



HELCOM Stakeholder Conference 2025
A 'one Baltic' approach towards a sea
unaffected by hazardous substances
31 March 2025

CHEMICAL TANKER DISCHARGES

Juulia Suikula
juulia.Suikula@jnfoundation.fi

Project Manager

John Nurminen Foundation



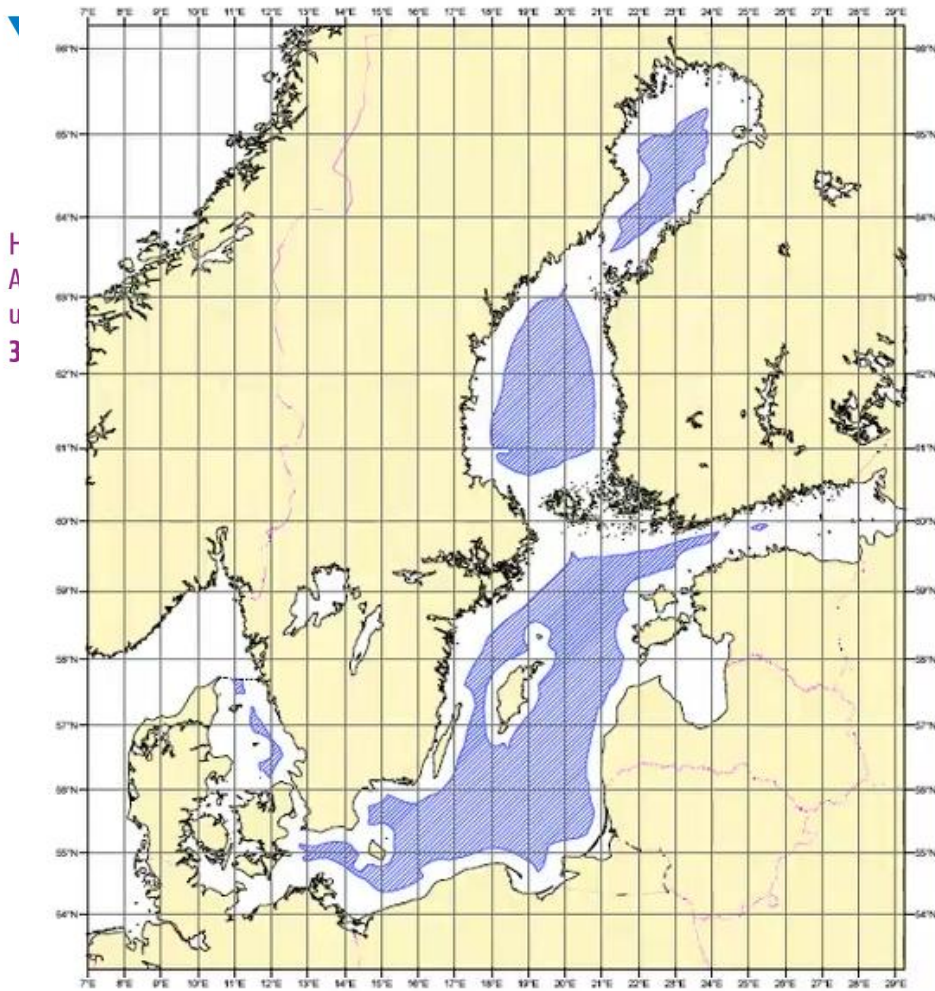
HELCOM Stakeholder Conference 2025
A 'one Baltic' approach towards a sea
unaffected by hazardous substances
31 March 2025

How can NGOs help to minimise the release and impact of pollution from hazardous substances?

- Corporate engagement: Encouraging companies using hazardous substances, sharing best practices, and finding resolutions to reduce the discharges of hazardous substances
- Advocacy and policy influence: Influencing regulation through HELCOM and IMO
- Capacity building, circulating information, influencing problems that are not yet addressed properly
- Increasing public awareness
- Sharing experiences from the Baltic Sea to other regional seas about hazardous substances

How has John Nurminen Foundation contributed to implementing BSAP action S16?: Chemical tanker discharges

- After unloading their cargo, chemical tankers often wash their tanks with seawater en route to the next port of loading. Washing water containing chemicals can be discharged into the sea within certain limitations. The ship must be travelling at least 12 nautical miles (approx. 22 km) from the nearest land and the depth of the sea must be at least 25 m.
- The permitted cargo residue per tank is 75–350 liters.
- Discharges have also been observed in protected areas in Sweden → permitted
- Also many illegal discharges and undetectable discharges



ITÄMEREN ALUE

- Etäisyys lähimmästä maasta vähintään 12 mpk
- Veden syvyys vähintään 25 m

170 85 0 170 Kilometris





Chemical Tanker Project

Coalition
Clean Baltic



1.

TRAFICOM
Finnish Transport and Communications Agency



Risk assessment

Identifying the chemicals handled in Finnish and Swedish ports that could potentially have the biggest harmful impact on the marine environment and human health.

- Harmfulness and handled volumes in Finnish ports
- Focus on chemicals in MARPOL class Y (harmful chemicals which can be discharged to the sea)

Identified risk substances in Finland: crude tall oil, styrene, benzene

2.

Solutions to reduce the most harmful discharges

Cooperation with chemical industry, ports, shipping companies and authorities

- Reducing the amount of cargo residues in washing waters
- Improving the washing practices
- Handling washing waters on shore cost-effectively
- Improving the environmental regulation



HELCOM Stakeholder Conference 2025
A 'one Baltic' approach towards a sea
unaffected by hazardous substances
31 March 2025

Achievements

- The frame for risk assessments was created and presented at HELCOM Maritime
 - [Finalized Finnish report](#): Risk chemicals unloaded at Finnish ports were identified and their washing water emission were estimated
- Industry collaboration
 - Tall oil emission prevention: we stopped all Finnish tall oil discharges into the Baltic Sea in collaboration with Finnish tall oil refineries
 - Styrene emission prevention
- More publicity to the discharges, shared best practices
- A HELCOM workshop accelerated the risk assessment process in HELCOM countries and promoted the inclusion of chemicals under mandatory prewash requirements (e.g., tall oil at the IMO level under MARPOL Annex II).

SAVE THE DATE: 16.5.2025 second HELCOM workshop – more information to come!

Project expansion: Scaling up the chemical tanker project to all HELCOM states → The Baltic Chemical Tanker Project



HELCOM Stakeholder Conference 2025
A 'one Baltic' approach towards a sea
unaffected by hazardous substances
31 March 2025

Baltic Chemical Tanker Project

Objective:

- To eliminate the discharges of tank cleaning washing water from the most hazardous chemical tankers in the Baltic Sea
- Implementation of HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan action S16

Measures:

- Country-specific risk assessments to identify the most hazardous risk chemicals – enabling them authorities to commission risk assessments as consultancy work
- Facilitated by JNF and CCB:
 - Influencing legislation through HELCOM and IMO
 - Compilation of best practices into an official document
 - HELCOM workshops and communication
 - Voluntary corporate collaboration: Engaging companies using risk substances, sharing best practices, and organizing workshops

Target:

- All HELCOM countries
- Chemical industry companies