Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

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Background

Having regard to Rule 11.4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Helsinki Commission, please find attached a summary report giving an account on the activities of the Commission during the year 2015.

As usual, the **Annex** to this document lists all HELCOM administrative matters, activities, meetings, etc. The intention is to update the report after HELCOM 37-2016, if necessary, and to publish it without the detailed Annex.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Activities report and provide any possible comments **by the end of March 2016**, and decide thereafter to have it published in an overview form.

Foreword

[xxxx]

State & Conservation group

Core indicators: Article (no interview)

Better tracking through new core indicators

This past year HELCOM made significant strides in evaluating the progress being made towards Good Environmental Status (GES) in the Baltic Sea by developing almost twenty new core indicators for elements of the marine ecosystem. The indicators are essentially tools for evaluating the status of the sea in a systematic way. This is an important step forward, as in the past the use of different assessment criteria as well as the lack of a clear definition of GES have prevented the tracking of changes over time.

The new indicators offer firm, jointly agreed criteria which allow HELCOM and any decision-makers to follow changes in the status of biodiversity, eutrophication and hazardous substances and support the management of maritime activities. These categories are in line with HELCOM's Baltic Sea Action Plan, which defines the objectives and needed actions for reaching GES for the entire Baltic Sea by 2021.

The second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea's ecosystem health is currently underway and will make use of these new core indicators. The first assessment results are expected in mid-2017 and will demonstrate how close we are to reaching the goals outlined in the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

The data for the indicators comes from the extensive monitoring conducted by the Baltic coastal states on species, biotopes, hazardous substances, nutrients and various human activities in the Baltic Sea.
The core indicators were developed with the cooperation of experts in the field and can be used for a multitude of purposes across the region and beyond. Cooperation with other European Regional Sea Conventions, sharing experiences with United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), and synergies with the ongoing processes in the EU reflect the steps taken towards the inter-regional relevance of these core indicators.

> Box:
> For the first time, HELCOM has set clear thresholds for specific elements of the marine ecosystem to evaluate how far we have come in pursuing good status for the Baltic Sea environment.

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Always room for improvement: coordinated monitoring

A successful case of ensuring that project results are policy-relevant and in line with the needs identified by HELCOM countries is the large EU-funded BALSAM project (2013-15). Improving the coordination of environmental monitoring in several areas and supporting the long-lasting regular monitoring activities of HELCOM was the key result. Under the wings of the project, more information on the current monitoring

programmes and activities in the Baltic were collected and included into the extensive HELCOM Monitoring Manual. In addition, guidelines were made for seabird and benthic habitat monitoring; databases initiated for seals and seabirds. The project also investigated how research vessels could be used in a more harmonized and cost-effective way, e.g. through online information exchange on such vessels and their planned cruises.

Research vessels should coordinate more

All the research cruises across the Baltic Sea, sailing for samples and other marine monitoring activities, are going to be coordinated better through the updating of a HELCOM Recommendation. Other cooperation between the ships and also smoother granting of permits of such cruises are included in the document as well. Another recent tool for improving coordination is the HELCOM on-line platform for sharing information on planned and completed cruises, also showing the real time vessel positions based on HELCOM Automatic Identification System (AIS) for ships.

Taking care of threatened Baltic Sea species

Adequate protection for the threatened Baltic Sea species will take a leap forward once the advanced draft of a HELCOM Recommendation is finalized. The new Recommendation follows up on the critical situation of many Baltic Sea species as concluded in the 2013 HELCOM Red List of Baltic Sea in danger of becoming extinct (BSEP 140). Preparation of a Recommendation on the Conservation of habitats and biotopes is expected to begin shortly.

Radioactivity now tracked for thirty years

Despite a general decreasing trend of concentrations of radionuclides, the Baltic Sea still is one of the most polluted sea areas as regards radioactive contamination. Radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea have been systematically monitored since the year 1984 and the next thematic assessment of long-term changes is expecting release at the end of 2016. The openly accessible database covers the discharge data, starting from the year 1952, on aquatic and airborne discharges of radionuclides from nuclear power plants and reprocessing plants. The credit for all this mainly goes to the HELCOM MORS Expert Group, meeting for already 30 years.

