OUTCOME OF THE 37TH MEETING OF BALTIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMISSION (HELCOM)

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OUTCOME OF THE 37TH MEETING OF BALTIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMISSION (HELCOM)

Introduction

0.1 The 37th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission was attended by all Contracting Parties, by Chairs and Vice-Chairs of HELCOM Groups, the following observer organizations: Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), Baltic Farmers Forum on Environment (BFFE), BONUS Baltic Organisations' Network for Funding Science EEIG (BONUS-EEIG), Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) – Baltic Sea Commission, Oceana and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and three invited guests: Mr Jacek Zaucha (VASAB), Mr Kari Homanen (NEFCO) and Ms Christina Gestrin. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1** to this Outcome.

0.2 The Meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Commission, Mr. Harry Liiv, Estonia.

0.3 The Meeting was opened on Thursday, 10 March 2016, at 9:00.

Agenda Item 1 **Adoption of the Agenda**

Documents: 1-1, 1-2

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda (document 1-1).

1.2 The Meeting held a moment of silence to commemorate Prof. Krzysztof Skóra from Poland, internationally renowned expert who contributed significantly to HELCOM work.

Agenda Item 2 **Outcome of the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference**

Documents: 2-1

2.1 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the HELCOM Marine Litter Stakeholder Conference held on 9 March 2016 (document 2-1) and agreed on the HELCOM key messages based on the Conference, as presented by Ms Heike Imhoff, Germany, moderator of the conference (**Annex 2**).

2.2 The Meeting appreciated the well organised conference, thanked Ms Heike Imhoff for the dynamic moderation of the event and the Secretariat for the preparations.

2.3 The Meeting stressed the importance of timely implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML), encouraged the Contracting Parties and stakeholders to lead implementation of individual actions and to seek stronger involvement especially of municipalities and the private sector.

2.4 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Finland to lead the development of the indicator on microlitter in the water column.

2.5 The Meeting emphasized that HELCOM could have a bigger role in raising awareness about marine litter and agreed to explore the idea of organizing a regional round table on marine litter following a German example.

2.6 The Meeting requested the Pressure Working Group to continuously follow up the timely implementation of the RAP ML and consider a regional round table on marine litter.

2.7 The Meeting took note of the information by CCB regarding ongoing activities to abate the problem of littering of the marine environment and indication that one of the urgent tasks is assessing of riverine input of marine litter.

Agenda Item 3 Next HELCOM Ministerial Meeting

Documents: 3-1, 3-2

3.1 The Meeting endorsed the updated roadmap for HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach (document 3-1).

3.2 The Meeting considered the next Ministerial Meeting, tentatively planned for 2018, using document 3-2 as background for discussion and supported the idea to organize high level sessions on the planned topics with the participation of ministers during 2016 and 2017 to ensure high-level interest in HELCOM work.

3.3 The Meeting welcomed the information by Finland on an initiative to organize a ministerial HELCOM session during the European Maritime Day (EMD) in Turku 18-19 May 2016 and took note that the invitation to the Contracting Parties will be sent shortly. Finland invited the Contracting Parties to suggest topics for the Ministerial event, possibly linking to the theme of the European Maritime Day.

3.4 The Meeting considered potential topics for the Ministerial Meeting and recognized that both 2nd HELCOM holistic assessment of the ecosystem health (HOLAS II) and nutrient reduction scheme provide possibilities to take stock of HELCOM achievements in improving the status of the marine environment and to consider strategic directions for further HELCOM work, while marine litter and costs of degradation of the marine environment are of potential focus, too.

3.5 The Meeting noted that the Ministerial Meeting would be held either under the EU or Finnish Chairmanship of HELCOM, took note that Finland is ready to host the meeting if decided to be held in the second half of 2018, and agreed that the exact timing of the Meeting should be decided by 2017.

Agenda Item 4 Matters arising from the subsidiary bodies

Documents: 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-3-Rev.1, 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8, 4-9, 4-10, 4-10-Rev.1, 4-10-Rev.2, 4-11, 4-12, 4-13, 4-14, 4-15, 4-16, 4-17, 4-18

Gear Group

4.1 The Meeting took note of the Outcome of GEAR 13-2016 (document 4-8) as presented by the Chair of the Gear Group, Ms Heike Imhoff. The Meeting welcomed the work of Gear and expressed appreciation to the regional coordination process that is facilitated by the Gear Group.

4.2 The Meeting noted that the 'Joint documentation on coordination of Programmes of Measures' was finalized by the Gear meeting as mandated by HOD 49-2015, to be made available via a URL address by 31 March 2016. The Meeting recalled that the report documents the HELCOM requirements and recommendations related to measures to protect the Baltic Sea and the co-operation among all Contracting Parties.

4.3 The Meeting requested Russia to clarify their study reservation on the Joint Documentation as soon as possible.

4.4 The Meeting noted that language as regards to the Actions outlined in Annex 3 of the Joint Documentation will be corrected to consistently refer to "Actions to be considered".

4.5 The Meeting took note that that Gear group is preparing, upon invitation, an input to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Common Implementation Strategy (MSFD CIS) work programme for the years 2016-2018 with the intention to submit the input to the meeting of the Marine Strategy Coordination Group on 7 April 2016.

4.6 The Meeting noted that the Contracting Parties through the Gear group are sharing information on the use of the 2nd HELCOM holistic assessment of the ecosystem health and have initiated a discussion on how to arrange the consultation on the first version of assessment report that will be prepared by mid-2017 in order to have a common approach. The Meeting stressed the importance to coordinate national time tables so that the joint regional products such as HOLAS II can be made full use of.

4.7 The Meeting recognized that a key issue for the success of the HOLAS II project is to have a set of agreed HELCOM core indicators ready by the end of 2016 and encouraged the Lead and co-Lead Countries on indicator development to prioritize this work during 2016.

4.8 The Meeting endorsed organizing the next meeting of GEAR on 10-11 May 2016, Gothenburg, Sweden.

4.9 The Meeting took note of the clarification on the status of the future HELCOM actions (document 4-15) and that all listed actions are agreed except for Regional Baltic Underwater Noise Roadmap 2015-2017.

4.10 The Meeting considered the revised Underwater Noise Roadmap 2015-2017 containing an additional reference to IMO as proposed by Russia (document 4-17) and adopted the Roadmap (**Annex 3**).

4.11 The Meeting decided that Pressure WG should be the main group responsible for the Action to 'Assess the role of [internal nutrient reserves][stored nutrients] in the Baltic and potential management measures' with possible contribution by State and Conservation WG as relevant.

4.12 The Meeting requested the identified responsible working groups (document 4-15) to consider how to initiate the actions.

4.13 The Meeting noted that the action on 'Blue catch crops/mussel farming' was deleted from Annex 3 of the Joint Documentation (Outcome of GEAR 13-2016, para 3.5). Estonia, European Union and Sweden regretted the lack of the agreement on the action (Outcome of GEAR 13-2016, para 3.6) and pointed out that the action represents a good example of combining the environmental, economic and social dimension and aims at sharing information and best practices and should be further explored in HELCOM.

4.14 The Meeting noted the strict mandate of Germany not to accept this action.

4.15 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide their feedback on this action for further consideration at HOD 50-2016.

4.16 The Meeting welcomed an initiative and proposal by Poland to take forward the actions 'Adjustment or utilization of EU data collection framework' and 'Testing alternative fishing gears/fishing techniques' already prior to the next meeting of the Fish group.

HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG

4.17 The Meeting took note of the information on the current mandate and achievements of the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (document 4-16).

4.18 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the VASAB Workshop on MSP held on 24 February 2016 in Gdansk, Poland, as presented by the Chair of VASAB Mr Jacek Zaucha (**Presentation 1**).

4.19 The Meeting thanked the VASAB Chair for the introduction and VASAB for their initiative to organize the workshop. The Meeting welcomed the invitation by the VASAB Chair to the Contracting Parties to attend the MSP Forum on 23-24 November 2016 in Riga, Latvia.

4.20 The Meeting took note of the introduction on the added value of the co-operation within the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG by the Co-Chair of the group Ms Anita Mäkinen and thanked for her contribution.

4.21 The Meeting expressed willingness from the HELCOM side to continue the good co-operation with VASAB and recognized the unique set-up of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG as well as its added value in facilitating coherent elaboration and implementation of maritime spatial plans across the borders in the

Baltic Sea. The Meeting emphasized the tangible results achieved by the group, including incorporating an ecosystem approach into MSP.

4.22 The Meeting took note of the view by EU that the WG is a good example of sea-basin cooperation on MSP that can also facilitate the work of the Contracting Parties being EU countries to implement the MSP Directive.

4.23 The Meeting supported the prolongation of the work of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

4.24 The Meeting took note of the proposal by Estonia that the WG should also deal with Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

4.25 The Meeting considered and supported the proposal for coordination between HELCOM and VASAB in preparing the future MSP tasks (document 4-6).

4.26 The Meeting agreed that a document on future MSP work, including a first draft list of MSP pan-Baltic topics will be prepared based on the exchange at this Meeting and taking into account the suggestions by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, for consideration by 72nd Meeting of the VASAB CSPD/BSR, 8 June, Warsaw, Poland and by HOD 50-2016 in June, Estonia. The Meeting noted that feedback is also being arranged within VASAB and the document will be prepared jointly by the HELCOM and VASAB Secretariats.

4.27 The Meeting welcomed the participation of the VASAB Chair in HELCOM meetings to pursue closer cooperation.

NOx Emission Control Area (NECA)

4.28 The Meeting considered the draft roadmap for the Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECAs as included in document 4-3, introduced by Denmark.

4.29 The Meeting recalled that eight out of nine coastal countries have already expressed readiness to agree on the roadmap as included in document 4-3.

4.30 The Meeting welcomed the information that the remaining country Finland has also clarified its position and can now agree on the NECA Roadmap included in document 4-3.

4.31 The Meeting agreed on the final wording of the roadmap as included in document 4-3-Rev.1, confirmed the decision to submit the proposal by the HELCOM countries to designate the Baltic Sea as a NOx Emission Control Area with the corresponding submission by the North Sea countries to IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee 70 in 2016 and adopted the "Roadmap for the simultaneous designation of Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECAs" as included in **Annex 4**.

4.32 The Meeting highlighted that this decision to adopt the NECA Roadmap is one of the major single decisions HELCOM has taken during the last years in terms of concrete nutrient pollution reduction potential and took note of the statement by the Chair on the occasion (**Annex 5**) where he thanked the Contracting Parties for having the courage to take this important decision for the Baltic Sea marine environment.

4.33 The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to submit suggestions for concrete updates to the IMO NECA submission and background document by **31 March 2016** and welcomed the offer by Finland to coordinate the updating process together with the HELCOM Secretariat with a view of submitting the revised files to HOD 50-2016 for adoption according to the NECA roadmap.

4.34 The Meeting took note of the statement by the EU that with regard to those Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States there is an obligation to coordinate positions within the EU, with appropriate involvement of the Shipping Working Party.

Safety of Navigation

4.35 The Meeting adopted the revisions to HELCOM Recommendation 25/7 on safety of winter navigation as included in document 4-2 (**Annex 6**) and agreed to keep the current Recommendation number 25/7, important due to direct references in, i.a., the IMO Polar Code.

Sewage from Passenger ships

4.36 The Meeting emphasized the importance of reducing nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea from ships' sewage, and recalled the agreement in the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration meaning that the Contracting Parties undertake to ensure adequate port reception facilities prior the application dates of the Baltic Sea Special Area requirements.

4.37 The Meeting underlined the urgency to enhance the work in this regard and continue the efforts to make certain that all relevant concerns are properly addressed and recognized the need for continuous regional data collection and monitoring of the progress and improvements already made.

4.38 The Meeting decided to request the HELCOM Maritime Group to include necessary action items in the existing work plan of the HELCOM Cooperation Platform on Port Reception Facilities and to prioritize the group's work accordingly.

4.39 The Meeting welcomed the information by Germany on organization of the International Workshop on Port Reception Facilities for the Baltic Sea as Special Area according to MARPOL Annex IV (PRF-Workshop) in Kiel, Germany on 30 June – 1 July 2016, to be organized by BSH in co-operation with Port of Kiel and BPO, on behalf of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety. The draft concept of the workshop was distributed during the Meeting and all Contracting Parties are invited to attend the workshop.

State and Conservation Working Group

4.40 The Meeting took note of the introduction by the Co-Chair of State and Conservation WG Mr Urmas Lips on the draft Recommendation on Co-operation and coordination of research vessel based monitoring in off-shore areas and procedures for granting permits for monitoring and research activities (document 4-1) and welcomed the information by Russia that they can lift the study reservation on the Recommendation.

4.41 The Meeting adopted the Recommendation on Co-operation and coordination of research vessel based monitoring in off-shore areas and procedures for granting permits for monitoring and research activities as HELCOM Recommendation 37/1 (**Annex 7**).

4.42 The Meeting took note of the introduction by the Lead Country Germany on the draft Recommendation on Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the 2013 HELCOM red list (document 4-9). The Meeting expressed its appreciation to Germany, and especially Mr Dieter Boedeker for leading the work and facilitating the consultations on the Recommendation that have taken place since its presentation to HELCOM 36-2015.

4.43 The Meeting took note of the proposal of the European Union to add reference to the Habitats and Birds Directive to the preamble of the draft Recommendation.

4.44 The Meeting noted that all Contracting Parties could accept to add such reference being a factual clarification and agreed to amend paragraph 8 of the preamble of the draft Recommendation by making specific reference to the Habitats and Birds Directive according to inserted text in italics:

- BEING AWARE that those Contracting Parties being also EU Member States, have to coordinate their activities regarding threatened species with the implementation of relevant EU Directives, *such as the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)*, and the Common Fisheries Policy as relevant.

4.45 The Meeting adopted the Recommendation on Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the 2013 HELCOM red list' as HELCOM Recommendation 37/2 (**Annex 8**).

4.46 In this context, the Meeting also took note of the suggestion by Germany to consider in the next revision of the HELCOM Red lists a more in-depth analysis of the natural dynamics and ecological peculiarities of the Baltic Sea and their influence on the population of all species groups. Currently, for instance, benthos' species, which are naturally rare and/or at the edge of their distribution range were only evaluated when a

combination of continuing decline in the population, range, or quantity and quality of their habitats could be detected for the HELCOM area (see e.g. page 26 in BSEP No. 140). Another suggestion for future evaluations is to look deeper into the occurrence and distribution of species, subsequently, to episodic natural processes such as saltwater inflows. Germany asked to come back to these questions at State and Conservation 4-2016, 7-11 April, Schwerin, Germany.

4.47 The Meeting noted that Oceana regretted how the negotiations on the Recommendation since HELCOM 36-2015 had weakened the Recommendation and delayed other HELCOM activities related to the conservation of species and biotopes.

4.48 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Germany to take the lead on the planned development of the HELCOM Recommendation on conservation plans for species, habitats and biotopes which are at risk of extinction according to the 2013 HELCOM Red list.

