



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach
Gothenburg, Sweden, 10-11 May 2016

GEAR 14-2016

Document title	Extracts from meetings of relevance for the Gear Group
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Agenda Item	2-Matters arising from other meetings of relevance to GEAR
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Background

This document contains extracts from relevant HELCOM meetings held since the last meeting of the Gear Group.

1. [HELCOM BalticBOOST workshop on the HOLAS II biodiversity assessment tool, 11-12 February 2016, Copenhagen, Denmark](#)
2. [HELCOM 37-2016, 10-11 March 2016, Helsinki, Finland](#)
3. [STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016, 11-15 April, Schwerin, Germany](#)
4. [PRESSURE 4-2016, 19-21 April, Gothenburg, Sweden](#)

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

1. HELCOM BalticBOOST workshop on the HOLAS II biodiversity assessment tool, 11-12 February 2016, Copenhagen, Denmark

HELCOM BalticBOOST is an EU co-financed project which includes the task to develop a tool for Biodiversity assessment to be used in the HOLAS II project. The project runs from September 2015-December 2016. The development of the tool is to be guided by through two HELCOM workshops with participation of experts from HELCOM Contracting Parties, HOLAS II core team and the State and Conservation Working Group. The first of the two workshops was held on 11-12 February, 2016 at the premises of NIVA Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark.

The aim of the Workshop was to support the development of a tool for Biodiversity assessment to be used by the HOLAS II building on the outcome of HOLAS II workshop already held on the topic (HOLAS II Biodiversity WS 1-2015, 15 June 2015, Gothenburg, Sweden) and guidance given by the HOLAS II core team.

Main conclusions from the Workshop are related to ([Outcome of the workshop](#)):

- Indicators to be included in the assessment
- Spatial scales of the biodiversity assessment
- Technical requirements for the tool in relation to the HELCOM core indicators
- Aggregation methods for integrated assessment of biodiversity
- Classification in the final output of the assessment
- Estimation of confidence in the assessment
- Tentative 'products' of the biodiversity assessment in HOLAS II

2. The 37th Meeting of Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM), 10-11 March 2016, Helsinki, Finland

NEXT HELCOM MINISTERIAL MEETING

- The Meeting considered the next Ministerial Meeting, tentatively planned for 2018, using document 3-2 as background for discussion and supported the idea to organise high level sessions on the planned topics with the participation of ministers during 2016 and 2017 to ensure high-level level interest in HELCOM work.
- The Meeting considered potential topics for the Ministerial Meeting and recognized that both 2nd HELCOM holistic assessment of the ecosystem health (HOLAS II) and nutrient reduction scheme provide possibilities to take stock of HELCOM achievements in improving the status of the marine environment and to consider strategic directions for further HELCOM work, while marine litter and costs of degradation of the marine environment are of potential focus, too.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Gear Group

- The Meeting noted that the 'Joint documentation on coordination of Programmes of Measures' was finalized by the Gear meeting as mandated by HOD 49-2015, to be made available via a URL address by 31 March 2016. The Meeting requested Russia to clarify their study reservation on the Joint Documentation as soon as possible.
- The Meeting took note that that Gear group is preparing, upon invitation, an input to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Common Implementation Strategy (MSFD CIS) work programme for the years 2016-2018 with the intention to submit the input to the meeting of the Marine Strategy Coordination Group on 7 April 2016.

- The Meeting noted that Contracting Parties through the Gear group are sharing information on the use of the 2nd HELCOM holistic assessment of the ecosystem health and have initiated a discussion on how to arrange the consultation on the first version of assessment report that will be prepared by mid-2017 in order to have a common approach. The Meeting stressed the importance to coordinate national time tables so that the joint regional products such as HOLAS II can be made full use of.
- The Meeting recognized that a key issue for the success of the HOLAS II project is to have a set of agreed HELCOM core indicators ready by end of 2016 and encouraged the Lead and co-Lead Countries on indicator development to prioritize this work during 2016.
- The Meeting took note of the clarification on the status of the future HELCOM actions (document 4-15) and that all listed actions are agreed except for Regional Baltic Underwater Noise Roadmap 2015-2017. The Meeting considered the revised Underwater Noise Roadmap 2015-2017 containing an additional reference to IMO as proposed by Russia (document 4-17) and adopted the Roadmap.
- The Meeting requested the identified responsible working groups (HELCOM 37-2016, document 4-15) to consider how to initiate the actions.

NOx Emission Control Area (NECA)

- The Meeting considered the draft roadmap for the Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECA as included in document 4-3, introduced by Denmark. The Meeting welcomed the information that the remaining country Finland has also clarified its position and can now agree on the NECA Roadmap included in document 4-3.