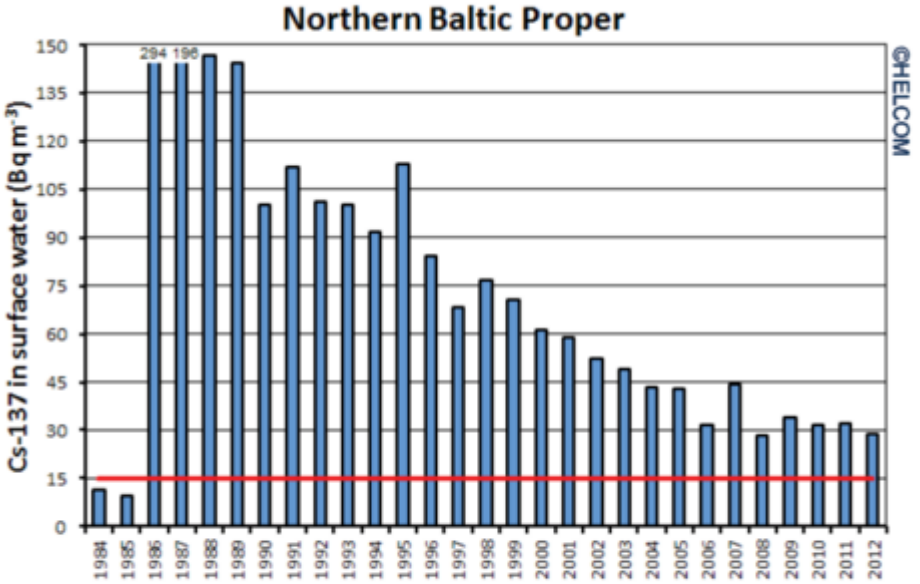

Figure 1. Cs-137 concentrations (in Bq m-3) in surface seawater (sampling depth less than 10 m) 1984-2012, as annual mean values in the Northern Baltic Proper. Red line indicates the GES-boundary (15 Bq m-3) calculated as average of pre-Chernobyl (1984-1985) concentrations.

Hazardous substances article + itw with the Co-chairs

New triumphs over hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea

The breeding success of the white-tailed eagles around the coast of the Baltic Sea tell a well-known encouraging story. In the 1970s the number of pairs successfully breeding reached an all-time low. Regional and global cooperation has since then successfully enabled bans on PCBs and DDTs, both highly harmful substances for the environment and especially to top predators such as the white-tailed eagle. During 2015, the initial results of a new HELCOM core indicator shows that the breeding health of the eagle previously seriously affected by these hazardous substance reflects good environmental status in most coastal areas.

Hazardous substances have been on the HELCOM agenda since the regional coordinated monitoring started in the late 1970s, enabling a joint understanding of which measures need to be taken to protect the marine environment. Significant progress has been made for many of the substances listed on the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan priority substance list*, and in 2015 HELCOM Pressure working group agreed to start reviewing the list. The aim is to conclude on whether some of the substances can be taken off the list and to identify if any emerging new substances should be brought to the forefront of regional environmental protection. Pharmaceuticals is one of the more recently tackled concerns.

Experts come together

Scientific advice from experts in the Baltic Sea region help the management decisions of HELCOM. In 2015 a new HELCOM Expert Network on hazardous substances was established with the aim to provide a platform for experts to discuss the advice and indicators used to assess the Baltic Sea. The newly established network filled in the gap in HELCOM working structure and will ensure that future efforts to improve the chemical status of the Baltic Sea will be targeted and regionally coordinated among all the Contracting Parties of HELCOM.

Safeguarding the Baltic Sea from hazardous substances

Interview with the new co-chairs of the HELCOM Expert Network on Hazardous Substances, Sara Danielsson, Swedish Museum of Natural History and Elisabeth Nyberg, Swedish Museum of Natural History

Text box:
HBCDD (hexabromocyclododecane) and PFOS (perfluorooctane sulphonate) are persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic compounds with possible impacts on the reproductive and developmental system. PFOS may also impact the immune system as well as lipid metabolism in organisms.

You lead the development of the PFOS and HBCDD core indicators. Can you tell us why these substances were chosen for HELCOM indicators on hazardous substances?
PFOS and HBCDD are man-made substances used in a broad variety of products. They are stable, toxic and accumulate in the food chain. They have posed concern because concentrations of both substances have increased in the Baltic environment at least since the beginning of contaminant monitoring in Sweden in the 1970s.

In your opinions, what are the benefits of developing indicators for the Baltic Sea regionally?
The core indicators provide comparable results between sub-basins of the Baltic Sea. One challenge in the past has been the large number of countries surrounding the Baltic with different types of monitoring programmes. This has led to diverging types of input data, or in some cases even a lack of data, for the evaluation of the substances.

Why is it important to monitor HBCDD?
High levels of HBCDD have proven to be toxic; effects on the nervous system, hormonal functions and reproductive success have been shown. A robust assessment of the substance will identify problem areas and general development over time. This will give policy makers a good basis for decisions on management.

Where does PFOS come from and why does it end up in the Baltic Sea?
PFOS has been phased out of production and use since the beginning of 21th century. PFOS can, however, still be found in, for example, textiles, kitchen appliances and foam fire extinguishers. PFOS can be released into air and water via industrial production as well as secondary emissions from consumer products and from sewage treatment plants.

What do the initial indicator results tell us about the status of the Baltic Sea?
The initial indicator evaluation indicates that the present levels of PFOS and HBCDD in the Baltic Sea will not cause adverse effects on the ecosystem. However, these are manmade substances and, according to the BSAP, levels of these substances should be close to zero. It is hard to develop accurate threshold values that take into account a whole ecosystem.

*Substances or substance groups of specific concern to the Baltic Sea

as listed in HELCOM BSAP

1. Dioxins (PCDD), furans (PCDF) & dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls
2a. Tributyltin compounds (TBT)
2b. Triphenyltin compounds (TPhT)
3a. Pentabromodiphenyl ether (pentaBDE)
3b. Octabromodiphenyl ether (octaBDE)
3c. Decabromodiphenyl ether (decaBDE)
4a. Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS)
4b. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)
5. Hexabromocyclododecane (HBCDD)
6a. Nonylphenols (NP)
6b. Nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPE)
7a. Octylphenols (OP)
7b. Octylphenol ethoxylates (OPE)
8a. Short-chain chlorinated paraffins (SCCP or chloroalkanes, C10-13)
8b. Medium-chain chlorinated paraffins (MCCP or chloroalkanes, C14-17)
9. Endosulfan
10. Mercury
11. Cadmium

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New insights on pharmaceuticals in the Baltic Sea

Pharmaceuticals constitute a group on emerging hazardous substances. The most comprehensive compilation of data ever made for on the concentrations and sources of pharmaceuticals in the Baltic Sea region was completed as a cooperation between HELCOM and the Policy Area Hazards of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region during 2015 with support from UNESCO. The compilation identifies concentrations of pharmaceuticals such as hormones and antibiotics that cause concern. Based on the available information, a new report is being finalized that integrates information on production and consumption of pharmaceuticals in the region, their pathways to the Baltic Sea environment, and concentrations in all the compartments of the environment and effects on marine life.

