



2024 Ministerial Meeting on the Baltic Sea Marine Environment



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Statement by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)

to be taken note of by the 2024 Ministerial Meeting
on the Baltic Marine Environment

Congratulation on 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Convention

by Ambassador Helena Tuuri, Finnish Presidency of the CBSS

Distinguished ministers, your excellencies, dear HELCOM partners and colleagues,

Representing the Finnish Presidency of the CBSS, I have the pleasure and honour to congratulate HELCOM, and those serving it, on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Convention. Fifty years of service is an impressive milestone. It is also a testament to the excellent work conducted by HELCOM, its corresponding Working Groups, and secretariat.

The long-standing record should not come as a surprise, however. If we go back to the original convention, a defining characteristic is its forward-looking vision. The Convention speaks of the need to protect and enhance the values of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Region for the benefit of its peoples. With respect to working methods, it calls for expediency and co-operation. These and related guidelines remain as relevant today as they were in 1974. As Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine continues, the challenging geopolitical situation in our region affects our work and focus. However, it does not change the need to protect and save the Baltic Sea and the marine environment.

HELCOM built a respectable track record early on, and its experience would later provide guidance for other Baltic regional organisations – including the CBSS. In hindsight, it is probably safe to say that the practical orientation of HELCOM inspired a whole host of other organisations in the region to emulate a targeted and functional approach.

The CBSS has a long-standing collaboration with HELCOM. The complementarity of mandates – aiming to contribute to a safer, more secure, more sustainable and more prosperous Baltic Sea Region – makes the partnership a natural one. We in the CBSS recognise that a sound Baltic Sea environment is a prerequisite for other regional goals. The two organisations have combined their respective strengths on several initiatives in recent time. These range from addressing submerged munitions to promoting green shipping corridors.

With the current celebrations in mind, I congratulate the on-going Latvian chairmanship and wish the forthcoming Lithuanian chairmanship a successful tenure. Looking ahead, the CBSS wishes HELCOM a continued successful journey as it navigates the next years and decades.