



**KOMMUNENES INTERNASJONALE MILJØORGANISASJON
LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
ORGANISATION**

PRESS RELEASE

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International Experts on Marine Litter Meet in Shetland

Experts from Northern Europe met last weekend in Shetland to continue work on developing monitoring techniques and to develop proposals to address the issue of marine litter. The Group was set up by the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR)¹ to continue the work of a pilot scheme set up six years ago to monitor beaches in a number of countries and to establish trends in marine litter.

The group reviewed statistical analyses of monitoring results collected from over 50 beaches over the last six years and considered any further actions which might be required. They also agreed to try and develop how a marine litter index could work and whether eco quality objectives for marine litter (EcoQO) could be set.

Consideration was also undertaken if monitoring information on the types of waste collected in fishermen's nets as part of Fishing for Litter initiatives could also be used to indicate trends.

A presentation by Dr Richard Thompson from Plymouth University on micro plastics included the scale and scope of problems related to microscopic plastics and proposals how to deal with this in the North East Atlantic region, including cost estimates - plastics in sediment, - plastics in plankton, - research into hydrophobic contamination versus plastics.

The work is part of assisting the drafting of a Quality Status Report for the Northeast Atlantic for Environment Ministers in 2010.

This work will also feed into a UN Global Assessment of Marine Litter as part of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

¹ <http://www.ospar.org/eng/html/welcome.html>

The project is led by The Netherlands and Belgium who have contracted Shetland based KIMO International to facilitate the project.

A spokesperson for KIMO commented, "Shetland has been at the forefront of tackling marine litter through local initiatives such as Da Voar Redd Up, Seaside Awards for beaches and other anti litter programmes. Through KIMO it has campaigned to highlight the issues surrounding marine litter whether that is the impacts on wildlife, economic cost to coastal communities or promoting measures such as Fishing for Litter that hopefully will change industry practices and reduce litter on our coast. Bringing these experts to Shetland was a good opportunity for them to see the problem first hand."

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