Following up on this information will enable future regional action to ensure that the Baltic Sea environment is safeguarded from the harmful effects of these substances. The report will be based on information compiled at national and regional level.

EUTRO-OPER article: intro + interview

Globally unique assessment system ready

Eutrophication is widely known to be detrimental to water quality and biodiversity and is caused by excessive inputs of nutrients to the marine environment. HELCOM continues to push forward in findings way to help address the issue, with key efforts being made in the last two years through the EUTRO-OPER project. Focused on making eutrophication assessments operational, this year the project introduced a new online assessment system—the first of its kind.

Interview with Vivi Fleming-Lehtinen, Project Manager of EUTRO-OPER and Senior Scientist at the Finnish Environmental Institute (SYKE)

1) **What, in your opinion, has been the most important outcome of the EUTRO-OPER project that was completed this year?**

The main outcome of the project is a new online system for producing assessments on Baltic-wide eutrophication—one of the main threats to the environment of the Baltic Sea. The new system is, at the moment, internationally unique in that assessments for an entire regional sea can be produced semi-automatically. This is a significant accomplishment when we consider that the workflow pulls together expert-vetted data from nine Baltic member states.

2) **What does the new workflow system offer?**

The new process is much more efficient. It combines and calculates monitoring data into resulting indicators and assessments, which are systematically reviewed by country-nominated experts. In the past, this was all done manually. The workflow is also more transparent as experts are involved not just at end stages but along the way to ensure that datasets and analyses are complete and accurate. This enhances the validity of findings, as assessments can be replicated. One further benefit is that data and indicators used in coming assessments will be available for other purposes. These achievements would not have been possible without the cooperation of our partner organisation, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), in particular Hjalte Parner.

3) **How does the workflow system contribute to the development of the Second assessment of ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II)?**

The new system is important to HOLAS II, expected in 2017, since at that point it will be launched with current information on eutrophication thus providing vital information online. It can also be seen as a pilot for other upcoming thematic assessments, such as on hazardous substances.

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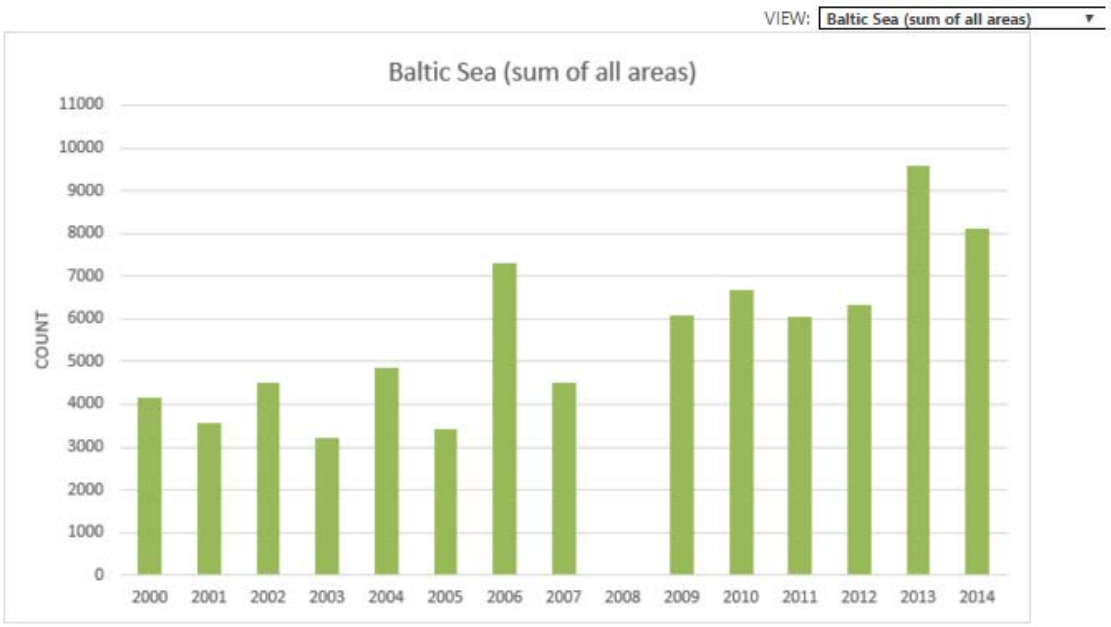
Keeping an eye on seal conservation efforts

Baltic Sea countries have made a few commitments in conserving seals and the progress is regularly reviewed by HELCOM. In addition, four core indicators on Baltic seal species have been under development in 2015, and since the indicators must be regularly updated there is the prerequisite of improved data as well as data flow on Baltic seals, also under scrutiny. The national management plans for seals are also regularly reviewed. Seal protection work is the responsibility of the HELCOM ad hoc SEAL Expert Group, meeting already for ten years.

