



Ministerial Meeting of the OSPAR Commission

Bremen Statement

WE, THE MINISTERS AND THE MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, meeting within the framework of the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, adopt this statement to set out the work of the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Commission:

1. Five years ago in Sintra, Portugal, Ministers set new and challenging objectives for OSPAR for the period up to 2020, aimed at bringing our marine environment within one generation to a healthy and sustainable condition.
2. OSPAR has responded to these new challenges by generating innovatory approaches, by exploring new areas in depth and by creating new partnerships with industry and environmental organisations. These path-finding initiatives have shown how some difficult problems in environmental protection can be addressed, and have influenced thinking in other forums.

Our purposes

3. With our colleagues from the Baltic Sea, we have sought to develop and integrate these approaches within wider frameworks, both
 - a. through supporting the creation of a European Marine Strategy, aimed at orchestrating the actions of all European States, the European Union and international bodies towards ambitious, clear and coherent objectives in all the fields affecting the marine environment; and
 - b. through developing Atlantic-Baltic cooperation, particularly in the common foundation of an ecosystem approach to management, as the basis of our strategies and of integrating our work, in a joint network of marine protected areas and in jointly implementing global agreements relevant to protecting the marine environment in both regions.
4. We now focus on issues of a special concern to the OSPAR Convention and the North-East Atlantic. Our purpose, within the specific framework of OSPAR, is to review the first five years' work towards the goals set at Sintra, to reaffirm our commitments, and to renew the mandates for further work on the five OSPAR strategies.
5. These strategies, together with the new Strategy for a Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme, set the course for the sectors within OSPAR's competence crucial for protecting and conserving the North-East Atlantic, and provide OSPAR's contribution to wider work to that end.
6. We endorse the conclusions of the evaluation of the OSPAR strategies, re-affirm their objectives and on that basis up-date them to take account of the past five years' developments within OSPAR, the European Union and other international organisations. On this basis, we detail the work required up to 2010 to implement them and commit ourselves to providing resources. This further work will form OSPAR's contribution to the European Marine Strategy, thus providing effective support for its development.

Biodiversity and ecosystems

7. In the new field of protecting the marine environment against adverse impacts other than pollution, we have brought into force, with effect from 30 August 2000, the new Annex V to the OSPAR Convention on the conservation and protection of marine biodiversity and ecosystems. We look forward to the early completion of ratification by the three remaining Contracting Parties.

8. We endorse the Texel/Faial Criteria for the Identification of Species and Habitats in Need of Protection and the initial OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats based upon them, in order to pursue the goals of Annex V and the related Strategy for the Protection and Conservation of Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystems. This List identifies the species and habitats on which we need at the moment to concentrate our efforts of conservation and protection. We shall now examine the ways and means by which we can achieve the necessary protection for these species and habitats and, where the action lies within the competence of OSPAR, develop any necessary programmes and measures for these purposes. We shall also keep the list under review using the agreed criteria.

9. The second implementation process in this field addresses the candidate list of human activities¹ capable of causing adverse impacts on the marine environment. We note the work that has already been done to develop measures (including progress on issues relating to artificial reefs) as a result of analyses of these activities. On that basis we confirm the candidate list as the basis for further work. Based on the OSPAR background document on tourism, we accept that the aspects of tourism and recreational activities identified in that document require analysis of the need for action to protect the marine environment against their impacts.

10. As further products from analyses of these human activities, we endorse:

- a. the Guidance on a Common Approach for Dealing with Applications for the Construction and Operation of Offshore Wind-Farms. We shall work further on the spatial planning across the maritime areas and on what is needed in this sector, in order to facilitate and encourage the further development of such installations in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable way. These developments can offer a significant new source of renewable energy which will help Contracting Parties to combat climate change by implementing their obligations under the Kyoto Protocol;
- b. an agreement on controlling sand and gravel extraction.

We shall pursue the analysis of these human activities and the measures necessary in the light of this analysis. By 2010, we shall complete an assessment of the impact of all these activities and conclude what programmes and measures are required.

11. The third line of action to protect marine biodiversity and ecosystems is to protect specific areas. For this purpose, we endorse the Recommendation on a Network of Marine Protected Areas. Working with HELCOM and the European Community, we shall identify the first set of such areas by 2006, establish what gaps then remain and complete by 2010 a joint network of well-managed marine protected areas that, together with the NATURA 2000 network, is ecologically coherent.

