



**OSPAR**  
**COMMISSION**

*Protecting and conserving the  
North-East Atlantic and its resources*

# Dumped Chemical and Conventional Munitions

In the OSPAR Maritime Area

The Challenges of Unexploded Munitions  
Colloquium

Brussels, 20 February 2019

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**OSPAR** Is the mechanism by which **15 Governments** and the **EU** cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East **Atlantic**.



Region I: Arctic Waters

Region II: Greater North Sea.

Region III: Celtic Seas

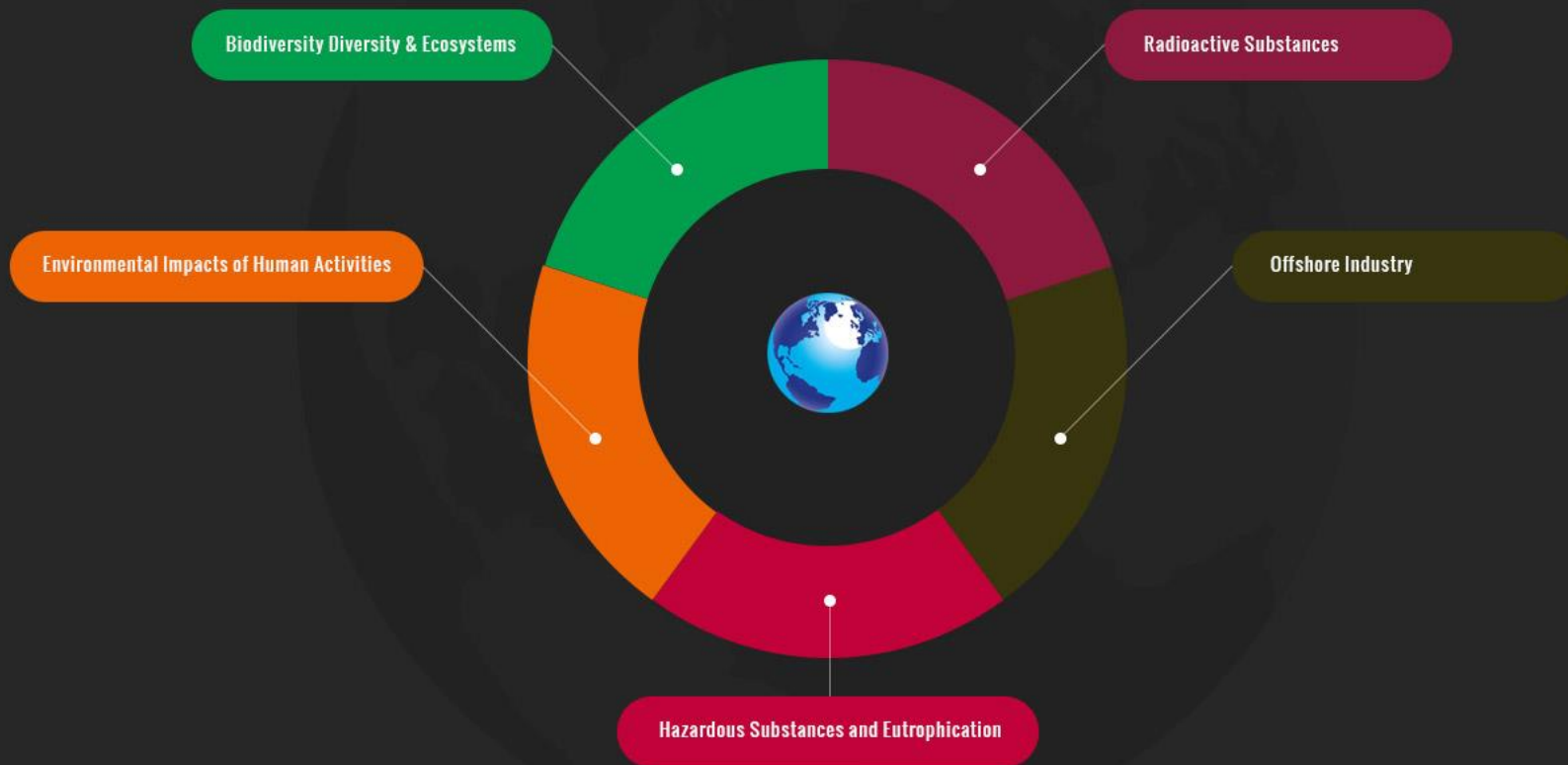
Region IV: Bay of Biscay and  
Iberian Coast.

