

CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE BALTIC SEA AREA
(HELSINKI CONVENTION)

OSPAR CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE NORTH-EAST
ATLANTIC

FIRST JOINT MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE HELSINKI AND OSPAR COMMISSIONS (JMM)

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Statement on the European Marine Strategy

“WHAT HELCOM AND OSPAR CAN BRING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN MARINE STRATEGY”

The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (the Helsinki Commission – HELCOM) and the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR) jointly adopt the following statement to set out the contribution that they can make to the development and implementation of the European Marine Strategy:

General

1. HELCOM and OSPAR will undertake, respectively, the actions identified below for the Baltic Sea Area and the North East Atlantic, but in collaboration with each other and with the other relevant international bodies. The enlargement of the European Union will mean that EC measures will be applicable across very large parts of the HELCOM and OSPAR maritime areas and their catchments. There must be an inclusive consultation on the development of the European Marine Strategy, and the final arrangements for cooperation and the eventual commitments by the various governments and organisations concerned will depend on this consultation.

Assessment and Monitoring

2. Scientific understanding of the marine environment must be the basis of all policy, programmes and measures to conserve and protect it. The Helsinki and OSPAR Conventions accordingly create obligations on monitoring and assessing the marine environment, and HELCOM and OSPAR have adopted strategies and programmes to meet these obligations.

3. Collection, analysis, reporting and assessment of data is undertaken within many overlapping frameworks. Each of these frameworks has its own objectives, and it is often difficult to avoid overlapping data collection and reporting. Nevertheless, efforts are under way within the European Environment Agency, the European Union and the European Economic Area to establish systems to minimise any such overlaps.

4. HELCOM and OSPAR will pursue their obligations to monitor and assess the status of the marine environment, with the objective of publishing assessments both of specific themes and periodically of the status of the marine environments of the Baltic Sea Area and the North East Atlantic, as a whole. As part of this work, HELCOM and OSPAR will include assessments of the impact of climate change and climate variability on the oceanography and ecosystems of the North East Atlantic and the Baltic Sea Area, in order to contribute to the knowledge base for judgements on policy in this field. They will also aim to reach agreements to ensure that collecting and reporting information on the marine environment can be carried out by single processes, and that the resulting information is then shared between the relevant bodies.

5. Based on their work on their maritime areas, HELCOM and OSPAR will also contribute to the new system for the Global Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, being established under the auspices of the United Nations.

Conservation of biological diversity and habitats

6. Excessive fishing and pollution, the introduction of non-indigenous species, disturbance from new uses of the sea and seabed and other adverse impact of human activities have seriously undermined the sustainability of many ecosystems in the Baltic Sea Area and in many parts of the North East Atlantic. In particular, populations of fish and marine mammals have been eliminated or threatened in several areas and habitats that are crucial for many species have been degraded. HELCOM and OSPAR have adopted long-term strategies to guide their work in this field, and these strategies will be an important contribution to the overall European Marine Strategy, both on the conservation of marine biological diversity and in managing human activities that may adversely affect the marine environment.

7. The European Community has adopted directives for the conservation and protection of birds and habitats¹ (“the EC Birds and Habitats Directives”), which apply also to the sea areas under the jurisdiction of its Member States. The resulting NATURA 2000 network (the finalisation of which becomes urgent) and the associated actions and measures will be very important for conserving marine biological diversity and ecosystems. The international fisheries commissions, the European Community and the other fisheries management authorities have duties in managing fisheries to ensure the conservation of biological diversity from the impact of fisheries. The international organisations concerned with marine mammals² also have duties in this field.

