

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

Sampling activities taking place in water bodies of the Port of Valencia (Spain)

Presented by Spain

Issue: This document presents information on sampling activities taking place in water bodies of the Port of Valencia (Spain).

Action requested

1. JTG-Ballast is invited to:
 - a. Take note of this initiative.

Background

2. Spain informs on sampling activity taking place in water bodies of the Port of Valencia.

Nonetheless the Port is located in the Mediterranean Sea that is out of the OSPAR boundaries, the sampling is following the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonize Procedure without no substantial difficulties to be mentioned; therefore proving -once more- the ability of JHP survey protocol to be interpreted and realized across all sea regions in the World.

Sampling of the Port of Valencia is carried out by University of Alicante under ODYSSEA project. Relevant environmental institutions of Northern Africa and Southern Europe countries are partners of this project. Partners recognises ballast water as a key vector for the introduction of invasive species. In this framework, the Valencian port research institution VALENCIAPORT Foundation, is coordinating a set of activities based on the application of the port survey protocol developed by HELCOM/OSPAR with the aim of:

- Validating the application of HELCOM/OSPAR procedures in the Mediterranean area, including Northern Africa ports.
- Providing data for supporting the exemption procedure and implementing the HELCOM/OSPAR risk assessment in the Odyssea platform.
- Developing a timely warning system based on the early detection of invasive species in ports.
- Providing data to the research community about invasive species.

The sampling procedure constitutes a pilot action, which will be further extended to other ports in the Mediterranean Sea. For this reason, all the activities are overseen by the members of an experts working group formed by Puertos del Estado, General Directorate of Merchant Marine, Port Authority of Valencia, University of Alicante and RAC/SPA acting on behalf of the Barcelona Convention.

The survey includes a quarterly campaign in July-2020, October-2020, January-2021 and April-2021; and the following two innovative actions are under consideration,

- The use of environmental DNA to effectively target already listed invasive species for the Mediterranean Sea to eventually reduce taxonomic workload.
- The addition of “extra” sampling locations/sites out of the Port boundaries to better assess whether aliens species found in the port may have been introduced by marine current or by ballast waters discharged within the port basins; this is specially appropriated where marine transportation current alongside the coast outside the port has clear dominant and unique direction, as it is the case for the North-South current at Port the Valencia’s.