

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 28E/11

Adopted 15 November 2007
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

FURTHER MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF NAVIGATION IN ICE CONDITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA

THE COMMISSION,

BEING CONSCIOUS that parts of the Baltic Sea are ice-covered for several winter months, which places some limitation on maritime transportation and entails greater risks of accidents and pollution,

NOTING the increasing vessel traffic and especially transportation of oil products in the Baltic and the expected future significant growth of shipping activities in general,

BEING AWARE of the technical difficulties in responding to oil spills in ice,

BEING FURTHER AWARE that the increasing vessel traffic will also increase demands for icebreaking services, especially during severe winters and in difficult ice conditions,

OBSERVING that the capability of vessels to navigate in ice has constantly improved due to the technological development, while there seems to be a lack of relevant experience and know-how among the ship crews, and that the risk of accidents during ice conditions can be decreased by well-trained and experienced ship crew,

RECOGNISING that timely and reliable information on ice conditions, recommended routes and available icebreaking services are of crucial importance when assisting the ships in their route through the Baltic,

RECALLING the Declaration on the Safety of Navigation and Emergency Capacities in the Baltic Sea Area (HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration) adopted on 10 September 2001 in Copenhagen,

BEING CONVINCED of the need for further measures to advance the safety and efficiency of winter navigation in the Baltic Sea and to create unified rules and regulations and operational practises for navigation in ice conditions,

ACKNOWLEDGING the successful development of co-operation among maritime authorities from all the Baltic Sea Coastal States within the framework of the Baltic Icebreaking Management organisation,

WELCOMING closer exchange of information with Baltic Icebreaking Management (BIM) in order to join forces of the two organisations: HELCOM as environmental policy-maker on one side and BIM as a platform for exchange of information and knowledge related to navigation in ice conditions on the other,

APPRECIATING the initiative by BIM to create a single source of timely and reliable information on ice conditions, traffic restrictions, icebreakers and other issues relevant to mariners navigating in the Baltic Sea during wintertime, which can be obtained from the website www.baltice.org,

RECOMMENDS that the Governments of the Contracting States take necessary steps to ensure that there are sufficient icebreaking services available to assist ships bound for ports in their territory,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Governments of the Contracting States, when arranging icebreaking services, try to prioritise the provision of service according to the risk areas, including heavy traffic routes, routes to oil terminals, ports with a large number of calls in ice conditions, and others,

RECOMMENDS FURTHERMORE the Governments of the Contracting States to advance educational offers for seafarers of high quality training programmes in navigation in ice conditions according to the 1978 International Convention on Standards in Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers. Such training programmes should provide knowledge, understanding and proficiency required for operating a ship in ice-covered waters, including:

- ice conditions, ice types and ice chart;
- ice classes, ship's construction and traffic restrictions;
- icing and winterisation;
- voyage planning and operation in ice;
- icebreakers and assistance,

RECOMMENDS ALSO the Contracting Parties to promote the use of the Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) and the use of qualified Baltic Sea Pilots during their voyage in the Baltic Sea in ice conditions until the Master or Senior Watchkeeping Officer of the vessel has achieved sufficient experience in winter navigation,

INVITES experts on icebreaking within BIM to contribute to the relevant work of the HELCOM Maritime and Response Groups,

REQUESTS the Governments of the Contracting States to implement the above mentioned measures as soon as possible and to report on the implementation of this Recommendation in accordance with Article 16, Paragraph 1 of the Helsinki Convention.