



Document title	Outcomes of HELCOM HOD 54-2018 and HOD 55-2018
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Agenda Item	2 - Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group
Submission date	8.1.2019
Submitted by	Secretariat

Background

The outcomes of the 54th Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation ([HOD 54-2018](#)), Helsinki, Finland, 14-15 June 2018 and the 55th Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation ([HOD 55-2018](#)), Helsinki, Finland, 4-5 December 2018 are available on the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#).

In particular, the Meeting is invited to note that HOD 54-2018 approved the updated Work Plan for the Fish Group for 2018-2019 and prolonged the mandate of this time-limited group until 2022, to cover the period of updating the Baltic Sea Action Plan. Extracts of other relevant matters are set out in the annex.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the outcomes and to discuss issues of relevance to the Fish Group.

Extracts from HELCOM HOD 54-2018 and HOD 55-2018 of relevance for the FISH Group

HOD 54-2018

3.3 The Meeting took note of a letter sent by the HELCOM Chair to the current Chair of BALTFISH (Denmark), the upcoming HELCOM Chair (Finland) and the upcoming BALTFISH Chair (Sweden), suggesting a meeting between HELCOM and BALTFISH regarding closer cooperation between management of fisheries and marine environment. The Meeting noted that the Chair remains hopeful that Finland, during its chairmanship, can make further progress on the matter.

4.28 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Ms. Katarzyna Kaminska, Vice-Chair of the HELCOM Fish Group on progress concerning HELCOM data needs, including the development by CG FISHDATA of a roadmap for the collection of fisheries data in order to assess incidental by-catches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea (Presentation 2).

4.34 The Meeting considered the Thematic Assessment on coastal fish and noted the small amendment to the report by Poland (document 4-26-Corr.1). The Meeting approved the third draft thematic assessment on coastal fish (document 4-26) for publication in the Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings. The Meeting noted the suggestion by Denmark that in the future data for additional species and additional seasons are included in future assessments.

4.53 The Meeting took note of the outcome of FISH 8-2018, as presented by the Chair Ms. Marianne Goffeng-Raakil, in general (document 4-23) and in particular:

- invited Contracting Parties who have not yet done so to nominate experts to the CG FISHDATA group;
- noted the initiative for a possible joint HELCOM/OSPAR workshop on by-catch indicators;
- approved the organization of a regional workshop on seal-fisheries interactions;
- invited the Contracting Parties, in particular those that have not yet done so, to consider hosting the next meeting of the Fish Group in January 2019.

4.54 With regard to the development of BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture, the Meeting noted the lack of progress and lead country. The Meeting agreed that, despite progress being slow, the matter is important, in particular in view of HELCOM Recommendation 37/3 on sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea Region.

4.55 The Meeting noted a comment by FEAP that a publication by the Nordic Council of Ministers may be useful in this regard, but that it has not been translated into English due to lack of funds.

4.56 The Meeting also noted a comment by CCB that the Helsinki Convention itself already contains a definition for BAT and BEP, and that HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 on Measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from water and marine fish farming is still valid. The Meeting welcomed the offer by CCB to contribute to the work regarding BAT/BEP.

4.57 Following the discussion, the Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to contribute to the work and agreed that organizing a meeting of the CG Aquaculture would be a good way for experts to come together to exchange views and share information regarding what is considered BAT/BEP in the different Contracting Parties. Based on the outcome of this meeting, HOD 55-2018 in December 2018 could make a final decision on the continuation of the work.

4.58 The Meeting approved the updated Work Plan for the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries 2018-2019 (document 4-24) and thanked the Chair of the Fish Group for her efforts in this regard.

- 4.59 The Meeting thanked the HELCOM groups for their dedicated work.
- 5.11 The Meeting recalled that the current mandates of two time-limited groups, the Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (Fish) and the Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri) are for a five-year period (2014-2019).
- 5.12 The Meeting also recalled that the Brussels 2018 Ministerial Meeting highlighted that the fulfillment of the Baltic Sea Action Plan is a priority and noted that all of the actions related to the time-limited Fish and Agri Groups have not been completed yet.
- 5.13 The Meeting took note that, taking into account the current work load of the Agri Working Group, which is reflected in its work plan, the group requires more than 3 meetings in 2 years.
- 5.14 The Meeting took note of a statement by CCB on the importance of the work carried out by the Fish and Agri Groups and that both groups deserve to be established as permanent groups also taking into account the relevance of cross-sectoral work for the BSAP update. Specifically for the Fish Group, CCB reiterated the important role of HELCOM in addressing fisheries-related measures that fall in between the scope of work of other relevant fora, e.g. Baltic AC, BALTFISH and ICES, e.g. fisheries/biodiversity interactions such as bycatch of seals, marine mammals and seabirds, BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture and ecosystem-based approach in fisheries. CCB stated that the latter is particularly important in the current seriously critical situation with the state of main commercial fish stocks in the Baltic Sea as indicated in the latest ICES Advice.
- 5.15 The Meeting decided to prolong the mandates of the Fish and Agri Groups until 2022, to cover the period of updating the BSAP.
- 5.16 The Meeting expressed appreciation for the valuable work done by the Agri and Fish Groups and agreed to explore the possibility of even longer mandates for the groups, beyond 2022.
- 5.17 CCB made a comment regarding the existence of numerous gaps in the work of the Fish Group, such as depletion of fish stocks and populations.

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- 4.85 The Meeting adopted the Terms of Reference and approved the draft revised Work Plan for HELCOM FISH Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG Aquaculture), as set out in document 4-17, Annexes 2 and 3.
- 4.86 The Meeting welcomed the confirmation by Finland, that they are willing to co-lead the work on BAT/BEP together with Germany.
- 4.87 The Meeting expressed appreciation for the progress made by CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018, as well as the commitment by the Contracting Parties that participated in the meeting, the identified thematic leads and in particular Germany and Finland for offering their leadership. The Meeting recognized the importance of all Contracting Parties contributing with missing information, including national contact points for the work, noting that the work on BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture should originally have been finalized already by the end of 2017.
- 4.88 A question was raised with regard to the validity of HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 on Measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from fresh water and marine fish farming. The Meeting noted that the matter had been raised also by CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018 and that while Recommendation 25/4 is to be maintained until adoption of BAT/BEP based measures, the Secretariat had been invited by CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018 to provide further information to FISH 9-2019 of its validity and to what extent the reporting requirements still apply.

4.89 In response to a question posed by FEAP on whether any Contracting Parties had provided further information to the Secretariat on national BAT/BEP definitions by 23 November 2018 as agreed at CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018, the Meeting noted the information by the Secretariat that no such information had been received.

4.90 The Meeting encouraged all Contracting Parties to nominate experts to participate in the work of CG Aquaculture.