



HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 25/5

Adopted 2 March 2004
having regard to Article 13, Paragraph b)
of the Helsinki Convention

ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED FOR ESCORT TOWING IN TANKER TRANSPORT ROUTES TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 8 and Annex IV "Prevention of pollution from ships" of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (the Helsinki Convention), as amended, on the prevention of pollution from ships and on the safety of navigation,

RECALLING FURTHER the "Declaration on the Safety of Navigation and Emergency Capacity in the Baltic Sea Area" (HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration), adopted on 10 September 2001 in Copenhagen by the HELCOM Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting,

RECALLING ALSO Paragraph XI of the HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration containing the commitment of the Governments of the Contracting Parties to ensure adequate emergency capacity (fire fighting, emergency lightening and emergency towing capacities),

BEING AWARE that in many incidents satisfactory emergency capacity and the readiness hereof has prevented serious oil spills,

FURTHER BEING AWARE that failures in the propulsion or steering of a ship will cause an immediate risk for an accident, especially in long and narrow routes through shallow waters and archipelago areas and that even an adequate emergency towing vessel in stand-by may not have enough time to prevent the accident,

CONSCIOUS of the sensitivity of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea area and of the importance it represents to the people living around it, for economic, social, recreational and cultural reasons,

RECOGNIZING that if harmful substances are introduced to this vulnerable sea they will remain there for a long time,

ACKNOWLEDGING the difficulties certain areas in the Baltic Sea present to navigation due to narrow straits, shallow depths, islands, and ice cover during winter period,

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING the different location of the ports in the Baltic Sea area; some accessible via long, narrow and shallow fairways and other accessible via deep-water routes,

EXPRESSING concern as to the growing density of maritime traffic in the Baltic Sea area and the accidents which have taken place,

BEING CONVINCED of the need to improve the precautionary safety measures to avoid pollution incidents in case of technical failures of ships in the Baltic Sea area,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that in many places escort towing has been found to be an efficient tool in preventing severe groundings or collisions by steering and stopping a ship that has suddenly lost its own manoeuvring ability,

RECOMMENDS that the Governments of the Contracting Parties carry out for main tanker transport routes, bound to the main ports/terminals and/or off-shore loading places in their territory or in waters under their jurisdiction before 1 July 2006, an evaluation on the need for escort towing services for laden oil and chemical tankers on voyages to and from oil and chemical ports, terminals and off-shore loading places where a failure of propulsion or steering of a tanker is likely to cause a severe pollution incident due to narrow straits, shallow depths, archipelago areas and/or ice conditions during winter period,

REQUESTS the Governments of the Contracting Parties to report on the implementation of this Recommendation in accordance with Article 16, Paragraph 1 of the Helsinki Convention.