12. We are particularly concerned about the status of vulnerable cold-water coral reefs, many of which are threatened with destruction. Bearing in mind the ecological importance of these reefs and the practical irreversibility of their damage, we shall take immediate measures to protect coral reefs from further damage

¹ The candidate list of human activities for analysis is as follows:
Construction or placement of artificial islands, artificial reefs, installations and structures;
Dredging for navigational purposes, other than within harbours;
Exploration for oil, gas and solid minerals;
Introduction of alien or genetically modified species, whether deliberately or unintentionally;
Land reclamation;
Placement of cables and pipelines;
Placement of structures for the exploitation of oil and gas; and
Sand and gravel extraction.

due to use of active fishing gear on the reefs. Furthermore, we shall ensure that steps are taken by 2005 to identify additional threats to the cold-water reefs and that measures are taken to protect the reefs against these threats.

13. Fourthly, we shall create an effective tool for integrating action across the whole field, including action against pollution, in accordance with the ecosystem approach, by taking up the invitation of the Fifth North Sea Conference to complete the North Sea pilot project for a coherent suite of ecological quality objectives, and then further developing this approach for the whole maritime area, taking into account regional differences.

14. Finally, we shall do our utmost to take measures to eliminate the problem of marine litter by, for example, supporting the OSPAR Marine Litter Monitoring Work Programme, considering the need for the development of an environmental quality objective for marine litter and for collective action within the International Maritime Organisation to have parts of the OSPAR maritime area designated as a Special Area for the purpose of Annex V (garbage) to MARPOL 1973/78² and welcoming the initiatives undertaken under the Save the North Sea Project.

15. On the basis of these five strands of action, we shall cooperate with other relevant organisations to achieve a coherent and comprehensive programme of work, which will deliver specific protection for vulnerable species, habitats and areas. We are committed to the protection and conservation of, and sustainable management of human impacts on, the ecosystems and biological diversity throughout the whole of the maritime area. We invite the industries involved to join us in these efforts.

Eutrophication

16. The 2003 integrated report on the eutrophication status of the OSPAR maritime area identifies, partly on the basis of shared criteria, the areas which the coastal Contracting Parties identify as threatened by eutrophication, or likely to be so threatened if preventive action is not taken. These shared criteria will improve the consistency of our approaches to eutrophication, but there is room for further improvement. There is also a need for better delivery of the 50% reduction commitments that apply to problem areas identified³ in this way, as a contribution to achieving the 2010 goal of the Eutrophication Strategy⁴. Those of us who have identified such areas will:

- a. in respect of problem areas, report further by 2005 on measures taken to reduce or eliminate the anthropogenic causes of eutrophication, including the achievement of the 50% reductions where relevant. This information will then be assessed in accordance with the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme;
- b. report by 2005 on the preventive measures taken on potential problem areas;
- c. determine by 2008 the status of the areas identified as potential problem areas.

We shall all review how to achieve greater consistency in identifying these areas and quantifying the various anthropogenic contributions to inputs of nutrients to these areas.

17. We re-emphasise the importance of common quantification and reporting procedures for calculating the reduction of nutrient inputs, and will continue to improve, and complete by 2006, the Guidelines on Harmonised Quantification and Reporting Procedures for Nutrients (HARP-NUT).

18. We shall use the development of the European Marine Strategy to integrate the OSPAR work on eutrophication with activities in other European and international bodies, through *inter alia* the development of ecological quality objectives, by 2005 for the North Sea and thereafter for other areas, and the harmonisation of reporting procedures, taking into account the OSPAR Guidelines (HARP-NUT).

² The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978.

³ In accordance with PARCOM Recommendation 88/2.

⁴ The timeframe of the Eutrophication Strategy provides for implementation progressively by making every effort to combat eutrophication in the maritime area, in order to achieve, by the year 2010, a healthy marine environment where eutrophication does not occur.

19. We emphasise the importance, for achieving the goals of the OSPAR eutrophication strategy, of achieving an integrated approach across all the policy areas, including agriculture, that substantially affect the nutrient levels of European seas.

Hazardous substances

20. The dynamic selection and prioritisation mechanism, developed in accordance with the Hazardous Substances Strategy, has enabled the creation and publication of a List of Substances of Possible Concern and significant up-dating of the OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action.

