

HELSINKI COMMISSION

Baltic Marine Environment
Protection Commission



HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 24/9

Adopted 25 June 2003,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

ENSURING ADEQUATE EMERGENCY CAPACITY

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING the “Declaration on the Safety of Navigation and Emergency Capacity in the Baltic Sea Area (HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration)”, adopted on 10 September 2001 in Copenhagen by the HELCOM Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting,

RECALLING ESPECIALLY Paragraph XI of the HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration containing the commitment of the Governments of the Contracting Parties to ensure adequate emergency capacity (fire-fighting, emergency lightering and emergency towing capacities),

BEING AWARE that in many incidents satisfactory emergency capacity and the readiness hereof have prevented serious oil spills,

CONSCIOUS of the sensitivity of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea area and of the importance it represents to the people living around it, for economic, social, recreational and cultural reasons,

RECOGNIZING that if harmful substances are introduced to this vulnerable sea they will remain there for a long time,

ACKNOWLEDGING the difficulties the Baltic Sea area presents to navigation due to narrow straits, shallow depths, archipelago areas and ice cover during winter period,

EXPRESSING concern as to the growing density of maritime traffic in the Baltic Sea area and the accidents which have taken place,

BEING CONVINCED of the need to improve the emergency and response capacities in the Baltic Sea area,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the findings of the consolidated version of the compilation “Emergency Towing, Fire-fighting and Intermediate Storage Capacity”, according to which only the south-western part of the Baltic Sea and the St. Petersburg area have a satisfactory towing and fire-fighting capacity,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT FURTHER that the conclusions of the above-mentioned compilation are only relating to the availability of the capacity but are not dealing with the readiness of the ships,

NOTING that Regulation 2 of Annex VII “Response to pollution incidents” to the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (the Helsinki Convention) encourages, as appropriate, the development of bilateral or multilateral plans for a joint response to pollution incidents,

RECOMMENDS that the Governments of the Contracting Parties keep their national inventories on emergency capacity continuously updated,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Governments of the Contracting Parties ascertain a satisfactory readiness of their emergency capacity. This can for example be done by applying one or more of the below-mentioned procedures:

- a) by elaborating a Memorandum of Understanding between the salvors and the responsible authority,
 - i) stating the normal readiness for the resources, and
 - ii) providing for an immediate exchange of information in case of changes in that readiness, as well as
 - iii) possibly outlining the payment by the authority of part of the improvement costs of the salvor;
- b) by investigating the possibility of drawing up bilateral or multilateral plans, under the Helsinki Convention, for certain sea areas, like the Gulf of Finland and the south-western Baltic Sea;
- c) by taking into consideration, when building new ships, the possibility of installing on board satisfactory emergency capacity; or
- d) by other means,

RECOMMENDS FURTHERMORE that the Governments of the Contracting Parties establish a national training and exercise programme to ensure the effectiveness of their emergency capacity,

RECOMMENDS ALSO that the Governments of the Contracting Parties report on the implementation of this Recommendation in accordance with Article 16, Paragraph 1 of the Helsinki Convention.