8. In pursuance of their duties under the Conventions to prevent and eliminate pollution and to protect the marine environment against the adverse effects of human activities so as to safeguard human health and conserve marine ecosystems, HELCOM and OSPAR will:

- a. identify the issues that need to be addressed in order to achieve a coherent and consistent approach to the conservation of biological diversity throughout the Baltic Sea Area and the North East Atlantic. They will therefore continue to identify species and habitats which are threatened and/or declining or in need of protection, to assess which human activities adversely impact on biological diversity or particular species or habitats, and to expand an ecologically coherent network of well managed marine protected areas throughout the Baltic Sea Area and the North East Atlantic, consistent with the NATURA 2000 network;
- b. where action is desirable in relation to a question relating to the management of fisheries, take steps in accordance with the provisions of the Helsinki or OSPAR Conventions, as appropriate;
- c. identify how to take forward and broaden the approach of the EC Birds and Habitats Directives in order to ensure the conservation of the full range of habitats and species in the marine environment within the jurisdiction of the EU Member States in accordance with the objectives of those directives, and suggest to the European Commission initiatives for these purposes;
- d. consider in addition how to promote the conservation of the full range of species and habitats in all parts of the maritime areas of the two Commissions;
- e. develop and implement other programmes and measures which may be needed to address the issues identified, where such issues are not addressed by action in other forums.

Development in the landward coastal area

9. Human settlements along the coasts of the Baltic Sea Area and the North East Atlantic have profoundly affected the adjoining marine environment, not least by increasing pollution and the demands for

¹ Council Directive of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC) and Council Directive of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (92/43/EEC).

² In particular, the International Whaling Commission, ASCOBANS (the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas), ACCOBAMS (Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area), concluded in 1991 and 1996 respectively under the auspices of the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species, and the North Atlantic Marine Mammals Commission.

limited resources. The intensification of such development, including the growth of the tourist industry, will further impact on the marine environment, particularly where it results in changes in, or intensification of, the use of the sea for shipping, recreation or mariculture.

10. The European Conference of Ministers of Regional Planning in 2000 adopted a set of Guiding Principles for the Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent. For the European Union, these are underpinned by the European Spatial Development Perspective, adopted in 1999 at Potsdam, Germany, by the Ministers responsible for spatial planning. These provide overall frameworks for national planning. The integration of developments in the landward and seaward parts of the coastal zone is addressed by the EU Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management³, and parallel measures by other Contracting Parties. The effects of significant developments on the environment are addressed, within the EU, by the EC Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive⁴ and the EC Environmental Impact Assessment Directive⁵ and, in the transboundary context, by the Espoo Convention⁶. Taken together, these various instruments and measures provide an appropriate framework for the operation of well developed national systems for planning and development control.

11. HELCOM and OSPAR will therefore focus their attention in this field on the pressures from existing and new developments which need to be taken into account in the other programmes and measures that they are developing.

Development in, and use of, the maritime area

12. The development of the offshore oil and gas industry and the extraction of sand and aggregates from the seabed has required the creation of regulatory systems. Future developments in this field, not least the creation of offshore wind-energy installations, suggest that more collaboration between States will be needed.

13. The EC Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Environmental Impact Assessment Directive and the Espoo Convention already provide a framework for assessing the impact of major developments in the maritime area, but do not set out approaches which will ensure the application of consistent criteria to decision-making on such developments in the different jurisdictions. Although progress has been made in developing common approaches to the offshore oil and gas industry and the extraction of sand and aggregates, no common understanding exists on how to address many other activities.

14. HELCOM and OSPAR will, therefore, investigate how action could help more consistent and coherent decisions on developments in the maritime area, including uses that do not result in permanent installations. In this context, OSPAR has already taken an initiative to adopt Guidance on a Common Approach to dealing with Offshore Wind-Energy Farms, as a contribution to combating climate change and its impacts on the marine environment, by ensuring that such installations are developed in a coherent, environmentally sensitive and sustainable manner. Within their spheres of competence, HELCOM and OSPAR will develop any necessary programmes and measures and will draw the attention of other international bodies to any issues more appropriately addressed in those other forums.

Dumping and waste disposal in the seabed

15. In the past, dumping of waste in the sea represented a major threat to the maritime environment. The provisions of the original Helsinki and Oslo Conventions did much to control this, and the new regimes created by the 1992 Helsinki and OSPAR Conventions ensure the end of threats from such dumping in the Baltic Sea and the North East Atlantic.

16. HELCOM and OSPAR will pursue the implementation of the 1992 Helsinki and OSPAR Conventions, including, in the OSPAR maritime area, the ban on the dumping of vessels and aircraft which

³ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2002 concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe (2002/413/EC).

