



Document title	Draft HELCOM Recommendation on marine pollution incident reporting and requests for assistance between Contracting Parties in the Baltic Sea area
Code	2-8
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	2 - Matters arising from the subsidiary bodies
Submission date	10.2.2015
Submitted by	Executive Secretary
Reference	Outcome of HOD 47-2014, Paragraphs 3.22-3.24

Background

HOD 47-2014 considered the draft HELCOM Recommendation on marine pollution incident reporting and requests for assistance between Contracting Parties in the Baltic Sea area and took note of the additional background to the draft Recommendation provided in the presentation by the Response Chair.

HOD 47-2014 agreed that HELCOM should use e-mails instead of fax in communication of POLREP BALTIC messages between Contracting Parties.

HOD 47-2014 took note of the position by Russia that the regional HELCOM communication channels should be maintained, but modern technological solutions could replace the existing basic system. The meeting agreed that in order to move forward:

- the Response Chair will lead the work in the HELCOM TG POLREP on drafting the Recommendation on marine pollution incident reporting,
- Russian Federation will provide the Chair with initial input in writing on their preferred solution regarding the exchange of POLREP BALTIC messages and to the text of the draft Recommendation by the end of January 2015,
- a new draft should be available by HELCOM 36-2015,
- all Contracting Parties are invited to contribute to the work.

The draft available during HOD 47-2014 was developed with the lead of the Response Chair. No input was received from the Russian Federation regarding the exchange of POLREP BALTIC messages and the text of the draft Recommendation.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to consider and adopt the draft HELCOM Recommendation on marine pollution incident reporting and requests for assistance between Contracting Parties in the Baltic Sea area.

DRAFT HELCOM RECOMMENDATION xx/xx

Adopted xx yy 201x

having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

MARINE POLLUTION INCIDENT REPORTING AND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE BETWEEN CONTRACTING PARTIES IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA**THE COMMISSION,**

RECALLING the 1992 Helsinki Convention ratified by the coastal countries of the Baltic Sea and the European Union, Article 13 of the concerning notification and consultation on pollution incidents and Article 14 on co-operation in combatting marine pollution

RECALLING Annex VII of the Helsinki Convention including Regulation 1 §2, concerning pollution incidents which affect or are likely to affect interests of other Contracting Parties, Regulation 5, concerning reporting procedure and Regulation 11 on HELCOM Response Manual;

RECALLING FURTHER the HELCOM Response manual Volume I Chapter 3 on reporting procedures and the HELCOM POLREP BALTIC standard message, Chapter 4 on Requesting and providing assistance and Chapter 5, on operational co-operation, especially 5.4.2 on External (off-site) Communications

RECALLING ALSO the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC) 1990, and its Protocol on HNS, as well as Article 8 and Protocol I (Resolution MEPC. 21(22)) of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

RECALLING that according to IMO Resolution A.851(20) as amended by Resolution MEPC.138(53) the Baltic State Governments are urged to ensure that ship reporting systems and reporting requirements comply as closely as possible with the general principles specified in its Annex,

RECALLING Directive 2002/59/EC, establishing a Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system,

CONSCIOUS that efficient and effective reporting on incidents is an essential tool in taking appropriate and timely measures to combat pollution and to investigate the matter,

NOTING that while the HELCOM POLREP BALTIC messages, including requests for assistance, have been traditionally sent via telefax new electronic means of communication have developed during the last decades and that the current trend in emergency communication is towards integrated solutions where the operator can access several communication systems via one or few access points.

NOTING FURTHER that the Contracting Parties which are also EU member states such electronic means of incident reporting is enabled by the national nodes of the EU SafeSeaNet network, as well as the marine pollution CECIS.

EMPHASIZING that ensuring efficient response in the Baltic Sea region and the full implementation of marine pollution incident provisions of the Helsinki Convention calls for efficient and operational communication channels connecting all Contracting Parties on an equal basis.

RECOMMENDS that formal POLREP BALTIC messages warning (POLWARN) and informing (POLINF) on an incident, requesting and rendering assistance (POLFAC), as well as acknowledging the receipt of such messages, shall be handled by the National Contact Point as defined in the HELCOM Response Manual Volume I.

RECOMMENDS that such POLREP BALTIC messages, containing the information defined in the HELCOM Response manual Volume I Chapter 3, should be submitted using SafeSeaNet and Marine Pollution CECIS, respectively, or e-mail, at the same time ensuring communication between all Contracting Parties on an equal basis.

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that urgent official or informal contacts may be made in some other convenient way, like by telephone. Any matter of importance for joint efforts should be confirmed as soon as possible by formal POLREP BALTIC messages.

RECOMMENDS that the relevant sections of the HELCOM Response Manual are amended by the HELCOM Response group accordingly.