State and Conservation Working Group

- The Meeting adopted the Recommendation on Co-operation and coordination of research vessel based monitoring in off-shore areas and procedures for granting permits for monitoring and research activities as HELCOM Recommendation 37/1.
- The Meeting adopted the Recommendation on Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the 2013 HELCOM red list' as HELCOM Recommendation 37/2.
- The Meeting welcomed the offer by Germany to take the lead on the planned development of the HELCOM Recommendation on conservation plans for species, habitats and biotopes which are at risk of extinction according to the 2013 HELCOM Red list.
- The Meeting welcomed the results of the ECONET project, approved the 'HELCOM Ecological coherence assessment of the marine protected areas network in the Baltic Sea' including the corrections presented to the Meeting, and agreed to publish the report in the Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings, pending clarification on the study reservation by Russia **by 31 March 2016**.

Aquaculture Recommendation

- The Meeting considered the revised draft Recommendation (4-10 Rev1, 4-10 Rev2) and adopted the Recommendation as HELCOM Recommendation 37/3.

Implementation follow up

BSAP follow up

- The Meeting took note of the presentation by the Secretariat on the progress of the visualization of the BSAP-follow-up system and noted that the reporting, as agreed by HOD 49-2015, of national actions under the Baltic Sea Action Plan and the Ministerial Declarations 2010 and 2013 is advancing but is not yet completed by all countries.
- The Meeting welcomed that the BSAP explorer provides a transparent presentation of HELCOM achievements and acknowledged that it offers useful information also for the national level, can be used to support prioritization of the actions not yet implemented, and for raising public awareness.

- The Meeting agreed to report the accomplishment of remaining national actions by 31 March 2016 by responding to the questionnaires and requested the countries to inform the Secretariat when the reporting has been finalized.

Eutrophication

- The Meeting took note of the information by the Chair of the Pressure WG Mr. Lars Sonesten on the current status of the implementation of the HELCOM nutrient input reduction scheme and In his presentation, the Pressure WG Chair highlighted the importance of further adjustments of the PLUS database, MAI CART OPER project as well as timing, completeness and quality of data collection and reporting.
- The Meeting noted that additional measures and investments have taken place in the coastal countries since the MAI/CART assessment period (up to 2012) and therefore, further reduction of nutrients inputs to the sea can be expected. At the same time, the Meeting recognized that there is a substantial time-lag between the reduction of inputs and positive effects in the marine environment, therefore, any early signals of the recovery are of importance to capture and communicate.
- The Meeting recognized the challenge of achieving a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea with regard to eutrophication and re-confirmed that it is a pan-Baltic issue concerning all Contracting Parties and which needs to be addressed in a holistic way and with involvement of other sectors in HELCOM work.

NEXT MEETING(S) OF THE COMMISSION

- The Meeting decided to arrange the next meeting of the Commission on 28 February - 1 March 2017 in Helsinki. A preliminary reservation for HELCOM 39-2016 has been made for week 10 in March 2018.

3. The Fourth Meeting of State and Conservation Working Group, 11-15 April 2016, Schwerin, Germany

Follow-up of agreed HELCOM actions for further consideration related to marine protected areas

- The Meeting took note of the further actions to be considered related to marine protected areas (document 2N-2, 4N-3, 4MA-1 Rev.1) and the identification of adjacent transnational HELCOM MPAs as input to the action 'Coordination of management measures of pressures and impacts on MPAs, in particular for adjacent transnational MPAs' (document 2N-3), presented by the Secretariat.
- The Meeting recalled the particular relevance of focusing transnational coordination of measures on the topics fisheries and shipping, because in most cases respective management can only be adopted by competent authorities.
- The Meeting emphasized the importance of establishing contacts between responsible managers for the transnational adjacent HELCOM MPAs and agreed to initiate this action through establishing communication between the managers as well as to share previous experiences in the cooperation regarding transnational MPAs. The Meeting invited countries to provide names of relevant contacts in order to collate the information to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi) by STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 at the latest and agreed to invite the Wadden Sea Secretariat and representatives of the World Heritage site of the Quark to participate in STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.
- The Meeting considered the second action related to marine protected areas 'How to consider MPAs in Maritime Spatial Planning and vice versa' of document 2N-2, 4N-3, 4MA-1-Rev.1 and noted that the issue was discussed at the last meeting of HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (MSP WG) that was positive towards the action as a joint activity between the HELCOM-VASAB

MSP WG and State and Conservation and that it was agreed, as a first step, to request the Contracting Parties/Member States to inform how MPAs are taken into account in the MSP, which could be used to amend information in the country fiches. This information is anticipated to be available by the next meeting of HELCOM-VASAB MSP.