>> graph and/or map on seals http://www.helcom.fi/baltic-sea-trends/data-maps/biodiversity/seals

RINGED SEAL



Inter-regional monitoring of birds leaps forward

Sea birds are a highly mobile species which poses specific challenges for getting sufficient knowledge about them as well as determining the best ways to protect them, thus calling for both scientific and managerial cooperation with other regions. Moreover, marine birds are sensitive to changes in the environment and are considered as good indicator species for evaluation the status of the environment. By joining forces in the continued development of environmental core indicators, the inter-regional work on marine birds has started with fresh energy, in the new expert group involving HELCOM, OSPAR covering the North East Atlantic, as well as the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES).

Baltic birdwatchers unite

Countries along the Baltic Sea have monitored seabirds for decades, but as the resulting data has been stored in different institutes and databases it has been challenging to assess and act on the regionally important questions, e.g. what the number of seabirds in a certain area can tell us about the health of the Baltic Sea marine environment. Knowledge on seabird populations, distribution and mobility on a regional scale has made progress in 2015, as a metadatabase as well as joint seabird monitoring guidelines were created under BALSAM project. The seabird metadatabase includes detailed information on all water bird surveys in the Baltic Sea since 1991.

HOLAS II – Article & graph (no interview)

What is the overall state of ecosystem health in the Baltic Sea?

HOLAS II, the second holistic assessment of the ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea, will provide information on the latest status of the marine environment and cumulative pressures and impacts from major human

activities. The preparations for the many components of HOLAS II are speeding up and the first version is scheduled for mid-2017.

For the first time, social and economic analysis will be truly incorporated into the HELCOM assessment by linking human activities to pressures and impacts on ecosystem components within one holistic framework. Overall, HOLAS II will demonstrate an improved application of ecosystem approach on a sea basin scale, thus promoting understanding of ecosystem approach and its practical use.

HOLAS II will provide a solid basis for decision-making, as it will comprehensively assist in evaluating progress towards achieving Good Environmental Status by 2021, according to the Baltic Sea Action Plan and follow-up commitments.

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MPAs – *Article: intro & itw*

New database open for HELCOM marine protected areas

Successful conservation of biodiversity and versatile ecosystems greatly depends on designating marine protected areas.

The most recent achievement by HELCOM has been the launch of the modernized database on coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (HELCOM MPAs) in October 2015, providing easier access to more detailed information on the sites.

There are currently already 174 HELCOM MPAs covering 12% of the marine area, making the Baltic Sea a pioneering region compared to other sea regions in the world.

Interview with Janica Borg, Project Coordinator, HELCOM Secretariat

Which features in particular would you like to highlight in the modernized HELCOM MPA database?

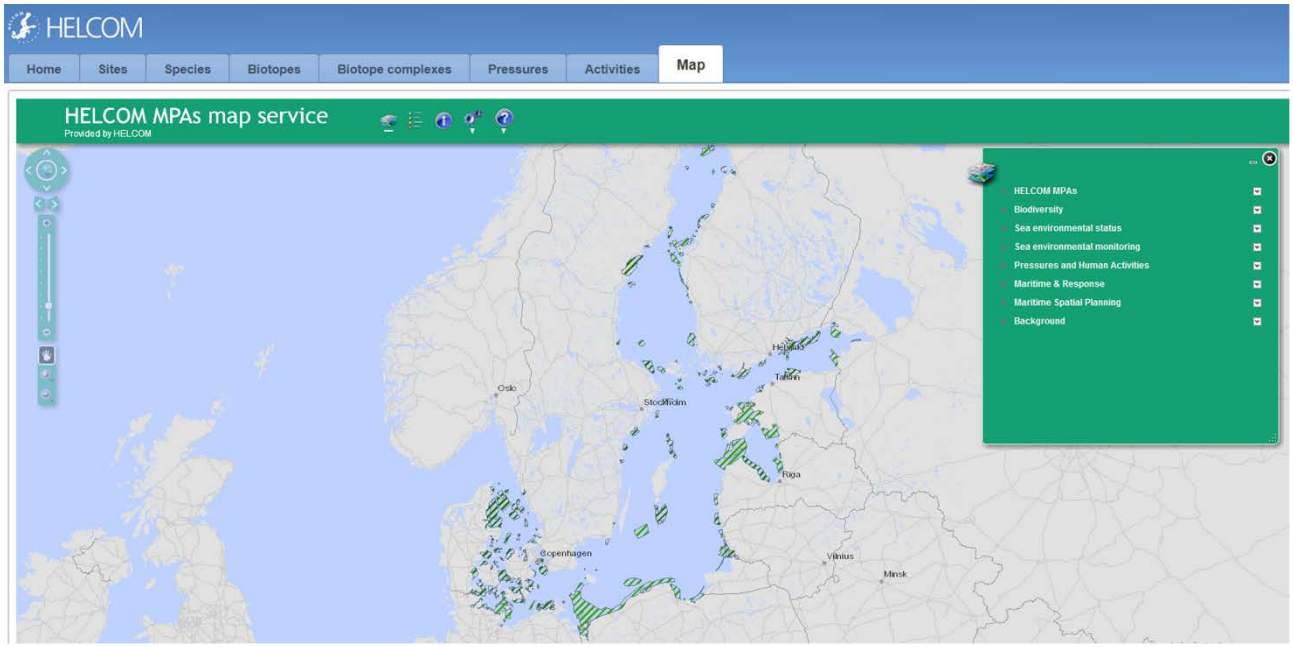
The main improvement in the new MPA database is the map interface which connects the information for each site directly to the map of the area. This GIS based map includes the location and size of each MPA, the Natura 2000 sites, maps of HELCOM Red Listed species and habitats, as well as a shapefile download function. All information on for example species, biotopes, biotope complexes, management and regulated activities are stored in interactive tables which can be used for sorting and analysing the information. In addition, you can find information on what types of pressures are found within each MPA, a feature which is missing from many other similar databases.

