



Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Group on Aerial Surveillance (EG SURVEILLANCE)

Approved by the HELCOM Heads of Delegation via correspondence in January 2023

Purpose

The HELCOM Expert Group on Aerial Surveillance (EG SURVEILLANCE) is, under the auspices of the HELCOM Response Group, responsible for the co-operation in the field of joint aerial surveillance as well as for co-ordination of the satellite based oil spill surveillance and evaluation of its results and operational effectiveness. The Expert Group shall make all arrangements necessary to implement the aerial surveillance cooperation as laid down in Chapter 6 of the HELCOM Manual on Co-operation in Response to Marine Pollution (HELCOM Response Manual). Co-operation on surveillance is carried out in accordance with Annex VII (Regulations 1, 3, 4 and 10) of the Helsinki Convention and HELCOM Recommendation 34E/4: Airborne Surveillance with Remote Sensing Equipment in the Baltic Sea Area.

Duties

The duties of the Expert Group are *inter alia*:

1. plan, carry out and evaluate the Coordinated Extended Pollution Control Operations (CEPCO) Flights and other aerial surveillance activities;
2. coordinate, and exchange information on, satellite surveillance in the Baltic Sea, including working out the frame routines for sub-regional aircraft/vessel verification of potential spills;
3. plan and carry out workshops and seminars in the field of aerial surveillance, especially on observing oil with remote sensing;
4. develop suitable routines for communication, flight safety, etc.;
5. cooperate with the Bonn Agreement with special regard to
 - the results of surveillance exercises,
 - the improvement of prosecution of offenders;
6. exchange information on research and development (R & D) activities.

Expected outcomes

The EG SURVEILLANCE works to implement the aerial surveillance cooperation as laid down in Chapter 6, of the HELCOM Response Manual. The Expert Group will report annually on the results of surveillance activities, define the total operational needs for satellite images in the Baltic Sea and co-ordinate surveillance activities.

Organization of work

The EG SURVEILLANCE consists of experts from Contracting Parties. Due to exchange of sensitive information, the Expert Group will not be open for HELCOM observers and meeting documents will remain restricted.

The Expert Group will meet physically once a year.

The Expert Group will elect a lead country and Chair following the alphabetical order of the Contracting Parties for a 2-year period.

The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed periodically, every four years, or as the need arises.

The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the Expert Group.

The Expert Group reports to the HELCOM Response Working Group.