4.49 The Meeting considered the final draft report 'HELCOM Ecological coherence assessment of the marine protected areas network in the Baltic Sea' that has been developed under the State and Conservation Working Group with financial support from the Nordic Council of Ministers (document 4-12).

4.50 The Meeting noted the following corrections to the report:

- clarification on the mentioned 60% target for assessing representatively of landscapes, i.e. that it was used in the HELCOM 2010 assessment of ecological coherence, inspired by a European Commission Guidance document for the application of the habitats directive in the marine environment;
- correction of Table 15: entry of row 6, right most column with countries, changed from Germany to Denmark.

4.51 The Meeting furthermore agreed on the deletion of the sentence on page 53, paragraph 2, starting with "The remaining 37%...".

4.52 The Meeting welcomed the results of the ECONET project, approved the 'HELCOM Ecological coherence assessment of the marine protected areas network in the Baltic Sea' including the corrections presented to the Meeting, and agreed to publish the report in the Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings, pending clarification on the study reservation by Russia **by 31 March 2016**.

4.53 The Meeting took note of the encouragement by Oceana to put stronger emphasis on the assessment of management of the MPAs in the future.

Aquaculture Recommendation

4.54 The Meeting considered the draft HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture (document 4-10) and Finnish comments to the draft (document 4-13) as well as the outcome of the Correspondence work on follow up of the draft Recommendation led by Mr Marcin Ruciński, Chair of HELCOM FISH (document 4-11) .

4.55 The Meeting clarified the outstanding issues and reached a common understanding on the follow-up work of the Recommendation on BAT/BEP descriptions based on Annex II of the 1992 Helsinki Convention.

4.56 The Meeting considered the revised draft Recommendation (4-10-Rev.1, 4-10-Rev.2) and adopted the Recommendation as HELCOM Recommendation 37/3 (**Annex 9**).

4.57 The Meeting considered and agreed on the revised terms of reference for the HELCOM FISH Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG AQUACULTURE) (document 4-18).

4.58 The Meeting thanked Mr Marcin Ruciński, Chair of the HELCOM FISH WG for advocating consensus building across sectorial borders and facilitating the negotiations of the new HELCOM

Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture, resulting in adoption of both the Recommendation and the Terms of Reference of the Correspondence Group at this meeting.

4.59 The Meeting recalled that HELCOM Recommendations are instruments to implement the Helsinki Convention, often providing a general framework for implementation where the details of follow-up do not have to be fixed at the time of the adoption of the Recommendations.

Implementation follow-up

Hot Spots

4.60 The Meeting took note of the information on the status of HELCOM Hot Spots, the identified pollution sites in the Baltic Sea catchment area (document 4-7).

4.61 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to correct the information regarding deletion of the hot spot Krakow - Plaszow WWTP in document 4-7 as well as on the HELCOM website.

4.62 The Meeting took note of the information by Russia regarding the on-going work on cleaning the hot spots in Russia and the plan to apply for their deletion from the HELCOM list during the year 2016.

4.63 The Meeting took note of the information by Greenpeace Russia on the alarming situation at Krasny Bor hazardous waste landfill submitted by CCB (document 7-1).

4.64 The Meeting took note of the concern expressed by Estonia, Finland and Sweden about the risk which the present state of the landfill poses to the environment of the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea and urged Russia to make all efforts to resolve the situation.

4.65 The Meeting took note of the information by Russia regarding measures which are planned to be implemented to mitigate the existing alarming situation in Krasny Bor and initial steps to rectify the situation in the hot spot.

4.66 The Meeting welcomed that more information on the planned action with regard to the hot spot will be presented at the Baltic Sea Day 2016 in St.Petersburg and requested Russia to provide current information on the situation around the Krasny Bor landfill as well as on the undertaken measures and planned activities to reduce environmental risk posed by the site at PRESSURE 4-2016.

4.67 The Meeting noted that Estonia offers to share their own experience in remediation of similar hot spots.

BSAP follow-up

4.68 The Meeting took note of the presentation by the Secretariat on the progress of the visualization of the BSAP-follow-up system and noted that the reporting, as agreed by HOD 49-2015, of national actions under the Baltic Sea Action Plan and the Ministerial Declarations 2010 and 2013 is advancing but is not yet completed by all countries (**Presentation 2**).

4.69 The Meeting took note of the demonstration of the web-based BSAP explorer that provides the possibility to view the assessment results, search for specific topics of interest, and access supporting information to the assessment of accomplishment.

4.70 The Meeting welcomed that the BSAP explorer provides a transparent presentation of HELCOM achievements and acknowledged that it offers useful information also for the national level, can be used to support prioritization of the actions not yet implemented and for raising public awareness.

4.71 The Meeting noted that responding to the questionnaires was in general felt as straightforward while for some issues, such as those related to fisheries, the reporting could possibly be made even easier in the future by clearly identifying which actions are to be reported nationally or otherwise.

4.72 The Meeting agreed to report the accomplishment of remaining national actions **by 31 March 2016** by responding to the questionnaires and requested the countries to inform the Secretariat when the reporting has been finalized.

4.73 The Meeting expressed the wish to make BSAP explorer open in April 2016, after the reporting by 31 March, and agreed to do so even in case of partially incomplete information.

4.74 The Meeting took note that there is a possibility to present the BSAP follow-up system and BSAP explorer at the Baltic Sea Day 2016 in St. Petersburg to facilitate the organizing of a systematic nationally coordinated reporting on HELCOM actions. Russia requested the Secretariat to offer assistance in using the BSAP-follow system.

Eutrophication

4.75 The Meeting took note of the information by the Chair of the Pressure WG Mr Lars Sonesten on the current status of the implementation of the HELCOM nutrient input reduction scheme (**Presentation 3**). In his presentation, the Pressure WG Chair highlighted the importance of further adjustments of the PLUS database, MAI CART OPER project as well as timing, completeness and quality of data collection and reporting. The Meeting thanked Mr Lars Sonesten for the excellent presentation.

4.76 The Meeting discussed the progress achieved and took note of the following information by the Contracting Parties on the national measures to be put in place to further reduce nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea:

- Germany underlined the eutrophication issue remaining the biggest HELCOM challenge including riverine and shipping inputs and explaining the broad German marine related approach that besides the MSFD also includes WFD, the Fertilizer and Sewage Regulations or, for instance, ongoing considerations of an inter-agency nitrogen strategy.
- Sweden highlighted the need to simultaneously launch implementation of measures to abate internal load within the Baltic Sea, that constitute a vast source of nutrients, with the land-based measures to reduce the input of nutrients.
- Poland informed on an ongoing national consultation regarding new measures to be undertaken by Poland to reduce the input of nutrients. Poland will provide information regarding the new measures within 2016.
- Lithuania expressed the concern that according to national assessment, the phosphorus CART for Lithuania is unachievable even when all possible measures, including the innovative ones, have been implemented. Lithuania also informed the Meeting that a significant part of the measures being implemented by Lithuania are included into river basin management plans.

4.77 The Meeting noted that additional measures and investments have taken place in the coastal countries since the MAI/CART assessment period (up to 2012) and therefore, further reduction of nutrient inputs to the sea can be expected. At the same time, the Meeting recognized that there is a substantial time-lag between the reduction of inputs and positive effects in the marine environment, therefore, any early signals of the recovery are of importance to capture and communicate.

4.78 The Meeting recognized the challenge of achieving a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea with regard to eutrophication and re-confirmed that it is a pan-Baltic issue concerning all Contracting Parties and which needs to be addressed in a holistic way and with involvement of other sectors in HELCOM work.

4.79 The Meeting welcomed that the reallocation of extra reduction in one basin to the others will be discussed at PRESSURE 4-2016 and reported to HOD 50-2016, accordingly.

4.80 The Meeting considered the draft Recommendations on waterborne pollution input assessment and the draft Recommendation on monitoring of airborne pollution (document 4-4), noted that the majority of the Contracting Parties are ready to adopt the Recommendations and took note of the study reservation by Germany on the draft Recommendations. The Meeting invited Germany to clarify their study reservation as soon as possible, but no later than HOD 50-2016, and mandated HOD 50-2016 to adopt the Recommendations.

4.81 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the 'Project on making HELCOM eutrophication assessments operational (EUTRO-OPER)' (January 2014 – December 2015) (document 4-14).

4.82 The Meeting noted that project activities related to indicators will continue as 'EUTRO-OPER EXTENDED' and that financial support from Germany provides resources to cover some of the activities proposed by the Intersessional network of eutrophication experts.

Agenda Item 5 **Activities of the Commission during 2015 and contributions to the work of the Helsinki Commission**

Documents: 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-4, 5-5

5.1 The Meeting took note of the statement by Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, the Executive Secretary of HELCOM, on the work of the Secretariat, including her comments and evaluation of the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies during 2015 (**Annex 10**).

5.2 The Meeting took note of the draft report on HELCOM activities in 2015 (document 5-2) and asked the Contracting Parties to provide their possible comments **by 31 March 2016**, and decided to have it published thereafter in an overview form.

5.3 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Ms. Kaisa Kononen, Executive Director of the BONUS Secretariat, on the BONUS recent activities (**Presentation 4**, document 5-1).

5.4 The Meeting recalled the good track record of the successful co-operation between HELCOM and BONUS, appreciated the added value the BONUS programme has created in the Baltic Sea region in general and to consolidate marine research to better respond to policy needs and expressed an interest to continue the co-operation also in the future.

5.5 The Meeting took note of the statements by CCB (document 5-3), WWF (document 5-4) and Oceana (document 5-5) and thanked the Observers for presenting their views and the contribution.

Agenda Item 6 **Accounts 2014–2015, budget 2016–2017 and other institutional and organisational matters of the Commission**

Documents: 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4-Corr1, 6-5, 6-6

6.1 The Meeting took note of the explanatory memorandum on the accounts of the Helsinki Commission for the financial period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (document 6-1) and adopted the Audit Report by the National Audit Office of Finland concerning the financial period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 together with the Financial Statement (**Annex 11**) and discharged the accountables from responsibility in respect of the implementation of the budget 2014–2015.

6.2 The Meeting mandated the Secretariat together with the host country Finland, within the available resources, to further investigate the recommendation included in the Audit Report and conclude on any further action by HELCOM.

6.3 The Meeting took note that the Working Capital Fund still remains below the level required by the Financial Rule 3.4 and needs to be replenished.

6.4 The Meeting adopted the budget for the financial period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (a new presentation as contained in **Annex 12** to the Outcome of this Meeting).

6.5 The Meeting expressed its appreciation for the efforts of Lithuania in the past few years towards reaching the equal share contribution to the budget of the Commission in accordance with Article 22.3 of the Helsinki Convention and recognized that after the transitional period Lithuania will reach the equal share, calculated on the basis of the 2014-2015 budget, in the coming financial period 2016-2017.

6.6 The Meeting considered the budget estimate for 2017-2018 (documents 6-4 and 6-4-Corr1) and endorsed it taking into account the request by Lithuania regarding the presentation of the income budget to reflect more clearly equal shares.

6.7 The Meeting took note that Germany noted that the Helsinki Convention does not contain the possibility of freezing equal shares based on the budget of 2014/2015 and agreed to come back to this issue at a Heads of Delegation meeting.

6.8 The Meeting took note of the draft priorities of the upcoming EU Chairmanship of HELCOM (1 July 2016-30 July 2018) (document 6-5) and welcomed the information and that the EU invited the Contracting Parties to provide feedback on the draft priorities **by 11 April 2016**.

6.9 The Meeting took note of the four applications for observership to HELCOM, i.e., from the PlasticsEurope and Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) (document 6-2), INTERTANKO (document 6-3) and European Anglers Association (EAA) (document 6-6) and granted these organizations observer status.

Agenda Item 7 Any other business

Documents: 7-1, 7-2, 7-3, 7-4, 7-5

7.1 The Meeting took note of the information by Russia on dredging material management at sea in connection with "Bronka" Multifunctional Transshipment Marine Operations Centre (document 7-3) and invited the Contracting Parties to provide any questions they may have to the material presented and dredging operations at Bronka within a month, to be submitted to the Secretariat. Russia expressed willingness to answer questions by the Contracting Parties.

7.2 The Meeting took note of the information by CCB on the need by the Government of the Russian Federation to undertake all appropriate measures to comply with fundamental principles and requirements of the Helsinki Convention (Art. 3, 7, 15, 16-17) with regard of construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline (document 7-2).

7.3 The Meeting noted the point by Finland in relation of the information by CCB that the Ministerial Meeting in 2013 decided to act upon the critical situation of ringed seals in the Gulf of Finland.

7.4 The Meeting took note of the information by Russia on the preparations of the 17th International Environmental Forum Baltic Sea Day which will be held in St. Petersburg 22-23 March 2016 (document 7-5) and invited all Contracting Parties and stakeholders to attend the event.

7.5 The Meeting took note of the information by Finland on a stakeholder seminar to be organized by PA Nutri in Gdansk, Poland on 14 April 2016 which will be devoted to the measures to reduce input of nutrients to the Baltic Sea.

7.6 The Meeting took note of the WWF booklet: How to safeguard the seas with ecosystem-based management (document 7-4) and appreciated the efforts to promote understanding of ecosystem approach.

7.7 The Meeting took note of the information from Sweden that in the preparation of the Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), to be held on 8-9 November 2016, it is now possible to propose topics for seminars until 17 May 2016 (strategyforum@si.se).

7.8 The Meeting took note of the statement by the European Union as included in **Annex 13**.

Agenda Item 8 Next meeting(s) of the Commission

Documents: None

8.1 The Meeting decided to arrange the next meeting of the Commission on 28 February - 1 March 2017 in Helsinki. A preliminary reservation for HELCOM 39-2018 has been made for week 10 in March 2018.

8.2 The Meeting thanked Estonia for offering to host the next Heads of Delegation Meeting HOD 50-2016 to be held near Tallinn, on 15-16 June 2016.

Agenda Item 9 Outcome of the Meeting

Documents: 9-1

9.1 The Meeting adopted the Draft Outcome as contained in document 9-1, thanked the Secretariat for the excellent support during the Meeting and decided that, according to Article 11.1 of the Rules of Procedure, the Executive Secretary in consultation with the HELCOM Chair should submit the Outcome of the Meeting to all Contracting Parties and to any Government, Intergovernmental Organisations and Non-Governmental International Organisations invited to send observers to the Meeting no later than **14 March 2016.**

Annex 1 List of Participants

*) Head of Delegation
**) Alternate Head of Delegation

REPRESENTING	NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
Chair of HELCOM	Harry Liiv	Estonian Ministry of the Environment	harry.liiv@envir.ee
Vice-Chair of HELCOM	Urmas Lips Co-chair of State & Conservation	Marine Systems Institute at Tallinn University of Technology	urmas.lips@msi.ttu.ee
CONTRACTING PARTIES			
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Annex 2 Key messages to HELCOM 37-2016 based on the outcome of the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference on Marine Litter

The main aim of the conference was to stimulate wider ownership for implementing the regional actions of the HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML). The implementation of the RAP ML has started but not all actions have leadership.

