



Welcome Dr. Darius Campbell, Executive Secretary, OSPAR Commission

I am honoured to be taking up the post of Executive Secretary at OSPAR, receiving the baton from my predecessor David Johnson. I am grateful to David for the role that the Secretariat has played under his leadership in supporting OSPAR's excellent progress over the last 6 years.

I come to OSPAR looking toward the challenges ahead. As we try to better integrate human activities into a clean, healthy and biologically diverse ecosystem, the marine environment continues to experience new pressures including fundamental impacts from climate change. In addition, organisations, policies, and regulation will continue to evolve in and around the North-East Atlantic. And of course the financial difficulties for many countries mean we need to achieve more, but with limited resources. In this context OSPAR will continue to need to be an efficient, flexible and evolving organisation to be of service to its Contracting Parties and more widely.

Each Executive Secretary has brought his own unique strengths to the job. As some of you know, I came from a science background, but bring a fairly broad experience, having worked inside and outside government, in practical international development and in environmental and agricultural policy and regulation. I also have worked on combatting international illegal fishing and on marine environment policies – over a period of several years, working in partnership with OSPAR and other international, regional and national organisations. One of the things this has taught me is that with co-operation, trust and good will, a great deal of progress can be made. I believe OSPAR has already made great strides in working with other organisations, and look forward to continuing to develop that co-operation.

At this stage, only a few days into my new role, I aim to spend some time listening and learning. I would be very happy to hear from you by e-mail if you have views on ways of working together and how to best tackle the challenges ahead. I will also of course hope to meet you as I attend the various events ahead of me now.

Looking forward to working with you all...



Dr Darius Campbell

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Au revoir Prof. David Johnson

As I leave OSPAR and BONN I feel the same as when I started about the relevance of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. To protect the environment of seas and oceans, governments cooperating at this scale can secure robust and effective regimes given the right political will. We can make a difference.

My time at the Secretariat has spanned important strategic milestones: amendments to the Convention to allow CCS; implementation of the MSFD; publication of the QSR 2010; establishing MPAs in ABNJ; formalising arrangements to work more closely with other competent authorities; and the Bonn Agreement BE-AWARE project.



Prof. David Johnson

Initiatives pioneered in the North-East Atlantic are recognised globally and promoting OSPAR and BONN successes through lessons learned is an interesting and rewarding part of the Executive Secretary role. So too is working directly with Contracting Parties and Observers to tackle priorities, determine common positions, understand political sensitivities and when possible help broker compromise. And the chance to do so in different locations, understand cultural nuances and appreciate generous hospitality.

I have truly relished being part of this professional, energetic, loyal and fun Secretariat. From our Ministerial meeting high points to one on one conversations in the margins, mixing with and learning from the very experienced and encouraging those whose careers are taking off – it has all been great. Thank you all so much for your collective inspiration, hard work, patience and super company. In leaving I wish Darius every success. I shall gratefully pass on some tough decisions about the future into the capable hands of others but I shall also be hard at work on the next cunning plan so I can still join the family from time to time somewhere near you! Marvellous!



Investigation of dumped radioactive waste in the Arctic by Dr. Justin Gwynn

In the autumn of 2012, a joint Russian-Norwegian expedition to the Kara Sea investigated an area where radioactive waste had been previously dumped. According to the Russian authorities a range of dumped materials can be found in Arctic seas, including nuclear-powered submarines, reactor compartments and more than 17000 containers of radioactive waste. The joint Russian-Norwegian expedition focussed its efforts on Stepovogo Bay on the east coast of Novaya Zemlya where the nuclear powered submarine K-27 containing two reactors with spent uranium fuel was dumped, as well as some 2000 containers of radioactive waste. The condition of the K-27 and some of the dumped containers were inspected using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV), while the collection of seawater, sediment and biota samples will be used to determine the radiological status of the marine environment. Preliminary measurements on surface sediments and



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water samples showed that the level of caesium-137 (^{137}Cs) contamination was generally low. However, slightly enhanced levels of ^{137}Cs were detected in bottom seawater and sediment collected in the area with dumped containers. Measurements taken around K-27 reveal that no leakage has occurred from the submarine. A similar picture for the level of radioactive contamination in Stepovogo Bay was observed in the first joint Russian-Norwegian expedition in 1993-94. A final report based on the findings of the 2012 joint Russian-Norwegian expedition will be published by the end of 2013. An important task for future work will be to carry out environmental assessments of different potential remediation options for the various dumped materials.



Project STAGES kicked off with keen interest from OSPAR

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive as the environmental pillar of the EU's integrated maritime policy is certainly a big driver to enhance our level of knowledge on the marine environment so that it can be properly protected. The eagerly awaited STAGES project, with institutes from several OSPAR countries, and also involving the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), is now just starting and will focus on capitalising on recent knowledge creation, clarifying gaps in knowledge and propose a workable model for a science-policy interface. We hope to liaise closely with this project for mutual benefit!



