

REPORT

Meeting: **OSPAR Committee on the Environmental Impact of Human Activities (EIHA)**

Parties: **OSPAR contracting parties, stakeholders, observers**

Date: **20-24 March**

Location: **Trondheim/online**

Rapporteur: **Pauline Delalain**

Pauline Delalain from CNPMMEM and Serena Rivero from the North Sea Foundation attended the meeting on behalf of the NSAC.

Agenda 4 – Data

The OSPAR Secretariat presented a new platform containing many data sent by the contracting parties such as ICES data, marine litter data...

A demonstration was made on the use of numerous filters to sort data according to countries or dates for example.

An exchange followed between the contracting parties on the missing data which were not sent by the various countries (France, Belgium, Norway, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, etc.). This concerns in particular waste from the seabed or beaches, underwater noise, etc.

Agenda 5 – Clean sea

5.1 Review the report on the progress of the implementation of the group mandate “IGC Marine Litter”

Reminder of previous meetings in May in Seville and in January. The next will take place in the Netherlands.

Update of the work in progress within this group on the monitoring and studies of marine litter. Work has been developed in partnership with Le Cèdre, various indicators are monitored: waste found in the organs of birds (fulmar), sea turtles, waste on the beaches. Work is being carried out with the MNHN and Alexandre Girard on sea turtles and the impact of plastic. Overall there is no major difficulty concerning these indicators, but studies are being carried out to analyze the possibility of having additional indicators.

The members of the OSPAR Convention follow numerous works, in particular on the Fishing For Litter (FFL) initiative, plastic pellets and the implementation of the Regional Action Plan

on marine litter (RAP ML). Some of these documents will need to be discussed during the meeting.

The Chair reminded the contracting parties of the importance of having data on marine litter to carry out the assessments and studies necessary to limit this pollution.

The contracting parties were able to discuss this topic. Questions were raised in particular on funding, thresholds and deadlines for the indicators. France replied that there was no deadline for setting up an indicator and that the thresholds were either those of Europe (probably those of the DCSMM), or those of OSPAR. It was added that it would be interesting to compare the objectives already put in place by the various countries.

The discussions continued on the document to which I did not have access so difficult to follow.

Willingness of the parties not to add additional work and the fact that there are already indicators, the targets should not be multiplied while other RAPs will follow.

Regarding the development of environmental targets, it is important that the IGC finds out what can be done, and transmits the information to the parties.

Need to harmonize indicators.

The United Kingdom made a presentation of the comments made on a piece of legislation concerning marine litter. Spain explained that some comments made by the Netherlands could be accepted but not all, in particular they disagreed with the fact of involving the bottom trawl as a means of monitoring marine litter on the bottom, Denmark joined him on these remarks.

It was proposed to publish an OSPAR document containing the comments to let the contracting parties agree or not to the document. The document to be sent back to the IGC ML group for discussion.

A mapping application was presented, it allows to observe the areas in which sand extractions took place during the year. Many filters are available, in particular to compare different countries. Nevertheless, additional work will be undertaken on the use of AIS to develop the data obtained.

A discussion was held on the terms of reference of the document and the modifications to be applied. The ICG ML group will make a draft incorporating the comments submitted by the participants of the meeting.

France has announced that it is withdrawing from its role as organizer of the IGC ML group.

5.2 Consider an overall assessment of national reports on the implementation of the recommendation on reducing marine litter through the implementation of FFL initiatives

Many comments were transmitted on the development and the brakes of the initiatives. It is interesting to see that the link between the PRF and SUP directives has been made. However, some countries are encountering difficulties in implementing these initiatives, particularly in finding suitable funding.

The document has been reviewed, contracted parties will be able to verify that the conclusions are satisfactory to them before the publication of the document.

5.3 Review the status of national reports on the implementation of the recommendation on reducing losses of plastic pellets in the marine environment and agree on the modalities for the development of an overall assessment

The United Kingdom recalled the context of this subject, and the desire to reduce this pollution. In particular to manage to do more than voluntary measures. Some countries have taken their own measures like a legislative text like France. Actions will be implemented in the next PCR with the aim of assessing the risks of pollution.

It is essential to have more information and studies on the impact of microplastics before developing the pollution framework because of many unknowns.

The contracting parties considered that, given the lack of information, it was not desirable to become more involved in the assessment of pellet pollution. Being a very complex subject, the lack of binding text makes it difficult to reach a conclusion.

5.4 Consider any additional tasks to be included in the implementation plan, including a task to achieve the target for additional regionally coordinated quantitative reduction targets

Willingness to add a task template within this objective to reduce the amount of litter found on the beaches.

The contracting parties felt that it was too early to agree on the percentages proposed as an indicator, but suggested coming back to it later when additional studies have been carried out. This is a subject that will also be discussed at the next meeting of the ICG ML group.