- The Meeting noted that the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group will convene a workshop on the ecosystem approach in maritime spatial planning in November 2016 (week 47) and proposed that MSP/MPAs could be addressed as a topic in the workshop. The Meeting encouraged the Co-Chairs of State and Conservation and the HELCOM VASAB MSP Working Group to initiate communication on further cooperation between the groups on this topic.
- The Meeting furthermore agreed to initiate the action by inviting the Contracting Parties to provide ideas and comments on their views on how to proceed with the action 'How to consider MPAs in Maritime Spatial Planning and vice versa' to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi) by **31 May 2016**.
- The Meeting considered the third marine protected areas related action 'Develop joint tools/approach for assessing effectiveness of spatial protection measures for individual sites as well as network level' of document 2N-2, 4N-3, 4MA-1-Rev.1. The Meeting took note of the information by Germany on OSPAR activities regarding assessing management effectiveness of the OSPAR MPA Network. The Meeting invited Germany to keep the State and Conservation Working Group updated on the progress and agreed to continue discussing this topic at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONSERVATION OF BALTIC SEA SPECIES AND UNDERWATER BIOTOPES, HABITATS AND BIOTOPE COMPLEXES

- The Meeting took note of the further action for consideration on 'Activities to support conservation of Baltic Sea species and biotopes/habitats categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List' (document 2N-2, 4N-3, 4MA-1 Rev.1) and noted that resources are available through a grant from Finland to support the implementation of activities 1 and 2 of the action.
- The Meeting agreed that those Contracting Parties that have not yet provided the contribution to the conservation/ recovery and or actions plans or other relevant programmes and measures, of plans, will submit the information by **6 May 2016** to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi) by using document [4N-1-Rev.2](#).
- The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat will proceed to compile information on national plans for species and pressures on those species with the aim to provide an overview to STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016. State and Conservation contacts will be invited to provide feedback during the course of the work.

Planning the next HELCOM Red List assessment

- The Meeting took note of the draft project description for the development of updated HELCOM Red Lists by 2019 (document 5N-3), presented by the Secretariat. The Meeting recalled that the steering group of the previous Red List project proposed to make a new assessment by 2019 as a one-time event to update and improve the 2013 assessments while in the long-term a longer assessment cycle was proposed.
- The Meeting discussed the timing of the next Red List assessments, noting the view by Denmark, Germany and Poland that the level of new knowledge does not justify a new assessment already after 6 years from the previous assessments. The Meeting further noted the proposal by Denmark, Finland, Germany and Poland to have a 12-year assessment cycle, which would mean finalizing the next Red List assessment by the year 2025.
- The Meeting noted the view of Sweden, supported by Finland, that is important to keep the momentum going and take advantage of the experience gained through the previous Red List project and Sweden being in favour of carrying out an updated assessment by 2019. The Meeting also recalled that 2019 is one year before the CBD targets should be met.

- The Meeting agreed to convene a workshop back-to-back with the Nature conservation session at the spring meeting of State and Conservation in 2017 where experts should come together to take stock of data and available updated information on threatened Baltic Sea species and habitats/biotopes and to consider improvements needed for the purpose of an updated assessment. The Meeting agreed to discuss the planning of the workshop at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.
- The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to inform the Secretariat on planned updates of the national Red Lists (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi) with the view to compile a timetable of national and international reporting obligations.
- The Meeting agreed to come back to discuss the scope and timing of the next red list assessment after the planned workshop, however concluded that it will not be prepared by the year 2019. The Meeting agreed to come back to the presented project proposal at a later stage.

Regional targets for the implementation of the strategic plan for biodiversity

- The Meeting took note of the comparison of HELCOM and CBD Aichi Biodiversity targets (document 5N-2), presented by the Secretariat. The Meeting revised the document as included in document [5N-2-Rev.1](#).
- The Meeting welcomed the document noting that it provides a good overview displaying the similarities between regional and international environmental policies. The Meeting noted that the information could be used for national reporting on actions taken to reach CBD targets related to the marine environment. The Meeting proposed to add a column to outline the relation between CBD targets with relevant European policies.
- The Meeting agreed to keep the document in the Agenda of upcoming State and Conservation meetings and to constantly update it according to new information.

