on ballast water exchange.

On hazardous substances, the utilisation by HELCOM of the contaminants assessment tool and a joint platform to operationalize the calculation of hazardous substances indicators is a good example of our collaborative work.

HELCOM, OSPAR and the European Union assist Contracting Parties that are also EU Members States in delivering their obligations under the MSFD, the most recent examples being the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment 2017 and HELCOM HOLAS II, which can be used for reporting purposes if those Contracting Parties so wish. In future, HELCOM and OSPAR could explore developing synergies and improving cross-regional coherence to support the assessments, target setting and monitoring programmes of those Contracting Parties.

But the future reserves many other emerging issues, like information sharing on emerging work on pharmaceuticals, or more horizontal challenges as regional approaches to an ecosystem-based management, and cumulative effects, as well as the need for adaptation in regard to climate change and ocean acidification.

In conclusion, regional collaboration and sharing of expertise between OSPAR and HELCOM will play a substantive role in the future and may give support to our Contracting Parties towards the implementation of the United Nations Agenda 2030 and the SDGs in particular Goal 14 on Oceans.

Finally, let me wish you a very successful meeting.

Thank you.

Susana Salvador

Executive Secretary of OSPAR Commission