The structure of the database facilitates keeping the information up to date and correct: the HELCOM countries update the information directly into the database, and all data is reported either from drop down fields or, in the case of numerical data, from shapefiles. The lack of free text fields makes the error margin very small.

In your opinion, why is the launch of the modernized HELCOM MPA database so important?
It's an important tool for HELCOM members to update, store and analyse information on the HELCOM MPAs. This kind of information is often stored nationally, which results in data between different countries being in different formats, which in turn makes analysing and comparing the data difficult. The database also serves the common user: anyone can read and download information and maps from the database.

In addition, the predecessor called BSPA database was not meeting the requirements of the Contracting Parties anymore, and there was a dire need for a new enhanced database.

How about the forthcoming report on the ecological coherence of HELCOM MPAs – which reasons/features make it a significant launch for HELCOM in 2016?
Ecological coherence describes how well a collection of MPAs provide protection both individually and as a network. The target is to assess whether the protection extends beyond that provided by a single sites. The previous ecological coherence assessment was made in 2010. The goal is to establish "an ecologically coherent and effectively managed network of coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (HELCOM MPAs)" (HELCOM Recommendation 35-1).
The fresh assessment of ecological coherence of coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas is expecting release in 2016.



Text box:

The first Coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (HELCOM MPAs) were established in 1994, following the adoption of the updated Helsinki Convention in 1992 and the first concerned Recommendation (15/5) of 1994. After that the network under protection has grown steadily. Initially there were 62 HELCOM MPAs and today there are threefold: 174 MPAs which cover 12% of the Baltic Sea. The Baltic Sea was one of the first regional seas to reach the target set by

Convention on Biological Diversity that 10% of each regional sea should be protected. In the Baltic Sea region this target was reached already in 2010.
* name “HELCOM Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPAs) was changed into Coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (HELCOM MPAs) in **2014**

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Pressure group

Marine Litter – intro & interview

New era for tackling marine litter in the Baltic

Baltic Sea is known for busy traffic at sea and high population in the catchment area, both raising the risk for considerable amounts of marine litter.

In the region, the more invisible littering – under, or above, the surface – has already been tackled for long, for instance in the much improved management of waste water and discards from ships. Already by the 1990s HELCOM launched the “Baltic Strategy on Port Reception Facilities for Ship-generated Wastes” which introduced a “No Special Fee” system for Baltic Sea Ports, meaning that all waste fees are already included in the harbour fees.

The emerging concerns on ghost nets, hazardous substances and micro plastics have been the wake-up call for creating the joint HELCOM scheme to combat the litter challenge. Near the start of the summer’s beach and cruise season, HELCOM action plan for tackling marine litter in the Baltic Sea region was officially adopted. The action plan, with thirty regional actions, will be carried out in 2015–2025 by HELCOM member states.

Interview with Stefanie Werner, German expert from the Federal Environment Agency.

In your own words, please describe the process of creating the HELCOM Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter
Not long ago, marine litter was not regarded as a serious problem for the Baltic Sea. That changed due to various reasons. Beach litter pilot projects, such as MARLIN in 2013, proved that significant numbers and amounts of litter along the Baltic Sea beaches are found, comparable in volume to other sea regions. Other studies became available, e.g. with regard to findings of micro plastics in sediments and water column of the Baltic Sea. Marine Litter Actions Plans for other European seas such as the North-East-Atlantic under OSPAR were adopted, demonstrating a range of actions which were applicable in other sea regions, too. Moreover, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive came into place demanding an assessment of the state of pollution with marine litter and setting up of coherent monitoring by EU Member States.

Out of the list of thirty regional actions to tackle litter, which ones would be your top priorities - and why?
The problem of marine litter is very complex in nature and the list of actions were derived through the involvement of a wide range of related experts e.g. from the fishing, shipping, sewage and stormwater

handling, waste management and cosmetic sector. As they stand in the moment, the actions describe important fields where actions is needed and for which specific measures now have to be developed. Only when these measures lead to visible reductions of litter findings in the Baltic Sea environment we can prioritize them in terms of their effectiveness.

Waste prevention is included as one of the activities in the Marine Litter Action Plan. What could be the methods for implementing this action?
One important requisite for more sustainability in the manufacture of plastics – a main source of marine litter – lies in 'smart' product design. Although there are only relatively few basic plastics, or polymers, many of the additives used in the production can greatly impair their recycling or, result in more down-cycling than eco-effective recycling. A reduction of the use of hazardous substances in plastics production might help in recyclability. Product design should focus on maximum product persistence, to avoid the decline of non-renewable natural resources and to put into effect a general limitation on the production of new plastics. The repair of plastic products is often economically unprofitable – or not even technically possible. Furthermore, a fundamental change would be desirable in the use of plastics usage, for example with take-away food", Werner continues.

