

## Facts About HELCOM – THE HELSINKI COMMISSION

- **is the governing body** of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, adopted in 1992 and covering the whole of the Baltic Sea; HELCOM's vision for the future is the good ecological status of the Baltic Sea environment;
- **works as an environmental policy maker**, developing common environmental objectives and actions;
- **is an environmental focal point**, providing information on the state of the marine environment, the efficiency of measures and common initiatives as a basis for decision making in other international forums;
- **is a body for developing recommendations** to address the needs of the Baltic Sea;
- **is also a supervisory body**, ensuring the implementation of good environmental standards; and
- **is a coordinating body** in the event of major marine incidents.

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## Swedish Chairmanship of THE HELSINKI COMMISSION 2010-2012

# SWEDISH CHAIRMANSHIP OF HELCOM 2010 – 2012

The HELCOM Chairmanship rotates between the Contracting Parties every two years. Sweden will lead HELCOM between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2012 and has presented a five-point Chairmanship programme in Government Communication 2009/10:213 on Measures for a Living Sea.

## OVERALL PRIORITIES

### 1. Strengthen the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

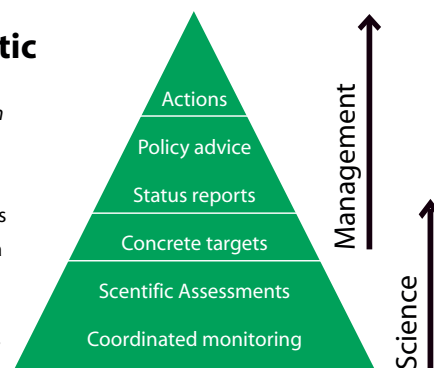
The meeting of environment ministers in May 2010 and the Ministerial Declaration have given HELCOM members a strong mandate to implement the Baltic Sea Action Plan and created momentum for regional action to carry out the National Implementation Plans presented at the meeting. HELCOM's crucial role in the regional work for the marine environment will be reflected in the fulfilment of the goals in the Baltic Sea Action Plan. National responsibility and national funding are crucial for moving from words to action. Strengthened cooperation and exchange of experiences between the members will play an important and supportive role. National funding can be combined with resources from international and regional financing institutions, such as the NIB and NEFCO technical assistance funds. Sweden will prioritise continued and increased involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

**2. Work for regular high-level meetings, preferably on an annual basis and at ministerial level.** The Baltic Sea Action Summit held in Helsinki in February 2010 demonstrated the importance of high-level support for the work of HELCOM and the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The fact that the HELCOM countries are now

### Helcoms' role in the Baltic

Works to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution through intergovernmental cooperation.

- **Environmental policy maker**  
developing common objectives and actions
- **Environmental focal point** for the Baltic Sea
- **Coordinates** regional monitoring activities and regularly produces targeted timely and scientifically sound assessments



moving into the implementation phase of the Baltic Sea Action Plan calls for more regular attention from the highest political level.

**3. Strengthen the role of HELCOM in regional marine environment action.** HELCOM should reassert itself as a strong, powerful and modern regional environmental organisation. A priority of the Swedish Chairmanship is the close involvement of different sectors – such as agriculture, fisheries, shipping, the business sector and civil society – in the work of HELCOM.

**4. Strengthen the role of HELCOM in the implementation of EU policies relevant to the Baltic Sea region.** Several on-going processes within the EU are highly significant for the Baltic Sea environment and mutually supportive of HELCOM's work. Increased coordination of these processes will benefit the future work of HELCOM. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, adopted during the Swedish Presidency of the EU, is a major policy initiative to give more EU attention to the Baltic Sea Region and to strengthen the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive states very clearly that regional conventions, like HELCOM for the Baltic Sea, should play a key role in the im-

plementation of the Directive. During the Swedish Chairmanship of HELCOM, priority will be given to ensure that the Baltic Sea Action Plan and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive go hand in hand.

**5. Guarantee that HELCOM decisions are based on the best available scientific knowledge.** HELCOM's decisions must be based on the best available scientific knowledge. Effective monitoring efforts are crucial. Solid scientific data will be the point of departure for the future work of HELCOM and for analysing the results of the members' activities and efforts. The credibility of HELCOM should be based on reliable data, good sampling methods and analysis, and models to be used by authorities in environmental assessments. Strengthened cooperation in this field will benefit the results of HELCOM's activities.

## HELCOM AND THE BALTIC SEA ACTION PLAN

The Helsinki Commission works to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution through intergovernmental cooperation between its Member States (Denmark, Estonia, the European Community, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden).

The Baltic Sea Action Plan is an ambitious programme that aims to restore the ecological status of the Baltic marine environment by 2021. It was adopted at the 2007 HELCOM ministerial meeting in Krakow, Poland, and aims for profound, innovative changes in the way we manage the environment in the Baltic Sea region. The plan builds on HELCOM's vision of 'a healthy Baltic Sea environment, with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable human economic and social activities'. The Baltic Sea Action Plan focuses on four components: eutrophication, hazardous substances, biological diversity and the environmental impact of shipping.