



2024 Ministerial Meeting
on the Baltic Sea
Marine Environment



Riga, Latvia • 25 April 2024

Statement on the geopolitical situation

adopted by the EU and the Contracting Parties
to HELCOM that are also Member States of the EU (H9)
on the occasion of the 2024 Ministerial Meeting
on the Baltic Sea Marine Environment



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

The European Union and the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention) that are Member States of the European Union (H9) reiterate their unequivocal condemnation of the Russian Federation's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, an observer state to the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM). The H9 demand that the Russian Federation immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

In light of this continuous and ongoing flagrant violation by the Russian Federation of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, as also underscored by the multiple related Resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022, the H9 reaffirm their unanimous position that they cannot currently engage in business as usual with the Russian Federation in the context of HELCOM.

In line with the statement by the Chairmanship of HELCOM of 2 March 2022 the H9 therefore uphold their decision to observe a strategic pause in regular HELCOM operations, whereby all regular meetings of HELCOM bodies and meetings of project groups with involvement of the Russian Federation under the HELCOM umbrella are suspended until further notice. The H9 wish to emphasize that this strategic pause does not constitute a cessation of HELCOM activities.

The H9 will continue to review their position with regard to the meetings of HELCOM bodies against the background of future developments concerning the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The H9 reiterate their continued commitment to the implementation of the Helsinki Convention and the policies and measures agreed in the context of that Convention, for the benefit of the entire Baltic Sea Region.

The Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Poland, the Kingdom of Sweden and the European Union reaffirm their support to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, as well as its inherent right of self-defence against the war of aggression by the Russian Federation.

Riga, 25 April 2024