Spotlight on the OSPAR / Abidjan cooperation

OSPAR moves a step closer to signing a MoU with the Abidjan Convention

Following-up on the recommendations of the joint Abidjan Convention/OSPAR/IMO Workshop held on 6-10 June 2011 in Libreville (Gabon), the OSPAR Commission and the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention are actively seeking avenues for cooperation and the means to articulate this cooperation through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Both the OSPAR Commission and the Abidjan Convention deal with matters of common interest and both would benefit from close collaboration to ensure that any joint effort is mutually supporting and complementary.

The MoU is intended to enhance cooperation through, amongst other things, the exchange of information knowledge and experiences as well as mutual consultation on common fields of responsibility. Under the broad umbrella of the MoU, opportunities for dialogue and closer cooperation might include matters such as the implementation of the ecosystem approach, the management of networks of marine protected areas or the environmental aspects of oil and gas activities.

The MOU keeps the momentum going since the Libreville Workshop and represents an excellent opportunity to ensuring maximum coordination of the work of the OSPAR Commission and the Abidjan Convention in matters that affect the two Conventions.

Making the OSPAR / Abidjan link work

The immediate past Executive Secretary represented OSPAR at COP10 of the Abidjan Convention in Pointe Noire, Republic of Congo, 12-16 November. Funding environmental management provided the focus for an expert Workshop. The high-level segment then concentrated on governance issues, noting progress on the draft OSPAR/Abidjan MoU and examples of marine protection in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. The Sustainable Ocean Initiative (funded by the Government of Japan) will support a capacity building CBD Regional Training Workshop in Senegal in February 2013, drawing on OSPAR experience.

Major Steps Forward Determined (MSFD)

No reprieve in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) calendar, it's onwards and upwards for the OSPAR support in enhancing regional coherence! OSPAR 2012 published 'Finding Common Ground' as a progress report on the Road Map agreed by Ministers in 2010. It establishes how far we've come and that we can make tangible progress that benefit Contracting Parties' implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The focus is now shifting to the commonality in indicators and how they will be monitored. This is concrete and operational stuff that requires all relevant working groups in OSPAR to bridge the gaps between needs and current capabilities, for any selected common indicators. The Intersessional Correspondence Group on the Coordination of Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring (ICG COBAM) is trail-blazing work on biodiversity indicators and the Environmental Impact of Human Activities Committee (EIHA) and the Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee (HASEC) are likely to follow suit. The Netherlands have volunteered to host the EIHA workshop on indicators which will be held on 25-26 February 2013 in The Hague. HASEC's challenge is to 'retrofit' its ongoing monitoring and assessment activities to make it as much as possible suitable also for any common indicators.



ASCOBANs

OSPAR participated as an Observer organisation in the 7th Meeting of Parties for the Agreement on conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANs), which met in October of this year, in Brighton on the South Coast of the UK. The geographical area covered by this agreement has strong overlap with the OSPAR Maritime Area. Issues of particular interest to the OSPAR agenda at this meeting included the threats to small cetaceans from by-catch, noise, pollution (including marine debris) and ship strikes; progress in the implementation of the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea and the adoption of a new action plan for the Kattegat – all of which will be of help to support the work of OSPAR in this coming year as Contracting Parties develop measures to add to the protection of this threatened species

OSPAR/HELCOM Joint Task Group on Ballast Water Exemptions

OSPAR and HELCOM have agreed to work together to develop joint guidelines for the granting of exemptions under the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Convention on Ballast Water Management. The Convention allows Parties to grant exemptions to ships on voyages between specified ports or locations, under Regulation 4-A, based on a risk assessment to ensure there will be no damage to the environment or human health.

The first meeting of the Joint Task Group was held in Norrköping, Sweden, 11 – 12 October 2012 and considered the products that needed to be developed based upon work already carried out in both Conventions and in particular the HELCOM Aliens 2 project. The work will focus on developing common guidance on port surveys, target species selection, risk assessment methodologies and administrative procedures with the aim of agreeing a common procedure in both conventions during the current meeting cycle.

Forthcoming meeting and conferences

25–28 November 2012	Forum for MPAs in the Mediterranean	Turkey
27–29 November 2012	A biennial conference on coastal systems, management and governance	Brussels, Belgium
3–4 December 2012	Building Bridges – Facilitating Water Information Exchange Between Science, Policy and Industry	Brussels, Belgium
December 2012	First Conference of the Atlantic Arc Marine Protected Areas Network - Final Maia meeting	Arcachon, France
24-25 January 2013	OSPAR/HELCOM Joint task group on ballast water convention exemption guidelines	TBC
25-26 February 2013	EIHA workshop on the further development of common indicator	The Hague, the Netherlands
16–20 March 2013	Transboundary Water Management Across Borders and Interfaces (TWAM) 2013	Aveiro, Portugal
25–29 March 2013	South-Eastern Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs)	

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