



HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/11

Supersedes HELCOM Recommendations 9/10 and 20/4

Adopted 28 March 2025,
having regard to Article 13, Paragraph b)
of the Helsinki Convention 1974

ANTIFOULING PAINTS CONTAINING ORGANOTIN COMPOUNDS AND CYBUTRYNE

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 5 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention), in which the Contracting Parties undertake to prevent and eliminate pollution of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area caused by harmful substances from all sources, according to the provisions of the Convention and, to this end, implement the procedures and measures of Annex I of the 1992 Helsinki Convention,

RECALLING ALSO Annex I of the Helsinki Convention, according to which pesticides, such as fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, slimicides and chemicals used for the preservation of wood, timber, wood pulp, cellulose, paper, hides and textiles belong to the priority groups of harmful substances for the purposes of Article 5 of the Convention,

RECALLING ALSO Part 1, Section 2.3 of Annex I of the 1992 Helsinki Convention banning the use of organotin compounds for antifouling paints for pleasure craft under 25 m and for fish net cages,

RECALLING FURTHER Article 8 of the 1992 Helsinki Convention, according to which the Contracting Parties shall take measures as set out in Annex IV to protect the Baltic Sea Area from pollution from ships,

RECALLING FINALLY Article 9 of the 1992 Helsinki Convention, according to which the Contracting Parties shall take special measures in order to abate harmful effects on the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area caused by pleasure craft activities,

HAVING REGARD to the Ministerial Declaration 1988 and to the Baltic Sea Declaration of 1990, calling, i.a. for a substantive reduction of load of pollutants most harmful to the ecosystem of the Baltic Sea,

HAVING REGARD to the Ministerial Communiqué 1998, calling to implement the HELCOM Recommendation 19/5 on HELCOM Objective with Regard to Hazardous Substances,

HAVING REGARD to the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships, 2001 (the AFS Convention),

HAVING REGARD to IMO Resolution MEPC.331(76) amending the AFS Convention.

NOTING that the use of organotin compounds, and in particular tributyl tin compounds, as well as of cybutryne as an anti-foulant in paints for use on boats, ships, underwater structures and fish net cages is causing pollution in the Baltic Sea Area,

NOTING FURTHER the scientific evidence of harmful effects on marine life and fisheries caused by organotin compounds and cybutryne,

RECALLING the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) adopted at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2021 and, in particular, its agreed actions to promote the development and use of effective, environmentally sustainable biofouling management techniques and antifouling systems on ships and recreational craft, including biocide-free alternatives to prevent biofouling by supporting related research and development activities in the Baltic Sea region, and to minimize the release of biocides from antifouling products to the marine environment, and preferably by 2027 replace the use of biocidal antifouling products with biocide-free alternatives on structures, equipment and recreational craft in cases not already subject to the AFS Convention when available and environmentally and technically feasible.

DESIRING to reduce the amounts of organotin compounds and cybutryne entering the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area,

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

- a) take effective measures to eliminate such pollution,
- b) maintain and enforce existing bans on the retail sale or use of organotin paints for pleasure boats or fish net cages¹,
- c) enforce IMO Resolution MEPC.331(76) with regular controls in accordance with the 2022 IMO Guidelines for brief sampling of anti-fouling systems on ships (MEPC.356(78)),
- d) consider the need for restrictions on other uses of organotin compounds in antifouling paints, for example on underwater structures,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Contracting Parties report on organic tin and cybutryne concentrations in the marine environment in areas where organic tin compounds and cybutryne may have entered the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area in the year 2028 and thereafter every three years,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that this Recommendation should be reconsidered as soon as possible taking into account the development in other international fora (like the IMO and the EU).

¹ For the EU Member States, a ban on manufacture, placing on the market and use of organic tin compounds is contained in entry 20 of ANNEX XVII of Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH). The placing on the market and use of cybutryne is prohibited by Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/107 of 27 January 2016 not approving cybutryne as an existing active substance for use in biocidal products for product-type 21.