21. We welcome the series of OSPAR background documents⁵. Through these, we identify in detail the reasons why the chemicals for priority action are causes of concern for the marine environment, the ways that they are used, the quantities in question and their route to the marine environment, what protective action is already in hand, and the most appropriate further action to achieve the target of cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of these chemicals reaching the marine environment. The common EU/OSPAR approach on risk-assessment methodology for the marine environment provides a sound basis for this work.

22. We confirm this twin-track approach as the appropriate way to pursue the objective of the hazardous substances strategy. Concerns for the marine environment are not, however, the only driver of work on hazardous substances. For nearly all OSPAR Contracting Parties, the EC Water Framework Directive and the development of the EC Chemicals Policy are also crucial. Switzerland is likewise developing complementary policies in this field. We shall therefore use the development of the European Marine Strategy to align the approaches to policy on hazardous substances in the different fields and to focus OSPAR work on the specific areas in which OSPAR can add value.

23. In this context, we note that further efforts are required to meet the objectives of the OSPAR Hazardous Substances Strategy and its 2020 cessation target. We acknowledge that different, but complementary, one-generation targets have been included in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and in the EC Water Framework Directive. In the further development of the EC Chemicals policy we encourage the European Community:

- a. to take full account of the need to protect the marine environment;
- b. to take account of our commitments to move towards the cessation of emission, discharges and losses of hazardous substances;
- c. to promote the substitution of hazardous substances with safer alternatives, including promoting and facilitating the development of such alternatives where they do not currently exist;
- d. to ensure that purchasers and consumers are provided with information on hazardous substances in goods, to help reduce the risks from them.

24. We shall ensure that:

- a. OSPAR continues to make certain that hazardous substances that cause concern for the marine environment continue to be identified;
- b. the range of measures adopted by the various authorities and bodies concerned are adequate both to deliver the general obligations of the OSPAR Convention to protect and conserve the marine environment and to move by 2020 towards the cessation target;

⁵ Background documents (prepared with the specified Contracting Party in the lead) have been approved for publication on: brominated flame retardants (Sweden); cadmium (Spain); dicofol (Finland); dioxins and furans (Belgium and Denmark); endosulphan (Germany); lead and organic lead compounds (Norway); lindane (Germany); mercury and organic mercury compounds (United Kingdom); methoxychlor (Finland); musk xylene and other musks (Switzerland); nonylphenol and nonylphenol ethoxylates (Sweden); octylphenol (United Kingdom); organic tin compounds (the Netherlands); pentachlorophenol (Finland); polychlorinated biphenyls (Belgium and Germany); polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (Norway); short-chain chlorinated paraffins (Sweden); 4-tert-butyltoluene (Germany); trichlorobenzene, 1,2,3-trichlorobenzene and 1,2,4-trichlorobenzene (Belgium and Luxembourg); triphenylphosphine (Germany) and 2,4,6-tri-tert-butylphenol (United Kingdom).

- c. a comprehensive and coherent assessment is made of progress towards the objectives of the OSPAR Hazardous Substances Strategy and its 2020 cessation target;
- d. where a shortfall is identified, action is taken to make it good.

Offshore oil and gas industry

25. Since the adoption of the offshore industry strategy, we have:
- a. achieved a harmonised mandatory control system for chemicals used and discharged offshore;
 - b. tightened the measures regulating the use of drilling fluids and the discharge of cuttings contaminated by them. These re-affirm the limits on the use of diesel-based drilling fluids and on the discharge of cuttings contaminated with oil-based drilling fluids. The Decision also limits the use of organic-phase drilling fluids (OPF) and the discharge of cuttings contaminated with OPF;
 - c. established a goal of reducing by 15% the total quantity of oil discharged into the sea in produced water (that is, the water coming up from oil and gas wells) as compared with the figures for 2000. This reduction should be achieved in the year 2006, despite the expected increases (as a result of ageing wells) in the total amount of produced water to be discharged. It forms a first step towards ensuring that by 2020 discharges of produced water will present no harm to the marine environment.
26. In line with the strategy, we now endorse the Recommendation establishing a goal that all operators of offshore installations in the OSPAR area will have in place by the end of 2005 environmental management systems that conform to internationally recognised standards. We have not achieved the complementary aim of specifying by 2003 all the environmental goals to be achieved, but we endorse the timetable that has been adopted to ensure the specification of such goals by 2004.
27. We confirm that this mixture of action is effectively pursuing the objectives of the offshore industry strategy.