HELCOM INDICATORS AND ASSESSMENTS

- The Meeting took note of the status of development of HELCOM core indicators (document 4J-15), presented by the Secretariat. The Meeting welcomed that Sweden is willing to support the development of the indicators 'Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes', 'Biomass ratio of opportunistic and perennial macroalgae' as well as 'Harbor porpoise distribution and abundance'. The Meeting welcomed that Germany will look into the possibility to take the Lead on the indicator 'Diatoms/dinoflagellates index' to be clarified at HOLAS II 5-2016.
- The Meeting considered the revised HELCOM core indicator on '**Populations trends and abundance of seals**' (document 4J-11), presented by Sweden, noting that the changes of the core indicator report are of editorial character. The Meeting took note that Germany could in principle agree to content of the document but that due to ongoing national consultations the German study reservation on the indicator cannot be lifted at this time. The Meeting recalled that Denmark has requested the indicator to be adjusted to Danish waters and that a Danish expert has commented the draft report. Denmark will clarify the study reservation when the revisions to the indicator are final.
- The Meeting considered the revised GES proposal for HELCOM core indicator '**Distribution of Baltic seals**' (document 4J-10), presented by Sweden. The Meeting noted that with the proposed amendments Finland has lifted the study reservation on GES for distribution of ringed seals. The Meeting noted that Germany for the same reasons as argued for the abundance indicator is not in a position to lift the study reservation. The Meeting noted that Denmark is not in a position to lift the study reservation on the indicator, however Denmark will clarify the study reservation when the revisions to the indicator are final.
- The Meeting considered the revised proposal on HELCOM core indicators '**Nutritional status of marine mammals**' and '**Reproductive status of marine mammals**' (document 4J-9), presented by Sweden. The Meeting noted the view by Finland that the indicators are good indicators for the population status of seals in the whole Baltic area and the wish to seek for a compromise solution

for the indicators so that they can be used in HOLAS II. The Meeting took note that Germany is not in a position to lift the study reservation on the core indicator. German experts have reviewed the documents and welcome that they have improved, however, the general concerns on the indicators remain i.e. whether they can be considered as good indicators of the health status of Baltic seals. The Meeting recalled the request to adjust the indicator to Danish waters and that Denmark is not in a position to lift the study reservation. The Meeting encouraged Lead country Sweden and the Seal Expert Group health team to find a solution and noted that Germany, as Lead country for the Seal expert group health team, is prepared to continue the discussion with a view to arrive at an agreement.

- The Meeting considered the progress update on the indicator '**Zooplankton mean size and total stock**' (document 4J-4), presented by the Secretariat. The Meeting recalled that the method for calculating GES was agreed at HOD 48-2015 while at that time the calculations were not made for all sub-basins. At the annual meeting of ZEN-ZIIM in 2015 GES values were calculated for some subbasins and they will be finalized by the next meeting of the ZEN-ZIIM project, planned for September/October 2016. The project has identified problems with access to data in the Southwestern areas of the Baltic Sea and not all countries have representatives in the project. The Meeting stressed the importance of making data available to the ZEN ZIIM project and national representation at the next meeting.
- The Meeting considered the GES boundary proposal on hazardous substances (document 4J-6, **(Presentation 3)**), as proposed by the Expert network for hazardous substances and presented by the Secretariat.
- Taking note of a general study reservation on the proposed GES-boundaries by Germany, the Meeting endorsed the proposed GES boundary values as presented in document 4J-6 and Annex 3, with the following remarks:
 - regarding the use of foodstuff threshold values from the EC directive 1881/2006 for Cd and Pb in offshore waters, it is still to be decided whether these values are to be used for Descriptor 9 only
 - the study reservation by Sweden on GES proposal for Cd and Pb in offshore waters which can be lifted when conversion factors for the biota matrix have been developed
 - the study reservation by Denmark on proposed GES boundaries for TBT concentration measured in sediments based on the QS as the methodological detection limit is often above the threshold level
- The Meeting noted that the proposed GES boundaries (**Annex 3**) will be submitted for adoption at HOD 50-2016 and urged the Contracting Parties to clarify their position on the still open issues raised in paragraph 4J-31 in advance of that meeting.

Extract from Annex 3 from Outcome of State and Conservation 4-2016. Endorsement of GES boundaries for hazardous substance core indicators.

Core indicator		GES boundary	Source	Endorsement type
Metals				
Cd	Offshore assessment units	50 µg/kg ww fish muscle 1000 µg/kg ww mussels	EC 1881/2006	Revision
Pb	Offshore assessment units	300 µg/kg ww fish muscle 1500 µg/kg ww mussels	EC 1881/2006	Revision