In the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference on Marine Litter, HELCOM succeeded in getting together representatives of governments, industry, municipalities, researchers, financing instruments, non-governmental organizations and consumers, for summarizing their views with regards to the Baltic situation, for finding better solutions through common discussions and ensuring leadership for combating litter.

HELCOM acknowledges the contributions by all the speakers, participants and exhibitors to the Conference.

This document presents the proceedings of the Conference (Annex) and the following key messages for the consideration by Helsinki Commission, based on the presentations and discussions of the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference on Marine Litter.

Knowledge gaps: yes, but there is sufficient indication of concerns to act

- More research and better knowledge is needed to understand the sources, extent, volume and impact of litter in the marine environment; but there is sufficient knowledge and reasons for concern to act based on the available information.

- Through the RAP ML HELCOM has agreed to aim at a achieving a significant quantitative reduction of marine litter by 2025, compared to 2015. To assess the accomplishment of this objective, Contracting Parties are ready to intensify efforts to establish a baseline of marine litter in 2015, based on available data and information, so that effectiveness of measures taken can be evaluated in the future.

- HELCOM is a forerunner in indicators on marine environment and is currently developing also marine litter indicators with definition of Good Environmental Status (GES). This development will contribute to assessment of the marine litter problem in the Baltic Sea, and a regional marine litter monitoring programme should be the next step when indicators and monitoring guidelines have been developed.

How to tackle the problem: Prevention is the key - but litter already in the sea has to be addressed, too

- Prevention and source control are key steps in reducing the marine litter problem, particularly plastics. Appropriate infrastructure is needed to tackle marine litter that has already been released by human activities (e.g. adequate wastewater management system and storm water facilities; appropriate capacity of port reception facilities). HELCOM through RAP ML is contributing to the development of tailor-made solutions that are needed to address the Baltic-specific problems.

- Some regulations are in place to address marine litter, however, gaps have been identified and the existing legislation is not always meeting the needs. There is a strong need to fully implement the

existing requirements related to marine litter. Contracting Parties and HELCOM will place more emphasis on the follow-up of HELCOM requirements and how effective they are in addressing the problem.

- Public awareness, education and consumers' choices are essential in reducing marine litter. Stakeholder involvement is necessary for ensuring cost-efficient measures.

- Contracting Parties recognize the need to step in to ensure leadership for all actions in RAP ML and other actors are invited to join them.

Cooperation: Everyone is involved, also in solving the problem

- The involvement of a few existing frameworks in the litter issue should be further enhanced. For example, the role of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) could be larger and HELCOM is inviting those involved in EUSBSR to take further initiatives to mitigate litter following the good examples such as Policy Area Hazards.

- BONUS and JPI Oceans are already stepping in through their recent call for projects addressing litter; Baltic Sea Advisory Council is an important regional partner in finding a solution to abandoned, lost and derelict fishing gear; International Financial Institutions such as NEFCO and BSAP Fund generate positive impact for the environment.

- HELCOM calls on regional organizations, industry and municipalities as well as NGOs to further cooperate in implementing the RAP ML.

- Work and achievements of UNEP, G7 and EU as well as NGOs are stepping stones towards increasing global recognition of the needs to act. HELCOM will continue to cooperate with other Regional Seas Conventions including the Nairobi Convention (twinning agreement) as well as draw on experiences of other initiatives and share its own as a part of the European and global networks already active in this field.

Annex 3 REGIONAL BALTIC UNDERWATER NOISE ROADMAP 2015-2017

Background information

Anthropogenic noise has potentially harmful effects on the marine environment and the species therein.

Pressure on the marine environment from anthropogenic noise in the Baltic Sea Area needs to be addressed.

Presently piling (impulsive noise) and shipping (continuous noise) are considered to constitute the two major sources of underwater noise in the Baltic Sea, and more evidence is needed to adequately reflect the scale of the problem in the Baltic Sea.

The 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration commits the Contracting Parties to take further measures, initiatives or efforts to reach a healthy marine ecosystem supporting a prosperous Baltic Sea region, including addressing pollution of the marine environment by litter, as well as impacts on marine organisms from underwater impulsive and continuous noise.

In the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration it has been agreed that the level of ambient and distribution of impulsive sounds in the Baltic Sea should not have negative impact on marine life and that human activities that are assessed to result in negative impacts on marine life should be carried out only if relevant mitigation measures are in place, and accordingly as soon as possible and by the end of 2016, using mainly already on-going activities, to

- establish a set of indicators including technical standards which may be used for monitoring ambient and impulsive underwater noise in the Baltic Sea;
- encourage research on the cause and effects of underwater noise on biota;
- map the levels of ambient underwater noise across the Baltic Sea;
- set up a register of the occurrence of impulsive sounds;
- consider regular monitoring on ambient and impulsive underwater noise as well as possible options for mitigation measures related to noise taking into account the ongoing work in IMO on non-mandatory draft guidelines for reducing underwater noise from commercial ships and in CBD context;

This roadmap will support the achievement of the commitments acquired in 2013.

There is a potential need for future revisions of the timetable indicated in this roadmap due to ongoing international, regional and European processes.

Goal

To make every effort to prepare a knowledge base towards a regional action plan on underwater noise in 2017/2018 to meet the objectives of the 2013 Ministerial Meeting, and of the EU MSFD for HELCOM countries being EU members.

Necessary steps

The following steps are perceived as necessary:

1. Knowledge gathering

1.1. Compile and review the available knowledge on impact of anthropogenic noise in the Baltic Sea;
1.2. Identify and map human activities that are the [main] sources of anthropogenic noise in the Baltic Sea;

1.3. Investigate and assess the significance of the sources of anthropogenic noise in the Baltic Sea from e.g. shipping, recreational vessels, ice-breaker vessels, low-frequency sonar, acoustic devices, acoustic experiments, as well as offshore construction, sand and gravel extraction, drilling, intense low or mid-frequency (Naval) sonar, underwater explosions, seismic surveys.

1.4. Investigate and identify sound sensitive species in the Baltic Sea in order to prioritize needed protection measures.

1.5. Compile information on measures to manage emissions and mitigate relevant impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise proposed and/or implemented internationally including with regard to ambient noise under the International Maritime Organisation[1].

2. Indicators

2.1 Support Lead Countries in the further development of the pre-core indicator 'Continuous low frequency anthropogenic sound' towards its operationalization by taking the following necessary steps:

- propose a concept for a regional monitoring network and propose HELCOM common monitoring guidelines based on the BIAS standards
- develop the assessment protocol based on experiences and information available;
- identify spatial and temporal distribution of sound sensitive species and habitats in the Baltic Sea including sensitive biological areas (spawning, nursery areas);
- develop a concept for the GES-boundary based on the available data.

2.2 Support the Lead Countries in the further development of the candidate indicator 'Distribution in time and place of loud low and mid frequency anthropogenic impulsive sounds' towards its operationalization by taking the following necessary steps:

- cooperate with OSPAR and ICES on the establishment of a joint regional registry of impulsive sound;
- define the elements and mechanisms required for a joint regional registry of impulsive sound activities, including reporting requirements;
- coordinate testing of the regional registry of impulsive sound activities;
- propose a concept for determining sustainable levels of impulsive sound.

3. Explore possibility to determine acceptable levels of underwater noise for marine species

3.1 Based on the compilation of information on impacts of noise (1.1), investigate the possibility to use species specific tolerance to define Good Environmental Status / develop environmental targets based on common principles.

4. Evaluation and follow-up

4.1. Carry out a workshop with all HELCOM members to discuss the Roadmap.

4.2. Update the Roadmap, if necessary, in 2016 e.g. based on applicability of the measures identified under section 1.5 in the Baltic Sea area and the knowledge gathered to be a starting point for initial considerations on suitable measures to be implemented, including a cost effectiveness analysis.

4.3 Assess the implementation of this Roadmap in 2017.

[1] Guidelines for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts of marine life (MEPC. 1/Circ. 833).

5. Updated working timetable

Milestone	Date
Cooperate with ICES and OSPAR on the establishment of a regional registry of sound	Joint HELCOM EN NOISE, ICG Noise-HELCOM EN Noise - EU TG NOISE in September 2015
Further work on the "Distribution in time and place of loud low and mid frequency anthropogenic impulsive sounds" candidate indicator aiming at its shift to pre-core indicator and subsequently, core indicator	FI and SE informed in PRESSURE 3-2015
Further work on the "Continuous low frequency anthropogenic sound" pre-core indicator aiming at its shift to core indicator	PRESSURE 3-2015 considered
Establish a joint regional registry of impulsive noise	By Mid-2016
Workshop with all HELCOM members to discuss the Roadmap	September 2016
– Develop assessment protocol for ambient noise based on experiences and information available – Test the regional registry using initial data – Identify and map human activities that are the [main] sources of anthropogenic noise in the Baltic Sea	By the end of 2016
– Identify spatial and temporal distribution and subsequent mapping of sound sensitive species and habitats in the Baltic Sea including sensitive biological areas (spawning, nursery areas) – Explore possibility to use species specific tolerance of underwater noise for defining GES and/or environmental targets	Progress by September 2016, work continued into 2017
Update the Roadmap, if necessary	In 2016
Assess the implementation of this Roadmap	In 2017

Annex 4 Roadmap for the simultaneous designation of the Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECAs

Background

The Baltic Sea states have decided to submit an application to the IMO for designation of the Baltic Sea as NECA, but are still undecided on the specific date for submission. At the 14th meeting in the HELCOM Maritime Group on the 4th-6th of November 2014 the Baltic Sea states furthermore expressed their preference for a parallel, synchronized process of NECA designation in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

The North Sea states are ready to submit their application to the MEPC and have a strong preference for synchronizing North Sea and Baltic Sea NECA designations.

Therefore the North Sea countries invited the Baltic Sea countries to a technical meeting, hosted by Finland in Helsinki in June 2015 for common discussion on the options and modalities for parallel NECA applications. The aim of the meeting was to facilitate a common understanding of the timing and procedural steps for a possible parallel process, i.e. a roadmap for parallel Baltic Sea and North Sea NECA designations.

At the meeting it was concluded that it is relevant to propose the formal decision process reactivated in parallel. The North Sea and the Baltic Sea states should consider and agree on the date for submission of the applications to the IMO as well as the compliance date/effective date from when new ships have to comply with the Tier III emission standards. It was furthermore agreed that Denmark, on behalf of the North Sea countries, should submit a proposal for a common roadmap for the North Sea and the Baltic Sea NECA designations to HELCOM Maritime 15.

MARITIME 15-2015 (Klaipeda, Lithuania, 23-25 November 2015) considered and discussed the proposed roadmap for designating a NECA in the Baltic Sea in parallel with the North Sea, including the date of submission of the parallel applications to the IMO and the date of compliance for new ships in both NECAs. At the Meeting there was general agreement of the necessity to designate a NECA and effectuate Tier III requirements in the Baltic Sea in parallel with North Sea NECA. It was agreed to adjust the effective date from 1 June 2020 to 1 January 2021 and to widen the scope of a possible meeting during spring 2016. The Meeting further agreed that decisions on how to proceed with the draft roadmap should be taken by the HELCOM HOD or the Helsinki Commission meeting.

The HELCOM HOD 49 Meeting (10-11 December 2015) considered how to proceed with the draft NECA roadmap and noted that only Finland was not yet ready to decide on timing of the Baltic Sea NECA. The Meeting welcomed Denmark to submit a revised version of the draft roadmap, based on the outcome of MARITIME 15-2015 to HELCOM 37-2016 for adoption.

This document presents the revised roadmap proposal for a NECA in the Baltic Sea in parallel with the North Sea.

Strategy

To ensure that the process is brought on track, there is need for a tangible process and timeline for the HELCOM and the North Sea decision on submission of NECA applications.

As discussed on the technical meeting in Helsinki, it is realistic to submit the applications to the MEPC 70, which will be held in October 2016. The North Sea countries have proposed to give the industry three years to prepare for the NECA from the date of adoption by the IMO to the Tier III emission standards should apply (compliance/effective date).

At HELCOM Maritime 15 it was agreed to adjust the effective date from 1 June 2020, as initially proposed in the roadmap by the North Sea countries, to 1 January 2021. Hence, it will take more than four years from the agreement on a submission is in place, till the NECAs will actually be effective (Figure 1).

Proposed process and timeline for Baltic Sea and North Sea NECAs

- 10-11 March 2016: Adoption of the NECA roadmap at HELCOM 37-2016.
- After HELCOM decision: formal notification to the North Sea states of the HELCOM position, and an appropriate procedure among North Sea states in support of the HELCOM decision to be implemented.
- January - May 2016: Update of the North Sea and Baltic Sea NECA applications.
- Spring 2016: A meeting between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea countries to discuss elements of Tier III technology, experiences with the North American ECAs and the NECA applications could be considered.
- 1 June 2016: Deadline for formal approval by all North Sea countries of the submission of the final North Sea NECA application to the MEPC 70.
- 15-16 June 2016: HELCOM HOD 50 approves the submission of the final Baltic Sea NECA application to MEPC 70.
- 1 July 2016: Submission of the Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECA applications to MEPC 70
  (22 July 2016: final 13-week deadline for MEPC 70 submission).
- 24-28 October 2016: MEPC 70, approval.
- 2017: MEPC 71, adoption.
- 1 January 2021: Compliance/effective date.

Procedural steps, possible timing and duration for a synchronized designation of the Baltic Sea and North Sea NECAs

The roadmap would firstly have to be adopted by the HELCOM 37-2016 meeting. The decision taken by HELCOM has to be supported by the North Sea countries in order to continue, which is proposed to be in form of a silent procedure between North Sea states. The MEPC 70 takes place in October 2016, so the applications should be submitted by July 2016, which would allow sufficient time to update the studies and applications during spring 2016.

If the applications are approved at MEPC 70 they will be forwarded to MEPC 71 for adoption. The dates for MEPC 71 are not yet set, but in figure 1 the meeting is assumed to take place in May 2017. The NECA would enter into force at least 16 months later, which would be in October 2018. The entry into force will of course only apply to the ships constructed/engines installed on or after the compliance/effective date, which could be on the date of adoption (at the earliest) or any later date as specified in the amendment designating the NECAs. The North Sea countries suggest that the industry is given three years from the date of adoption until the date of compliance/effective date. At HELCOM Maritime 15 it was agreed that the compliance/effective date should be 1 January 2021. This would imply the Tier III emission standards to be applicable to ships constructed on or after this date.

For EU members: Close coordination of the EU position is necessary throughout the process, with appropriate involvement of the Shipping Working Party.