Text box:

> The only way to ensure that the actions against litter are accomplished for real is that all actors join the governments' work

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Keeping down the underwater noise
Building a knowledge base on harmful underwater noise in the Baltic Sea has kick-started by HELCOM in 2015, in order to help suppress this growing concern for marine species. A regional register of impulsive sounds, established together with OSPAR, is a concrete achievement. To register the occurrence of such abrupt sounds, challenging to measure, needs national reporting in a jointly agreed manner. Another major strain of work for the new HELCOM Experts Network on Underwater Noise is the region-wide HELCOM indicator for ambient noise, referring to continuous low frequency anthropogenic sound.

An in-depth look at dredging
As the biotopes of the Baltic seafloor are negatively affected by several human activities such as dredging, construction, fishing with bottom contact fishing gear and extraction of sand and gravel, HELCOM has for long inspected the latest concerned information submitted by the countries. An updated report on disposal of dredged material at sea for 1999–2013 has been prepared in 2015, Also, as a part of the revision of the HELCOM Guidelines for Management of Dredged Material at Sea, the new reporting format for dredging has boosted more diligent reporting from the countries about their dredging, the disposals and – importantly – the estimations on hazardous substances contained in the disposed materials at sea.

Dealing with sewage sludge
The work continues at HELCOM on identifying ways to best handle sewage sludge resulting from the treatment of municipal wastewater. Sewage sludge has energetic potential and contains components that can be reused; it is also, however, a collecting point for harmful substances and pathogenic flora contained by sewage water. As such, sustainable and environmentally friendly ways of sewage sludge handling are on

top of the agenda for HELCOM. The upcoming Recommendation on Sewage Sludge Handling will identify the ways of sewage sludge handling that assure the maximum recycling of nutrients, in particular phosphorus, while minimising negative impacts on the environment. Potential areas where sewage sludge and its products can be used include agriculture and forestry, land reclamation and landscaping, as well as energy production. The final Recommendation will introduce restrictions for the use of the sludge to be applied in all the countries of the Baltic Sea drainage area.

Nutrients to the Baltic Sea are decreasing, HELCOM follow-up shows

How the countries are doing in reaching their HELCOM nutrient reduction targets is a priority topic of the HELCOM Pressure group, issuing a new follow-up report in 2015 about the country allocated reduction targets. A more comprehensive follow-up system for the regional nutrient reduction scheme is under preparations, based on the most recent data on polluting nutrient inputs.

The data for individual sub-basins of the Baltic Sea is revealed by another recent report on the assessment of nitrogen and phosphorus input to the Baltic Sea in 2012. The statistical trend of the overall burden of nitrogen and phosphorus to the Baltic Sea as a whole, indicates decrease with 18% and 23%, respectively, in the past 15 years. However, the situation differs between the sub-basins. According to the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme, reductions in inputs of nitrogen were needed to three sub-basins where Maximum Allowable Inputs were exceeded: Baltic Proper, Gulf of Finland and Kattegat. Out of these, only to Kattegat has the nitrogen input been cut sufficiently. However, statistically significant reduction has also been achieved for the Baltic Proper, by almost 55,000 tonnes (average annual input during 2010–2012 compared to the reference period of 1997–2003).

Six pollution Hot Spots cleaned up in the Baltic Sea

Six waste water treatment plants were approved for deletion in 2015 from the HELCOM Hot Spot list, identified as significant pollution sites in the Baltic Sea catchment area. All six are located in the Polish terrain: three in Warsaw area and the rest in Krakow, Lublib and Poznan. The HELCOM list of Hot Spots, with 162 sites identified as very major pollution sources originating from municipal and industrial waste water treatment, agriculture, as well as industrial sites, has only one quarter of Hot Spots left. The list was originally established as a part of the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP, 1992–2013).

How far are we in implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan?

A follow-up system on HELCOM requirements is under development - an online explorer showing the level of accomplishment by the HELCOM countries of a selection of actions agreed on in HELCOM. The backbone of the assessment displayed in the portal are the actions agreed in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), adopted in 2007, and the Ministerial Declarations of 2010 and 2013, which build on and complement the BSAP. The assessment is based on regionally agreed criteria. For those actions that require implementation at the national level, the information source is national reporting from the Contracting Parties of the Helsinki Convention.

The assessment explorer includes only those actions from BSAP and Ministerial Declarations that have clear and measurable targets. Actions with more general objectives are followed up by the relevant HELCOM Working Groups, providing a basis for evaluating progress over time. The overarching goals and objectives expressed in the BSAP, especially to achieve a Baltic Sea in good environmental status by 2021, continue to

guide the work of HELCOM in years to come. In the future, the follow-up is planned to be expanded to HELCOM Recommendations.

Gear that you need to coordinate it all

HELCOM Gear group has continued to outline regional coordination of Programme of Measures needed to achieve a healthy Baltic Sea, as agreed in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan as well as the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation.

Countries are recurrently developing measures to improve the state of the marine environment. During the last few years the efforts have been augmented with the aim to achieve a Baltic Sea in Good Environmental Status by 2021 (Baltic Sea Action Plan) and for EU Member States by 2020 (Marine Strategy Framework Directive). Last year the Gear Group continued regional coordination focusing on:

- exchange of information and alignment of measures that are primarily of national concern and responsibility;
- development of any additional measures and actions at regional level with a focus on transboundary issues.

The coordination process aims to ensure that national measures have a positive impact on waters under the jurisdiction of neighbouring countries and contribute to achieving or maintaining good environmental status at regional scale.

