

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 11/13

(supersedes HELCOM Recommendations 1/7 and 4/3)

Adopted 14 February 1990, having regard to Article 13,
Paragraph b) of the Helsinki Convention

DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL ABILITY TO RESPOND TO SPILLAGES OF OIL AND OTHER HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING the provisions of Regulation 2 of Annex VI to the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1974, (Helsinki Convention), concerning the ability of the Contracting Parties to the Convention to combat spillages of oil and other harmful substances at sea,

RECALLING ALSO the former HELCOM Recommendations 1/7 and 4/3 having dealt with the national ability to respond to oil and chemical accidents,

RECOGNIZING the need for further development of the national ability of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention to combat spillages of oil and other harmful substances,

BEING AWARE of the great value of coordinating national efforts in this respect,

BEING MINDFUL that the maximum tonnage of an oil tanker entering fully laden the Baltic Sea is up to 150 000 dwt,

RECOMMENDS that Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention should, in establishing national contingency plans, aim at developing the ability of their combatting services,

- a) to deal with spillages of oil and other harmful substances at sea so as to enable them:
 - (i) to keep a readiness permitting the first response unit to start from its base within two hours after having been alerted;
 - (ii) to reach within six hours from start any place of a -spillage that may occur in the response region of the respective country;
 - (iii) to ensure well organized adequate and substantial response actions on the site of the spill as soon as possible, normally within a time not exceeding 12 hours,

- b) to respond to major oil spillages
 - (i) within a period of time normally not exceeding two days of combatting the pollution with mechanical pick-up devices at sea; if dispersants are used it should be applied in accordance with HELCOM Recommendation 1/8, taking into account a time limit for efficient use of dispersants; *)
 - (ii) to make available sufficient and suitable storage capacity for disposal of recovered or lightered oil within 24 hours after having received precise information on the outflow quantity,
- c) to respond to spillages of harmful substances other than oil with suitable countermeasures:
 - (i) to consider hereby the provisions in Volume III of the Helsinki Commission Manual on Co-operation in Combatting Marine Pollution;
 - (ii) to make the necessary efforts to recover floating chemicals (floaters) with a reasonable retention time using adequate mechanical pick-up devices at sea normally not exceeding 2 days of combatting at sea; *)
 - (iii) to use their best endeavours in research and development activities to develop suitable techniques or methods to recover such sunken chemicals from the sea bottom if they have a long retention time without dissolving tendencies,
- d) should continue with the development and improvement of the combatting services, taking into account:
 - (i) relevant factors such as the length and configuration of the coastline, safe haven harbour approaches, vulnerable ecological areas, probability of adverse weather conditions, ice, etc.;
 - (ii) that this capability should be considered in connection with the national salvage and lightening capacity; and
 - (iii) the targets specified above concerning oil response ability, to be reached as soon as possible and, in any case, within the early nineties;
 - (iv) the targets specified above concerning chemical spill response ability, to be reached as soon as possible and, in any case, before the end of the nineties.

*) The given response time limit can also be fulfilled by agreed regional cooperation of other Contracting Parties.