



HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/4

Adopted 7 August 2022,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

REDUCTION OF THE RELEASES OF EXPANDED AND EXTRUDED POLYSTYRENE TO THE BALTIC SEA

THE COMMISSION,

BEING CONCERNED of the harmful effects of marine litter on the marine ecosystem and human health as well as causing socio-economic losses;

RECALLING the commitments in the HELCOM Recommendation 36/1 on the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter to achieve a significant quantitative reduction of marine litter by 2025, compared to 2015, and prevent harm to the coastal and marine environment in the Baltic Sea area;

RECALLING IN PARTICULAR, action RL9 in the RAP ML to compile information on the prevalence and sources of expanded polystyrene in the marine environment, and engage with industry to make proposals for alternative solutions (e.g. use of other materials, establishment of deposits, return and restoration systems, overpackaging reduction);

RECOGNIZING that beach litter monitoring indicates that expanded and extruded polystyrene (EPS and XPS) accounts for about 10% of the total sum of plastic beach litter items;

ACKNOWLEDGING that many sources contribute to the total environmental load of EPS and XPS, such as construction materials, production of EPS/XPS articles, solid waste treatment, recreational activities, fish boxes and fishing tools;

DECIDES to reduce EPS and XPS releases to the environment and therefore

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

- a) promote and share best practice on the handling, storage and waste management of EPS/XPS on construction and demolition sites, and on that basis;
- b) establish a HELCOM guideline for best practice on handling EPS/XPS on construction and demolition sites by 2024;
- c) share the HELCOM guideline for best practice on handling EPS/XPS on construction and demolition sites with relevant actors through national awareness raising campaigns;
- d) improve collection, sorting and recycling of EPS/XPS e.g. in municipal waste handling, at construction and demolition sites, at recyclers and producers by promoting collection schemes, innovation projects or information campaigns;
- e) promote the Operation Clean Sweep scheme or equivalent certification schemes for EPS/XPS producers and converters aiming at zero pellet loss;

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Contracting Parties inform on the current situation regarding EPS and XPS waste by 2024 and assess the implementation of this recommendation and report the results of the assessment to the Commission in 2027;

DECIDES that Contracting Parties consider revision of this Recommendation in 2028.