



Document title	Outcomes
Code	8-1
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	8
Submission date	24.09.2018
Submitted by	Secretariat
Reference	

The Fourth Online meeting of the Group was held on 20th September 2018 at 13.00 CET (14.00 Finland) and was attended by member from Denmark, Estonia, Finland (also representing CW PHARMA project), Germany, Latvia, Poland, Russia, and Sweden (representing PA Hazards platform).

Meeting outcomes

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the Agenda. DEC

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda.

Agenda item 2: Veterinary data reporting. CMNT

2.1 The Meeting discussed the data call related to veterinary data, and the established deadlines.

2.2 Denmark enquired if HELCOM has the possibility to access data directly from ESVAC as they already report relevant information to that data host. Denmark have currently only considered antimicrobial data, so an extended reporting period would be valuable.

2.3 The fact that ESVAC data only covers antibiotics was discussed and other pharmaceuticals, more than just antibiotics, were also considered as appropriate for the data call.

2.4 Poland informed that only part 1 of the questionnaire is possible to complete. Poland informed that data prior to 2015-2016 is stored in the EMA database but is from pilot projects so not possible to freely release currently. Furthermore, data from 2017 is undergoing a verification process and will therefore not be available till September 2019 at the earliest. Furthermore, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development does not have percentage data regarding the distribution of medicines to individual consumer groups. In Poland, prescription medicines go only to veterinarians. Also all medicines for food-producing animals go only to veterinarians. Medicines that can be sold without prescription (OTC – Over The Counter medicines) go to veterinarians and also to the general public.

The Meeting encouraged Poland to provide pilot data 2015-2016 and the data on sales of veterinary pharmaceuticals which would allow to evaluate the magnitude of the use of these substances in Poland and indicated that any market data (sales and distribution data that may be possible to provide) would also be of value.

2.5 Germany informed that data for antibiotic groups is available till 2017, but informed that information on separate compounds will likely not be fully available due to legal restrictions. Some data at a more detailed resolution may be possible, but requires circa 2 months additional time.

2.6 Estonia informed that they are currently fulfilling the questionnaire and should be able to submit data by the deadline.

2.7 It was clarified that Question 4.3 in the data call relates to defined methods for disposal vs how actual disposal currently takes place.

2.8 Russia informed that data availability is only at the national level and the data can not currently be divided into regional aspects, with no defined record currently available through the agricultural institution. Furthermore, since the experts involved generally do not have the authority to provide such data and there is currently no specific regulations relating to pharmaceuticals in the environment, then data reporting in the future may also be problematic.

2.9 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to report data by the current deadline but agreed to extend the **deadline by 28 November, 2018** for the countries which indicated that they need more time for reporting. All data supplied will be analyzed and incorporated into predictions on loads, where possible. Representatives of CW PHARMA (partner project in this process who will analyze the reported data) accepted the new deadline as it still fit to the project work plan but urged national experts to provide data as soon as possible to start their compilation and analysis.

Agenda item 3: Handling of medical wastes. CMNT

3.1 The group discussed the proposed data call related to the handling of medical wastes. It was clarified that a major aim of the call was to improve the volume of data and information supplied by countries, and to consecutively address issues such as confidence in the data provided and source of data.

3.2 The Meeting agreed that the data call request should be submitted to PRESSURE 9-2018 and requested the Secretariat to do so directly after the meeting.

Agenda item 4: Pharmaceuticals in WWTPs. CMNT

4.1 The provisional overview of pharmaceutical data in waste water treatment plants (WWTPs) was presented to the Meeting by Finland (also representing partner project CW PHARMA).

4.2 Circa 15,000 data points were examined and divided into similar classification categories as the 2017 HELCOM and UNESCO joint report on the ([Pharmaceuticals in the aquatic environment of the Baltic Sea](#)).

4.3 A few main findings were highlighted, including: generally very poor spatial coverage of data, circa 50% of substances of the total substances reported were reported only by 1 country (thus direct comparative studies can be difficult), and that circa 60% reported data came from effluent water.

4.4 The Meeting discussed the data collation and the following point were raised:

- More data on concentrations in influent waters would be beneficial as it would allow better risk management approaches, possible indication of compartmentalization of substances and assist with setting of management approaches or improved WWTP methodologies.
- Partner project CW PHARMA will continue to develop data analyses and utilize them as a way to estimate and model inputs of different compounds regionally.
- Several substances (e.g. carbamazepine) were widely reported and could be explored further to examine suitability for development as HELCOM indicators.
- Primidone was highlighted in the HELCOM-UNESCO joint report as the substance frequently measured in the marine environment, yet was only reported by one country in this data call. This could also warrant further discussion to gain a regional understanding of status.
- Further discussion in the group could be valuable to determine a list of compounds of potential concern that could be distributed to the HELCOM PRESSURE Working Group and the EU Chemicals Working Group to assess the need for monitoring and indicator development.
- Data from rivers would be a valuable asset in future calls as they can inform of releases to the environment from WWTPs and also run-off from agriculture/veterinary applications. Streamlining

this approach with approaches for other general chemicals, where load calculations are performed, should be explored.

