

OSPAR CONTRIBUTION TO THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

(ii) OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic

1. The main work of the OSPAR Commission in 2002 has been the implementation of the five strategies on hazardous substances, radioactive substances, combatting eutrophication, the environmental impacts of the offshore oil and gas industry and the protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity, together with the joint assessment and monitoring programme.
2. On hazardous substances, the Commission revised its List of Chemicals for Priority Action, adopted background documents on policies for the control of a number of hazardous substances (cadmium, dicofol, dioxins, endosulphan, hexachlorocyclohexane (lindane), lead and organic lead compounds and methoxychlor). A Recommendation on Discharge Limit Values for Existing Aluminium Electrolysis Plants was also adopted which supplements an earlier instrument by covering discharges to water, as well as to air, from existing aluminium electrolysis plants.
3. In pursuing the biodiversity strategy (implementing the new Annex to the Convention which gives new functions to protect the marine environment from human activities other than pollution), the Commission has taken steps in establishing ecological quality objectives, on developing a list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats, and on marine protected areas.
4. On the basis of preparatory work by the OSPAR Commission, the Fifth International Conference for the Protection of the North Sea (20-21 March 2002 in Bergen, Norway) committed the North Sea states to a pilot project on environmental quality objectives for the North Sea, and asked OSPAR, in conjunction with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and other relevant bodies, to work towards a comprehensive system of EcoQOs for the North Sea by 2005.
5. OSPAR's work relating to a list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats was taken forward through three related strands of activity: the completion of criteria for the selection of such species and habitats; the completion of the first version of the list and preliminary consideration of what is implied in terms of protecting the species and habitats identified.
6. Guidelines on the identification and selection of marine protected areas (MPAs) within the OSPAR maritime area and on their management have been completed. On this basis, a comprehensive approach to the creation of an ecologically coherent network of well managed MPAs, covering both the North East Atlantic and the Baltic is being prepared jointly with the Helsinki Commission for the joint Ministerial Meeting of the two Commissions in June 2003.