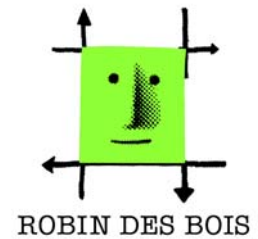


**OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine
Environment of the North-East Atlantic.
Bergen. 20-24 September 2010**



Robin des Bois' contribution to OSPAR ministerial meeting 2010

Offshore Industry

The Deepwater Horizon accident in the Gulf of Mexico and prior accidents in the North Sea and across the globe involving offshore platforms are a reminder to industries, neighbouring countries and the international community that exploration and exploitation of fossil resources present an increasing risk for workers, the environment and regional and worldwide economy. This is of particular significance for the North-East Atlantic concerning ongoing and future installations. OSPAR contracting parties should ensure that the best available techniques are accessible to prevent disasters. Robin des Bois is urging international cooperation by all contracting parties to put in place coordinated and practical contingency plans. Concerning projects in OSPAR Region I Arctic and Region V Wider Atlantic contingency plans are all the more important due to their remoteness and extreme climate conditions. Germany's recommendation on a Moratorium on certain new Oil Exploration Activities in Deep Waters 10/8/5 is a good starting point on this subject.

The BP accident involved an offshore platform flying a flag of convenience, Marshall Islands, which meant that safety inspections take four to eight hours whereas if it was a US flag inspections could last 2-3 weeks. Such flags of convenience are used within the OSPAR regions and in the case of accidents, they make investigations to establish technical and financial responsibilities more complicated. The use of convenience flags for offshore platforms in the North-East Atlantic and in the Arctic should be reconsidered.

Lastly, looking at future projects in Region I and adjacent waters a ban of using Floating Nuclear Power Plants (FNPP) should be put into place until there is an international agreement by OSPAR, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and other competent bodies. It is foreseen that FNPPs could provide energy to offshore activities.

Russia, new OSPAR contracting party ?

Due to technical cooperation in OSPAR Arctic waters particularly on the Shtokman gas field and due to the recent boundary agreement between Russia and Norway in the "Grey Zone", it becomes all the more imperative that Russia becomes a contracting party to the Convention.

Marine Litter

The OSPAR Convention has been leading the battle against marine litter in the world's oceans through their inventories and research on negative impacts of litter on marine environment. This work should continue and be consolidated through the Bergen Statement. As statistics show 70 to 80% of marine litter originate from land, it is important to put into place a coordinated plan to reduce this input. The Bergen Statement should include a reduction target of 40% of all marine litter by 2020. .../...

Arctic Waters

Concerning the reduction of marine litter, but also, the global protection of the Arctic environment, contracting parties should intervene in the framework of International Maritime Organisation so that the Arctic Ocean becomes a Special Area which means to say strict conditions on waste disposal and pollution prevention.

Marine dumped conventional and chemical munitions

Robin des Bois appreciates the recommendation 10/5/19 to create an integrated inventory of munition sightings by fishermen and other users of the sea and coastline to consolidate documentation on known disposals and bring to light unknown sites. This regrouping of information is all the more important in the perspective of new offshore installations and disturbances to the seabed.

It is very important that these disposal sites be subject to studies to assess the quality of the surrounding marine environment. This issue deserves to be mentioned in the Ministerial Statement.

Marine Protected Areas

To date Marine Protected Areas in the OSPAR perimeter are largely Natura 2000 sites which are scattered near or along the shoreline. Robin des Bois is asking that all OSPAR contracting countries fulfil their responsibilities to preserve and protect the marine environment by nominating and protecting further zones within the OSPAR area especially in the high seas. With this in mind Portugal's proposal of the Rainbow hydrothermal vent site is positive and the pioneer project of Charlie Gibbs of which the principle was agreed by OSPAR Plenary session in Brest 2008 must proceed.

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

To date, the number of contracting parties having ratified the Amendments to the Annexes of the Convention is not sufficient for their entry into force. Robin des Bois is asking that all contracting parties yet to ratify closely review all environmental and safety risks involved with CCS techniques and to take note of the lack of scientific research before proceeding.

As observers to numerous international conventions, Robin des Bois appreciates OSPAR's role as a pioneer think tank and knowledge sharing organisation to safeguard biodiversity and marine resources. The time has come for Ministers and Heads of Delegations to take concrete decisions to protect the North-East Atlantic.

OSPAR 17/09/10