⁴ Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (2001/42/EC).

⁵ Council Directive of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (85/337/EEC).

⁶ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, Espoo, 25 February 1991

is not yet in force. They will also evaluate proposed new developments to ensure that the objectives of the Conventions continue to be achieved. The HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties will also promote the speedy ratification and entry-into-force of the 1996 Protocol to the 1972 London Convention, in order to ensure the widest possible application around the world of the aims of the 1992 Helsinki and OSPAR Conventions.

Fisheries and their environmental impact

17. Many commercial fish stocks are being exploited beyond their safe biological limits, or are being exploited within that limit to an extent that risks the limit being breached. By-catch of juveniles of commercial species, the consequent high level of discards, and the mortality of, and damage to, non-target species, including benthic animals, marine mammals and sea-birds are continuing problems in many areas.

18. It is the duty of the international fisheries commissions, the European Community and the national fisheries authorities to conserve all fisheries resources and, in doing so, to work towards fulfilling the obligations of their contracting parties under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The European Community and States outside the EU which are HELCOM or OSPAR Contracting Parties also have important responsibilities in ensuring that European vessels fishing in other jurisdictions and on the high seas act in accordance with the international agreements to which they are parties and with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The European Marine Strategy must emphasise the importance of fulfilling all these duties.

19. HELCOM and OSPAR will continue to discharge their obligations to assess the environmental impact of fisheries, and will take action in accordance with the Helsinki and OSPAR Conventions where these assessments show that action is desirable in relation to questions of fisheries management, or where other action is needed to protect marine ecosystems and biological diversity. HELCOM and the International Baltic Sea Fisheries Commission will continue the cooperation in the protection and the sustainable utilisation of the marine living resources of the Baltic Sea. OSPAR will develop similar cooperation with the international fisheries commissions active in the North East Atlantic.

Land-based sources of pollution

Global Programme of Action

20. The HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties are committed to the Global Programme of Action to Protect the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities. They consider that the HELCOM and OSPAR strategies, together with their other international obligations, will fulfil their commitments under the Global Programme. In addition, they will support the work of the UN Environment Programme and the other UN agencies and bodies involved in the Global Programme in promoting the implementation of the Global Programme around the world, recognising that the strategies that they have developed could serve as models for other regions.

Hazardous Substances

21. Discharges of hazardous substances from land-based sources have been a significant cause of marine pollution. Both HELCOM and OSPAR have therefore adopted long-term strategies to move towards the cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances to the marine environment. The implementation of these strategies should be an important part of the overall European Marine Strategy.

22. At the global level, major progress has been made with the adoption of the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties can play an important role in bringing this Convention into force, and assisting in its implementation. Similar world-wide initiatives on other hazardous substances will also be important. The UN Economic Commission for Europe Convention on the Long-Range Transport of Air Pollution also has an important role in protecting European seas from inputs of hazardous substances.

23. Within the European Union and the European Economic Area, important regulatory arrangements have been put in place to deal with a wide range of sources of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances:

- a. the EC Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive⁷, which has created a framework of regulation for major point sources of hazardous substances, requiring the application of best available techniques. The directive also sets up effective mechanisms for the development of descriptions of best available techniques for the processes which it regulates;
- b. the EC Water Framework Directive⁸ which sets up a unified approach to protecting and improving the quality of inland, transitional (estuarial) and coastal waters, in particular providing for a progressive reduction of pollution from priority substances and the cessation or phasing-out of discharges, emissions and losses of certain hazardous substances;
- c. likewise, EC Directives and Regulations on hazardous substances in water⁹, pesticides¹⁰, pharmaceuticals¹¹ and the marketing and use of other hazardous substances¹², which control diffuse sources of many hazardous substances;
- d. the EC National Emissions Ceilings Directive¹³, which addresses emissions to the atmosphere.

HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties outside the European Union and the European Economic Area likewise have, or are developing, far-reaching systems of similar controls.

