

## HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 13/6

Adopted 6 February 1992, having regard to  
Article 13, Paragraph b) of the Helsinki Convention

### DEFINITION OF BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE

#### THE COMMISSION,

**RECALLING** Paragraph 1 of Article 6 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1974 (Helsinki Convention), in which the Contracting Parties undertake to take all appropriate measures to control and minimize land-based pollution of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area,

**RECALLING ALSO** Paragraph 2 of Article 2 of the Helsinki Convention, in which the "land-based pollution" is defined as pollution of the sea caused by discharges from land reaching the sea waterborne, airborne or directly from the coast,

**HAVING REGARD** to the Ministerial Declaration of 1988 and to the Baltic Sea Declaration of 1990, calling, *inter alia*, for a substantive reduction of the load of pollutants most harmful to the ecosystem of the Baltic Sea,

**BEING AWARE** that from environmental point of view, the reduction of inputs, resulting from the use of "best environmental practice", as defined in this Recommendation, does not necessarily lead to environmentally acceptable results,

**BEING FURTHER AWARE** that what is "best environmental practice" for a particular source will change with time in the light of appropriate combination of measures, economic and social factors, as well as changes in scientific knowledge and understanding,

**RECOGNIZING**, according to the Paragraph 2 of Article 3 of the Helsinki Convention, that application of the best environmental practice should not result in any increase in pollution in other sea areas or in other parts of the environment or any increased risk to the human health or living resources in countries where the environmental regulations are less stringent,

**RECOMMENDS** that the Governments of the Contracting Parties agree that:

1. In order to prevent pollution of the sea from diffuse sources, the Contracting Parties shall use Best Environmental Practice, minimizing or eliminating inputs from such sources to the aquatic environment by providing control strategies.

2. The term "best environmental practice" is taken as the application of the most appropriate combination of measures. In selecting for individual cases, at least the following graduated range of measures should be considered:

- provision of information and education to the public, to users and to producers about the environmental consequences of choice of particular activities and choice of products, their use and ultimate disposal;
- the development and application of Codes of Good Environmental Practice which covers all aspects of the activity in the product's life;
- mandatory labels informing users of environmental risks related to a product, its use and ultimate disposal;
- availability of collection and disposal systems;
- saving of resources, including energy;
- recycling, recovery, re-use;
- avoiding the use of hazardous substances and products and the generation of hazardous waste;
- application of economic instruments to activities, products or groups of products;
- a system of licensing which involves a range of restrictions or a ban.

3. In determining what combination of measures constitute best environmental practice, in general or individual cases, particular consideration should be given to:

- environmental hazard of the product, its production, its use and ultimate disposal;
- substitution by less polluting activities or substances;
- scale of use;
- potential environmental benefit or penalty of substitute materials or activities;
- advances and changes in scientific knowledge and understanding;
- time limits for implementation;
- social and economic implications;
- the precautionary principle, i.e., taking preventive measures when there is reason to assume that substances or energy introduced, directly or indirectly, into the marine environment may create hazards to human health, harm living resources and marine ecosystems, damage amenities or interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea even when there is no conclusive evidence of a causal relationship between inputs and their effects.

**RECOMMENDS FURTHER** that:

- (i) if the reduction of inputs resulting from the use of best environmental practice does not lead to environmentally acceptable results, additional measures be applied;
- (ii) in order to attain the objectives, the intensified exchange of information and knowledge regarding best environmental practice be promoted;
- (iii) the definition of best environmental practice be revised when appropriate.