

OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, and
Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area
Meeting of the Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on Ballast Water Management Convention
(BWMC) and Biofouling (TG BALLAST 11-2020)

Online: 26-27 November 2020

Outcomes of relevant OSPAR meetings

Presented by OSPAR Secretariat

Issue: This document presents outcomes of relevant OSPAR meetings.

Action requested

1. JTG-Ballast is invited to;
 - a. take note of the information and make use of it as appropriate.

Background

2. This document contains extracts from BDC(2) 2020 (30 September-2 October 2020), EIHA(1) 2020 (20-22 April 2020); and EIHA(2) 2020 (12-14 October 2020) which are of relevance for TG BALLAST.

Outcomes of relevant OSPAR meetings

Matters arising from EIHA(1) 2020

1.1 The Secretariat drew EIHA's attention to the list of "A" items that had been listed in Annex 1 of the draft agenda (EIHA(1) 20/01/01-Rev.1) and which had been sent out to EIHA HODs in advance with a request to indicate whether they would be content to adopt without discussion. EIHA agreed to the following actions without discussion:

- a. Progress Report from the Joint Task Group on Ballast Water Management Convention Exemptions (EIHA(1) WP 20/01/04): EIHA noted **the progress report** and agreed **Terms of Reference for 2020-2024 (Annex 5)**;
- b. Joint Harmonised Procedure (EIHA(1) WP 20/01/05): . EIHA agreed **the revision to the Joint Harmonised Procedure (JHP) for the Contracting Parties of HELCOM and OSPAR on the granting of exemptions under International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, Regulation A-4To (Annex 6). The revised JHP is subject to approval in HELCOM.**

Matters arising from EIHA(2) 2020

Non-indigenous species

6.1 The Netherlands presented EIHA(2) 20/06/03 and gave presentation EIHA(2) 20/06/P02 on proposals for a common OSPAR and HELCOM baseline study to support the regional evaluation and implementation of IMO biofouling guidelines. As a first step the Dutch authorities were undertaking a pilot baseline study in the Port of Rotterdam, which would provide a basis for developing a standard research procedure/protocol, in order to establish the status of biofouling across the OSPAR/HELCOM maritime areas. The Netherlands would present the results of their work and proposals for developing a protocol to JTG-Ballast in November.

6.2 In discussion the following comments were noted:

- a. Contracting Parties welcomed the initiative as a complement to work in the IMO, and looked forward to its further development, though Parties were not in a position to commit to undertake national studies at this point;
- b. Several Contracting Parties were already active in JTG-Ballast; the UK would provide the contact details of experts who could participate;
- c. It was important to ensure good coordination with existing NIS related groups such as the COBAM expert group and work in ICES; a document would be presented to the JTG on a biofouling plan developed by HELCOM countries which had the potential to extend to a joint approach.

6.3 EIHA welcomed the overall approach to addressing biofouling and agreed:

- a. **to invite Contracting Parties to nominate experts to participate in the JTG if not already active;**
- b. **to invite the Netherlands to present the results of their study to JTG-Ballast.**

Matters arising from BDC(2) 2020

4.1. The Convenors, on behalf of the UK, Sweden and Denmark, presented a proposal to establish a joint OSPAR/HELCOM working group on non-indigenous species (BDC(2) 20/4/7). The proposal outlined establishing a joint working group NIS with one Co-convenor from OSPAR and one for HELCOM, with the group working based on a 3-year work programme. The group would build timing synergies between developing QSR 2023 and HOLAS III and would develop a critical mass of expertise to work on shared topics.

4.2. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- a. Norway noted that data management through AquaNIS had been discussed previously, and it was surprising that this was not reflected in the proposal;
- b. Denmark queried whether the work programme would need updating to reflect the delay caused by COVID-19;
- c. Belgium noted that the OSPAR NIS EG had not been very active in recent years as there are several other groups working on NIS in the region, for example in ICES and the JRC managed EASIN database requesting the same information, as well as the HELCOM/OSPAR JTG Ballast. It would be preferred if ICES would also be included in the joint group. France and Sweden did not support a merging of the ICES group as this group worked on a different timescale and topics;
- d. Sweden, Denmark, UK, Germany, Norway and France supported the creation of a joint group between HELCOM and OSPAR;
- e. a reference on collaboration with JTG Ballast and ICES WG-ITMO should be added to the work programme;
- f. the Secretariat underlined the importance of having an OSPAR expert group lead in place who could actively work on establishing the group in a successful way;
- g. Denmark informed that HELCOM State & Conservation had been informed of the suggestion, but had not yet been considered by BDC.

4.3. In conclusion, BDC agreed:

- a. to invite **the Chair of BDC and Secretariat to inform HOD of the support from BDC for establishing a joint working group on NIS assessments between OSPAR and HELCOM;**
- b. to invite **the Secretariat to inform the HELCOM Secretariat that BDC had considered the proposal, and welcomed it in principle;**
- c. once an NIS expert group lead had been identified they would be asked to **progress this work as a first task and to provide any updates as relevant to ICG-COBAM and then to BDC for agreement.**

Matters arising post BDC(2) 2020

Denmark has confirmed that they will offer a new lead for the NIS Expert Group. Peter Stæhr will join the next meeting of COBAM.