24. The development of the proposed new EU Chemicals Policy and the further implementation and development of the directives on hazardous substances must increasingly provide a comprehensive system of controls to prevent and eliminate discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances that can reach the marine environment. These developments must also promote and facilitate substitution of hazardous substances with less hazardous, or preferably non-hazardous, alternatives or the development and use of alternative processes. It will be important for the HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties that are Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area to ensure that full account is taken of the need to protect the marine environment in the development of this policy.

25. In particular, the opportunity should be taken to pursue the objectives of the HELCOM and OSPAR strategies on hazardous substances through the Contracting Parties which are Member States of the European Union promoting, within the new EU Chemicals Policy, the incorporation by industry into their strategies of the development of clean production and clean products (sustainable production and consumption). This would include the promotion of “green chemistry”, including:

- a. the encouragement of the use and development of environmentally sound products and the development of less hazardous, or preferably non-hazardous, substances;
- b. the employment of usages and practices during the manufacture, use and ultimate disposal of chemicals (whether as intermediates, products or residues), including waste handling and waste

⁷ Council Directive of 24 September 1996 concerning integrated pollution prevention and control (96/61/EC).

⁸ Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (2000/60/EC).

⁹ Council Directive of 4 May 1976 on pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community (76/464/EEC)

¹⁰ Council Directive of 15 July 1991 concerning the placing of plant-protection products on the market (91/414/EEC).

¹¹ Council Directive of 28 September 1981 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to veterinary medicinal products(81/851/EEC), Council Directive of 13 December 1990 extending the scope of Directive 81/851/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to veterinary medicinal products and laying down additional provisions for immunological veterinary medicinal products(90/677/EEC), and Council Regulation of 22 July 1993 laying down Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products (2309/93).

¹² Council Directive of 27 July 1976 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (76/769/EEC) and related directives.

¹³ Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2001 on national emission ceilings for certain atmospheric pollutants (2001/81/EC)

management, that reduce, or preferably avoid, the use of hazardous substances and that avoid losses of hazardous substances to the environment;

- c. the provision of alternatives to the use of hazardous substances in processes other than the manufacture of hazardous substances.

26. With the growth of such measures, there is a correspondingly reduced need for comprehensive systems of HELCOM and OSPAR measures for the prevention, reduction, control and elimination of discharges, emissions and losses of specific hazardous substances. There remain, nevertheless, continuing needs for identifying the problems of the marine environment and reviewing whether adequate measures are in place, in order to achieve commitments to make every endeavour to move towards the target of the cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances by the year 2020.

27. HELCOM and OSPAR will accordingly continue to pursue this goal and :

- a. continue to cooperate with each other and with the European Community to this end;
- b. identify hazardous substances that may reach and affect the marine environment. In doing so, they will work to achieve synergy with the system for identifying priority substances and priority hazardous substances for action under the EC Water Framework Directive;
- c. locate the sources of such hazardous substances and their pathways to, and fate in, the marine environment, quantify such sources, and assess the scale of the problems;
- d. indicate possible solutions, with *inter alia* a view to the promotion of the principles of “green chemistry”, that is, reducing, or preferably avoiding, the use of hazardous substances in all aspects of the production, use and disposal of chemical products;
- e. draw the attention of the various regulatory systems to the assessments of the specific problems of hazardous substances for the marine environment and to the possible solutions identified. In this process, it will be important for the HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties which are Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area to ensure that the conclusions of HELCOM and OSPAR are taken into account in developing EC measures, particularly in the implementation of the EC Water Framework Directive, in the development of guidance on best available techniques for the EC Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive, and in the development of other EC regulatory systems for chemicals;
- f. develop a system to deliver a comprehensive and coherent assessment of progress towards the achievement of the Hazardous Substances Strategy including the 2020 cessation target; and
- g. develop specific programmes and measures where these are needed and will not be delivered by action in other forums.

Microbiological and viral contamination

28. Microbiological and viral contamination of transitional (estuarial) and coastal waters can have serious impacts on human health and on economic activities such as tourism and shellfish fisheries. Little is known about the risks to marine mammals and seabirds and other impacts on marine ecosystems from human pathogens in the marine environment.