During 2015 the Gear Group has developed a 'Joint documentation on regional coordination of Programmes of Measures in the Baltic Sea Area'. The document provides an overview of HELCOM agreements and their contribution to achieving good environmental status in the Baltic Sea Region. In this process, additional actions aimed at regional coordination and contributing to HELCOM targets and objectives have been recommended by HELCOM Working Groups and will be further considered and specified as part of HELCOM's work in the upcoming years.

Agri group

Manure management, article + itw

Effective manure management brings opportunities to the Baltic

When thinking about the Baltic Sea, agriculture and nutrients one easily first starts to think of problems. Nutrients that leach to the Baltic Sea cause eutrophication, and agriculture is one of the major sources of nutrient leaching. In the fields, however, nutrients are vital for plant growth and nutrients leached in watercourses are a financial loss for the farmer. Though problematic when ending up in the wrong place, nutrients are valuable.

Moreover, one of the main nutrients, phosphorus, is an unrenewable resource. The mined phosphorus reserves will eventually be exploited and, at the same time, we should produce 60 % more food by 2050 to feed the growing world population (FAO 2012). There is a need to start recycling phosphorus properly before it runs out from the reserves.

Efficient manure management is the key to nutrient recycling and reducing nutrient loading to the Baltic Sea. Treating manure not as waste but as a resource requires taking manure nutrients fully into account when fertilizing the crops. There are two excellent tools for this: nutrient bookkeeping and manure standards.

What has HELCOM done about it?
In the HELCOM 2013 Ministerial Declaration the Contracting Parties committed to establishing by 2016 national guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure and to develop by 2018 guidelines or recommendation on the use of such standards. The Contracting parties agreed also to promote and advance towards applying by 2018 at the latest nutrient accounting at farm level.

In 2015, the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri group) worked towards first establishing a baseline. Two HELCOM workshops were organized by lead countries Germany and Finland on nutrient bookkeeping and manure standards respectively. Both workshops were attended by country experts to share experiences, identify possibilities for cooperation and find the obstacles and knowledge gaps. In 2016, the Agri group continues the work to find the next steps for reaching the goal set at the 2013 Ministerial Meeting.

I**nterview with Dr. Sari Luostarinen 17.2.2016**
Ms Luostarinen contributes to the current HELCOM work on creating regional guidelines for nutrient content in manure, led by Finland. She works in the Natural Resources Institute Finland in the group for Recycling economy solutions, under the Unit of Bio-based business and industry.

Which aspects would you identify as most important in applying nutrient recycling in agriculture, while pursuing environmental benefits?
The key aspects for nutrient recycling are manure management and good soil condition and they are closely interlinked to each other. If the soil is in good condition, there is less leaching of nutrients and the crops grow better. Manure on the other hand contains organic matter, so applying manure to the fields helps the soil to stay in good growing condition. In the long run, more precise utilization of manure will also reduce leaching of nutrients as there is less surplus.

Why is manure management such a current topic in the policy and research discussions on recycling resources?
It is a current topic because the advantages of manure are realized more than before and the appreciation of it keeps on growing. More effective manure utilization does bring additional benefits, such as reduced need for mineral fertilizers, improved soil condition and possibilities for the energy sector. On one hand, poor use of manure is a problem and a source of nutrient leaching so we need measures to tackle it. On the other hand, there are great opportunities in manure management as well as manure processing for creating new livelihoods.

The current trend to value manure more as a resource started in 00's. Both regulatory and financial restraints have played their part in lifting up the new accreditation of manure's worth. More stringent environmental regulations have helped to drive innovations forward.

In your view, what are the key challenges in manure management? How about sustainable agricultural practices at large?

The profitability of agriculture is a challenge: the solutions for manure management need to be economically viable for the farms thus financial incentives and subsidies are needed. As far as the manure processing is concerned, profitability as well as a predictable policy framework are vital. For example, the subsidy system for biogas production cannot change every few years or else there will be no investments in biogas plants.

Creating a joint understanding and shared practices of calculating manure quantity and quality in the Baltic Sea region is the way forward. This work is now ongoing in the HELCOM Agri group.

What is your prediction for the future? How will the agricultural production in the Baltic Sea region change and how will it affect the Baltic Sea?

We can already see that the sizes of the farms increase while the number of the farms decrease. The trend is the same in the whole region. This development can bring new possibilities for manure management and processing since the bigger farms can utilize the benefits of scale and make better profit. Furthermore, when more manure is processed it can make the cooperation between crop farms and animal farms easier. Another benefit is that such processed manure products are more easily transported from excess regions to regions needing the nutrients.

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Tracking nutrient flows for the environment as well as farmers' benefit

HELCOM has been working on upgrading national standards for nutrient content in manure and promoting nutrient accounting at the farm level. In the past, one significant obstacle in applying nutrient accounting in agriculture in the Baltic Sea region has been the lack of a common system and insufficient skills. In general, nutrient recycling remains a high priority for HELCOM in discovering ways to limit the harmful environmental impact of agricultural practices. Through bookkeeping, nutrient flows at the farms may be followed through annual fertilization plans and calculating nutrient balances. This careful tracking allows the excessive use of nutrients to be minimized while also avoiding financial losses for farmers and protecting the environment.

