



Ringkjøbing Amt

Teknik og Miljø

Report on

OSPAR meeting of the

Hazardous Substances Committee, HSC

Meeting in Brussels, 5 – 8 April 2005

Report prepared for the North Sea Commission
(on behalf of the Conference of Marine Peripheral Regions) by
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Meeting in the OSPAR Hazardous Substances Committee, April 2005

On 5-8 April 2005 The OSPAR committee on hazardous substances held their annual meeting in Brussels, which I attended as an observer for CPMR and the North Sea Commission. I attended the meeting on April 5 –7 and therefore did not observe the last part of the meeting.

The main topics of the meeting can be summarised to 3 elements:

1. European Marine Strategy
2. Selection and prioritisation of hazardous substances
3. Assessment, monitoring and measures of hazardous substances

This is a brief summary record, which contains my conclusions from the meeting. The official summary record from the meeting is available from the OSPAR website.

Participants

The meeting was represented by the following contracting parties: Belgium, Denmark, European Community (represented by the European Commission, EC), Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK)

Other observers were representatives from the following organisations:

- Oil Companies' European Organisation for Environmental and Health Protection (CONCAWE)
- EuroChlor Federation
- European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA)
- Kommunenes Internasjonale Miljøorganisasjon (KIMO International).

Overall summary

As a general observation on the meeting I would like to point out that OSPAR uses some effort to coordinate the borderline between cases handled by the EU and OSPAR and to evaluate the outcome of EU work on hazardous substances to find the relevant target issues.

My impression is, that OSPAR's role on hazardous substances slowly will weaken as the EU takes over on more and more items. There were discussions on what will be left for OSPAR, but no clarification on the subject.

For the time being, my impression is, that OSPAR still plays an important role on prioritising which substances causes the greatest threat to the marine environment. OSPAR's work could be seen as a safety net to the EU work on prioritising hazardous substances, because the procedure for identifying

the most hazardous substances is slightly different from the EU-procedure and weighs persistence and bio accumulation heavier, see item 2.

OSPAR delivers serious background information on prioritised substances as well as information on monitoring and assessment. Combined with the work done on whole effluent assessment (see below) OSPAR contributes to the aim of the Water Framework Directive and the OSPAR goal on reducing the concentration of hazardous substances in the sea.

The main input from the industry was EFPIA that repeatedly pointed out that OSPAR should support a better involvement of industry in decision-making.

1. European Marine Strategy (EMS)

- HSC concluded that there was, at present, no need for any initiative on its part with respect to the European Marine Strategy since the proposal is not final.

On the item hazardous substances, the OSPAR evaluation of the European Marine Strategy is, that it is less detailed than the Water Framework Directive (WFD), but it is modelled along the WFD. There will be a general obligation to member states on monitoring and assessment.

The representative of the European Commission informed the meeting that the EC was now in the process of finalising its proposals for the European Marine Strategy that should be published before the summer break. A main element will be a proposal for a marine framework directive. ICES have made proposals that the EMS should contain "eco-regions", but it is, at present, unclear whether this will be accepted.

The OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action contains substances falling under the scope of the EC pesticides, biocides, pharmaceuticals and veterinary medicines Directives. HSC have concerns that these substances are not adequately addressed in the emerging European Marine Strategy.

- The HSC agreed, that OSPAR should send a letter of concern to the EC. The letter should draw the attention of the EC to the concrete causes for concern, and ask the EC to take action to revise the relevant directives

2. Selection and prioritisation of hazardous substances

OSPAR has developed a manual for selecting those substances where action should be taken. The manual is called the DYNAMEC and the identified substances are on a List for priority action.

The DYNAMEC procedure weighs the P- (persistence-) and the B- (bio accumulative-) criteria heavier than the COMMPS procedure. COMMPS is the EU procedure for selecting the substances prioritised in the Water Frame-

work Directive (the Annex 10). The main reason is that OSPAR aims to protect the marine environment and the Water Framework Directive (WFD) aims to protect surface water, including freshwater. OSPARs procedure therefore weighs the criteria for long-term effects (P- and B-criteria) harder, because it is the resulting recipient.

It was pointed out that HSC should not re-examine the adequacy of the EC conclusions but make use of the material produced by the EC

The OSPAR list of substances for priority action (and the list of substances of possible concern) is regularly reviewed and some substances were de-selected on the meeting because of new information, primarily produced in cooperation with the industry. For further information on specific substances I refer to the official summary record.

Because of the differences in the DYNAMEC and the COMMPS procedures, OSPAR have identified some substances as problematic for the marine environment that are not included in the WFD Annex 10.

