



HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 24/10

Adopted 25 June 2003 and amended 7 March 2019,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the 1992 Helsinki Convention

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

THE COMMISSION

RECALLING Article 3 of the Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention) according to which the Contracting Parties shall apply the precautionary principle, and Article 15 of the Helsinki Convention, in which the Contracting Parties agree to individually and jointly take all appropriate measures with respect to the Baltic Sea Area and its coastal ecosystems influenced by the Baltic Sea to conserve natural habitats and biological diversity and to protect ecological processes;

RECALLING FURTHER other HELCOM Recommendations and agreed documents of relevance to integrated coastal management and maritime spatial planning or related issues,

BEARING IN MIND that:

- a) the marine and coastal areas¹ are of great environmental, economic, social, cultural and recreational importance for the Baltic Sea area and its inhabitants;
- b) the Baltic Sea marine and coastal areas as defined in the Helsinki Convention Article 1 possess a unique biodiversity and resources. The use and protection of these areas require special planning and approaches of management² of human activities;
- c) the improper use of the marine and coastal areas may result in irreversible changes or damages from which the areas can only slowly recover, thus affecting the lives of future generations and their relations to the Baltic Sea and its coastal areas,

BEING DEEPLY CONCERNED about the increasing pressure on the marine and coastal environment arising from the growing number of human activities and the use of marine resources in the Baltic Sea region,

¹ *Coastal area(s)* (same as *coastal zone*) is defined as a zone following the Baltic Sea coastline, extending 3 km landwards (as this zone is described in HELCOM Recommendation 15/1) from the mainland coast to the adjacent marine offshore areas. The *offshore areas* extend from the outer border of the coastal areas as far offshore as it in each case is relevant for the sustainability of marine and coastal biodiversity and geodiversity (diversity of the geomorphology and geology), in particular if these areas are used or intended to be used in a way that conflict or may conflict with the aims of Article 3 of the Helsinki Convention. These zones thus cover Baltic Sea waters, the underlying seabed and coastal terrestrial areas including the biota as well as abiotic resources.

² *Management* is defined as an acknowledged, thoughtful and planned way to manage human activities with regard to the use of land, seabed, water and living resources considering the effects of these activities on adjacent and other ecosystems.

RECALLING that Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention have a common goal to draw up and apply maritime spatial plans, which are coherent across borders and apply an ecosystem-based approach, including the aim to contribute to achieve good environmental status.

BEING AWARE that the integrated coastal management and maritime spatial planning, as management tools, can contribute to promoting the sustainable growth of maritime economies, the sustainable development of marine areas and the sustainable use of marine resources.

RECOGNIZING that the lack of free access to spatial information on cover, use and biodiversity reduces the possibilities of integrated coastal management and maritime spatial planning to be fully applied in the process of sustainable use of marine and coastal resources of the seabed, land and water areas,

NOTING that the nine riparian countries of the Baltic Sea have or are in the process of developing a national legislation and policies regarding integrated coastal management and maritime spatial planning which are different from each other.

BEING CONVINCED that the marine and coastal management must be carried out in a way that safeguards the marine and terrestrial biodiversity of the marine and coastal areas, uses resources in an environmentally sustainable way and considering social, economic and cultural aspects of the inhabitants, users or visitors of the marine and coastal areas, in particular the traditional activities and customs,

WELCOMING furthermore the activities carried out in the Baltic Sea region through cooperation between HELCOM and VASAB³ which has resulted in joint visions, principles and guidelines for the Baltic Sea Region,

CONSIDERING for those Contracting Parties, , who are also EU Members States the relevant EU-Directives and recommendations such as the EU Integrated Coastal Zone Management recommendation, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) , EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU) and EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC), EU-Directive on assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (2001/42/EC), EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the amended EU Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment (2014/52/EU), and for the Russian Federation the Water Code of the Russian Federation, the Federal Act on the internal maritime waters, territorial sea and contiguous zone of the Russian Federation, Water Strategy of the Russian Federation and other relevant legal acts.

RECOMMENDS to the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention to develop maritime spatial plans and integrated coastal management measures which ensures the implementation of the principles for integrated management of human activities⁴, and are coordinated with regional marine management strategies.