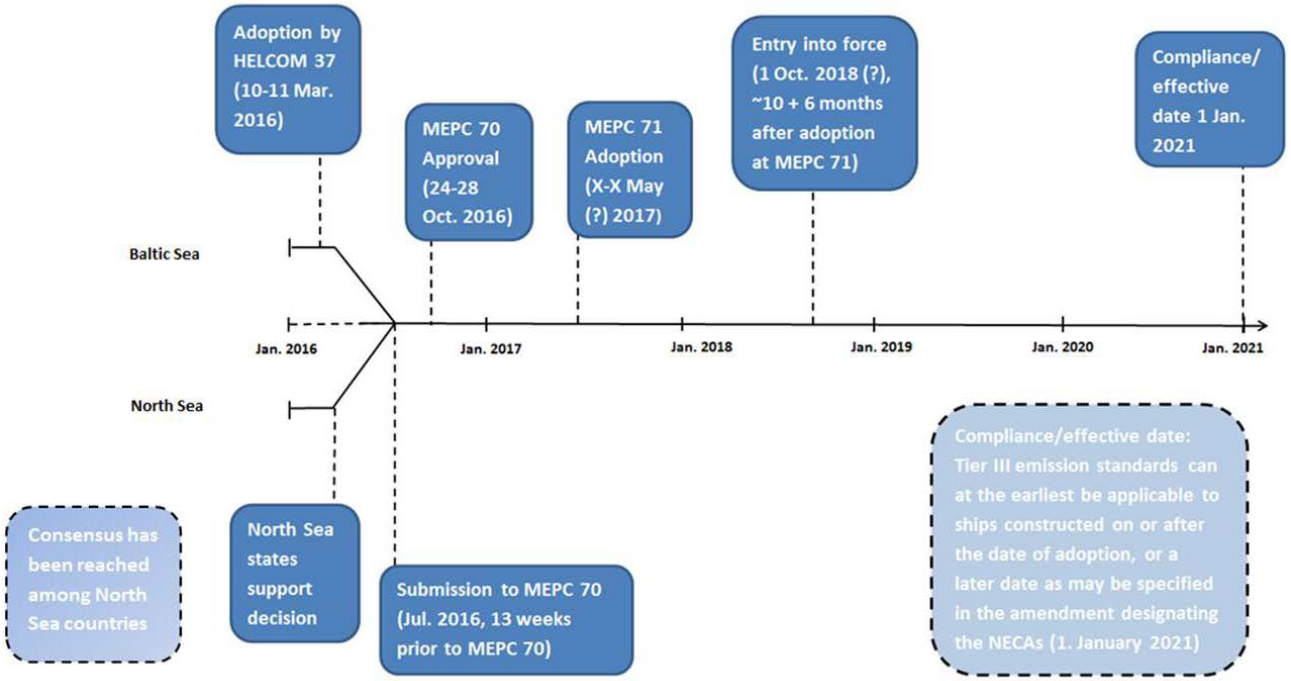

Figure 1 Proposed roadmap for parallel NECA designations in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea.

Annex 5 Statement by HELCOM Chair, Mr. Harry Liiv

HELCOM agrees on a Roadmap for a Baltic Sea NECA

Statement by HELCOM Chair, Mr. Harry Liiv
10 March 2016

In the Annual Meeting today we the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), consisting of the Baltic coastal countries and the EU, have made a major decision. We have agreed on a Roadmap which includes a commitment to submit to IMO a proposal to designate the Baltic Sea as a NOx Emission Control Area (NECA) - according to the IMO MARPOL Convention Annex VI - in parallel with the North Sea. In addition we have agreed that the Roadmap will be submitted to the IMO MEPC 70 Meeting, scheduled already for next autumn. I think we all deserve some congratulations.

As I am sure you recall, this initiative for a Baltic Sea NECA in accordance with Annex VI of the MARPOL Convention emerges from the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, agreed by the nine coastal countries and the EU in 2007.

Since 2007 we, together as HELCOM, have carried out the necessary environmental and economic studies, finalized the needed submission papers in 2012, as well as carried out intensive negotiations on the right timing for a final submission to IMO.

As we all are aware of, this work has not been done without a good reason as NOx emissions from shipping is really a major source of airborne deposition of Nitrogen, aggravating the serious eutrophication of the Baltic Sea. According to estimates, Baltic Sea NECA has potential to cost-efficiently reduce around 7 kt Nitrogen input to the Baltic Sea per year, after a time lag needed for fleet renewal as the regulation addresses only new ships.

I would like to stress that this anticipated annual Nitrogen reduction in the Baltic Sea, 7 kilotonnes, is significant. For several coastal countries that amount exceeds their entire national Nitrogen pollution load reduction commitment, according to the HELCOM Country Allocated Reduction Target (CART) scheme agreed in 2007 and updated in 2013.

Beginning tomorrow the coastal countries and the HELCOM Secretariat will prepare for a submission to the MEPC 70 Meeting, scheduled to take place in October 2016. The Baltic Sea NECA submission is planned to take place parallel to a similar NECA submission from the North Sea countries.

Thank you once again for your persistent work on this issue and for having the courage to take this important decision for the Baltic Sea marine environment.

Annex 6 Revised HELCOM Recommendation 25/7

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

Revised 4 March 2015 and 10 March 2016,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph b)
of the Helsinki Convention

SAFETY OF WINTER NAVIGATION IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

THE COMMISSION,

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 economical, social, recreational and cultural reasons,

NOTING the increase of shipping activities, especially the increase of oil transportation, in the Baltic Sea area during the past ten years,

NOTING ALSO the special requirements set for maritime transportation by low temperature and ice conditions in winter in the Baltic Sea area,

NOTING FURTHER the important work of the Baltic Sea Ice Services to provide information on ice conditions in the Baltic Sea area,

RECALLING the decision of the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting held in Copenhagen, Denmark, 10 September 2000, to consider the possible need for concerted action regarding a unification of rules for winter traffic/ice classification and icebreaker services arrangements during winter time at the joint IMO/HELCOM/EU Workshop held in Warnemünde, Germany, 11-12 March 2003,

RECALLING ALSO the outcome of the joint IMO/HELCOM/EU Workshop, where it was agreed that there is a need for unified action within HELCOM to obtain rules for winter traffic, i.e. ice classification and icebreaker services arrangements,

RECALLING FURTHER the decision of HELCOM HOD 11/2003 to establish inter alia an *ad hoc* Expert Working Group to look into the need and possibility to establish unified rules for the ice classification of ships and arrangements for icebreaker services during the winter period, with Finland acting as a lead country,

RECOGNIZING the need for unified application of winter navigation rules and practises,

RECOGNIZING ALSO the special problems related to fire fighting at low temperatures,

RECOGNIZING FURTHER the problems related to combating oil spills in ice conditions,

RECOMMENDS that the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention should take measures to ensure that compilation of data on accidents and incidents due to ice conditions will be continued, and that a Formal Safety Assessment on the safety of winter navigation in the Baltic Sea area is made in accordance with the Guidelines for Formal Safety Assessment (FSA) for use in the IMO Rule-making Process (MSC/Circ.1023, MEPC/Circ.392 of 5 April 2002),

URGES the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention to apply the attached Guidelines for the Safety of Winter Navigation in the Baltic Sea Area,

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.

GUIDELINES FOR THE SAFETY OF NAVIGATION IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

These guidelines are intended to give instructions for the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention for establishing adequate ice surveillance systems, establishing equivalence of ice classification rules, establishing safety requirements for ships sailing in ice conditions, and to give guidelines for operational matters related to winter navigation in the Baltic Sea area.

1. Ice surveillance systems

Information about ice conditions in the Baltic Sea area should be obtained from national ice services. Contact information of the national ice services and basic information about ice conditions in the Baltic Sea area can be obtained from the common website of the national ice services of the Baltic Sea States established by the Baltic Sea Ice Services, www.bsis-ice.de.

Information about ice conditions should be published in the form of ice charts, ice reports or bulletins, or in accordance with the Baltic Sea Ice Code. Information about ice conditions should contain information on the location of the boundary of the ice field and open water, the edge of the ice field with thickness exceeding 10 cm, the thickness of level ice, ice concentration, and ice ridge fields along the routes to the ports used during the winter period. The terms and symbols of WMO should be used when describing ice and ice conditions in the Baltic Sea. Ice reporting should also contain information about traffic restrictions, information about traffic control, and the location of the assisting icebreakers and their operational area.

Icebreakers should send information about ice conditions in their operational area to their national ice service.

The national ice services should send their information about ice conditions to the other national ice services preferably daily, but at least twice a week.

2. Equivalence of ice classification rules

The equivalence of the ice classes of different Classification Societies with the Finnish- Swedish Ice Class Rules is based on the comparison of hull structural requirements. Equivalence is estimated on the condition that the hull structural strength given by the rules of a classification society is on a similar level as the hull structural strength obtained by applying the Finnish-Swedish Ice Class Rules.

At the same time, the requirements of the Finnish-Swedish Ice Class Rules regarding the power of the main engines should be fulfilled. Alternatively, the ship should have sufficient power for possible independent movement at a minimum steady speed of 1-2 knots through level ice of a thickness indicated in paragraph 3.1 below, depending on the ice class of the ship.

An equivalence table indicating the equivalence of the ice class rules of the Classification Societies with the Finnish-Swedish Ice Class Rules is attached to these Guidelines.

3. Safety requirements

The Administrations of the Contracting Parties should set traffic restrictions based on safety aspects for ships sailing in ice conditions. Adequate ice strengthening should be required for ships sailing in ice in accordance with paragraph 3.1. More stringent traffic restrictions than those given in accordance with paragraph 3.1 may also be set based on operational reasons.

3.1 Traffic restrictions based on safety aspects

The traffic restrictions may be based on the measured level ice thickness, or the calculated level ice thickness in the coastal area. Level ice thickness can be calculated e.g. in accordance with the formula of Zubov:

$$h_{ice}\,2 + 50h_{ice} = 8R$$

where h_{ice} is the level ice thickness in cm and R is cumulative freezing degree days (FDD) based on 0°C. The temperature measurements should be obtained from official meteorological stations located along the coastline. The calculation of freezing degree days has to be started only from the freeze-up date for each location. A freeze-up date is established when the mean ice concentration reaches 80 to 100%.

The traffic restrictions should be set as follows:

When the thickness of level ice is in the range of 10-15 cm, and the weather forecast predicts continuing low temperature, a minimum ice class Ice 1 or equivalent should be required for ships entering the ports of a Contracting Party.

When the thickness of level ice is in the range of 15-30 cm, and the weather forecast predicts continuing low temperature, a minimum ice class IC or Ice 2 or equivalent should be required for ships entering the ports of a Contracting Party.

When the thickness of level ice is in the range of 30-50 cm, a minimum ice class IB or Ice 3 or equivalent should be required for ships entering the ports of a Contracting Party.

When the thickness of level ice exceeds 50 cm, a minimum ice class IA or Arc 4 or equivalent should be required for ships entering the ports of a Contracting Party.

The traffic restrictions can be lightened and finally removed after the melting period of ice has started in spring and the strength of the level ice fields has started to decrease.

3.2 Exemptions on traffic restrictions

In the beginning and in the middle of the winter season, the icebreaking service should not cancel a traffic restriction as long as the water temperature is close to zero degrees. However, exemptions on the given traffic restrictions may be granted by the Administration for individual ships due to favourable weather conditions, or based on detailed analysis of the strength of the vessel. No exemptions should be granted for ships which are more than 20 years old.

3.2.1 Exemptions on traffic restrictions due to favourable weather conditions

If favourable wind conditions open up the ice along the coast of the state, the Administration may grant exemptions from the traffic restrictions that are in force. A time-limited exemption can under these circumstances be issued for a specific vessel to a specific port. Before this exemption is permitted, the icebreaking service should consult the weather or ice service about how long this weather situation is estimated to last.

3.2.2 Exemptions on traffic restrictions based on detailed analysis of the strength of the vessel

The Administration may grant an exemption from the traffic restrictions on an individual ship, which does not have the required ice class, if a detailed analysis of the strength of the vessel in the prevailing ice conditions is made. In the analysis the level ice thickness, ice strength, ice pressure, ice coverage and other relevant information on ice conditions should be taken into account. The ship-owner should submit to the Port Authority or to the Administration a written document, developed by a competent organization, specifying admissible speeds of ship under various ice conditions, the number of required assisting icebreakers, and other relevant operational information. This information should also be submitted to the icebreakers responsible for icebreaker assistance in the area.

3.3 Winterization of ships

The above exemptions from the traffic restrictions apply mainly to the assessment of sufficiency of the hull strength against ice loads. However, in any case, a ship should be adapted for the safe operation at a low outdoor air temperature down to minus

30˚C. This concerns the operability of material of hull structures, deck equipment (anchor-handling and mooring, towing and cargo handling), main engine cooling system, material of propeller and its sufficient immersion to reduce interaction with ice.

The stability of ships at a low outdoor air temperature under open water conditions should be sufficient taking into account the probability of icing.

4. Operational matters related to winter navigation

4.1 Vessel Traffic Management and Information System in winter

In winter conditions the most important task of the Ship Reporting System (SRS) is to provide information on way points for ships sailing in the area. The organization responsible for defining and giving information on way points should be agreed on in each country. Only one organization should be authorized for this purpose. The national SRS Centres should create clear procedures for the distribution of information on way points to ships, to national Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Centres and to other SRS Centres.

Information on way points should be distributed to ships as follows:

1. The Administration or the icebreaker responsible for co-ordination of icebreaker services notifies the way points to the national SRS centre.
2. The national SRS Centre notifies the way points to the other SRS Centres in the Gulf of Finland.
3. The SRS Centres give information on way points to ships upon request or when ships report.

4.2 Operational instructions for ships

The Administrations of the Contracting Parties should set operational instructions for ships sailing in ice covered waters. Such instructions should contain the following:

1. Instructions for sailing alone in ice.
2. Instructions for sailing in ice under icebreaker supervision.

Instructions for sailing assisted by an icebreaker: escorting, in towing, and sailing in a convoy headed by an icebreaker.

