



Review Statement for the  
OSPAR Background Document on  
Perfluorooctane Sulphonate



### **OSPAR Convention**

The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the "OSPAR Convention") was opened for signature at the Ministerial Meeting of the former Oslo and Paris Commissions in Paris on 22 September 1992. The Convention entered into force on 25 March 1998. It has been ratified by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom and approved by the European Union and Spain.

### **Convention OSPAR**

La Convention pour la protection du milieu marin de l'Atlantique du Nord-Est, dite Convention OSPAR, a été ouverte à la signature à la réunion ministérielle des anciennes Commissions d'Oslo et de Paris, à Paris le 22 septembre 1992. La Convention est entrée en vigueur le 25 mars 1998. La Convention a été ratifiée par l'Allemagne, la Belgique, le Danemark, la Finlande, la France, l'Irlande, l'Islande, le Luxembourg, la Norvège, les Pays-Bas, le Portugal, le Royaume-Uni de Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord, la Suède et la Suisse et approuvée par l'Union européenne et l'Espagne.

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## Introduction

OSPAR Background Documents are periodically reviewed and revised, as necessary, to take account of the latest information, so that any additional risks to the marine environment can be highlighted and additional measures and controls can be acknowledged.

In cases where a revision was not advised, a Review Statement supplementing the Background Document is prepared by lead countries, highlighting new developments since the adoption of the Background Document. The Review Statement will be updated, as appropriate, with information on progress on the actions that are agreed in Background Documents.

The OSPAR Background Document on Perfluorooctane Sulphonate (PFOS) was published in 2006 (OSPAR publication number 269/2006). Following a review by the OSPAR Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee in 2011, this Review Statement, prepared by the UK as lead country for this chemical, was adopted.

## Progress in implementing and completing actions set out in the Background Document

### Action in the European Union

The background document recommended that OSPAR Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States should support the concept of EU level controls. Since it was published, OSPAR Contracting Parties have supported an EU restriction on PFOS and this was agreed under an amendment to the Marketing and Use Directive, as Directive 2006/122/EC (which was later placed in Annex XVII of the REACH Regulation).

Subsequently it was agreed to add PFOS to the Annexes to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in 2009, and this has been incorporated into EU law as Commission Regulation (EU) No. 757/2010. As a consequence, the earlier restriction became superfluous, and the REACH Annex XVII entry was deleted by Commission Regulation (EU) No. 207/2011.

PFOS is one of the substances currently being considered by the EU as a potential Priority Substance (PS)/Priority Hazardous Substance (PHS) under the Water Framework Directive. As part of the EU considerations, draft values for Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) have been developed for the substances under consideration, including PFOS. As part of the process the draft EQS values are being considered by SCHER (Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks) and PFOS is one of the substances currently being considered by SCHER. As the draft EQS values are still being reviewed and decisions on PS/PHS status have yet to be made the EQS values are not yet finalised and available.

### Action within OSPAR

OSPAR has focussed its attention on the monitoring of PFOS and how it should be addressed in the Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP). PFOS was included in the pre-CEMP in 2007 for water, sediments and biota. Its moving on to the CEMP depends on the development of assessment criteria and suitable quality assurance being in place. A request was also made to ICES to consider the technical aspects regarding the monitoring of PFOS in the atmosphere. The conclusion is that it is premature to include atmospheric monitoring in the CEMP.

## Action by Contracting Parties

A number of Contracting Parties have taken national action to enforce the EU restrictions. For example, in the UK, the prohibitions are contained in Annex I of the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Regulation (EC) No. 850/2004 (as amended), and the Chemical Compliance Team of the UK Environment Agency is launching a campaign to monitor and enforce prohibitions on the production, import, supply and use of PFOS.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Since PFOS was identified by OSPAR and the EU as a substance of concern, and the background document was published, significant further work has been undertaken to further evaluate its risks to the environment and, as a result, the EU has restricted certain uses. Contracting Parties are taking various measures to enforce these restrictions. Further work has also been undertaken in both OSPAR and the EU to monitor concentrations of PFOS in the marine environment.

The UK believes that any further work and measures for the control of PFOS would be best taken in the EU framework, rather than by OSPAR. However, OSPAR should continue to keep a watching brief on future developments to ensure that any possible risks to the marine environment (e.g. as shown through monitoring in the marine environment) are flagged up and taken into account in the evaluation of risks.



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**OSPAR's vision is of a healthy and diverse North-East Atlantic ecosystem,  
used sustainably**

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