Region V: Wider Atlantic





## OSPAR Work Areas





## Environmental Impact of Human Activities Committee

1. Noise

2. Ballast Water Management

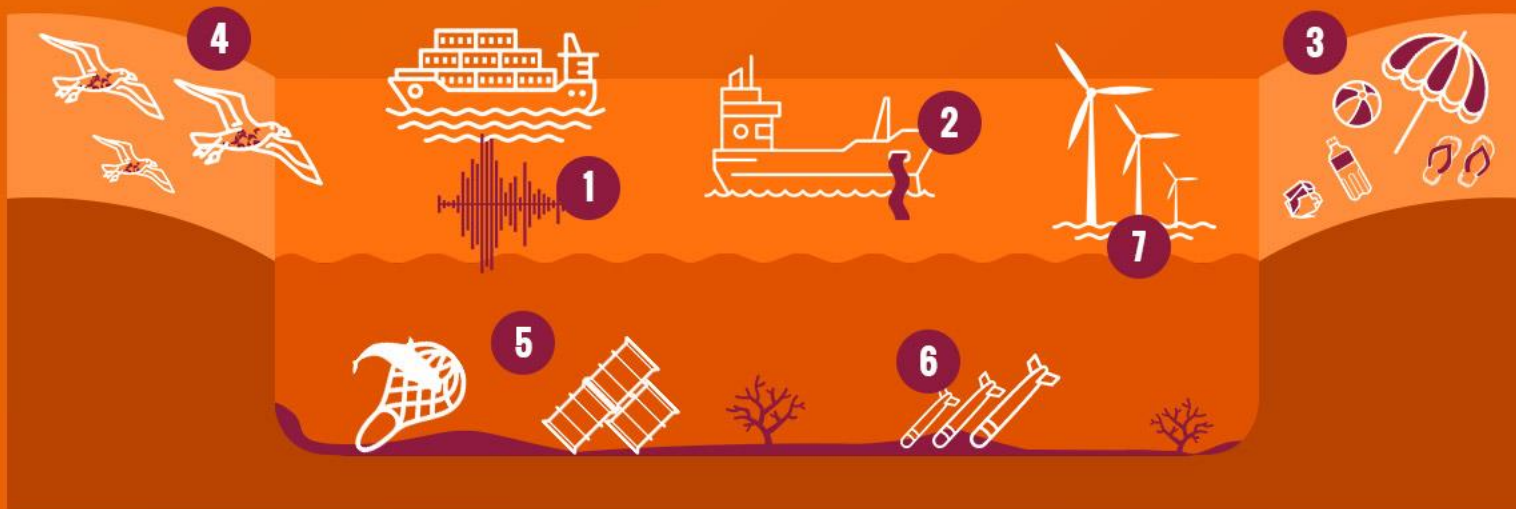
3. Beach Litter Monitoring

4. Plastic in Fulmar Stomachs

5. Seabed Litter Monitoring

6. Munitions Encounters

7. Offshore Renewable Developments





# Encounters with Munitions

- Following WWI and II large amounts were dumped (both conventional and chemical).
- These are causing **environmental** and **safety** concerns.
- Historical records on quantities and locations is limited and of dubious accuracy.