Radioactive substances

28. We welcome the development by all Contracting Parties of national plans showing how they intend to deliver the objective of the OSPAR Strategy with regard to Radioactive Substances. These detailed and specific national plans are an essential part of the way in which we implement the strategy.
29. We note that, if national plans are implemented as forecast, the overall level of discharges, emissions and losses will be reduced by 2020. We are, however, concerned that it has not been possible to make a final assessment whether or not the combined effects of the national plans will be sufficient to achieve the objective of the strategy.
30. The individual Contracting Parties concerned confirm that they will ensure the continued evolution and implementation of their national plans so as to achieve the objective of the strategy⁶ in accordance with its timeframe for 2020⁷.
31. We endorse the revised programme for the implementation of the radioactive substances strategy, to ensure that OSPAR collectively is kept informed about the progress of the national plans and can form an overview of performance, judged against the agreed baseline.

⁶ The objective is “to prevent pollution of the maritime area from ionising radiation through progressive and substantial reductions of discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances, with the ultimate aim of concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring radioactive substances and close to zero for artificial radioactive substances. In achieving this objective, the following issues should, *inter alia*, be taken into account: (a) legitimate uses of the sea; (b) technical feasibility; and (c) radiological impacts on man and biota.”

⁷ This timeframe is that “by the year 2020 the Commission will ensure that discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances are reduced to levels where the additional concentrations in the marine environment above historic levels, resulting from such discharges, emissions and losses, are close to zero.”

32. We shall progressively assess collectively, based on a methodology to be completed by 2006, whether or not the combined effects of the national plans are sufficient to achieve the objective of the strategy within its time frame.

33. We note the concerns expressed by a number of Contracting Parties about discharges of technetium-99 from Sellafield and their view that these discharges should cease immediately. We welcome the recent initiative of the United Kingdom to request the operator of Sellafield to stop discharges from the MAC treatment process for the next nine months while further research and development of abatement technology is carried out. We look forward to the introduction of such technology to treat remaining MAC if it proves to be technically feasible.

34. Within this process, and in the light of the MARINA II study by the European Commission, and taking into account new information from Contracting Parties and other studies, we shall ensure that discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances from sources outside the nuclear industry equally comply with the Radioactive Substances Strategy.

Assessment and Monitoring

35. We welcome the completion of the Quality Status Report 2000, and its five sub-regional reports. This was an innovatory exercise, creating a detailed, scientifically based evaluation of the state of a major region of the world's oceans. We welcome the progress achieved in some fields, but we must take to heart the serious problems which the reports reveal – in particular, the environmental impacts of fisheries, hazardous substances, the impact of climate change, the introduction of non-native species through ballast-water discharges, and the need to improve our knowledge base. These give a firm basis for the actions that we are pursuing.

36. We adopt the Strategy for a Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP), and endorse the recommendation to promote its implementation. We shall aim to ensure that the implementation of the JAMP is consistent with the approaches to monitoring coastal waters under the EC Water Framework Directive. The acid test of the success of the OSPAR thematic Strategies and the over-arching ecosystem approach is whether the state of the marine environment is actually improved. This strategy will ensure that we can regularly check the progress of our thematic strategies in improving the state of the North-East Atlantic.

37. To that end, and following the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme, we shall examine in 2010 a further Quality Status Report of the whole OSPAR maritime area, as the culmination of a series of thematic assessments examining in detail the various themes of OSPAR's work.

Achieving our aims

38. Neither OSPAR nor its Contracting Parties on their own can ensure that the North-East Atlantic will be in a healthy and sustainable condition. This requires a sustained effort in many forums. But OSPAR provides the essential focus, both by covering many crucial sectors and by monitoring and assessing the quality status of the whole North-East Atlantic in all its aspects. We reiterate our commitment to ensuring the continuation of high-quality, dedicated efforts within the framework of OSPAR to achieve the goals that we have set.

39. We shall individually use the annual reports of OSPAR as a tool to evaluate regularly progress towards the goals of these strategies, and collectively we shall meet again in 2010 to review progress and set the agenda for the ensuing decade.