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) and dioxin and furan			
Dioxin and dioxin-like compounds	0.0065 TEQ/kg ww fish, crustaceans or molluscs	EQS <small>biota human health</small>	New GES proposal
	<i>Secondary GES boundary: CB-118 24 µg/kg lw fish liver or muscle:</i>	EAC	New secondary GES proposal
Non-dioxin like PCBs;	sum of congeners (28, 52, 101, 138, 153, 180) 75 µg/kg ww fish muscle	EC 1881/2006	New GES proposal
Polyaromatichydrocarbons (PAH) and their metabolites			
benzo(a)pyrene	5 µg/kg ww crustaceans and molluscs	EQS <small>biota human health</small>	New GES proposal
Metabolite: 1-hydroxypyrene	483 ng/g fish bile	Davies and Vethaak, 2012	New GES proposal
<i>Secodary: Fluoranthene;</i>	<i>Secondary GES boundary: 30 µg/kg ww crustaceans and molluscs, 2000 ug/kg dw sediment</i>	EQS <small>biota human health</small> QS	New secondary GES proposal
<i>Secondary: Anthracene</i>	<i>Secondary GES boundary 24 ug/kg dw sediment</i>	QS	New secondary GES proposal
TBT and imposex			
TBT	1.6 µg /kg dw sediment (5% TOC)	QS	New GES proposal
	<i>Secondary GES boundary: 0.2 ng/l water 12 µg/kg dw mussel</i>	EQS water (AA) EAC	New secondary GES proposal
Imposex	<i>Peringia ulvae</i> : 0.1 VDSI Other species: OSPAR EcoQO class 2 as defined in Table 1 of this document.	Gercken & Sordyl 2009; Magnusson et al 2016 EAC	New GES proposal

- The Meeting took note of the report on the work of intersessional network on eutrophication (document 4J-14), presented by the Secretariat. The Meeting endorsed the further development of 'Shallow-water bottom oxygen' and 'Deep-water oxygen consumption' as eutrophication candidate indicators. The Meeting welcomed that the EUTRO-OPER project has been extended for a limited period of time enabled by financial contribution from Germany. The Meeting noted that the project will support the IN-Eutrophication in a number of tasks, and more specifically the development of the pre-core indicator on Cyanobacterial bloom and the candidate indicator on Shallow water oxygen to core indicators, in cooperation with Lead Countries; operationalizing oxygen debt core indicator algorithms, with an opportunity of some funding also from the HELCOM budget to support the task; updating workflow for new core indicators and corresponding HEAT adjustments; adjustments of HEAT tool according to revised EU Commission Decision (depending on final decision) and overall assessment tool development.
- The Meeting took note of the development of a biodiversity assessment tool for HELCOM HOLAS II (document 4J-7, **Presentation 4**), presented by the Lead Partner SYKE, Finland for WP 1.1 in the HELCOM coordinated EU co-financed BalticBOOST project. The Meeting noted that the ongoing process to review and revise the GES Decision 2010/477/EU is considered in the development of the tool in the sense that the tests carried out in the project also cover the proposals as regards the latest draft GES decision.
- The Meeting took note of the development of a hazardous substance assessment tool for HELCOM HOLAS II (document 4J-8, **Presentation 5**), presented by the Secretariat and developed by NIVA Denmark as Lead partner WP 2.1 of the EU co-financed BalticBOOST. The Meeting noted that the

tool builds on the integration of indicators within four compartments (water, sediment, biota and biological effects) and that in the current version of the tool OOA is used between the four compartments. The Meeting noted that the BalticBOOST project will test the OOA approach between indicators as well as the use of the CHASE tool in both coastal and open waters, and use of core indicators only as well as complementing the core indicators with additional indicators. For coastal waters the project will also compare the test results with WFD assessment results, pending that WFD assessment results are made available by the Contracting Parties. The Meeting noted the concern raised by Germany on the use of bioeffects compartment in the tool since Germany is of the view that the bioeffect indicators should be supplementary indicators. The Meeting noted that some countries wish to consider further the use of the four compartments.

- The Meeting recalled that the workshops convened under BalticBOOST are 'HELCOM workshops' and that participants are expected to represent national views. The Meeting requested that background documentation should be made available well in advance of the workshop to enable collecting national views and preparation prior the workshop and suggested that preferably also members of State and Conservation would attend the workshop.

SESSION ON UNDERWATER NOISE

- The Meeting took note of the progress and upcoming work of the BalticBOOST project on underwater noise (document 6J-1, **Presentation 6**), presented by the Secretariat and appreciated the ongoing work. The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to provide feedback on the criteria for identifying noise sensitive species, on the proposed list of priority species, on the compilation map, available national data or projects that could support the development of the maps on biological sensitive areas, on the provisional draft programme of the HELCOM workshop on underwater noise on 5-6 October 2016 as well as on the possibility to host the workshop **by 6 May 2016** to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi).
- The Meeting took note of the proposed regional monitoring programme of ambient noise based on output from the BIAS project (document 6J-2-Rev.1, **Presentation 7**), presented by Ms. Emilia Lalander, representative of Lead partner of WP 4 of BalticBOOST, FOI. The Meeting noted that the proposal is based on two alternative monitoring programmes proposed based on yearly minor assessment in a few prioritized locations and major assessment every e.g. 6 years. The Meeting supported the continuation of the ongoing monitoring. The Meeting agreed that there is a need to have a monitoring programme on ambient noise, however that it is too early to decide on specific monitoring locations. The Meeting agreed to consider the issue at the upcoming State and Conservation meeting.

