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<b>Document title</b>	Outline for a joint HELCOM/Baltic Earth Stakeholder Conference 2022 on Climate Change
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<b>Category</b>	INF
<b>Agenda Item</b>	2 - Matters arising from HELCOM/Baltic Earth work of relevance to the network
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<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat

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### Background

The next HELCOM Stakeholder Conference will be centred around the theme of climate change in the Baltic Sea, with tentative dates currently under consideration being 9-10 March 2022 (prior to HELCOM 43-2022).

Planned as an online event, the conference reflects the fact that Germany has highlighted climate change as one of the priorities under its chairmanship of HELCOM, and also aims to showcase the publication of the HELCOM/Baltic Earth Climate Change Fact Sheets. The conference will be held jointly with Baltic Earth and Germany (in its current capacity of chair of HELCOM).

HOD 60-2021 approved in principle the organization of an online HELCOM Stakeholder Conference on climate change in the Baltic Sea region in cooperation with Baltic Earth and Germany, tentatively scheduled for week 10 in March 2022.

The meeting noted that the Workshop on Blue Carbon will specifically focus on mitigation measures related to the potential of the Baltic Sea for carbon sequestration while the Stakeholder Conference will address broader issues related to climate change, including the presentation of the joint HELCOM/Baltic Earth Climate Change Factsheet.

The meeting further noted that the Stakeholder Conference should also focus on the implementation of the relevant actions contained in the updated BSAP that are related to climate change.

This document contains the outline for the stakeholder conference, as submitted to HOD 61-2021.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the plans for organizing an online HELCOM Stakeholder Conference on climate change in the Baltic Sea region in cooperation with Baltic Earth and Germany, to be held during week 10 in March 2022.

## Outline Joint HELCOM/Baltic Earth Stakeholder Conference 2022 on Climate Change

### Introduction

The HELCOM Secretariat is planning to centre the next HELCOM Stakeholder Conference around the theme of climate change in the Baltic Sea, with tentative dates currently under consideration being in week 10 in March 2022 (prior to HELCOM 43-2022).

Planned as an online event, the conference reflects the fact that Germany has highlighted climate change as one of the priorities under its chairmanship of HELCOM, and also aims to showcase the publication of the HELCOM/Baltic Earth Climate Change Fact Sheets. The conference will be held jointly with Baltic Earth and Germany (in its current capacity of chair of HELCOM).

### Objectives of the conference:

- Identify (or: indicate) climate change effects on the Baltic Sea and discuss how they may affect Baltic Sea ecosystems and the efforts to preserve them and/or improve their environmental status;
- Determine whether and to what extent the multifaceted HELCOM Climate Fact Sheets are being used (release is planned for September 2021) and promote the utilization of the fact sheets in marine protection processes;
- Discuss options for integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations into HELCOM activities (and vice versa).

### Technicalities

- **Organizers/Hosts:** HELCOM Secretariat; Active Co-hosts: Baltic Earth, Germany
- **Location:** online
- **Event format:** Several thematic sessions; presentations by experts, panel discussions, but also interactive workshop elements
- **Estimated Date:** Spring 2022 (week 10 in March 2022)
- **Estimated costs:** not yet defined. If held online, costs will be low.
- **Potential participants:** Up to 100 participants; ideally, each HELCOM member should be represented by scientific experts and/or governmental representatives; Baltic Earth experts; other relevant stakeholders.

### Background

With the Climate Change Fact Sheets (CCFS), the HELCOM Expert Network on Climate Change (EN CLIME) is providing concise information on influencing factors and indirect effects of climate change on the Baltic Sea. The official release of the CCFS is planned for September 2021. The knowledge contained in the CCFS should be actively used in the coming years to address marine environmental challenges posed by climate change in an ambitious way. In parallel, Baltic Earth's scientific expertise has reassessed the status of the Baltic Sea in climate change in 2020 which will be published in detail in 2021 (successor to BACC II in the BEAR reports). Climate-related and ecologically relevant effects, for example oxygen depletion ("dead zones"), lack of ice cover during winter or increased freshwater runoff (including increased nutrient and contaminant loads) into the Baltic Sea, may be actively communicated with the processed data and recommendations of the "Fact Sheets". They may also be used to illustrate the close linkages between climate impacts and other pressures, such as contaminants, nutrients, or marine litter, fisheries, as well as the establishment of marine protected

areas. Also, for the Baltic Sea region it is fact that healthy ecosystems at land and sea show increased resilience to climate-related changes and enable or support our activities against climate change.

This conference should facilitate a lively discussion of HELCOM work to protect the Baltic Sea in the context of a changing climate, including opportunities and challenges suggested by stakeholders. The impact of the fact sheet-based communication on climate-related issues at the policy level may be evaluated for the first time. Results from the Blue Carbon Workshop 2021 (see document 2-1 of HOD 60-2021) are expected to be incorporated in one of the thematic sessions.

In their declaration at the end of 2021, the Ministers and the Commissioner responsible for the environment and maritime affairs of the HELCOM Contracting Parties may give an impulse for promoting political integration of marine and climate protection.

**Please note:**

A more detailed outline of the conference will be submitted to HOD 61-2021.