



# Essentials for OSPAR MMC and JMMC 2003

briefing

In the International Year of the Ocean 1998, WWF welcomed the landmark commitments Environment Ministers and the Member of the European Commission adopted in Sintra for the North-East Atlantic and in Helsinki for the Baltic Sea. The very first joint Ministerial Meeting of the OSPAR and Helsinki Commissions, to be held from 25 - 26 June 2003 in Bremen, Germany, is an opportunity not only to evaluate progress on implementation of the common strategies and targets endorsed five years before but also to address pressing problems in the marine environment that have increased dramatically since then and must be resolved co-operatively.

The OSPAR Ministerial Statement, which is expected to arise from OSPAR MMC 2003, in conjunction with the revised Strategies and a number of Recommendations and Guidelines will add value to the Sintra Statement - provided that it helps move marine environment protection from theory to practice and fosters programmes and measures to:

- cease discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive and/or hazardous substances and in particular of Chemicals for Priority Action so far identified;
- green offshore oil and gas industry and ensure that new offshore developments such as wind farms are marine environmentally sound;
- tackle the root causes of the eutrophication problems now identified, including nutrient inputs from the agriculture and/or aquaculture sector; and
- protect all species, habitats and ecosystems in need of protection in the Maritime Area, including its High Seas.

### The Joint OSPAR/HELCOM Ministerial Declaration

and related documents on the ecosystem-based approach, the European Marine Strategy and a work programme on marine protected areas, which are expected to arise from JMMC 2003, will be a political milestone - provided that they support detail actions to reduce the environmental impact of fisheries and shipping, beyond the commitment to establish a network of marine protected areas.

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#### WWF, the Conservation Organization...

**Congratulates** OSPAR Signatories on the entry into force of Annex V on the Protection and Conservation of the Ecosystems and Biological Diversity. Annex V to the OSPAR Convention and Article 15 of the Helsinki Convention pave the way to joint nature conservation programmes now being on the agenda of JMMC 2003.

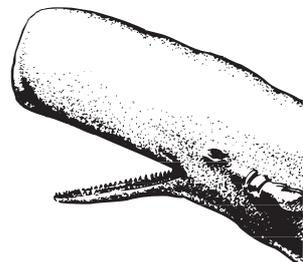
**Expresses concern** that five years after the Sintra Meeting, certain Contracting Parties have not managed to ratify the important provisions of Annex V while human impacts on North-East Atlantic marine wildlife are steadily increasing.

**Welcomes** the swift development and successful delivery of programmes and measures under OSPAR Annex V and the Biodiversity Strategy including the...

- Texel/Faial Criteria for the Identification of Species and Habitats in Need of Protection;
- Initial OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats;
- Recommendation on a Network of Marine Protected Areas; and the
- Guidelines on the Identification and Selection and/or Management of Marine Protected Areas in the OSPAR Maritime Area.

**Urges** the Parties to the OSPAR Convention to strictly comply with the Texel/Faial Criteria and, for the benefit of marine wildlife, adopt the complete List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats without any exception or delay. The Signatories to the OSPAR Convention and its Annex V have the legal obligation to protect the full range of species and habitats in the North-East Atlantic, be they commercially exploited or otherwise affected by human activities. As a logical consequence, it must be possible to raise proposals for measures in fisheries management if this deems appropriate to improve the status and health of the populations of certain species or habitats.

**Calls upon** Ministers of the Environment from North-East Atlantic and Baltic states and the Member of the European Commission to ensure they meet their target to establish an ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas (MPAs) by 2010. To this end, pursue a number of important steps by 2006, including conservation measures in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), effective management in all existing MPAs, protection and management in all Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPAs) so far proposed, nominations for OSPAR MPAs, as well as the adoption of a coral reef action programme by 2004.



**Emphasizes** the fact that the biological diversity of our seas cannot be conserved and that marine protected areas will not be effective unless the environmental impact of fisheries gets considerably reduced. JMMC 2003 must not fail to address the substance of this important item on its agenda.

**Calls upon** Ministers to urge the relevant fisheries management authorities and international bodies to address, as a matter of priority, the measures desirable from an environmental point of view, including recovery plans for fish stocks, regeneration and/or undisturbed areas, by-catch limits for non-commercial species, recovery plans for harbour porpoises, improved management of deep-water fisheries, protection of vulnerable deep-water habitats such as coral reefs and seamounts from harmful fishing gear, and strategic environmental assessment of new fishing practices. The outcome of the Meeting of OSPAR/HELCOM Biodiversity Experts (Berlin, March 2003) is regarded as a major step forward in this context.

