

HELCOM PRIORITIES DURING THE ESTONIAN CHAIRMANSHIP

(1 July 2014 - 30 June 2016)

1. POLLUTION MANAGEMENT

2. PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

3. ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS AND INFORMATION

1. POLLUTION MANAGEMENT

Reduction of pollution load - Intensify the implementation of water management plans and environmental measures under the rural development plans¹ in order to decrease the load of nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorous) from mainland into the Baltic Sea. Construct water collection and purification systems for small and medium-sized settlements², among other measures. Carry out applied research to assess and further test options for 'natural' phosphorus and nitrogen recycling. Aquaculture as an environmental measure: cultivation of algae, shells, etc. to remove phosphorus and nitrogen from the marine environment. Stimulate an effective re-use of phosphorus originating from technological residue of sewage treatment facilities and big farms³.

Reduction of impact of hazardous substances - Reduce or stop the use of HELCOM problematic chemicals by substituting these with substances not harmful for the environment⁴. Liquidate the still existing past pollution sites having impact on the environmental status of the Baltic Sea. Further develop the pollution response capacity and contingency in the Baltic Sea countries and the whole region, including for shoreline pollution accidents, oiled wildlife and oil pollution in ice conditions⁵.

Regional Marine Litter Action Plan - develop regional action plan on reducing marine litter. The plan is to be developed by 2015 at the latest, with the objective to reach considerable reduction of marine litter by 2025 compared to 2015⁶. Carry out applied research to investigate the dispersion of micro plastics in the marine environment, and develop and test applicable technology for removal of micro plastics and nano-particles in municipal sewage by 2020 at the latest, at the same time cooperating with industry in order to stop the use of micro plastics and nano-particles in production processes⁷.

2. PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Use, conservation and protection of the Baltic Sea regional coastal and marine areas - develop regional integrated coastal management, maritime spatial planning and marine and maritime governance basis, principles and best practices⁸ in order to contribute to blue growth and creation of new jobs and prosperity in the region while enabling a sustainable use of marine goods and services⁹.

¹ HELCOM Rec. 28E/4 on Prevention of Pollution from Agriculture <http://www.helcom.fi/Recommendations/Rec%2028E-4.pdf>

² HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para 16, 24 (B), 15 (N), 18 (N) + HELCOM Rec. 28E/5: Municipal Wastewater Treatment: <http://www.helcom.fi/Recommendations/Rec%2028E-5.pdf>

³ HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para XI, 22 (B), 13 (N)

⁴ HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para 16, XI, 1-6 (H); 11 (H). Hazardous substances of concern: <http://www.helcom.fi/Lists/Publications/BSEP119.pdf>

⁵ HELCOM Rec 34E/3 on Amendments to Annex VII to the Helsinki Convention: <http://www.helcom.fi/Recommendations/Rec%2034E-3.pdf>

⁶ HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para IX: <http://www.helcom.fi/Documents/Ministerial2013/Ministerial%20declaration/2013%20Copenhagen%20Ministerial%20Declaration%20w%20cover.pdf>.

⁷ HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para 24 (B)

⁸ HELCOM 2013a Declaration Para 7, 11, 12, 13, I, 17 (B), 1 (K), 1 – 17 (M), 1-4 (MSP), 5 (F)

⁹ EU, „A Sustainable Blue Growth Agenda for the Baltic Sea Region“, [http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/attachments/article/590671/Adopted%20SWD%20Blue%20growth%20agenda%2016.05.2014\(1\).pdf](http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/attachments/article/590671/Adopted%20SWD%20Blue%20growth%20agenda%2016.05.2014(1).pdf), 13.06.2014

Well-managed and ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas - assess the current status of marine protection areas, develop and implement, by 2015, the Baltic Sea marine protected areas' management plans or measures¹⁰. Upon further necessity and in order to preserve and protect marine goods and services, agree on the extension of the network of marine protected areas.

Fish stock and other environmental resources - draw up or further develop ecosystem based management principles for fish stock and other marine environment goods and services¹¹. By 2020 at the latest refine and implement positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity including payments¹² for ecosystem services¹³, and stop, step by step, decrease or reform subsidies and incentives harmful to the coastal and marine biodiversity¹⁴.

3. ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS AND INFORMATION

HELCOM's up to date monitoring programme¹⁵ - implement HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy¹⁶, update the HELCOM monitoring programme in 2014 and handbooks and guidelines in 2015¹⁷ (incl. database and interface for the *Pollution Load Compilation* (PLC) data). Consolidate the HELCOM data management so that data delivered by Parties to the Helsinki Convention are usable for both measuring the implementation in HELCOM as well as drawing up other international or domestic monitoring information (e.g. EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive or the Marine Doctrine of the Russian Federation).

Indicator- and environmental objectives' based assessment - make the assessment of the status of the Baltic Sea fully operational by drawing up or exploiting an assessment system based on core indicators in order to measure the progress towards a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea¹⁸. Develop 2nd Holistic Assessment of the status of and pressures on the Baltic Sea by 2016/2017¹⁹.

Access to environmental information and visibility of HELCOM activities - further develop the HELCOM website, update HELCOM map applications to improve operational access to data. Implement the HELCOM Communication Strategy guided by the necessity to improve HELCOM's visibility and intelligibility for the general public²⁰. Establish a communication network in HELCOM Contracting Parties to raise awareness of HELCOM efforts among the general public, including youth in the Baltic Sea countries²¹.

¹⁰ HELCOM Rec. 35/1 on HELCOM MPA <http://www.helcom.fi/Recommendations/Rec%2035-1.pdf>

¹¹ UK DEFRA, An Ecosystem Based Approach to the Common Fisheries Policy: Defining the Goals, 2002: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/DEFINING.pdf> 12.06.2014

¹² UK DEFRA, Payments for Ecosystem Services: A Best Practice Guide, 2013; https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200920/pb13932-pes-bestpractice-20130522.pdf, 14.08.2014

¹³ Convention on Biological Diversity and its AICHI biodiversity targets T 3, <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>, HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para 4 (B)

¹⁴ HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para 4 (B), EU ENVIRONMENT: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/international/index_en.htm,

¹⁵ HELCOM MORE 6/2013, Document 4/2, COMPILATION OF HELCOM MANUALS AND GUIDELINES, http://meeting.helcom.fi/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=16324&folderId=2434394&name=DLFE-54652.pdf, 10.06.2014

¹⁶ HELCOM MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY 2013, <http://helcom.fi/action-areas/monitoring-and-assessment/monitoring-and-assessment-strategy>, 10.06.2014

¹⁷ HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para 1 (K)

¹⁸ HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para2 (K)

¹⁹ HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para IV, 13 (M), 1(K)

²⁰ HELCOM Communication Strategy, 2014: <http://helcom.fi/Lists/Publications/HELCOM%20Communication%20Strategy.pdf>, 14.08.2014

²¹ HELCOM 2013 Declaration Para 4 (B), 7 (B), 5 (H), 2 (MSP)