Annex **Approximate correspondence between Ice Classes of the Finnish-Swedish Ice Class Rules (Baltic Ice Classes) and the Ice Classes of other Classification Societies**

Classification Society	Ice Class				
Finnish-Swedish Ice Class Rules	**IA Super**	**IA**	**IB**	**IC**	**Category II**
Russian Maritime Register of Shipping (Rules 1995)	UL	L1	L2	L3	L4
Russian Maritime Register of Shipping (Rules 1999)	LU5	LU4	LU3	LU2	LU1
Russian Maritime Register of Shipping (Rules 2008)	Arc 5	Arc 4	Ice 3	Ice 2	Ice 1
American Bureau of Shipping	Ice Class I AA	Ice Class I A	Ice Class I B	Ice Class I C	D0
Bureau Veritas	ICE CLASS IA SUPER	ICE CLASS IA	ICE CLASS IB	ICE CLASS IC	ID
CASPPR, 1972	A	B	C	D	E
China Classification Society	Ice Class B1*	Ice Class B1	Ice Class B2	Ice Class B3	Ice Class B
Det Norske Veritas	ICE-1A*	ICE-1A	ICE-1B	ICE-1C	ICE-C
DNV GL	Ice(1A*)	Ice(1A)	Ice(1B)	Ice(1C)	-
Germanischer Lloyd	E4	E3	E2	E1	E
IACS Polar Rules	PC6	PC7	-	-	-

Korean Register of Shipping	IA Super	IA	IB	IC	ID
Lloyd's Register of Shipping	Ice Class 1AS FS (+) Ice Class 1AS FS	Ice Class 1A FS (+) Ice Class 1A FS	Ice Class 1B FS (+) Ice Class 1B FS	Ice Class 1C FS (+) Ice Class 1C FS	Ice Class 1D Ice Class 1E
Nippon Kaiji Kyokai	NS* (Class IA Super Ice Strengthening) NS (Class IA Super Ice Strengthening)	NS* (Class IA Ice Strengthening) NS (Class IA Ice Strengthening)	NS* (Class IB Ice Strengthening) NS (Class IB Ice Strengthening)	NS* (Class IC Ice Strengthening) NS (Class IC Ice Strengthening)	NS* (Class ID Ice Strengthening) NS (Class ID Ice Strengthening)
Polski Rejestr Statków	L1A	L1	L2	L3	L4
Registro Italiano Navale	ICE CLASS IA SUPER	ICE CLASS IA	ICE CLASS IB	ICE CLASS IC	ID

Annex 7 HELCOM Recommendation 37/1

Adopted 10 March 2016,
having regard to Article 20 (1), Paragraph b)
of the Helsinki Convention

CO-OPERATION AND COORDINATION OF RESEARCH VESSEL BASED MONITORING IN OFF-SHORE AREAS AND PROCEDURES FOR GRANTING PERMITS FOR MONITORING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Articles 4 and 24 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention), concerning the application of the Convention and scientific and technological co-operation,

RECALLING ALSO Article 27 of the Helsinki Convention ensuring that none of provisions of the Convention infringes the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea, as well as Regulations 9 of Annex IV of the Helsinki Convention on Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) for ships in the Baltic Sea,

ACKNOWLEDNING United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Part XIII, Section 3, Article 247 'Marine scientific research projects undertaken by or under the auspices of international organizations' and Article 248 'Duty to provide information to the coastal State',

APPRECIATING the achievements in environmental protection within the framework of the Helsinki Convention as well as successful implementation of coordinated monitoring programmes to provide basis for decision making, such as HELCOM BMP, COMBINE, MORS, PLC, COASTAL FISH and SEALS,

RECALLING FURTHER HELCOM Ministerial Declaration, 2013 paragraph X and chapter on marine knowledge, monitoring and assessment, concerning the intensified efforts to improve data and information quality and availability as well as coordinated monitoring practices,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy, 2013 stating the need for co-operation and coordination of monitoring efforts especially for the open sea areas as well as for joint surveys, cruises and campaigns that enable full cooperation in practice, harmonization of practices, efficient exchange of knowledge and better use of monitoring infrastructure,

TAKING ALSO INTO ACCOUNT the HELCOM Monitoring Manual, urging Contracting Parties to use limited resources as efficiently as possible by carrying out monitoring activities in the HELCOM sub-basins in a coordinated way,

NOTING that HELCOM has developed an on-line platform to share information on planned and completed cruises, real time vessel positions (based on AIS) and technical details of research vessels used for environmental monitoring,

NOTING ALSO the bi-lateral co-operation between Contracting Parties on joint use of research vessels for marine environmental monitoring, e.g. between Finland and Sweden as well as Estonia and Latvia,

CONSIDERING that multinational experiments covering inter-connected marine areas, which might be under jurisdiction of different coastal states, are vital for the scientific understanding of the Baltic Sea ecosystem functioning and pathways of contaminants,

REALIZING the necessity of instant and joint investigations at extreme events of environmental concern and sudden events, which could considerably influence the Baltic Sea environment as a whole, for example, the Major Baltic Inflow in 2014,

CONVINCED that a prerequisite for a successful implementation of coordinated monitoring is the application of smooth national administrative procedures for granting timely cruise permits for exclusive economic zones, fishing zones, continental shelves or territorial waters,

APPRECIATING that certain Contracting Parties have implemented the practice of granting yearly permits for monitoring and scientific research activities in the Baltic Sea area,

REGRETTING that in some cases the present national administrative practices create major problems for the implementation of coordinated monitoring and related scientific research,

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention:

a) to support the joint use of existing research vessels for off-shore monitoring activities and co-operation in planning and construction of new regional research vessels for the Baltic Sea environmental monitoring and scientific research,

b) to use the HELCOM on-line platform to share information on planned and completed cruises, real time vessel positions (based on AIS) and technical details of research vessels used for environmental monitoring that could support timely granting of permits for monitoring and research activities,

c) to grant one year permits for planned monitoring and research activities in the framework of the HELCOM coordinated monitoring programme in the exclusive economic zones, fishing zones, continental shelves or territorial waters, during which period the coastal state is only to be notified in advance for each individual cruise,

d) to facilitate granting of permits, to carry out monitoring and research activities in the framework of the HELCOM coordinated monitoring programme in the exclusive economic zones, fishing zones, continental shelves or territorial waters, aiming at within six weeks from the time of the request.

Annex 8 HELCOM Recommendation 37/2

Adopted 10 March 2016,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

CONSERVATION OF BALTIC SEA SPECIES CATEGORIZED AS THREATENED ACCORDING TO THE 2013 HELCOM RED LIST

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 15 of the 1992 Helsinki Convention requiring the Contracting Parties to take all appropriate measures to conserve and protect biodiversity of marine and coastal areas,

BEING DEEPLY CONCERNED about the alarming situation of Baltic Sea species being in danger of becoming extinct, i.e. those categorized as "critically endangered", "endangered" or "vulnerable" according to the 2013 HELCOM Red List and termed "HELCOM threatened species" hereafter,

RECALLING HELCOM Recommendations aiming at the protection and conservation of specific (groups of) Baltic Sea species, in particular Recommendations 17/2, 27-28/2, 34E-1, 19/2 and 32-33/1,

HAVING REGARD to the complementary HELCOM Recommendation 21/4 on the Protection of heavily endangered or immediately threatened marine and coastal biotopes in the Baltic Sea area,

RECALLING ALSO the commitment of the 2007 HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan to improve the conservation status of threatened and/or declining species of the Baltic Sea area by 2015 (including specific agreements regarding fish and lamprey species), and the goal to achieve a favourable conservation status of all species by 2021,

RECALLING FURTHER the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration stating that species included in the 2013 HELCOM Red List (BSEP No. 140) are priorities for protection and should receive specific protection through an ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas, and that conservation plans for species at risk of extinction should be established,

RECALLING FURTHERMORE the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets, specifically Aichi Target 12 to prevent extinction of threatened species and improve and sustain their conservation status, and Aichi Target 6 to put in place recovery plans and measures for depleted species and that fisheries shall have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species, both to be met by 2020,

BEING AWARE that those Contracting Parties being also EU Member States, have to coordinate their activities regarding threatened species with the implementation of relevant EU Directives, such as the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), and the Common Fisheries Policy as relevant,

HIGHLIGHTING that HELCOM threatened species can be associated, *inter alia*, with "biological features" according to Annex III Table 1 of the MSFD and thus, their protection and conservation contributes to the MSFD objective of achieving Good Environmental Status of EU marine waters by 2020,

RECALLING the ecosystem approach to fisheries management as required by the Common Fisheries Policy and the 2003 HELCOM/OSPAR Statement on the Ecosystem Approach to the Management of Human Activities and the Baltic Sea Action Plan,

ACKNOWLEDGING the important contributions of other regional fora and cooperation frameworks to the conservation of HELCOM threatened species, *inter alia,* under the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS), the implementation of which this Recommendation will support,

RECOGNISING that the 2013 HELCOM Red List includes a number of species which are naturally rare in the HELCOM area,

AIMING at specific protection and conservation measures for HELCOM threatened species, and when scientifically meaningful, reintroduction programmes for "regionally extinct" species,

RECOMMENDS that the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention take necessary measures to improve the status of HELCOM threatened species according to the 2013 HELCOM Red List and reduce the number of red listed species, herewith also working towards the goal to achieve a favourable conservation status of all species by 2021, and to carry out the following steps:

1. Make an inventory of existing and planned national and regional conservation-, recovery- and/or action plans as well as other relevant programmes and measures for the protection of species which are threatened according to the 2013 HELCOM Red List including measures through habitat protection - and review by 2018 their effectiveness and, if necessary, define future protection needs, and based on these:
   1.1. Determine which additional activities are needed to mitigate the identified pressures and/or impacts and support the development or amendment of conservation-, recovery- and/or action plans for HELCOM threatened species. Where appropriate, the development could be carried out in cooperation with neighbouring countries or relevant organizations,
   1.2. Aim to implement such plans as soon as possible, and by 2021 at the latest.

2. Consider the possibility to introduce and/or update national legislation or, if more appropriate, choose different kinds of instruments (such as incentives, administrative actions or negotiated agreements), to provide for effective protection of relevant HELCOM threatened species in all their life stages in the Baltic Sea sub-regions where they are threatened.

3. Consider including HELCOM list of threatened species in EIA procedures in order to mitigate or limit pressures or impacts inflicted on threatened species with the aim to:
   3.1. Receive and share knowledge about the occurrence of such species,
   3.2. Get a documentation of the human induced pressures and/or impacts,
   3.3. Be in a position to decide on appropriate measures to avoid or limit and mitigate the relevant pressures and/or impacts,
   3.4. Receive reliable data for the restriction or prohibition of activities which may significantly affect, destroy or damage populations or habitats of HELCOM threatened species.

4. Consider whether any sites justify selection as new or expanded MPAs for the conservation of HELCOM threatened species such as sites of particular ecological significance for their different life stages (e.g. habitats of sessile species, feeding grounds, moulting/haul-out sites, nursery and resting areas), with the aim to improve connectivity between populations and key areas along migration routes.

5. Identify and/or map areas of ecological significance, such as migration corridors for individual or groups of HELCOM threatened species, based on the available data and possible new data, also in order to support maritime spatial planning based on the ecosystem approach.

6. Support and, if necessary, take measures to reduce transboundary pressures and/or impacts on HELCOM threatened migrating species which are moving across national borders including such pressures and/or impacts on species not occurring within the waters where the pressures and/or impacts originate from.

7. Encourage other international organizations or bodies to promote and strive for taking all appropriate measures in areas of their specific competence, such as in fisheries management or shipping, in order to reduce pressures and/or impacts on HELCOM threatened species.

8. Improve the exchange of data on HELCOM threatened species between HELCOM and other international and national bodies that produce or use similar data in order to create synergies, and therefore:
   8.1 Consider improving data by regular systematic investigations and/or monitoring of the abundance, distribution, diversity and ecology of HELCOM threatened species or the pressures and/or impacts that are causing threats to these species,
   8.2 Raise awareness about the HELCOM list of threatened species amongst stakeholders and the general public, and consider to establish a permanent dialogue and exchange of knowledge between HELCOM and relevant stakeholders such as recreational and commercial fishermen, seamen.

RECOMMENDS ALSO that

9. The Contracting Parties will report on their first activities taken to implement this Recommendation in 2018, and thereafter according to the schedule to be agreed by the State & Conservation Working Group with the aim to harmonize reporting intervals and content with EU and other reporting obligations supported by this Recommendation, using an appropriate template to be developed,

10. Based on the progress in implementing this Recommendation and following the next Red List assessment of the Baltic Sea species and habitats/biotopes in 2019, the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention utilize new knowledge on threatened species to maintain or further improve the status of HELCOM threatened species also beyond 2021.

Annex 9 HELCOM Recommendation 37/3

Adopted 11 March 2016,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 3 and 6 and Regulation 1, Annex II of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention), requiring the Contracting Parties to prevent and eliminate pollution of the Baltic Sea Area from land-based sources by using, *inter alia*, Best Environmental Practice (BEP) for all sources and Best Available Technology (BAT) for point sources, minimizing or eliminating inputs to water and air from all sources by providing control strategies,

RECALLING ALSO Article 3 of the Helsinki Convention, in which the Contracting Parties shall individually or jointly take all appropriate legislative, administrative or other relevant measures to prevent and abate pollution in order to promote the ecological restoration of the Baltic Sea Area,

HAVING REGARD to HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) and, for those Contracting Parties being also EU Member States, to relevant EU legislation, aiming at preventing further degradation of the marine and freshwater environments and at achieving a healthy sea in good environmental/ecological/chemical status by 2020/2021, with diverse biological components functioning in balance and supporting a wide range of sustainable human economic and social activities,

RECALLING FURTHER the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting agreement to develop a new HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture by 2014 to substitute the existing HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 aiming at limiting potential environmental impacts of aquaculture activities such as the introduction of non-indigenous species, ecological and genetic impacts on wild fish stocks from unintended releases of farmed species, nutrient pollution, as well as introduction of antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that in HELCOM BSAP and its follow-up process the Contracting Parties agreed, *inter alia*, on the following provisions to reach a healthy Baltic Sea:

- achieving the country allocated reduction targets of nutrients in order to reach good environmental status, and undertaking corresponding actions;
- maintaining or recovering water quality that enables the integrity, structure and functioning of the ecosystem;
- maintaining thriving and balanced communities of plants and animals, as well as viable populations of species to reach a favourable conservation status – through actions, *inter alia*, aiming at the prevention of introduction of alien species via different pathways, including aquaculture;
- addressing aquaculture as one of the potential sources which can cause or exacerbate eutrophication and the aforementioned issues,

HAVING REGARD to HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 on Measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from fresh water and marine fish farming, as far as it is not overridden by HELCOM Ministerial Declarations and Recommendations or other legal requirements,

RECOGNIZING the need to maintain Recommendation 25/4 until adoption of BAT and BEP based measures for application in marine and fresh water fish farming,

RECALLING the Baltic broad-scale Maritime Spatial Planning Principles, jointly adopted by HELCOM and VASAB, as a follow-up of HELCOM BSAP, whereby the ecosystem approach is an overarching principle,

RECALLING ALSO EU Directive 2014/89 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning,

RECALLING FURTHER the 2003 HELCOM/OSPAR Ministerial Meeting Statement on the Ecosystem Approach to the Management of Human Activities,

RECALLING FURTHER that Ecosystem Approach to fisheries, as defined by FAO, is "an approach that strives to balance diverse societal objectives, by taking into account the knowledge and uncertainties about biotic, abiotic and human components of ecosystems and their interactions and applying an integrated approach to fisheries within ecologically meaningful boundaries",

SUPPORTING the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy, by adhering to the Maximum Sustainable Yield goals that also form a part of the BSAP and to ensure that aquaculture activities contribute to long-term environmental, economic, and social sustainability,