- The role of indicators to assess loads and/or risk would be a valuable consideration in the future and may alter the conceptual approach taken when developing future indicators.

4.5 The Meeting was invited to provide further comments on this document at the PRESSURE 9-2018 meeting, via their national contacts.

Agenda item 5: Pharmaceuticals as potential indicators. CMNT

5.1 The Meeting discussed the Diclofenac indicator and the estrogen-like compounds indicator previously reviewed or updated by the group, and discussed potential focusses for future indicator work.

5.2 The Meeting discussed the importance of both exposure and risk assessments as vital components in this process, and considered that carbamazepine and primidone should be discussed further.

5.3 The Meeting noted that the EU Watchlist contains 4+ antibiotics, that should be commonly measured in surveys by a number of countries, and for which ecotoxicology data generally exists. Thus these should also be considered as important.

5.4 The Meeting noted the importance of considering substances with existing Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) or solid scientifically grounded threshold values as this allows status assessment.

5.5 The Meeting took note of the method through which threshold values are approved within HELCOM (i.e. based on proposals from expert groups that are passed through the relevant HELCOM Working Groups and approved at the HELCOM Heads of Delegation level). The Meeting took note that these threshold value proposals could be EQS values, or other solid scientifically based approaches, as long as there was a clear and transparent published definition for the basis of the threshold value, and that the decision on approval rested within the higher levels of the HELCOM process.

5.6 The Meeting discussed the importance of considering alternative approaches where needed also for the development of indicators. The example of antimicrobial agents was discussed. The Meeting noted that these compounds are major focus group currently and can be considered as substances of priority due to the potential risks of microbial resistance. The Meeting discussed that while quantifying the impact of these compounds and defining threshold values might be problematic (i.e. how to quantify potential microbial resistance development) and concluded that these, and similar, substances should however not be overlooked. A possible solution for examining such compounds through a pressure/loads indicator was considered.

5.7 The approach of using single compounds as indicative of a compound group, or several selected and closely related compounds together within indicators was discussed.

Agenda item 6: Future work on HELCOM indicators. CMNT

6.1 The Meeting was informed of proposals to develop closer working ties between PRESSURE and State and Conservation Working Groups, in particular via the expert groups. The Meeting supported the idea that hazardous substances and the linking of loads and status in the marine environment was a valuable approach.

6.2 The future work on HELCOM indicators and the plan approved at HELCOM HOD 54-2018 ([Outcomes paragraph 4.25](#), document 4-5) was introduced and the Meeting took note of the fact that a series of questionnaires and supporting documents would shortly be distributed to the group.

Agenda item 7: Any other business. CMNT

7.1 The question was raised as to if the HELCOM-UNESCO joint report on pharmaceuticals would be updated and revised since some Contracting Parties had further data that would be of interest now. The Meeting took note that there were no current plans for an update but that it was the aim for such updates to take place in the form of specific targeted work such as summaries of data collected and through indicator development.

7.2 The next meeting of the group was discussed. The possibility of a physical meeting was proposed and the possibility of holding such a meeting back-to-back with the next HELCOM Expert Network on Hazardous Substances (EN-HZ) was proposed. The Meeting agreed that these options should be explored and that the next meeting of the group would be planned via an attendance poll and was tentatively set for February/March 2019.

The list of participants included the following people:

Participant name	Institution and country	Email address
John Jensen	Aarhus University / Danish Medicinal Agency	jje@bios.au.dk
Lauri Äystö	SYKE, Finland	lauri.aysto@ymparisto.fi
Zoya Zhakovskaya	SRCES RAS, Russia	zazhak@hotmail.com
Margus Korsjukov	Estonian Ministry of the Environment	margus.korsjukov@envir.ee
Dorota Żaboklicka-Bodzioch	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Poland	Dorota.Zaboklicka-Bodzioch@minrol.gov.pl
Mariusz Porębski	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Poland	Mariusz.Porebski@minrol.gov.pl
Anne Munch Christensen	Ministry of Environment and Health of Denmark	anmch@mst.dk
Ulrike Pirntke	UBA, Germany	Ulrike.pirntke@uba.de
Owen Rowe	HELCOM Secretariat	Owen.rowe@helcom.fi
Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky	HELCOM Secretariat	Dmitry.Frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi