



HELCOM 50th Anniversary

OSPAR Commission Congratulatory Remark

Riga, Latvia, 25th April 2024

Dear HELCOM Chair, distinguished Ministers, EU Commissioner, fellow Observer organisations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the OSPAR Commission, it is my honour to extend our warmest congratulations to our esteemed colleagues at HELCOM on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Convention.

Half a century ago, the Baltic Sea coastal countries came together to establish a regional platform to protect the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution, to preserve biodiversity, and to promote the sustainable use of its marine resources. Many of these issues were identified by OSPAR's predecessors, the Oslo and the Paris Conventions, that also entered into force in the early 1970s.

This commitment to tackle common environmental issues and responsibility towards marine environmental protection is something that HELCOM and OSPAR share. The close cooperation between our organisations is an excellent example of what can be achieved when States come together in pursuit of a common goal. OSPAR and HELCOM have a long and successful history of cooperation, and we have made significant progress over the last decades in addressing the pressing environmental issues facing our ocean. For example, HELCOM and OSPAR have been frontrunners in limiting shipping emissions, in assessing and addressing nutrient inputs, which is the root cause of eutrophication, and in reducing the inputs of some of the most serious hazardous substances.

Our recent holistic assessments, HELCOM's HOLAS 3 and OSPAR's Quality Status Report 2023 are further examples of our contributions to improving the collective understanding of the marine environment and the pressures impacting on it. Both these assessments have shown that the North-East Atlantic and Baltic Sea continue to face challenges and require regional cooperation to ensure the effective protection and sustainable use of the marine environment.

As we celebrate this important occasion, OSPAR reaffirms its commitment to continue our collective action towards a healthy marine environment. Now, more than ever, Regional Seas Conventions continue to play a crucial role in delivering the ocean we need for the future we want.

In conclusion, we would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to HELCOM on their remarkable journey thus far and we look forward to continuing working with you towards a more sustainable future for our ocean.

Thank you.

OSPAR Commission

Protecting and conserving the North-East Atlantic and its resources