RECOGNIZING, *inter alia*, the relevance of direct discharges and losses, nutrients and organic material, from open-system marine and fresh water aquaculture, as potential negative impacts on the aquatic environment,

RESPECTING the need to prevent or minimize other possible environmental pressures and their negative impacts on marine ecosystems that can be associated with aquaculture, such as the introduction of non-indigenous species, ecological and genetic impacts on wild fish stocks from unintended releases of farmed fish, introduction of antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals, as well as hazardous substances and litter,

RECOGNIZING the need to fill, on a sustainable and ecologically sound basis, the growing gap between general seafood demand and supply globally,

RECALLING the need of strengthened regional self-supply with aquaculture products and, hence, reduced dependency of global imports, in contributing to global responsibility *via* use of sustainably developed and managed domestic resources,

TAKING NOTE OF:

- the need for a differentiated approach to specific types of aquaculture production for effective application of BAT and BEP in fresh water and marine fish farming;
- the possible supporting role of certain extensive aquaculture systems, particularly fresh water ones, in habitat conservation, if developed and maintained sustainably,

BEARING IN MIND that aquaculture has globally been the most rapidly growing form of primary food production during the past 30 years, while it was constant or decreasing in the EU and that the industry's technological and functional development has been fast; therefore, **ENCOURAGING** the industry to realize its great potential to develop and apply environmentally friendly technologies and production methods, both in marine and fresh water,

DESIRING to limit the negative impacts on the environment from aquaculture facilities located in the catchment area of the Baltic Sea and in the Baltic Sea by applying Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP),

RECALLING the Regulation (EU) No 304/2011 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 708/2007 concerning the use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture, creating a framework governing aquaculture practices in EU member countries in order to ensure adequate protection of the aquatic environment from the risks associated with the use of non-native species and locally absent species in aquaculture,

RECALLING ALSO the requirement in HELCOM Recommendation 20/4 concerning anti-fouling paint containing organotin compounds to ban the retail sale or use of organotin paints for fish net cages,

RECALLING FURTHER the prohibition laid down in Annex XVII to the EU Regulation (EC) 1907/2006 on the registration, evaluation and authorization of chemicals (REACH), on the use of hazardous substances in anti-fouling of cages, floats, nets and any other appliances or equipment used for fish or shellfish farming,

ACKNOWLEDGING existing national and international legislation and competences, criteria and guidance for an ecologically sound aquaculture, including for the HELCOM countries being EU members CFP, MSFD, WFD, Habitats as well as Birds Directives, the EC Guidance on Aquaculture and Natura 2000, the EC Regulation No. 710/2009 as regards rules on organic aquaculture animal and seaweed production, and for Nordic countries the Nordic Council recommendation on RAS aquaculture (Rek. 5/2014), as well as **NOTING** the forthcoming development of similar guidance documents addressing the requirements of the EU Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives in relation to aquaculture (as proposed in Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture (COM(2013) 229 final), as applicable,

ACKNOWLEDGING ALSO the law of Russian Federation 148-FZ 02.07.2013 "On aquaculture (fish-farming) and amendments of some other related legal act of Russian Federation" as well as legal framework on protection of the water environment,

NOTING ALSO the targets and priorities outlined by the Strategy of aquaculture development in Russian Federation to the year 2020, and the Strategic National Plans on Aquaculture of EU members on the basis of the CFP,

RECALLING ALSO the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU) and its amendment 2014/52/EU which are in line with the UN ECE Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a transboundary context and similarly the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC),

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention to jointly develop by 2018 Best Available Technology (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP) descriptions for sustainable and environmentally friendly aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region and apply them, based on Annex II of the Convention and the following principles:

1. to endeavour, when developing marine and fresh water aquaculture, to maintain or restore ecosystem functions and services, to prevent or minimize emissions and discharges, minimize negative environmental effects (by e.g. spatial planning) and to relieve pressure on wild fish stocks;
2. to ensure that possible negative impacts from aquaculture will not hinder the achievement of a good environmental/ecological/chemical status, as agreed upon in HELCOM BSAP and relevant national and international legislation;
3. to take full account of nutrient discharges and losses from marine aquaculture in an overall endeavour by the Contracting Parties to keep inputs within Maximum Allowable Inputs for nitrogen and phosphorus for the Baltic Sea basins, as agreed at the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting and in its possible future updates;
4. to foster development and innovation towards ecologically sustainable farms and aquaculture technologies, including nutrient neutral and nutrient extractive ones, to avoid or minimize, and mitigate discharges of nutrients, organic matter, litter, chemicals and handling of escapees and diseases, as relevant;
5. to employ regional planning as an instrument for directing aquaculture activities to suitable areas and for mitigating conflicts between aquaculture and other uses of that area. Fish farms should not be placed in areas reserved for nature protection, if that might conflict with the aims of protection for that area;
6. to avoid or minimize potential negative impacts when establishing new or enlarging existing aquaculture facilities in the Baltic Sea Region;
7. to manage marine and fresh water aquaculture on the basis of the Ecosystem Approach, taking into account, *inter alia*, potential risks and impacts on the environment arising from the introduction of non-indigenous species, and the ecological and genetic impacts on wild fish stocks and from unintended releases of indigenous species,

RECOMMENDS ALSO

8. to make better use or establish and maintain national databases of aquaculture or water permits and monitoring data in co-operation with the aquaculture sector. A better assessment of the nutrient loads from aquaculture should be based on data collected and reported to the HELCOM PLC database;

9. to develop specific measures aimed at reduction/mitigation/prevention, as appropriate, of nutrient release into the Baltic Sea, which have to be implemented simultaneously with the growth of fish production, consistent with measures foreseen in the national aquaculture development strategies;

10. to avoid the use of genetically modified species;

11. to ensure that the use of hormones does not impact the environment negatively;

12. in areas where the water quality status is deteriorated and where ecologically possible, aquaculture that contributes to improving the status of the aquatic environment should be encouraged. The promotion of such aquaculture systems should not deter from measures to address nutrient input close to source,

RECOMMENDS ALSO to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to develop, apply and enforce BAT and BEP measures aiming at sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea Region, based on guidance, as contained in Annex 1 to this Recommendation. The guidance should be applied in marine and fresh water aquaculture, if not expressively differentiated,

DECIDES to review this Recommendation within three years upon development of the BAT/BAP descriptions, but no later than 2020, and thereafter as necessary,

DECIDES ALSO that actions taken by the Contracting Parties to implement this Recommendation should be reported for the first time in 2018 and thereafter every six years.

HELCOM Recommendation 37/3
Annex

Guidance for BAT and BEP measures aiming at sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea Region

The following paragraphs provide guidance for development and maintenance of sustainable, ecologically sound aquaculture in the Baltic Sea Region, while keeping in mind that the Baltic Sea is a vulnerable ecosystem whose current environmental status requires intensive efforts towards improvement. Against that background, these guidelines are to help the Contracting Parties when further developing, applying Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP) for effective implementation of this Recommendation, enhanced co-operation and provision of economic incentives while aiming at limiting potential negative environmental impacts of aquaculture activities.

1. Establish new or enlarge existing aquaculture facilities only upon granting permits or according to prior regulations by the competent authority or appropriate body in accordance with existing legislation (including EIA and SEA directives for EU Member States) and taking into account the following aspects:

a) when establishing aquaculture facilities, negative local environmental effects and threats to biodiversity should be avoided or minimized by careful planning processes including environmental impact assessment according to international, EU and national legislation as appropriate, and by selection of appropriate locations by means of objective environmental impact evaluation methods taking into account the hydrographic and hydrological conditions of the specific water area;

b) permits or regulations should aim at limiting emissions and discharges of phosphorus and nitrogen, thus striving to contribute, together with other sectors, to keeping the inputs within the Maximum Allowable Inputs as agreed in the HELCOM Ministerial Declaration 2013 (and following updates) in order to enable and not jeopardize the achievement of a good environmental/ecological/chemical status as agreed upon in HELCOM BSAP and relevant national, EU and international legislation- at the latest by 2021;

c) such permits or regulations should, *inter alia*:

i. take due account of the current status of the marine and fresh water area potentially affected by the aquaculture facility and other sources of nutrient release or negative environmental effects;

ii. take into account the carrying capacities of the directly affected ecosystem;

iii. avoid or minimize negative impacts on the current status of the environment and aim at not jeopardizing the achievement of a good ecological/environmental/chemical status of the area affected, and

d) evaluate future environmental effects of the proposed aquaculture facility as part of the authorization process for aquaculture;

e) take into account aquaculture intensity, the type of cultured organisms and the production method, the hydrographic framework according to the Ecosystem Approach;

f) select cultured species and rearing techniques so that the risks of genetic mixing of cultured and wild stocks, spreading of diseases and parasites, and impact of non-indigenous species to the environment, accidental releases and escapes are avoided or minimized.

2. Permits and regulations should be reviewed at appropriate intervals, set on a national level, taking into account existing permit conditions.

3. Encourage the aquaculture sector to develop and to implement environmentally friendly technologies, production methods, and feeds through appropriate incentives, e.g. a reduced administrative burden.

4. Promote sustainable fish feed composition to reduce pressure on wild fish and to prevent additional nutrient discharges by optimizing nutritive requirements and encourage the use of regionally sourced products as fish feed ingredients with an aim to decrease the net inflow of nutrients into the Baltic Sea.

5. Assess and aim to avoid or minimize as far as possible the potential negative impact of aquaculture facilities located outside MPAs on these protected areas (in particular, HELCOM MPAs, NATURA 2000 sites and potential MPAs as designated under MSFD Art. 13 (4)) or other ecologically sensitive areas.

6. Fish farms should not be placed in protected areas if they might compromise conservation objectives for which MPAs have been established.

7. Supervise the discharges from and the ecological effects of aquaculture farms, e.g. by means of regular monitoring and e.g. aquaculture farm operation records, discharge calculations, monitoring and environmental impact models. Focus the monitoring on measuring reliably and cost-effectively the impacts of fish farming on the marine and fresh water environments, including the eutrophication status, oxygen depletion and the state of the sediments in the affected area.

8. Minimize, strictly regulate and effectively control the use of legally approved bioactive chemicals, antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals at aquaculture farms and effectively control the abundance to avoid risks to the environment. Promote the use of vaccination ~~only~~ as prophylaxis only and encourage the use of biological means to reduce the application of chemicals. Promote also washing/drying of net cages instead of application of toxic compounds.

10. Encourage the industry to adopt an open policy regarding the environmental issues related to aquaculture, to appropriately inform the public and the relevant institutions.

11. The relocation and transport of cultured non-native species should be subject to special safety rules or permits according to respective national and EU legislation for EU Member States such as Regulation (EU) No708/2007 on the use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture and Regulation (EU) No 307/2013 on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction of the Spread of Invasive Alien Species as well as the Recommendations of EIFAAC and ICES Code of Practice on the Introductions and Transfers of Marine Organisms.

12. Treat, dispose of and utilize waste, litter or waste water resulting from the handling and processing of aquaculture products to minimize pollution to the Baltic Sea, surface or ground water.

13. Improve and facilitate national and international co-operation between the aquaculture industry, stakeholders and the authorities including by making use of co-operation mechanisms including those established in the context of the CFP, with the aim to reach at informational background for an effective implementation of BAT/BEP.

In order to fulfill this objective the following actions should be taken:

a. HELCOM should act as a regional platform for the regular exchange of information on the development and implementation of BAT and BEP. The platform can also be used for discussions of the calculation methods used as background for issuing permits, taking into account the local and regional environmental impacts and experiences gained;
b. The Contracting Parties should provide information according to HELCOM Guidelines for the annual and periodical compilation and reporting of waterborne pollution inputs to the Baltic Sea (PLC-water) ;
c. Make publicly available all relevant information at a national scale;
d. In order to conduct regular assessments of the state of the environment of the Baltic Sea, as well as anthropogenic pressures on the marine environment, the Contracting Parties should provide necessary information required, e.g. for calculation of the HELCOM core indicators, i.a. aggregated country-wise and basin-wise data on location of aquaculture facilities, stocks of cultured species, chemicals and pharmaceuticals as used and gear and management practices;
e. In order to fulfill the Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2013-2020, adopted by the 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, the Contracting Parties should compile and provide information on water areas designated for aquaculture, which is relevant for regional maritime spatial planning.

Annex 10 Statement by the Executive Secretary at HELCOM 37-2016

Dear Colleagues,

The milestone of the year 2015 was the adoption of the Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter in June. Concrete work for the plan started in May 2014, following the Ministerial commitment in 2013 binding all the Baltic coastal governments and EU. The drafting process, led by Germany, benefited from the expertise of non-governmental organizations, research institutions, industry, administration and authorities. Thanks to the wide consultations the plan is very comprehensive and includes an excellent set of actions to combat marine litter. Now the challenge is to find leaders and implementers for each action so that fine ideas are followed by concrete work and results. I am glad that we could take this forward in the HELCOM Marine Litter Stakeholder Conference held on Wednesday.

In October the modernized database of Baltic Sea Marine Protected Areas (HELCOM MPAs) was released. The database provides easy and user-friendly access - for anybody interested - to detailed and new information on coastal and marine HELCOM MPAs such as on human pressures, threat categories and monitoring of species, biotopes and biotope complexes as well as about national protection status. I can proudly say that the HELCOM MPA database stands out among other similar databases on regional and global levels, particularly because of its vast coverage and because the information it contains is current.

The comparable data sets and assessments of pollution loads cover both the nine HELCOM countries and also more distant transboundary sources; they are unique from a worldwide perspective. Without this data it would be impossible to assess major pressures from human activities.

Last year a new approach was introduced and agreed to the future Pollution Load Compilation (PLC) assessments. This will ensure more clearly distinguished products, smooth and operationalized regular updating of the products, and better sharing of responsibilities of different actors for timely delivery.

One of these new products prepared and released in December was the assessment of progress towards reaching Country-allocated Reduction Targets. This was a major achievement considering the complexity of the issue and high political interest, and we thank all the dedicated scientists and experts for the product. At the same time, it has become evident that there is a new need for a more concise product for policy-makers.

Implementing this approach in PLC remains a main task – for all of us - also for this year, but it can only happen with the active involvement of more Contracting Parties.

I am especially proud what we have managed to achieve within the project on making HELCOM eutrophication assessments operational (EUTRO-OPER). This project resulted in a tool for the integration of indicators, an assessment protocol, and a solution to increase the comparability of assessment of open sea and coastal waters. But importantly, work and data flows have been automated, including in-built step-wise approval procedure by national experts of the assessment product, providing a solid system for easy updates of the eutrophication assessment in the future. This was accomplished in partnership with ICES. The ambition is to follow this approach also for other themes as far as possible, within the work on the Second Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II).

