

OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic

Meeting of the Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC)

London (United Kingdom): 11-13 February 2014

Report on Historic Deep Sea Disposal of Radioactive Waste in Layperson's Language

Presented by Germany

Issue: RSC 2013 agreed that Germany will present a report on deep sea disposal of radioactive waste to RSC 2014. It was suggested earlier that this report should be written in layperson's language to allow straightforward information of the wider public.

Action requested

1. The RSC meeting is invited to examine the attached report, and conclude:
 - a. whether monitoring of deep-sea dumpsites in the OSPAR maritime area is necessary;
 - b. if so, the possible extent of the monitoring programme based on the three options outlined in the attached report: i.e. Options A, B, and C (see pages 23-24).

Background

2. In the work programme of RSC 2009/2010 the potential impact of radioactive waste disposed in the deep sea was identified as an issue of concern. This led to the preparation of a "Position paper on the implications of deep sea disposal of radioactive waste" (RSC 10/4/3) in collaboration with the IAEA in 2010.
3. The public interest in the issue of man-made radioactivity in the marine environment was fuelled after the Fukushima accident in 2011. TV and print media in Germany picked up the subject referring to the aforementioned position paper, and raised a number of questions and uncertainties originating from the fact that monitoring results for the dumpsites date back some time.
4. Parallel to this development, the IAEA had prepared a draft document on request for the London Convention and Protocol (LC/LP) "Inventory of waste disposal, accidents and losses at sea involving radioactive materials" (LC 33/INF. 5) which was tabled at the 2011 meeting of the LC/LP. This inventory paper summarizes earlier IAEA publications (TECDOCs 588, 1102 and 1242). Although the report was scheduled to be finalised for submission to the LC/LP meeting in autumn 2012, the process of verification is still not finished due to the complicated procedure on a case to case basis. The publication of the final version is scheduled for 2014.
5. In response to the public concern in Germany it was suggested at RSC 2012 (RSC 12/5/4) to provide a report covering the subject of deep sea disposal of radioactive waste in layperson's language on the basis of the updated IAEA report. The development of the report had to be postponed in 2013 as the relevant IAEA report had not been published as announced. As the IAEA document is currently *still* not available in a final version, the attached layperson's report has also to be regarded as a draft. It will be finalised as soon as the finalised IAEA document is made available.