

# Terms of Reference for the Response Group

(approved by HELCOM HOD 9/2002)

The duties of the Response Group (HELCOM RESPONSE) of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission are:

To advise the Commission in discharging its duties under Article 20 of the Helsinki Convention adopted at the Diplomatic Conference on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, Helsinki 9 April 1992, especially in respect of matters related to Articles 3 "Fundamental principles and obligations", 12 "Exploration and exploitation of the seabed and its subsoil", 13 "Notification and consultation on pollution incidents", 14 "Co-operation in combating marine pollution", 16 "Reporting and exchange of information" and 24 "Scientific and technological co-operation" as well as Annexes VI "Prevention of pollution from offshore activities" and VII "Response to pollution incidents" of the Convention, in relation to:

- I) Ensuring a swift national and trans-national response to marine pollution incidents, and in particular:
  - i) to promote adequate national emergency capacity (fire-fighting, emergency lightering and emergency towing capacities) to enable quick responses to maritime incidents, including ascertaining the adequacy and readiness of existing capacity, making it part of national capacity building and developing plans for sub-regional co-operation;
  - ii) to promote adequate national ability to respond to pollution incidents at sea and on the shoreline, including response methods for high density oils, orimulsion and for icy conditions;
  - iii) to maintain and further develop the standing operational network for trans-national co-operation in pollution incidents at sea and on the shoreline, including facilitation of direct contact and co-operation between the competent authorities dealing with pollution response matters in the Baltic Sea area, *inter alia*, through meetings, workshops and exercises;
  - iv) to update and keep under review the HELCOM Combatting Manual;
- II) Co-ordinating aerial surveillance flights:
  - i) to arrange CEPCO flights;
  - ii) to co-operate in oil spill detection using satellites;
  - iii) to ensure efficient aerial surveillance support during response operations;
- III) Co-operating with other international organizations
  - i) to develop suitable routines for co-operation in operational matters with the competent authorities acting under other international agreements and of relevance to response operations in the Baltic Sea area;
- IV) Facilitating effective prosecution of offenders of anti-pollution regulations
  - i) to develop annual maps and statistics of observations of deliberate, illegal oil discharges;
  - ii) to further develop procedures for the collection of evidence to be used for the prosecution of offenders of deliberate illegal discharges;
  - iii) to promote national and trans-national co-operation between competent authorities engaged in the collection of evidence and in the investigation/prosecution of offenders of deliberate, illegal discharges;
- V) Responding to pollution from offshore activities, and in particular:
  - i) to promote adequate pollution emergency plans for immediate response actions in case of pollution incidents;
- VI) Monitoring and assessing the implementation by the Contracting Parties of the Helsinki Convention and the HELCOM Recommendations in the combatting field, and in particular:
  - i) to co-ordinate the reporting.