



OSPAR Commission  
The Aspect  
12 Finsbury Square  
London, EC2A 1AS

Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs

By email

14 June 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response by the OSPAR Commission to the request pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/69 of 5 December 2023, entitled "Oceans and Law of the Sea", for an OSPAR contribution to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly

1. The following is the contribution by the OSPAR Commission for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) to the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/69, as requested in a letter from Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under Secretary-General in charge of the Office of Legal Affairs, dated 19 March 2024.

#### Introduction

2. The OSPAR Convention is the legal instrument guiding international cooperation on the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic (NEA). The activities and work under the Convention are managed by the OSPAR Commission, which is composed of fifteen Governments and the European Commission, on behalf of the European Union.

3. The OSPAR Commission is the Regional Seas Convention responsible for coordinating the efforts of its Contracting Parties to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic and ensure the sustainable use of its resources. Importantly, in the year that saw the adoption of the International Legally Binding Instrument on Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction approximately 40% of the OSPAR maritime area is in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

4.

agreement to develop three new indicators: discharges of radionuclides from the nuclear sector; discharges of radionuclides from the non-nuclear sector; and environmental concentrations of artificial radionuclides.

6. Work is also underway to address monitoring of environmental concentrations around offshore installations and the impact of leaving in-situ contaminated oil and gas infrastructure such as pipelines. OSPAR also considered the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification on sources, behaviour and fate of radionuclides as in the [GESAMP WG 45](#) report on Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Related Impacts on Contaminants in the Ocean.

7. In terms of collaboration with other international organisations, OSPAR's Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC) will organise a joint Working group on natural radiation sources of the Heads of European Radiation Competent Authorities ([HERCA WGNAT](#)) and OSPAR-RSC and to further liaise with the [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) to review the practical arrangements between the IAEA and the OSPAR Commission on data sharing.

#### Part X Marine environment and marine resources

8. OSPAR continues to prioritize implementation of Part XII of the Convention to protect and preserve



bycatch, which encourages Contracting Parties to develop national action plans and to collaborate to build evidence and understanding of marine bird bycatch. Further Regional Action

14. The extension of OSPAR's the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Sea Basin Marine Protected Area

Tool (HARSAT), an Open-Source R-based statistical package that is publicly available on [GitHub](#)<sup>1</sup>. It enables all three organisations to better, more effectively and more efficiently monitor and assess hazardous substances in the marine environment, one of the key of pressures impacting on marine biodiversity.

21. OSPAR also continues to cooperate both bilaterally and multi-laterally with other Intergovernmental Organisations and competent bodies to improve the protection of the North-East Atlantic. Positive discussions were held under the OSPAR and North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) Collective Arrangement<sup>2</sup>. A positive outcome from this work was the agreement of a joint statement on how OSPAR and NEAFC's collective efforts on MPAs and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) can improve the protection of the marine environment in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

22. Discussions also addressed the role the Collective Arrangement could play as a regional platform to facilitate cooperation and coordination on area-based management tools as envisaged under the newly adopted International Legally Binding Instrument on Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

23. I confirm that the full text of this report can be made available on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Pattinson', is written over a horizontal line. The line is decorated with a colorful, pixelated pattern in shades of blue, green, and yellow.

Dominic Pattinson

Executive Secretary

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<sup>1</sup> <https://github.com/osparcomm/HARSAT>

<sup>2</sup> [www.ospar.org/about/international-cooperation/collective-arrangement](http://www.ospar.org/about/international-cooperation/collective-arrangement), [www.neafc.org/collective-arrangement](http://www.neafc.org/collective-arrangement)