- The HSC agreed on sending the OSPAR documents on the DYNAMEC procedure and the relevant substances to the EU Commission as OSPAR's contribution to the current review of Annex 10.

Whole Effluent Assessment (WEA)

An OSPAR intersessional expert group presented a study work on whole effluent assessment. The WEA is a supplement to the substance-by-substance approach carried out by the HSC. It is a method to evaluate the effects of complex effluents on persistence, bioaccumulation and toxicity taking in to account, that for the major part of substances there are no data and therefore a substance-by-substance evaluation is not possible. The aim is to point out problematic point sources where action is needed as a complement to pointing out problematic substances.

Specific testing methods are developed and continuously being developed.

The work done by this expert group will continue.

Reports from the World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF

HSC took note of the interesting information in the reports from WWF "on The tip of the iceberg: Chemical contamination in the Arctic" and "Clean Baltic within Reach". It was noted that many of the substances mentioned in the reports are OSPAR priority substances and this information should be used when considering further action on these substances.

Disappointingly the reports were not discussed at the meeting, but hopefully the information will be taken into account.

3. Assessment, monitoring and reporting

At OSPAR 2004 monitoring strategies for nineteen chemicals for priority action was agreed. The monitoring strategies will be available on the OSPAR website when agreed on the OSPAR 2005 meeting.

Monitoring strategies for specific substances were presented and discussed at the meeting. For further information on specific substances I refer to the official summary record.

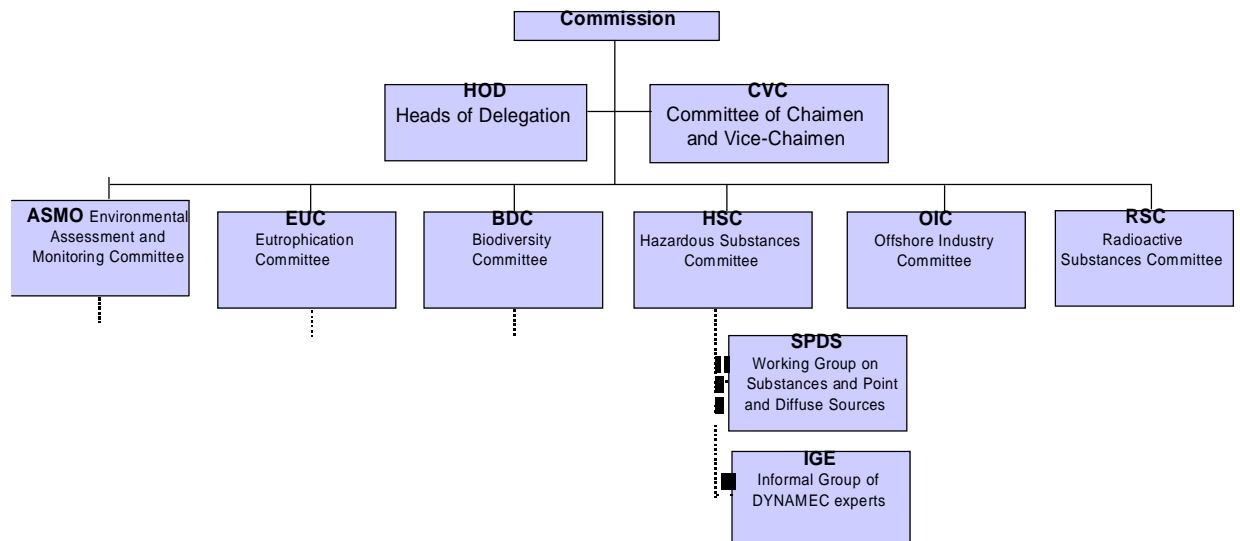
General information on HSC, Hazardous Substances Committee

HSC was established by OSPAR 2000 to facilitate the implementation of the OSPAR Strategy with regard to Hazardous substances. HSC has two subsidiary working groups to which it annually allocates specific parts of the work programmes.

Organisation

In 2000 OSPAR retained a new working structure. There is a second tier Committee for each of the five OSPAR strategies and a second tier Committee on assessment and monitoring.

The Hazardous Substances Committee has 2 working groups to which they annually allocate specific parts of their work programmes.



Hazardous substances - Objective

In accordance with the general objective, the objective of the Commission with regard to hazardous substances is to prevent pollution of the maritime area by continuously reducing discharges, emissions and losses of hazard-

ous substances (as defined in Appendix 2), with the ultimate aim of achieving concentrations in the marine environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances.

The objective is adopted directly from the Esbjerg Declaration for the North Sea, where the “one-generation goal” was first declared as a recommendation. The Esbjerg Declaration was a result of the North Sea Conference held by the North Sea Ministers of Environment in 1995.