# What did/does OSPAR do?

- OSPAR Recommendation (2003-2010) on Framework for Reporting Encounters

- ❖ Ref. n° - CP ID
- ❖ Location (long/lat) and date
- ❖ Nature encounter
- ❖ Type and state of munition
- ❖ Action taken
- ❖ Release (lat/long)

- Yearly reporting

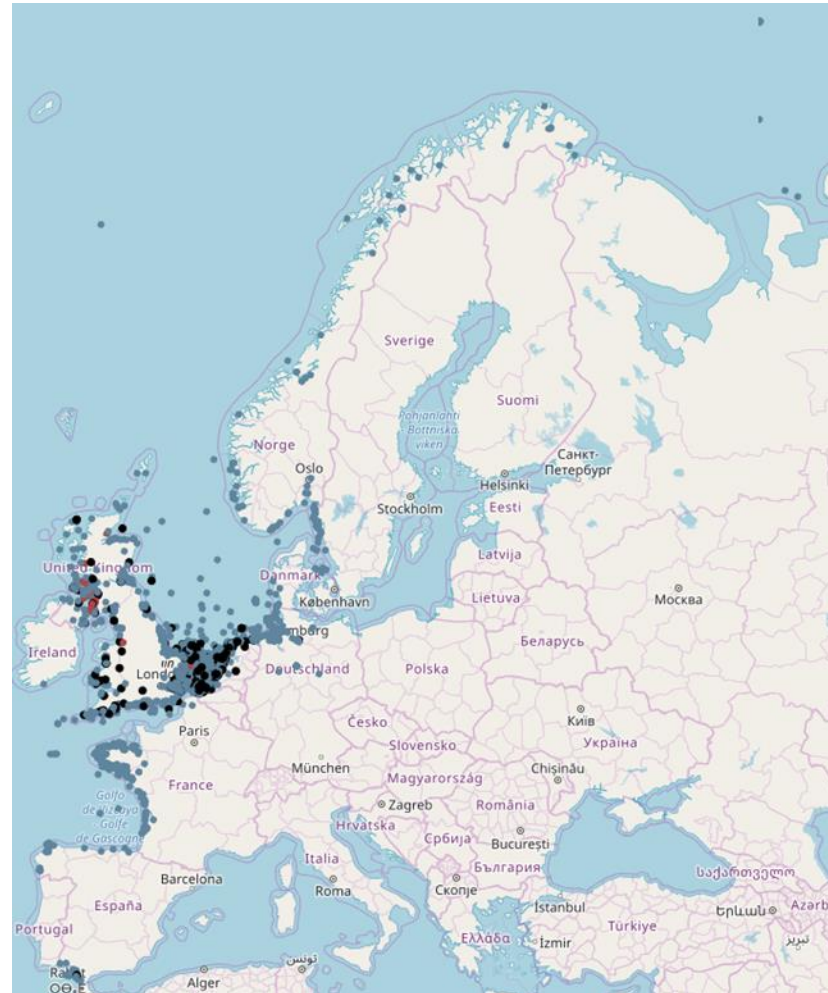


# Encounters year 2016





# Encounters 1999 - 2015



# Welcome to ODIMS

OSPAR's Data & Information Management System

ODIMS is a fully featured platform for accessing OSPAR's geospatial maps, data and metadata.

# Encounters - Numbers

- +/- 900 reported each year
- Increased reporting has been noted following accidents
- More than 50% are due to entanglement with fishing nets
- Worrying increase in numbers reported since 2011
- More (new) human activities (windfarms, electricity cables, ...) give also increased numbers

# Encounters Environmental concerns

- Of chief concern from **chemical perspective**  
: discarded weapons containing Clark,  
Adamsite, mustard gas  
    Arsenic compounds : toxic to some  
    marine organisms
- **Noise and pressure** impacts from :
  - ❖ Underwater spontaneous explosions:  
    auditory damage marine mammals
  - ❖ Deliberate explosions
- **Health & safety** issues from human  
encounters ...

# Implications

- Disturbance of dumped munitions by seabed activities = important issue => should be addressed
- Details of locations of all munition dumpsites + areas of clusters of encounters: to be identified
- **Clean up** of dumpsites : serious safety risks + increased risk of dispersion hazardous substances

# Management Options

- Most common = leave on seabed for natural disintegration
- Clusters : consider other management options

# Future actions (B : pilot country)

- Review/Update of Recommendation 2010 on Framework for Reporting Encounters.
- Review of “national” guidelines for encounters with munition.
- Recommend monitoring of identified clusters/dumpsites of munition.
- Recommend mitigation measures when explosion at sea of encountered munition.





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Thank you for your attention.