Environmental monitoring and data

- The Meeting took note of the Status of national data reporting to COMBINE as contained in document 3MA-1. The Meeting recalled that the annual reporting deadline for the COMBINE database is 1 September, however that data can be submitted at any time of the year. By September 2016 entries to COMBINE should cover data from 2011-2015 that will be fed into the first version of HOLAS II report. The Meeting also noted that if there are any questions related to data submissions or formats, ICES Data Center can be contacted at any time (marilynn.sorensen@ices.dk). The Meeting agreed to fill in the gaps in the COMBINE database as soon as possible, and agreed that countries that have reported data to other databases or that have many years back-logged data will contact the ICES Data Centre and discuss how the collation of data can be arranged.
- The Meeting took note of arrangements for data reporting for HOLAS II (document 3MA-4), as presented by the Secretariat. The Meeting welcomed the document on data arrangement (document 3MA-4), found it very useful for the planning of national data submission, and confirmed that the Contracting Parties will do their utmost to submit data according to the timetable.
- The Meeting welcomed the development of simplified reporting formats and data views from the ICES Data Centre (document 3MA-2), noting that such simplified reporting formats have already been

developed for contaminants and biological effects, and are being developed for phytoplankton and zooplankton data. The Meeting noted that the simplified reporting format can be used as the main reporting format if desired.

PROGRESS OF RELEVANT HELCOM PROJECTS AND ASSESSMENTS

- The Meeting took note of the draft status report on pharmaceuticals in the Baltic Sea region as included in document 4MA-2. The Meeting welcomed the compilation and supported the publication of the report pending revisions according to comments provided by Contracting Parties. The Meeting noted that limited conclusions can be drawn from the report due to the shortage of data and since the analytical detection limit often exceeds proposed threshold levels for pharmaceuticals substance on the WFD Watch list, i.e. for estrogens and diclofenac. The Meeting supported the continued development of the pre-core indicators on 'Diclofenac concentration' and 'Estrogenic-like chemicals and effects,' however noting that monitoring to support their evaluation will not be available for HOLAS II.

4. The Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area, 19-21 April 2016, Gothenburg, Sweden

Follow up on marine litter and underwater noise

Marine litter

- The Meeting took note of the key messages of the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference on Marine Litter held in Helsinki on 9 March 2016 (doc. 3-1) as presented by the Secretariat. The Meeting discussed the request by HELCOM 37-2016 to take the key messages into account in the future work of the Pressure Working Group, and considered opportunities, scope and timeframe for possible regional roundtable on marine litter.
- The Meeting agreed to arrange the workshop back-to-back with PRESSURE 5-2016 and invite national coordinators, experts from EN-Marine Litter, experts who are task leads and co-leads of actions, and authorities and other stakeholders to discuss practical aspects of the RAP ML implementation and to identify fora to follow up the implementation of the particular actions. The Meeting noted the link between discussion on implementation of the national programmes of measures in the frame of the MSFD and the RAP ML. The Meeting also invited PA Hazards to cooperate with HELCOM in the organization of the regional dialog on implementation of the RAP ML in particular with regard in microplastics.
- The Meeting took note of the current status of the actions of the RAP ML, including details of Lead and Co-Lead Countries and on-going regional and national activities (doc. 3-3).
- The Meeting agreed that the table in document 3-3 is the appropriate tool to follow the request by HELCOM 37-2016 (cf. para 3.2). The Meeting also agreed to update this document for upcoming PRESSURE meetings.
- The Meeting agreed to set up a 3-week written procedure (12 May 2016) to update information on implementation of the RAP ML (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi).

Underwater noise

- The Meeting took note that the study reservation by Russia was lifted at HELCOM 37-2016 where the roadmap, containing an additional reference to IMO as proposed by Russia (HELCOM 37 document 4-17), was adopted (Annex 3 of the Outcome of HELCOM 37-2016).
- The Meeting took note of the progress in setting up the OSPAR-HELCOM registry of underwater noise (doc. 3-2, Presentation 1). The Meeting also took note that the reporting format for reporting data to the OSPAR-HELCOM impulsive noise events registry had been evaluated by EN-Network. Reporting

has been tested by some countries and the Meeting approved the reporting format (Annex of doc. 3-2), noting that it was coordinated with that developed within OSPAR and TG-Noise.