RECOMMENDS FURTHER to the Contracting Parties to develop maritime spatial plans in accordance with the Baltic Sea Broad-scale Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Principles⁵ and utilizing the Guideline for the Implementation of Ecosystem-based Approach in Maritime Spatial Planning and Guidelines on Transboundary Consultations, Public Participation and Co-operation⁶;

RECOMMENDS ALSO:

- a) to identify laws and regulations of relevance for the use and protection of marine areas and, the authorities responsible for their implementation (governmental, sub-national or municipal sector officials);

³ VASAB = Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea

⁴ Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2002/413/EC)

⁵ Adopted by HELCOM HOD 34-2010 and the 54th Meeting of VASAB CSPD/BSR

⁶ Adopted by HELCOM HOD 50-2016 and 72nd Meeting of VASAB CSPD/BSR

- b) to use existing knowledge of stakeholders with interests concerning the use and protection of coastal and marine areas;
- c) to use existing knowledge of interacting and/or conflicting interests, obligations and activities of private and public stakeholders. Additional investigation can for example be carried out following the DPSIR⁷ concept;
- d) to develop criteria, standards and guidelines that are needed for integrated management of human activities taking into account cross-sectoral approach, as well as development of practical and applicable ways to share responsibility for plan management, implementation and enforcement;
- e) to use existing knowledge of the major planning and management issues for human activities in marine and coastal areas, and strive to align them, taking into account experiences and requirements from maritime spatial planning processes and the establishment of the HELCOM marine protected areas (HELCOM MPAs) network and management of MPAs;
- f) to identify data gaps and gaps in knowledge that may impede planning and management of human activities in coastal zones and marine areas, e.g. lack of spatial data on marine and coastal biodiversity (distribution of habitats and species) and natural resources, as well as problems connected with access to data (data availability and restrictions in use, e.g. copyright).
- g) to set up and carry out a scheme to fill in the identified data and knowledge gaps, e.g. by inventories and mapping of biodiversity (e.g. habitats and species) and resources, analysis of existing data or sharing experiences between authorities and stakeholders;
- h) to improve assessments of the status of biodiversity and of impacts of human activities on the marine and coastal environment; in support of the evaluation of favourable conservation status under the EU Habitats Directive and of good environmental status (GES) for marine waters as defined in the EU Marine Strategy Framework directive;
- i) to manage human activities in coastal and marine areas in such a way that marine resources are used sustainably and natural values of the environment are preserved by reducing user conflicts and adverse impacts of human activities and by addressing the tasks in *a* to *h*, in particular in the course of developing and implementing national maritime spatial plans and link to relevant programs of measures for coastal, and marine waters.

The implementation of this Recommendation should be evaluated at regular intervals, at least every six years.

Further considerations and suggested actions related to HELCOM activities are given in **Attachment 1**.

⁷ DPSIR = **d**iving forces (changes in the environment, e.g. industry and agriculture), **p**ressures on the environment (e.g. emissions and discharges), **s**tate (the quality of the environment), **i**mpacts (e.g. biodiversity loss and impacts on the economy) and **r**esponses (actions).

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Attachment 1

Further considerations and suggested actions related to HELCOM activities

- a) The HELCOM marine protected areas (HELCOM MPAs) and other marine protected areas should be of particular concern as well as areas where the local biodiversity is severely threatened or where the use of resources or the number of inhabitants or visitors is particularly high.
- b) A national meta-data base should preferably be formed in an early stage of implementation in order to facilitate the use of spatial data required, e.g. data on biodiversity, geodiversity, demography, infrastructure, and the development of land and water areas. The national database can be a part of the existing information structure, e.g. it may consist of a set of links to sub-national databases. The possibility to link up the national integrated coastal zone management and marine area management databases to an impending international HELCOM meta-data base should be anticipated.
- c) Identification of the existing successful ways to carry out integrated coastal management and maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea. In particular, bottom-up initiatives, where local or sub-national policies, programmes, projects or other initiatives that address both the coastal, marine and terrestrial areas and that have worked out successfully should be addressed. The experiences from these “success stories” should be taken into consideration by HELCOM who, together with the HELCOM Contracting Parties, should find ways to encourage such initiatives e.g. through funding of projects. In a similar way should the knowledge about well working instruments (technical solutions, methods) and potential new ways to apply the integrated coastal management and maritime spatial planning be made available to the public through workshops arranged by HELCOM.
- d) Identification of threats towards the marine and coastal areas that are of particular interest in the Baltic Sea region and that should be acknowledged simultaneously by several pertinent HELCOM groups.

Link, where appropriate, the implementation of integrated coastal management and maritime spatial planning with water resources management and land use planning in the catchment area of the Baltic Sea.