29. EC Directives on bathing waters and on shellfish waters have set up a framework for controlling impacts on human health from such sources, which is further buttressed by the EC Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive. The EC Water Framework Directive is also establishing a more comprehensive approach to maintaining the quality of inland waters, transitional (estuarial) waters and coastal waters. Annex IV (Sewage) of MARPOL 73/78 will enter into force on 27 September 2003, and HELCOM will continue to enforce its provisions to the strictest extent permitted in the enclosed Baltic Sea. In the parts of the North East Atlantic likely to be adversely affected, action will be taken to enforce the provisions, in order to reduce the impact of sewage from ships

30. There is therefore no need for further specific action by HELCOM and OSPAR on the human health aspects of microbiological and viral contamination. As resources permit, HELCOM and OSPAR will consider possible impacts on wild fauna as part of their work on the conservation of biodiversity.

Nutrients

31. Enhanced inputs of nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients used in primary production processes can lead to eutrophication¹⁴ and to consequent de-oxygenation events and widespread kills of biota, particularly in partly enclosed sea areas and in deeper waters below a stratification divide. These enhanced inputs have resulted both from agricultural activities that did not pay sufficient attention to environmental consequences, from failure to treat urban and industrial waste-water and to control air emissions adequately, and from discharges and emissions from industry and vessels. Both HELCOM and OSPAR have therefore adopted measures and long-term strategies to combat eutrophication. The implementation of these strategies will be an important part of the overall European Marine Strategy.

32. Within the European Union and the European Economic Area, the EC Nitrates Directive and the EC Urban Waste-Water Treatment Directive are major steps towards the control of these problems. Through its requirements for assessment and classification of biological quality status and efforts to produce “good ecological status”, the EC Water Framework Directive will also result in further steps to combat eutrophication in inland waters, transitional (estuarial) waters and coastal waters. The new Annex VI to MARPOL¹⁵ dealing with air pollution from ships is also important in some areas.

33. Current work in HELCOM and OSPAR is focused on monitoring (including the development of a harmonised reporting system) and on identifying problem areas and potential problem areas with regard to eutrophication and the nutrient inputs that are causing, or may cause, problems. This will continue and would be assisted by work to ensure a common basis for HELCOM, OSPAR and EU classifications. Further action could involve both establishing targets in this field and addressing identified major sources. HELCOM and OSPAR will continue the development of ecological quality objectives for ecological quality elements likely to be affected by eutrophication. Further HELCOM action on nutrients will be developed by defining more specific targets aimed at delivering by 2005 the strategic goals set up in the 1988/1998 Ministerial Declarations. A eutrophication initiative is also being taken to address further the problems of oxygen depletion in the Baltic Sea. Further OSPAR action on sources of nutrients will be considered when the EC measures and other commitments in this field by Contracting Parties have been fully implemented.

*Radioactive Substances*¹⁶

34. Concerns have been expressed by states around the Baltic Sea and the North East Atlantic about the impacts on human health and the effects on marine biota from discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances to the sea, including possible accidental discharges, and about the effects of possible public reaction to such discharges, emissions and losses on other uses of the sea (such as fisheries and recreation).

35. OSPAR has adopted a long-term strategy to reduce discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances to levels where the additional concentrations in the marine environment above historic levels, resulting from such discharges, emissions and losses, are close to zero. The implementation of this strategy will be an important part of the overall European Marine Strategy. OSPAR has also adopted a number of decisions¹⁷ and recommendations, and ensures regular reporting on the application of best available techniques.

¹⁴ “Eutrophication” means the enrichment of water by nutrients causing an accelerated growth of algae and higher forms of plant life to produce an undesirable disturbance to the balance of organisms present in the water and to the quality of the water concerned, and therefore refers to the undesirable effects resulting from anthropogenic enrichment by nutrients.

¹⁵ The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78).

¹⁶ France maintains the reservation communicated in March 2003 against the inclusion of objectives relating to radioactive substances in the proposed European Marine Strategy, since Chapter III of the EURATOM Treaty does not provide the mechanisms necessary for the European Community to assist in the fulfilment of the commitments of the Sintra Statement and the OSPAR Radioactive Substances Strategy, and since confusion would be the only result of attempting to pursue those objectives both in OSPAR and in another forum.