**WWF's briefings for OSPAR MMC & JMMC 2003**

- Make space for a network of marine protected areas!
  - Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs)
    - Sea use and spatial planning
- Reducing the environmental impact of fisheries
  - Position on a European Marine Strategy
- Hazardous substances and EU Chemicals Policy

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**Welcomes** the joint approach taken by the OSPAR and Helsinki Commissions to help reduce the environmental impact of shipping in the face of recent environmental disasters such as the sinking of the Prestige off the Galician coast, and aware of the emerging and increasing accidental risks identified in the Baltic Sea.

**Calls upon** Ministers to agree to take concerted action within the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to promote the Baltic Sea, the Barents Sea and the waters of Western Europe, as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA) along with appropriate protective measures.

**Encourages** North-East Atlantic and Baltic Governments and the EC to work co-operatively within the IMO to seek a global solution to the carriage of the heaviest grade oil in double-hull tankers.

**Calls upon** Ministers to ...

- agree to co-operate in the development of the concept of vessels designed, constructed and operated in an integrated manner to eliminate harmful discharges and emissions throughout their working life;
- commit to urgent ratification of the Antifouling System Convention and agree to adopt a common strategy for reductions in the harmful effects of other alternative antifouling compounds, ensuring that toxic compounds are gradually replaced by viable, non-toxic alternatives, including for smaller vessels;
- agree to take urgent and co-ordinated steps to reduce the problem of spreading of non-indigenous invasive organisms to and within the Baltic Sea and NE Atlantic in accordance with international law and in order to fully implement IMO Guidelines (Resolution A.868(20)) and decide upon national and/or regional measures by the end of 2004; and

• agree to co-ordinate efforts with the IMO to ensure that the upcoming "International Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water and Sediments", contains provisions that will effectively reduce the risk of introduction of alien species to the Baltic and NE Atlantic.

**WWF reports launched on the occasion of OSPAR MMC & JMMC 2003**

- \* Are Governments prepared to keep our seas clean?
- \* Do Governments protect the treasures of our seas?
  - \* North-East Atlantic - Baltic Health Check

**Considers** the Ecosystem-Based Approach to Management, incorporating the precautionary principle, as fundamental to achieve the sustainable use of the seas, and in seeking truly comprehensive and integrated governance.

**Calls upon** Ministers to recognise the benefits of marine spatial planning as a tool for the Ecosystem-Based Approach to Management of human activities in the marine environment and agree to initiate a pilot project by 2004 to highlight the practical, legal and administrative issues that would need to be addressed to deliver marine spatial planning for the North Sea with a view to being taken forward in other regions of the OSPAR Maritime Area.

**Regrets** that the specific management recommendations from the OSPAR Quality Status Reports 2000 for the five regions of the OSPAR Maritime Area (rQSRs I-V) have not been followed up to date.

**Is confident** that OSPAR and HELCOM can bring a lot of valuable experience and expertise to the European Marine Strategy. Co-operation and co-ordination between the EU and relevant regional and international bodies, in particular the Regional Seas Conventions (OSPAR, HELCOM and BARCOM) is important. Clarity on this issue is vital to ensure there is no duplication of effort and to recognise the validity and contribution of the Regional Seas Conventions. It is imperative that the EU and Regional Seas Conventions work in concert and not in variance to each other (- see separate Position Statement).

**WWF's submissions to OSPAR 2003**

- From Sintra to Bremen (1):  
Measuring progress with regard to hazardous substances
  - From Sintra to Bremen (2):  
Measuring progress on marine protected areas
- Download version - <http://www.wwfneap.org>**

**Welcomes** the progress made with regard to hazardous substances, and in particular highlights the further development of the List of Chemicals for Priority Action, of Background Documents for such chemicals, and the launch of the OSPAR List of Substances of Possible Concern.

**Expresses concern** that no measure has been implemented yet to meet the 2020 cessation target for such chemicals and/or eliminate them from the marine environment. Furthermore, the OSPAR/HELCOM Objective was only partly translated into the EC Water Framework Directive.

**Calls upon** Ministers to reaffirm the Regional Seas Conventions' Objective with regard to hazardous substances and promote its inscription into a new EU Chemicals Policy.