



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Helsinki Commission  
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HELCOM 36-2015

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<b>Document title</b>	Proposed project on Restoration of the E40 Waterway on the Dnieper-Vistula section
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### Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the proposed project on Restoration of the E40 Waterway on the Dnieper-Vistula section.

27 February 2015

## **CCB proposals for the HELCOM 36, Commission Meeting, 3-4 March 2015**

Hereby CCB submit proposals for the HELCOM 36, related to plans for a waterway between Black Sea and Baltic Sea for shipping transports.

### **Proposed project on RESTORATION OF THE E40 WATERWAY ON THE DNIEPER-VISTULA SECTION**



Various actors in Poland, Belarus and Ukraine has presented the proposal for a waterway as an important infrastructure project for eastern Europe and connections between Europe and Black Sea Region countries. The project has been presented at different conferences in Europe, e.g. in Brussels.

The planned waterway runs through the territories of these countries on the map above, but right now is unnavigable between Warsaw and Brest. However, the Polish environmentalists demonstrate only limited optimism regarding the possible restoration of

the E40 waterway. First, the unnavigable section from Warsaw to Brest passes through the territory of two national parks. Second, it is necessary to build additional dams and cascades on the Vistula to maintain the water level sufficient for shipping heavy cargo. However, construction flaws may only aggravate the issue of frequent floods which occur on the main Polish river. At the same time, the inland water transport is still one of the most ecological means of delivering goods. Its emission of CO<sub>2</sub> per one ton-kilometer is 1.5 times lower compared to the rail transport, and 5 times lower compared to the truck transport.

The project "Restoration of the E40 waterway on the Dnieper-Vistula section: from strategy to planning" is being implemented within the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine cross-border cooperation programme for 2007-2013. The programme is funded by the European Union within the European Partnership and Neighbourhood Instrument. Project partners: Republican unitary maintenance and construction enterprise "Dnepro-Bug Waterway" (Lead Partner, Belarus), Brest Regional (Oblast) Executive Committee (Belarus), Local Foundation for Promotion of International Dialogue and Cooperation "Interakcia" (Belarus), Volyn Regional Department of Water Resources (Ukraine), Public Organization "Volyn Association of Scientists and Innovators" (Ukraine), Marshal Office of the Lubelskie Voivodeship in Lublin (Poland), Association for regional and local development "Progress" (Poland).

### **Comments CCB**

Such water way project can have major environmental impact on the river ecosystems involved; river coastal territories; on transport of alien invasive aquatic species from Black Sea to Baltic Sea

Various aspects important to consider are:

A major problem with canals-waterways from Black Sea catchment to the Baltic Sea is the very high risk for Baltic Sea ecosystem changes, via introduction of aquatic alien invasive Ponto-Caspian region species from river systems and brackish water Black Sea. There is a number of examples of such destructive introduction. 20 years ago an alien fish, Round goby, was observed in Gdansk Bay. This fish has since that time strongly expanded and is now a common fish from Denmark to Estonia in coastal waters, changing the coastal marine ecosystem. First observation have also been noted on Swedish & Finnish coastal archipelagos, so soon we will have it all over Baltic Sea. Round goby, a Ponto-Caspian species, has for long been in channels-canals in the Moscow region in the Volga basin, and the introduction to the Baltic Sea has most probably coming from shipping via Volga system to Baltic Sea. Another invasive species, comb-jelly Mnemiopsis (originally from North-American east coast) was introduced to Black Sea 20 years ago, which resulted in collapsed fisheries in Black Sea (the comb-jelly eat fish larvae), has since 3 years also been found in Baltic Sea, and can reproduce in Baltic Sea, with still unclear consequences. This comb-jelly may also have been introduced via the Black Sea basin.

-A waterway project connecting two brackish sea areas, Baltic & Black Seas, must consider the obvious risk for adverse impact of new aquatic invasive species that can be introduced to the Baltic Sea, via canal-shipping from Black to Baltic Sea.

There is still many unclarities if such waterway projects will be implemented, but if the Polish government will consider such construction in the future, we wonder how Poland plan to relate such plan, before a decision will be taken, to Helsinki Convention and Espoo Convention.

-Will Poland announce such case to HELCOM countries and present an EIA, before any decision will be taken in Poland ?

-Will Poland report such case to signatory parties of the Espoo Convention that can be subject to transboundary environmental impact of such project and present an EIA on the project ?