¹⁷ OSPAR Decision 2000/1 on substantial reductions and elimination of discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances, with special emphasis on nuclear reprocessing, and OSPAR Decision 2001/1 on the review of authorisations for the discharges or releases of radioactive substances from nuclear reprocessing

36. Within the regulatory framework established under the International Atomic Energy Agency, the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological protection and the EURATOM Treaty, national systems ensure proper protection of human health. There is a range of opinion among states around the North East Atlantic whether these systems also sufficiently guarantee effective protection of marine biota and other interests. This debate will be taken further as work is completed in global forums on the development of criteria for the protection of the environment against radioactivity.

37. HELCOM will continue to monitor and assess the inputs of radioactive substances, to quantify the amounts in the Baltic Sea Area, and to assess their possible effects on the food web and the doses to human population.

38. The OSPAR Strategy with regard to Radioactive Substances commits Contracting Parties to a programme of progressive and substantial reductions in discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances towards an ultimate aim of concentrations in the marine environment near background values for naturally occurring radioactive substances and close to zero for artificial radioactive substances, taking into account legitimate uses of the sea, technical feasibility and radiological impacts on man and biota. OSPAR Contracting Parties have developed national plans to work towards this objective within the agreed timeframe. OSPAR will continue to assess the implementation of these plans, including the application of best available techniques and the status of the North-East Atlantic marine environment, in order to judge progress in delivering the Strategy's objective. It will also continue to promote the development of environmental quality criteria. Furthermore it will, if necessary, consider further measures to assist in that aim. OSPAR will also continue to consider how to ensure that these national plans adopt a consistent approach to the non-nuclear industrial and other sectors whose activities result in inputs of radioactive substances to the marine environment.

Litter

39. Litter from coastal sources, recreational activities, vessels and offshore installations still causes harm to the environment, threatens safety and health and undermines the economies of coastal communities, as well as spoiling the public's enjoyment of the sea and its coasts.

40. Within the European Union and the European Economic Area, the EC Waste Framework Directive¹⁸ promotes the proper management of waste, so as to reduce escapes of waste into the marine environment. Similar measures apply in other Contracting Parties. Full implementation of Annex V (Garbage) of MARPOL 73/78, the EC Directive on port reception facilities¹⁹ and the Baltic Strategy on Port Reception Facilities²⁰ will assist in addressing the problem of litter from vessels. HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties will further attack this problem by ensuring adequate port reception facilities to enable ships to deliver their wastes ashore and through efficient enforcement of the requirements for garbage discharge in port.

41. OSPAR will continue to monitor marine litter on beaches and use this information as a basis for assessing the success of these initiatives in tackling the problem of marine litter. Nevertheless, there will remain major problems of ensuring that the public realise the seriousness of the problems caused by litter, especially that scattered along the sea shore, and encouraging them to change their habits. To these ends, HELCOM and OSPAR will continue to promote partnerships to tackle the problems of land-based marine litter.

Minerals extraction

Oil and gas

42. Offshore oil and gas installations in the North East Atlantic represent a major extractive industry with all the typically resulting potential problems – disturbance from exploration to locate extraction sites and the

activities were not accepted by France and the United Kingdom (the only two Contracting Parties with operative nuclear reprocessing plants) and do not therefore bind them.

¹⁸ Council Directive of 15 July 1975 on waste (75/442/EEC).

¹⁹ Directive 2000/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2000 on port reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues.

²⁰ Strategy for Port Reception Facilities for Ship-generated Wastes and Associated Issues (the Baltic Strategy).

placement of installations and communicating pipelines and cables, potentially polluting discharges and emissions, and decommissioning. OSPAR has therefore adopted a long-term strategy to set environmental goals, and to establish management systems for the offshore oil and gas industry, in order to address these problems. The implementation of this strategy will be an important part of the overall European Marine Strategy.