- The Meeting took note of the national arrangements planned/undertaken in order to deliver data to the regional registry by September 2016.
- The Meeting took note of the dates 5-6 October 2016 for the HELCOM workshop on underwater noise and agreed that comments to the provisional draft programme are forwarded to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) by 6 May 2016. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Denmark and Germany to consider hosting the workshop.
- The Meeting took note of the compilation of the internationally available reviews on underwater noise mitigation measures and of the questionnaire prepared by BalticBOOST, to be filled in by HELCOM countries in order to identify which of the listed measures are nationally implemented, planned to be, or have the potential to be implemented in the future as contained in document 3-5 (Presentation 2). The Meeting agreed to provide comments on the questionnaire from both and Pressure and Maritime delegates to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) by 6 May 2016. The Secretariat will need to collate the comments and post the questionnaire at the HELCOM website by 20 May 2016. The Contracting Parties will fill in questionnaire in by 10 June 2016.

Dredging activities and extraction of mineral resources

- The Meeting discussed the suggested updates to the reporting guideline and format, listed in the Conclusions chapter of document 4-1, and decided to organize an expert skype meeting to discuss it.
- The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to nominate experts by 3 May (dmitry.frankkamenetsky@helcom.fi) for a skype meeting on dredged material reporting format to be held during May.
- The Meeting agreed to submit the suggested changes to the reporting guideline and format, based on outcomes of the Skype meeting, to HODs for approval via correspondence. The Meeting took note of the study reservations by Denmark and Germany on the document until after the discussion at the Skype meeting.
- The Meeting agreed on the need to update HELCOM Status Report on Marine sediment extraction in the Baltic Sea (1999), based on reliable, comprehensive, geo-referenced national data and agreed to conduct the reporting on marine sediment extraction in the Baltic Sea according to HOLAS II needs, and, subsequently, consider the need of regular reporting and revision of Recommendation 19/1. Denmark informed that they will inform the Secretariat on the data which are available for this assessment.

Draft HELCOM Recommendation on sewage sludge handling

- The Meeting agreed on the draft HELCOM Recommendation as contained in **Annex 2** to this Outcome. The Meeting also agreed that the Contracting Parties will make a final check of the agreed draft Recommendation and inform the Secretariat (dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi) by 2 May 2016, whether any minor corrections are needed, though bearing in mind that the document will be proofread before its submission to HOD 50-2016.

Hazardous substances

- The Meeting took note the draft Status report on pharmaceuticals in the Baltic Sea environment and welcomed the effort by the Secretariat and PA Hazards to preparation the report (doc. 6-1-Rev.1).
- The Meeting agreed that the report is the starting point for further development of the regional strategy.
- The Meeting agreed in principle on publication of the report, taking into account the comments by State&Conservation and Pressure Groups, and decided to establish a group to work further in order to suggest further actions on pharmaceuticals in the Baltic Sea region.

- The Meeting agreed on the following procedure to finalize the Status report:
 - all corrections will be incorporated into the document by the Secretariat with the assistance of PA Hazard Coordinator and experts by 7 May 2016 and the draft Status report will be circulated to the Contracting Parties for reviewing;
 - all the replies by the national experts should be sent to the Secretariat (dmirty.frankkamenetsky@helcom.fi) by 17 May 2016 in order to submit the draft Status report to HOD 50-2016 for approval for publication.
- The Meeting noted that HELCOM 37-2016 had agreed on 13 future HELCOM actions as a result of the coordination efforts relating to national PoMs. The Meeting took note of the actions falling under the Pressure WG and agreed to incorporate the actions into its future work.
- The Meeting took note of the results of a questionnaire on the input of organic compounds (doc. 7-9 and Presentation 4) and discussed how the information can be utilized for implementation of the action on micropollutants in effluents from WWTP and for reviewing the existing list of HELCOM priorities (HELCOM Recommendation 31E/1).
- The Meeting was of the opinion that the information should be coupled and correlated with the work on HELCOM core indicators in order to identify any discrepancy between the major concern in fresh water or coastal water and indicators of the ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea. The result should be a starting point to revise the list of priority substances of HELCOM Recommendation 31E/1.
- The Meeting discussed further ways to use the outcomes of the questionnaire, particularly in the preparation of the PLC reports. The Meeting agreed to include a summary into PLC-6 report. The Meeting suggested to inform State&Conservation Group on the results of the questionnaire to coordinate activities on identification of the priority pollutants in the Baltic Sea region.

