

Extending Ireland's continental shelf jurisdiction to the outer limits in the Porcupine Abyssal Plain: progress, issues and experience to date

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Abstract

Ireland made its first submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) in May 2005, the fourth coastal State to do so. This was a partial submission for an area of extended continental shelf located in the Porcupine Abyssal Plain (PAP), southwest of Ireland. Recommendations regarding the outer limit were received from the CLCS in April 2007. In March 2009 Ireland designated the additional area of Continental Shelf out to the outer limit in the PAP, in line with the Recommendations of the CLCS. Details of the outer limit were also lodged with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority. Ireland is just the second coastal State to complete the entire process as described in UNCLOS.

The presentation describes the steps in this process and goes on to discuss the prospectivity of the PAP for natural resources and possible licensing issues related to Article 82 of UNCLOS and measures to protect the marine environment beyond the 200M limit. Finally, it takes a look at the more regional North Atlantic picture.