The preparation of HOLAS II was at full speed last year and will continue to be the major umbrella activity of HELCOM in the near future. The aim is not only to produce a single assessment publication, but to create a longer-lasting and web-based system to serve future updates, and to enable better use nationally and increased outreach. This means improved documentation, semi-automation and use of the HELCOM working structure to maintain the system as opposed to project-maintained assessment.

All necessary ingredients for making HOLAS II a success are in place – it has been planned in detail and is well coordinated, Contracting Parties are committed and their best experts are engaged, and for the first time ever I can state that I feel comfortable in terms of available resources for the exercise (albeit not all needs can be secured yet). EU grants for two actions we call BalticBOOST and HELCOM TAPAS projects have significantly helped in this respect and are very much appreciated.

This carefully planned assessment will also be truly holistic, as it will include integrated assessment of themes on eutrophication, hazardous substances and biodiversity, and results of separate HELCOM Maritime Assessment will be used as well. Commercial fish species, as they are part of the marine ecosystem, will also be assessed, along with cumulative pressures and impacts from major human activities, based on the improved data and information. Marine litter and underwater noise, not assessed previously, will be new elements.

For the first time, a social and economic analysis will also be truly incorporated into the HELCOM assessment by linking human activities to pressures and impacts on ecosystem components within one holistic framework. The work on social and economic analysis that started last year may prove itself to be one of the milestones or a break-through for future HELCOM work. Such aspect has been largely lacking in HELCOM work so far, which has prevented full use of HELCOM results in many spheres and sectors. We have now fair chances to rectify this obvious shortcoming.

So we stand firm in terms of preparing HOLAS II in HELCOM. But there are other circumstances and processes that influence our work and need to be catered for. On the European level a parallel process takes place to make assessments. It makes no sense to duplicate the work, and the HELCOM countries that are also EU members have already agreed to use HOLAS II as the basis of the national assessments under the EU MSFD.

While I am absolutely convinced it will be possible to cater also for this need, I find it of paramount importance that both immediate national management needs and longer-term HELCOM policy needs are met, and that:

- the HELCOM assessment system improves and is based on the best available science
- that we are able to compare the outcome to the previous assessment
- that we show how far from reaching the Good Environmental Status (GES) we are - as likely most of the areas in the Baltic Sea will be still short of the target - and that we also show progress and improvement.

We will not be in a position to maintain political attention unless we start demonstrating the effects our decisions and actions are bringing.

Last but not least, two issues that have been or are about to be concluded during this Meeting are important accomplishments as well: a new HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture, efficiently led by the Fish group, established not so long ago but already working at full speed, and a decision to submit the proposal by HELCOM countries to designate the Baltic Sea as a NECA to IMO MEPC 70, in parallel with the North Sea NECA submission.

This has been an exceptional meeting of the Helsinki Commission, thank you Contracting Parties, Observers and colleagues in the Secretariat.

Annex 11 Audit Report by the National Audit Office of Finland and Financial Statement, 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015

25.11.2015

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Audit Report 314/65/2015

The National Audit Office of Finland herewith sends the Audit Report, dated 25 November 2015, concerning the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission on financial period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

Assistant Auditor General Marjatta Kimmonen

Principal Financial Auditor Mika Halme

NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE OF FINLAND
ANTINKATU 1 | P.O.Box 1119 | 00101 HELSINKI
TEL +358 9 4321 | WWW.VTV.FI/EN

Dnro 314/65/2015

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Auditing of the accounts of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission on financial period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015

In accordance with the Financial Rules of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission the external auditing of the accounts of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission has been entrusted to the National Audit Office of Finland. The National Audit Office has assigned Principal Financial Auditor, CPFA Mika Halme to carry out the audit for the financial period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

On the basis of the audit, it is certified that during the financial period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

a) the financial statements are in accord with the books and records of the Commission;

b) the financial transactions reflected in the statements have been carried out in accordance with the rules and regulations, the budgetary provisions and other applicable directives;

c) the monies on deposit and on hand have been verified;

d) the assets and liabilities of the Commission are in accordance with the books of the Commission.

It is recommended that the recognition bases of incomes and expenditures will be defined more precisely in the Financial Rules.

Helsinki 25 November 2015

Principal Financial Auditor — Mika Halme

National Audit Office of Finland

NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE OF FINLAND
ANTINKATU 1 | P.O.Box 1119 | 00101 HELSINKI
TEL +358 9 4321 | WWW.VTV.FI/EN

Baltic Marine Environment
Protection Commission

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 30 JUNE 2015

GENERAL OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The operations of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission (hereinafter the Commission or HELCOM) are governed by the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, the "Helsinki Convention". The first Convention was signed in 1974 and entered into force in 1980. The ten Contracting Parties of the current Convention, signed in 1992 and in force since 17 January 2000, are Denmark, Estonia, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden.

HELCOM's main goal is to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution and to restore and safeguard its ecological balance. The Convention covers the whole of the Baltic Sea area as well as actions at land to cut pollution and to improve the waters of the sea.

Meetings of the Helsinki Commission are held annually, and at least every three years there is a meeting at the ministerial level. The Heads of Delegation meet regularly between the meetings of the Commission. In the financial year 2014-2015 the Commission renewed its working structure and streamlined its activities so that there are now five permanent main working groups and three additional time-bound groups. HELCOM also establishes expert groups and projects to deal with specific issues. Projects may be funded from the HELCOM budget, by special contributions of the Contracting Parties, through external sources, or by combinations of these.

The HELCOM Secretariat is located in Helsinki, Finland. A Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Finland and the Commission on the office and the privileges and immunities came into force in Finland on 27 June 1980. According to the Convention the Commission adopts its Rules of Procedure, and the current version in force is from 2013. The Commission also has its own Staff Regulations for General and Professional Staff, which were last amended in 2013.

The Commission is an international legal person with the capacity to enter into contracts, to acquire and dispose of immovable and movable property, and to institute legal proceedings. The Commission and its property and income are also exempt from all national direct and other taxes or duties. VAT exemption rules are the same as for diplomatic entities.

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNT POLICIES

Financial Statements

The Commission's financial statements are prepared according to the Financial Rules of the Helsinki Commission, last time amended by HELCOM in 2012 (Financial Rule 8). The accounts of the Commission are kept in euro, and the financial statements are presented in euro. HELCOM's accounting practice matches the scale of the organization and its budget and the limited number of its financial transactions (about 55 per month). The financial statements are prepared so that they provide a holistic and transparent picture of the financial situation of the Commission to the Contracting Parties and stakeholders. This is ensured for example by these notes and by presenting comparative information in respect of the preceding financial period.

Within the financial period incomes and expenditures are mainly recorded on cash basis. Between financial periods accrual basis is applied, so that the balance shows known outstanding payments to and from the Commission at the end of a financial period.

Changes in equity are not reported in the financial statement, because the Commission does not own any major property. The Secretariat's premises are rented, and most of the IT and communications equipment is leased. An up-to-date inventory of equipment and furniture is separately kept, covering both purchased and leased items.

The Secretariat has prepared a simple practical accounting manual, so that all staff members are aware of the practices and tasks as well as the duties of staff involved in financial administration. There are also related internal instructions, e.g. for travel/missions and procurement.

Assets

HELCOM's assets consist of operating funds deposited on a bank account, a small petty cash, and receivables. In addition to VAT receivables the item *Other receivables* comprises mostly pending reimbursements from various financing instruments to cover expenses incurred in ongoing and recently completed projects with external funding.

Liabilities

Most of HELCOM's liabilities are transitory items, which result from the fact that it is not always possible to pay out funds budgeted for certain activities during the same financial period. Therefore some of the allocated or received funds are transferred to the next financial period and form a reserve (or fund) for future liabilities and charges on approved projects and other authorized actions. Unique accounting codes are used for project-specific funds.

The *Working Capital Fund* is a reserve of HELCOM's own funds required by the Financial Rules. If the WCF is temporarily below the limit set in the Financial Rules, it must be replenished with eventual annual surpluses.

Income

Regular sources of income are the annual budgeted contributions from the Contracting Parties and the Headquarter contribution by Finland. Special contributions, which are not included in the regular budget, are received mainly from the Contracting Parties but also from other organisations and financing instruments for ongoing and new projects.

With the agreement of the Contracting Parties, transfers from the Working Capital Fund can be made to the income, but only in case the WCF is above the limits set by the Financial Rules. The third regular source of income is bank interest.

Expenditure

HELCOM expenditures are divided into 11 chapters. Most of the chapters are self-explanatory.

The Finnish Headquarters Contribution is used to finance Chapters 5 *Communications*, 6 *Rent and maintenance* and 8 *Material and equipment*. The use of any possible surplus at the end of the accounting period is decided by Finland in accordance with Rule 4.1 of the Financial Rules of the Commission.

Chapter 11 *Projects* covers both those projects included in the HELCOM budget and those for which special contributions are received. Therefore expenditures in this chapter are usually higher than the budgeted amount, because the budget only contains HELCOM's own funds, not external contributions. Project operations and finances do not always coincide with financial periods, which is why some

appropriations and contributions are transferred to a project fund for the next financial period (see *Liabilities)*. Project expenditures are recorded by funding-year basis. Each project has a unique accounting code, so that it is possible to monitor and follow the expenditures and incomes.

CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS FINANCIAL PERIOD

Assets

The level of the bank account was at the normal level. There were no receivables from Contracting Parties.

Liabilities

Most of the liabilities are transitory items containing funds that had been budgeted for this financial period but could not be paid out and were therefore transferred to be used in the next financial period. Project transitories also contain the HOLAS II fund, which will be used during the whole duration of the multi-annual project, until 2018.

The level of the Working Capital Fund, now at 8,54 % of the total budget, still remains below the limit of 11–15 % set in Financial Rule 3.4. The Contracting Parties are aware of the situation, and the Fund is gradually being replenished, including with the savings from this financial period.

Income

The annual contributions from the Contracting Parties and the Headquarter contribution by Finland are set in the income budget decided by the Commission in its annual meeting. The amount of special contributions outside the regular budget fluctuates with the cycles of the externally funded projects.

In this financial year there was no transfer from the WCF due to the low level of the Fund. The bank interest earned was a little higher than budgeted, which helped create a surplus for the replenishment of the WCF.

Expenditure

This year it was possible to make some savings in Chapters 1 *Meeting expenditures* and 4 *Travel expenditures*, mainly due to the increased use of online meetings instead of physical meetings.

In Chapters 3 *Data and consultant services* and 11 *Projects* many appropriations were carried over to the next financial period as transitory items. Total project expenditures fluctuate on the basis of the different implementation and payment schedules of externally funded projects.

Expenditures in Chapters 5 *Communications*, 6 *Rent and maintenance* and 8 *Material and equipment* could be covered by the Finnish HQ Contribution, with a minimal deficit financed by the savings of the previous year.

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission
Financial Statement 30 June 2015
Amounts in EUR

BALANCE SHEET

		30 June 2015		30 June 2014
ASSETS				
Petty cash		340,65		110,74
Bank account		660 119,13		898 114,31
Receivables from Contracting Parties		0		0
Other receivables		151 067,53		394 798,53
		811 527,31		1 293 023,58
LIABILITIES				
Liabilities to Contracting Parties		0		597 584,00
Accounts payable		10 300,82		12 184,54
Transitory items				
Data/cons. services transitories	175 033,72		173 553,17	
Project transitories	454 231,90		339 827,94	
Other transitories	5 357,27	634 622,89	11 358,70	524 739,81
		634 622,89		1 134 508,35
OWN FUNDS				
Working Capital Fund	158 515,24		155 917,61	
Surplus/deficit from period	8 088,36	166 603,60	2 597,62	158 515,23
		811 527,31		1 293 023,58

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission
Financial Statement 30 June 2015
Amounts in EUR

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

	1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015		1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014	
INCOME				
Contributions	2 377 729,83		2 266 070,22	
Interest and other income	1 109,77		2 277,40	
Transfer from Working Capital Fund	0	2 378 839,60	0	2 268 347,62
EXPENDITURES				
Meeting expenditures	-105 618,70		-109 971,67	
Salaries and remunerations	-993 303,02		-994 322,04	
Data and consultant services	-188 800,00		-193 600,00	
Travel expenses	-37 779,40		-38 857,40	
Communications	-67 000,00		-65 000,00	
Rent and maintenance	-173 000,00		-173 000,00	
BSEPs and other information	-74 077,70		-79 000,00	
Material and equipment	-50 000,00		-52 000,00	
Miscellaneous	-24 754,17		-25 201,28	
Meeting support	-5 888,42		-5 951,39	
Projects	-650 529,83	-2 370 751,24	-528 846,22	-2 265 750,00
Surplus/Deficit		8 088,36		2 597,62

Monika Stankiewicz

Monika Stankiewicz
Executive Secretary

Attachments:
1. Detailed Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet 2014–2015
2. Three-year comparison (2013/14–2015/16)

5

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission Attachment 1
Financial Statement 30 June 2015

1.7.2014 - 30.6.2015

Amounts in euro

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

INCOME	**As on 30.6.2015**	**Budget 2014-15**	**Balance**
Contributions by Contracting Parties			
4101 DENMARK contribution	209 310,00	209 310,00	0,00
4102 ESTONIA contribution	178 916,00	178 916,00	0,00
4103 FINLAND contribution	499 310,00	499 310,00	0,00
4104 GERMANY contribution	178 916,00	178 916,00	0,00
4105 LATVIA contribution	147 821,00	147 821,00	0,00
4106 LITHUANIA contribution	118 835,00	118 835,00	0,00
4107 POLAND contribution	178 916,00	178 916,00	0,00
4108 RUSSIA contribution	178 916,00	178 916,00	0,00
4109 SWEDEN contribution	209 310,00	209 310,00	0,00
4110 EU contribution	48 750,00	48 750,00	0,00
4200 Special contributions	428 729,83	0,00	428 729,83
Contributions total	2 377 729,83	1 949 000,00	428 729,83
Interest and other income			
4300 Interest	1 109,77	1 000,00	109,77
Interest and other income total	1 109,77	1 000,00	109,77
INCOME total	**2 378 839,60**	**1 950 000,00**	**428 839,60**
EXPENDITURES	**As on 30.6.2015**	**Budget 2014-15**	**Balance**
1. Meeting expenditures			
5100 Meeting Expenditures	26 120,28		
5110 HELCOM Meetings	11 952,92		
5111 HOD Meetings	6 612,53		
5112 BSAP Related Meetings	3 047,65		
5125 STATE&CONSERVATION Meetings	12 486,98		
5135 PRESSURE Meetings	8 021,61		
5140 MARITIME Meetings	5 686,58		
5160 GEAR Meetings	9 069,19		
5170 RESPONSE Meetings	11 485,88		
5180 AGRI Meetings	8 045,51		
5190 FISH Meetings	3 089,57		
Meeting expenditures total	105 618,70	110 000,00	4 381,30
2. Salaries and remunerations			
5200 Salaries and Remunerations	27 000,00		
5210 Full-time salaries	761 602,73		
5220 Part-time salaries	1 700,00		
5230 Remunerations	50 716,60		
5231 Pensions	141 521,37		
5232 Occupational health	10 762,32		
Salaries and remunerations total	993 303,02	994 400,00	1 096,98
3. Data and Consultant Services			
5311 3.1/1 COMBINE data base	64 000,00	64 000,00	
5315 3.1/5 PLC water	67 500,00	67 500,00	
5322 3.2/2 EMEP centers (PLC AIR)	52 300,00	52 300,00	
5330 3.3 ICES and other expertise	5 000,00	5 000,00	
Data and Consultant Services total	188 800,00	188 800,00	0,00
4. Travel expenses			
5410 Travels	37 779,40	39 000,00	1 220,60