Thematic session on input of nutrients

Overall planning of PLC-based assessment products

- The Meeting considered document 7-3, Proposal for procedures for releasing the reported PLC water data and accepting the filled-in and consolidated dataset as part of the steps to elaborate PLC products. The Meeting agreed on the revised version of the document as presented in the Annex 4.
- The Meeting considered the suggestion on the roadmap for PLC-7 and PLC-8 assessments (doc. 7-7) and tasked the RedCore DG to update the Roadmap.
- The Meeting discussed the timeframe for the PLC-8 assessment and was of the opinion that the results should cater for the reporting under the EU regulations for the EU member states. From this point of view, the suggestion for the timeframe of the PLC-8 assessment can also be discussed by GEAR 14-2016 (10- 11 May). The Meeting also noted that Germany needs the assessment data latest in summer 2023. The Meeting agreed on a preliminary timeframe for the PLC-8 assessment, proposed by Germany at HOD 49- 2015, as 2021 for monitoring and the assessment in 2023.
- The Meeting also noted that the position of Germany regarding the contents of the PLC-7 and the timeframe and contents of PLC-8 will be clarified at HOD 50-2016, due to ongoing national consultation.
- The Meeting agreed that the project proposal for PLC-7 can be submitted to HOD 50-2016. The Meeting requested RedCore to elaborate the project proposal.

PLC-6 assessment

- The Meeting considered the updated roadmap for implementation of the PLC-6 project (doc.7- 1) and approved it. The Meeting agreed in general on the contents of the PLC-6 report.
- The Meeting took note of and discussed the implementation of the tasks on assessment of effectiveness of measures and potential reduction in nutrient inputs of the PLC-6 project. The Meeting recommended to the PLC-6 team to consider revising and simplifying the document taking into account the feedback by PRESSURE 4-2016 and replies by countries.

- The Meeting took note of the progress in the compilation of background and supporting data for the assessment report of the Sixth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-6).
- The Meeting took note of the status of the 2013-2014 annual PLC data reporting (doc. 7-11) and the status of the 2014 periodic PLC data reporting (doc. 7-13).
- The Meeting expressed great concern on the feasibility of elaboration of the assessment products due to the delay of the data reporting.

Follow-up of the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme

- The Meeting suggested several methods to assess the progress towards national reduction targets, e.g. using a 3- or 5-year averaging period or statistically adjusted data on the last year of the assessment. The Meeting noted that the Contracting Parties are not fully satisfied with the clarity of the policy message of the assessment 2015.
- The Meeting noted that countries are in favour of different averaging periods but agreed that the HELCOM policy message should be based on one agreed methodological approach.
- The Meeting agreed that the following questions should be included into the policy message:
 - Whether the reduction target is achieved?
 - What is the distance from the target, e.g. in tons?
 - What is the trend in inputs?
- The Meeting agreed to arrange a workshop dedicated to MAI/CART assessment methodologies in autumn 2016. The Meeting pointed out that the workshop should be organized when the recent assessment results are as ready as possible in order to use its outcomes for e.g. MSFD reporting. The workshop will outline the policy message.
- The Meeting requested the RedCore DG to prepare the agenda for the workshop and invited the Contracting Parties to provide input to the agenda of the workshop.
- The Meeting took note the information on a methodology for accounting an extra reduction in CART follow-up (Presentation 7).
- The Meeting requested RedCore to elaborate more detailed documentation describing the methodology and limits for its application as well as provide examples. The Meeting also suggested to include the theme into the agenda of the workshop in the autumn 2016.
- The Meeting took note of the progress in implementation of the HELCOM Project MAI-CART OPER 2015-2017. The Meeting expressed the concern that the funding of the Project has still not been completely secured. The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to consider funding the remaining 30% (20 thousand euros) of the Project.

Any other business

- The Meeting took note of the information by PA NUTRI on the outcomes of stakeholder's seminar organized in Gdansk on 14 April 2016 and the suggestion for a joint seminar (PA Hazards, PA Nutri, PA Bioeconomy) at the EUSBSR Forum in Stockholm, 8-9 November 2016.
- The Meeting also took note of the information on an activity on taking a stock of the national policies related to recycling of phosphorus, launched by the Agri Group, and that the first results are expected to be obtained by the autumn 2016. The Meeting supported the initiative of Agri group and invited national experts to cooperate with the drafting group.
- The Meeting noted that PA Nutri had encouraged national representatives to attend the PA Nutri Steering Committee meeting on 26 April 2016.
- The Meeting took note of the information by Russia on the need to revise some of the HELCOM Recommendations falling under the Pressure group ToR, and that Russia is ready to prepare a relevant overview. The Meeting agreed to include the issue into the agenda for PRESSURE 5-2016.

Future work and meetings

- The Meeting welcomed the offer by Poland to host PRESSURE 5-2016 in Warsaw on 25-27 October 2016 in the premises of the National Water Management Authority.
- The Meeting suggested that PRESSURE 6-2017 will take place during the week 24-28 April 2017.