43. HELCOM has adopted a regulatory system for any discharges from offshore installations of waste water containing oil, chemicals and hazardous substances, as well as for air emissions and disposal of drilling mud residues. OSPAR programmes and measures have established regulatory regimes for discharges of oil, chemicals, drilling muds and produced water and for decommissioning. The EC Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive deals with certain emissions from combustion on offshore installations.

44. Activity on offshore oil exploration in the Baltic Sea is expected to increase in the near future. HELCOM will, where necessary, develop uniform principles for oil extraction in the Baltic Sea.

45. OSPAR will complete the work in progress on the potential adverse impacts of exploration for offshore oil and gas, on the placement of structures, cables and pipelines for oil and gas exploitation, on environmental goals for the discharge of offshore chemicals and on discharges of produced water and radioactive substances, and will (where necessary) develop further programmes and measures. OSPAR will also keep under review the existing regulatory regimes.

Sand and aggregates

46. The increasing demand for sand and aggregates and the environmental consequences of extraction on land have led to increasing demands for sea-dredged sand and aggregates. There are potential problems with such extraction where conflicting with the protection of species and habitats, since it may lead to long-lasting damage and destruction of important habitats, with consequential harm to species identified as threatened and/or declining or in need of protection.

47. HELCOM has adopted a recommendation on guidelines concerning marine sediment extraction in the Baltic Sea Area, in order to prevent severe impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems. OSPAR has adopted an agreement which embodies guidelines developed by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) for the management of marine sediment extraction.

48. As part of their overall assessments of the status of the marine environment, HELCOM and OSPAR will assess developments in this field on the basis of information, respectively, collected by HELCOM and (in the case of OSPAR) reported to ICES, and will, if necessary in the light of those assessments, develop further programmes and measures.

Shipping and its environmental impact

49. Compared with other major modes of transport, maritime transportation is generally environmentally friendly, particularly where ships meet the “clean ship” concept which is to be further developed. Nevertheless, the results of the operation of sub-standard shipping, maritime disasters and deliberate operational discharges by ships can have severe consequences, both locally and on a wider scale. As shipping is international by nature, regulation will be more effective if applied universally. The HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties will therefore continue to support the work of the International Maritime Organisation to achieve effective protection of the marine environment at a world-wide, international level.

50. HELCOM has adopted a series of measures to prevent pollution from ships in the special circumstances of the Baltic Sea Area.

51. HELCOM, the Bonn Agreement and North Sea States are committed to improving enforcement against marine pollution offences by vessels, and will involve other European States in the actions for this purpose as opportunity offers.

52. The Contracting Parties of HELCOM and OSPAR are committed to intensifying the measures to ensure that shipping is environmentally friendly, and will pursue this aim in the appropriate forums for the different measures. Within HELCOM and OSPAR appropriate arrangements for joint efforts will be made to deal with issues (including the implementation of the international rules on ballast water, the designation of particularly sensitive sea areas and the control of air pollution from shipping) where the two regions share common interests.

53. Effective response to maritime disasters, to contain, mitigate and make good the damage which they cause, will continue to be essential. This will be particularly important in the light of the vast increases in maritime transportation expected both in the Baltic Sea Area and the North East Atlantic, not least in the amount of oil.

54. HELCOM and the Bonn Agreement will continue to provide focuses in the Baltic Sea Area and the northern North East Atlantic for planning, preparation, training and cooperation in response to maritime disasters. The OSPAR Contracting Parties concerned will make every effort to achieve the extension of the Bonn Agreement to cover the sea areas around, and to the north of, Ireland, and to bring the Lisbon Agreement into force to provide a focus for similar cooperation in the southern North-East Atlantic. HELCOM, the Bonn Agreement and OSPAR will examine what joint action can contribute to improvements in response to maritime disasters.

Support to other regional marine organisations

55. The world's oceans and seas share many problems, and action is required around the world at regional level to address them.

56. HELCOM and OSPAR will play their part in collaborating with regional marine organisations in other regions and, where appropriate, will cooperate on specific issues, particularly with, respectively, the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions for the seas of East and West and Central Africa, as one contribution of their Contracting Parties to the development of partnerships in accordance with the commitments made at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.