5. Communications			
5500 Communications	524,45		
5510 Phone/Fax/Skype	15 661,38		
5511 Data	44 620,06		
5520 Mailings/deliveries	6 194,11		
Communications total	67 000,00	67 000,00	0,00
6. Rent and Maintenance			
5600 Rent and Maintenance	-6 019,60		
5610 Rent of office	161 301,34		
5620 Cleaning/maintenance	17 718,26		
Rent and Maintenance total	173 000,00	173 000,00	0,00
7. BSEPs and other information			
5700 BSEPs and other information	10 870,81		
5710 Proceedings (BSEP)	12 858,81		
5720 Other publications	3 980,95		
5730 Other information activities	46 367,13		
BSEPs and other information total	74 077,70	75 000,00	922,30
8. Material and Equipment			
5800 Material and equipment	5 470,23		
5810 Copying	3 010,66		
5820 Office utilities	1 204,37		
5821 Newspapers, magazines etc.	1 727,33		
5840 Equipment/maintenance	38 587,41		
Material and Equipment total	50 000,00	50 000,00	0,00
9. Miscellaneous			
5900 Miscellaneous	0,00		
5910 Bank charges	800,20		
5920 Staff training&well-being etc.	12 438,41		
5930 Miscellaneous	11 515,56		
Miscellaneous total	24 754,17	25 000,00	245,83
10. Meeting Support			
6000 Meeting Support	534,91		
6104 Support Russia	353,51		
Meeting Support total	5 888,42	6 000,00	111,58
11. Projects			
7111 11.43 PLC-6	50 000,00	50 000,00	
7115 11.15 Information system	25 000,00	25 000,00	
7117 11.17 Other HELCOM projects	27 740,00	27 740,00	
7122 11.44 PLUS	44 684,71	34 000,00	
7146 11.46 ALIENS et al	5 000,00		
7148 11.48 CORESET 2	52 000,00	52 000,00	
7149 11.49 PEG QA	3 560,00	3 560,00	
7150 11.50 FISH-PRO 2	5 500,00	5 500,00	
7152 EUTRO-OPER	36 000,00	24 000,00	
7154 Marine Litter	46 800,00		
7155 MPA Database	26 929,83		
7156 ECONET	13 993,02		
7157 HOLAS II	179 204,86		
7229 BALSAM (EU)	113 473,95		
7330 Sturgeon	1 895,75		
7331 EU RED LIST	14 412,71		
7332 BALTWISE SEED (EU)	4 335,00		
Projects total	650 529,83	221 800,00	428 729,83
EXPENDITURES total	**2 370 751,24**	**1 950 000,00**	**420 751,24**
Surplus/Deficit	**8 088,36**	**0,00**	**8 088,36**

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission

BALANCE SHEET	30.6.2015	30.6.2014
ASSETS		
Petty Cash		
1010 Petty Cash	340,65	110,74
Bank Account		
1020 Bank Account	660 119,13	898 114,31
Other Receivables		
1200 VAT receivables	63 563,08	136 437,50
1201 Other receivables	87 504,45	258 361,03
Other Receivables total	151 067,53	394 798,53
	811 527,31	**1 293 023,58**
LIABILITIES		
Liabilities to Contracting Parties		
2010 Liabilities to CPs	0,00	597 584,00
Liabilities to Contracting Parties total	0,00	597 584,00
Accounts Payable		
2020 Accounts payable	2 996,70	4 462,69
2021 Employee PVaEL	1 767,54	1 801,93
2022 Employer TVaEL	5 536,58	5 919,92
Accounts Payable total	10 300,82	12 184,54
Transitory Items		
Data/Cons.Svces transitories		
2050 Data/Cons.svce transitories	11 980,96	8 100,41
2052 3.1/1 COMBINE data ICES transf	500,00	500,00
2053 3.2/1 ICES co-op transfer	35 902,76	35 902,76
2055 3.2/2 EMEP transfers	74 900,00	74 900,00
2056 3.1/3 Discharge radioact db tr		2 400,00
2058 3.1/2 Radioact.database transf	18 000,00	18 000,00
2059 3.1/5 PLC Water transfer	33 750,00	33 750,00
Data/Cons.Svces transitories total	175 033,72	173 553,17
Project transitories		
2060 Project transitories	124 451,52	80 557,09
2061 NIP transfer		11 350,20
2063 PRF transfer		25 000,00
2066 11.40 MORE transfer		12 967,79
2067 11.39 ZEN-QAI transfer	6 000,00	6 000,00
2068 11.44 PLUS transfer	58 998,73	85 016,51
2069 11.42 PLC 5.5 transfer	4 000,00	4 000,00
2070 11.43 PLC-6 transfer	57 500,00	50 000,00
2071 11.6 QA Phytopl.PEG transf.	12 460,52	11 666,34
2072 Baltwise Seed (EU) transfer		2 554,05
2073 TRANSDATA transfer	19 732,95	19 732,95
2075 CORESET transfer	2 825,63	2 835,01
2077 HOLAS II transfers	153 769,76	
2079 EUTRO-OPER transfer	14 492,79	28 148,00
Project transitories total	454 231,90	339 827,94
Other transitories		
2080 Other transitories	4 479,46	4 479,46
2082 FIN HQ transitory	68,45	93,37
2083 11.15 - IT updates transitory	224,47	2 859,92
2086 11.31 FISH-PRO transfer	584,89	3 925,95
Other transitories total	5 357,27	11 358,70
Transitory Items total	634 622,89	524 739,81
	644 923,71	1 134 508,35
OWN FUNDS		
Working Capital Fund		
3010 Working Capital Fund	158 515,24	155 917,61
Surplus/deficit from period	8 088,36	2 597,62
Working Capital Fund total	166 603,60	158 515,23
	811 527,31	**1 293 023,58**

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission Attachment 2
Financial Statement 30 June 2015

Three-year budget development comparison

	2015/2016	*2014/2015*		*2013/2014*	
A. INCOME	***Budget***	***Budget***	***Actual***	***Budget***	***Actual***
1. HQ contribution by Finland	292 000,00	290 000,00	290 000,00	290 000,00	290 000,00
2. Contributions by CPs					
2.1 Denmark	190 844,00	209 310,00	209 310,00	213 652,00	213 652,00
2.2 Estonia	180 751,00	178 916,00	178 916,00	179 028,00	179 028,00
2.3 European Union	49 237,00	48 750,00	48 750,00	48 750,00	48 750,00
2.4 Finland	190 844,00	209 310,00	209 310,00	213 652,00	213 652,00
2.5 Germany	180 751,00	178 916,00	178 916,00	200 000,00	200 000,00
2.6 Latvia	178 916,00	147 821,00	147 821,00	116 816,00	116 816,00
2.7 Lithuania	148 948,00	118 835,00	118 835,00	88 618,00	88 618,00
2.8 Poland	180 751,00	178 916,00	178 916,00	179 028,00	179 028,00
2.9 Russia	180 751,00	178 916,00	178 916,00	179 028,00	179 028,00
2.10 Sweden	190 844,00	209 310,00	209 310,00	213 652,00	213 652,00
3. Interest and other income	3 028,00	1 000,00	1 109,77	0,00	2 277,40
4. Transfer from Working Capital Fund	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
5. Special contributions	0,00	0,00	428 729,83	0,00	343 846,22
Total income	**1 967 665,00**	**1 950 000,00**	**2 378 839,60**	**1 922 224,00**	**2 268 347,62**

	2015/2016	*2014/2015*		*2013/2014*	
B. EXPENDITURE	***Budget***	***Budget***	***Actual***	***Budget***	***Actual***
1. Meeting Expenses	110 000,00	110 000,00	105 618,70	110 000,00	109 971,67
2. Salaries	995 000,00	994 400,00	993 303,02	994 400,00	994 322,04
3. Data handling/consultant services	188 800,00	188 800,00	188 800,00	193 600,00	193 600,00
4. Travels	39 000,00	39 000,00	37 779,40	39 000,00	38 857,40
5. Communications	67 000,00	67 000,00	67 000,00	65 000,00	65 000,00
6. Rent and maintenance	174 000,00	173 000,00	173 000,00	173 000,00	173 000,00
7. Publications&other info.material	75 000,00	75 000,00	74 077,70	79 000,00	79 000,00
8. Material and equipment	51 000,00	50 000,00	50 000,00	52 000,00	52 000,00
9. Miscellaneous	25 000,00	25 000,00	24 754,17	25 224,00	25 201,28
10. Meeting support	6 000,00	6 000,00	5 888,42	6 000,00	5 951,39
11. Projects	236 865,00	221 800,00	650 529,83	185 000,00	528 846,22
Total expenditure	**1 967 665,00**	**1 950 000,00**	**2 370 751,24**	**1 922 224,00**	**2 265 750,00**

Annex 12 Budget for the financial period 1 July 2016 - 30 June 2017

INCOME (EUR)

	Budget 2016-2017	***Equal share of countries based on 2014-2015 budget***
1. HQ contribution by Finland	292 000	
2. Contributions by CPs		
2.1 Denmark	182 496	178 916
2.2 Estonia	182 496	178 916
2.3 European Union	49 608	
2.4 Finland	182 496	178 916
2.5 Germany	182 496	178 916
2.6 Latvia	178 916	178 916
2.7 Lithuania	178 916	178 916
2.8 Poland	182 496	178 916
2.9 Russia	182 496	178 916
2.10 Sweden	182 496	178 916
3. Interest and other income	3 808	
4. Transfer from Working Capital Fund	0	
5. Other contributions	0	
TOTAL INCOME	**1 980 720**	

Annex 13 Statements by the European Commission

Statements by the European Commission Regarding Financing and the Implementation of EU Legislation

The EU is an important financing body for potential projects being considered within the context of HELCOM. In order to avoid any interference with the independent decision-making procedures established under the various financing instruments, the EU does, as a matter of principle, not take any position as regards any project proposal intended for submission to EU financing bodies. This should not be interpreted in any way as prejudging the position of the EU when taking financing decision.

The responsibility for implementing EU legislation is solely with the EU Member States. The role of the European Commission is, inter alia, to assess compliance with EU legislation once a Member State has submitted its report. Hence, any statement or position taken by the EU within the context of HELCOM should not be construed to give any assessment of whether the work done by HELCOM is compliant with EU legislation.

Statement regarding MSFD Implementation

The EU pointed out that any agreement that the EU delegation will give within the context of HELCOM in this respect is without prejudice to the European Commission's role under the EU Treaty to assess the implementation and compliance of EU Member States with EU law and the assessments that the European Commission is required to carry out in accordance with Articles 12 and 16 MSFD after EU Member States have officially reported to the European Commission.

List of Documents

Name	Category	Submitted by
1-1 Provisional Agenda.pdf	DEC	Chair and Executive Secretary
1-2 Annotations to the Provisional Agenda.pdf	CMNT	Executive Secretary
2-1 Outcome of the HELCOM Marine Litter Stakeholder Conference.pdf	INF	GEAR Chair, Moderator of the Conference
3-1 Roadmap for HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
3-2 Planning the next Ministerial meeting.pdf	CMNT	Executive Secretary
4-1 Draft Recommendation on co-operation and coordination of research vessel based monitoring.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
4-2 Draft revised HELCOM Recommendation 25-7 on Safety of winter navigation in the Baltic Sea area.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
4-3 Draft roadmap for the Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECAs.pdf	DEC	Denmark
4-3-Rev.1 Draft roadmap for the Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECAs.pdf	DEC	Secretariat
4-4 Draft HELCOM Recommendations on waterborne pollution input assessment and on monitoring of airborne pollution input.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
4-5 Status of HELCOM projects.pdf	INF	Executive Secretary
4-6 Proposal for coordinated HELCOM-VASAB process to develop future MSP work plan.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
4-7 Update on the status of HELCOM Hot Spots.pdf	INF	Executive Secretary
4-8 Outcome of GEAR 13-2016.pdf	INF	Executive Secretary
4-9 Draft Recommendation on Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
4-10 Draft HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
4-10-Rev.1 Draft HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture.pdf	DEC	Chair of Fish Group
4-10-Rev.2 Draft HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture.pdf	DEC	Secretariat
4-11 Outcome of the work on follow-up of the draft Recommendation on aquaculture.pdf	DEC	Chair of Fish Group
4-12 Draft HELCOM ecological coherence assessment of the MPA network.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
4-13 Comments to the draft HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture.pdf	CMNT	Finland
4-14 Outcomes of EUTRO-OPER project.pdf	INF	Executive Secretary
4-15 Status of clarifications on the future HELCOM actions.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
4-16 Current mandate of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.pdf	INF	Executive Secretary
4-17 Regional Baltic Underwater Noise Roadmap 2015-2017.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
4-18 Draft Terms of Reference for the HELCOM FISH Correspondence Group.pdf	DEC	Chair of Fish Group

5-1 Update on BONUS activities.pdf	INF	BONUS
5-2 Activities overview 2015.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
5-3 Statement by CCB.pdf	INF	CCB
5-4 Statement by WWF.pdf	INF	WWF
5-5 Statement by Oceana.pdf	INF	OCEANA
6-1 Accounts of the Commission 2014-2015.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
6-2 Observer applications.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
6-3 Observer application by INTERTANKO.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
6-4 Draft budget for 2016-2017 and draft budget estimate for 2017-2018.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
6-4-Corr1 Draft budget for 2016-2017 and draft budget estimate for 2017-2018.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
6-5 Draft Priorities of the EU Chairmanship of HELCOM.pdf	INF	European Union
6-6 Observer application by European Anglers Alliance, EAA.pdf	DEC	Executive Secretary
7-1 Information by Greenpeace Russia about alarming situation at Krasny Bor hazardous waste landfill_CCB.pdf	CMNT	CCB
7-2 Update of information regarding anthropogenic threats to Kurgalskiy Nature Reservey_CCB.pdf	CMNT	CCB
7-3 Information on dredging material management at sea in connection with Bronka.pdf	INF	Russia
7-4 WWF booklet on safeguarding the seas with ecosystem-based management.pdf	INF	WWF
7-4-Att_Safeguarding the seas with ecosystem-based management.pdf	INF	WWF
7-5 Information about the XVII International Forum Baltic Sea Day.pdf	INF	Russia