

Annex 4

HELCOM Recommendation 33/2

Adopted 6 March 2012
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

CO-OPERATION IN RESPONSE TO SPILLAGES OF OIL AND OTHER HARMFUL SUBSTANCES ON THE SHORE

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 14 and Annex VII of the 1992 Helsinki Convention on response to pollution incidents at sea, as well as HELCOM Response Manual, defining, *inter alia*, procedures and principles for requesting and providing assistance in case of a major spillage of oil or other hazardous substance at sea;

RECALLING FURTHER the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, requiring the Contracting Parties to identify the need for and finalize the quantification of countermeasures for shoreline response, and to prepare concrete plans/programmes for fulfilling them by 2013;

RECALLING ALSO HELCOM Recommendation 28E/13 "Strengthening of sub-regional co-operation in response field", requiring the Contracting Parties to integrate shoreline response into national contingency plans, and cooperate by conducting trainings and organizing exchange programmes to ensure swift and adequate response capacity and to develop best practices, as well as HELCOM Recommendation 31E/6 "Integrated wildlife response planning in the Baltic Sea area";

APPRECIATING the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) regarding oil spill preparedness and response, including shoreline response, and **WELCOMING** the IMO Manual on Assessment of Oil Spill Risks and Preparedness, providing good strategic guidance for developing oil spill response capacity, and addressing, among others, shoreline protection and clean-up;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT Council Decision 2007/779/EC of 8 November 2007 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism and Council Conclusions adopted on 27 November 2008 calling for civil protection capabilities to be enhanced by a European mutual assistance system building on the civil protection modular approach;

While RECOGNIZING the substantial and continuous efforts by the Contracting Parties to develop and maintain adequate resources to efficiently respond to pollution accidents at sea, **REMAINING CONSCIOUS** that there are factors, such as confined character of the Baltic Sea waters or weather conditions, which may make it impossible to prevent the pollution reaching the shore;

BEING AWARE of possible devastating consequences connected to the polluted shoreline, including destruction of vulnerable ecosystems and putting at risk socio-economic well-being of people living in the coastal areas;

RECOGNIZING that experience in responding to a major pollution incident requiring resources outside a country has clearly demonstrated the critical importance of administrative procedures to facilitate rapid provision of assistance and deployment of human resources and equipment;

In this respect **RECALLING** IMO Resolution A.983(24) "Guidelines for facilitation of response to a pollution incident" addressing co-operation to facilitate the prompt provision of mutual assistance in the event of pollution incident;

APPRECIATING that there are already some resources available in the Baltic Sea countries to deal with pollution at the shore, including sensitivity maps and integrated decision support tools incorporating all relevant information needed during the pollution accident;

DESIRING that, similarly to the well-functioning regional system to respond to pollution accidents at sea, permanent cooperation in responding to shoreline pollution in the Baltic Sea is established and promoted, including constantly working on building adequate shoreline response capabilities;

RECOGNIZING that for such cooperation in shoreline response to become region-wide, effective and operational, the scope of the Helsinki Convention as well as of HELCOM Response Manual needs to be extended to enable requesting and providing international shoreline clean-up assistance and dealing with practicalities of such assistance;

AGREES to extend in 2013 the scope of the Helsinki Convention to cooperation on shoreline response with the aim to ensure that:

- adequate equipment and expertise in the Baltic Sea countries to respond to pollution at the shore is put in place,
- response to pollution at shore is integrated with overall contingency planning,
- a Baltic Sea State can ask for assistance from another Baltic Sea State when dealing with pollution at the shore,
- Contracting Parties exchange information regarding their systems for shoreline pollution;

RECOMMENDS the Contracting Parties to undertake the necessary measures to develop and put in place by 2013 a shoreline response plan integrated with existing contingency plan(s), taking into account the following best practices in the planning process:

- a) areas of high environmental, economic and cultural significance are prioritized in advance based on the mapping of the sensitivity to accidental oil pollution, with the understanding that further prioritization may take place in a real time situation;
- b) baseline data on those priority areas are collected and collated;
- c) a plan for assessment of environmental damage and reinstatement of the environment following spills is developed in advance and form part of the integrated shoreline response plan; the plan indicates immediate and longer term assessment actions, data collection protocols, sampling methodologies, standard operating procedures, laboratory analysis, etc.; IMO/UNEP Guidance Manual on the Assessment and Restoration of Environmental Damage following Marine Oil Spills provides generic advice to assist the development of such a plan;
- d) waste management plan is put in place;
- e) all institutions and entities involved in response, assessment and restoration activities are identified and clear responsibilities are assigned.

RECOMMENDS FURTHER the Contracting Parties to constantly work on increasing and maintaining their capabilities for shoreline response, including technical resources and expertise with the aim to sufficiently protect environmental resources sensitive to oil in prioritized areas against pollution, and to ensure that:

- a) designated authorities are alarmed without any delay in case of a threat of shoreline pollution so that the resources can be mobilized at an early stage;
- b) response action on the site of the spill is well organized, adequate and substantial and taken as soon as possible;
- c) response action, including cleanup method and the resources are adequate;
- d) common basic standards on health and safety and decontamination are defined.

RECOMMENDS FURTHERMORE that the need for assistance from volunteers in shoreline clean-up is analysed in advance by relevant authorities, and if such assistance is decided, necessary measures are undertaken to set up in advance a well-organized and trained national volunteers' structure;

RECOMMENDS ALSO the Contracting Parties to exchange information and develop knowledge on shoreline clean-up and treatment techniques appropriate for the shoreline types and coastal environmental settings in the Baltic Sea region, including through conducting international shoreline response exercises;

REQUESTS the HELCOM Response Group to map existing shoreline response resources available for international assistance in the Baltic Sea by 2013, and in doing so consider and develop the most suitable ways to define the resources that can be requested, for instance to consist of modules whereby for each module tasks, capacities, components, and degree of self-efficiency and interoperability are defined;

REQUESTS FURTHER the Response Group to include information on shoreline response resources available in the Contracting Parties in the HELCOM Response Manual and in addition to make use of the common HELCOM map and data GIS service to facilitate the exchange of information, including for mapping of shoreline response resources in the Baltic Sea.