Text box:
Baltic Sea countries plan to save nutrients for the benefit of farmers and environment

Fish group (& fisheries)

Article: intro & itw with Jens Olsen

Coastal fish populations reveal more about Baltic Sea health

The Baltic Sea contains many different species of fish, whose well-being relies on the health of the waters they call home. To better understand their status across the region, indicators on coastal fish were among the first of nearly 20 new HELCOM core indicators under development this year as a result of careful preparations by HELCOM experts. For example, the abundance of typical species of fish, such as perch and flounder, in coastal areas will now be systematically tracked. The new core indicators will play a vital role in

HELCOM's ongoing work, as they help measure progress made in achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) in the Baltic Sea.

Text box:
Four new HELCOM core indicators on coastal fish populations were launched in 2015

Interview with Jens Olsson, Project Manager of FISH-PRO II

Why were the core indicators on coastal fish chosen?

Coastal fish communities are vital to fishing, recreation, as well as coastal ecosystem functioning and structure in the Baltic Sea. Given this, it is important to include coastal fish—both as species and as communities—in the assessment of the status of these waters.

The Baltic is a large brackish sea with pronounced differences in salinity, temperature, nutrient status and types of coastline. We tried to select indicators that are general and applicable in all Baltic coastal areas despite the substantial environmental differences. So, the chosen indicators not only describe the status of fish communities and coastal ecosystems but also can be used Baltic-wide.

What do the indicators tell us about coastal fish populations and the health of the Baltic Sea?

The indicators tell us, generally, whether coastal fish communities are in good status. A wide range of factors influence coastal fish communities and there is no one-to-one relationship between a single pressure and an indicators response—which is why several measures are employed. Key species and piscivores are affected by commercial and recreational fishing pressures, the amount and quality of available nursery and spawning habitat, a changing climate, as well as to some extent eutrophication and top-level predators. The abundance of cyprinids (in the south and west also mesopredatory fish) is mainly impacted by eutrophication, habitat and climate. A Baltic Sea in good status would be reflected in high abundances of piscivores and key species and by low to intermediate abundances of cyprinids.

Possible text box:
According to one of the 19 new core indicators, abundance of coastal fish, about half of the assessed coastal areas of the Baltic Sea are in good environmental status. Coastal fish are doing better in the northern and eastern parts of the Baltic Sea, where perch is a key species, while the environmental status is poorer in the west and south, where flounder is a key species.

Possible text box: Did you know?
Piscivores are fish that feed on other fish.
Cyprinids are fish that feed on smaller animals.
A mesopredator feeds on other fish but also is fed upon by other predators.

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Aquaculture: How can economic profit and environmental protection be possible

The goal of the new HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture, developed within the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries, is to determine what constitutes BAT and BEP in aquaculture in the region. The Recommendation outlines criteria for best practices for minimizing and preventing negative environmental impacts of aquaculture, including but not limited to freshwater and marine fish farming, such as such as the introduction of non-indigenous species, ecological and genetic

impacts on wild fish stocks from unintended releases of farmed species, nutrient pollution, as well as the introduction of antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals. The great potential of developing and applying environmentally friendly technologies and production methods in aquaculture is only to be fully realized in the growing industry. .

Several rounds of negotiations between the Contracting Parties took place during 2015 on this Recommendation -an indication of vital interests and issues at stake. The Recommendation is to be the main HELCOM instrument to implement the requirements of the Helsinki Convention related to BAT and BEP in this emerging sector. .

Maritime Spatial Planning

Article (tbc) – itw with the Chair of MSP sub-group

Unique in Europe: sea-basin scale maritime spatial planning

The joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Working Group has coordinated the regional work on MSP since 2010. The group is of a substantial significance, as this is the only established formal cooperation involving all riparian countries as well as EU in MSP discussions on a sea basin scale in Europe: no other Regional Sea Convention has been involved in MSP like HELCOM has in the Baltic Sea.

The MSP Working Group is a forum to promote for coherent Maritime Spatial Plans in the Baltic Sea and to advance the understanding and application of ecosystem approach in MSP in which HELCOM has a major role to play. Transboundary context is also of special interest.

Better data for MSP in the Baltic

The development of high quality maritime spatial plans (MSP) demands an up-to-date and precise information on on-going use of marine areas and resources as well as on planned development of human activities at sea. An importance of trustworthy spatial and factual data to support MSPs also grows due to transboundary consultation on the MSP. Effective consultations require clear definition of sets of the data used for the development of the MSPs by countries, their availability as well as compatibility of their technical parameters. A new data expert group was established in 2015 as part of the HELCOM-VASAB cooperation in order to launch a regional dialog on common approaches to information support of MSP. An agenda of the group integrates elaboration of the minimum required set of national data which are to be available for transboundary consultation and identification of their technical parameters. The group is also missioned to elaborate a solution for establishing data exchange based on metadata provided by national data holder as well as appropriate using for MSP purposes of international information resources gathering sectorial data.

Projects help maintain the dynamic future of MSP

There are a number of ongoing or soon-to-be-started projects on MSP. For example, Baltic SCOPE focuses on planning various marine-based activities and whether such activities can co-exist in different parts of the marine areas. HELCOM's role on the SCOPE project—which is coordinated by the Swedish Agency for

Marine and Water Management—has been to provide countries with maritime GIS data and maps on ship movements based on the HELCOM Automatic Identification System (AIS) network.

Projects on MSP such as Baltic SCOPE are important sources of information and best practices for the joint HELCOM-VASAB Working Group, which supports countries in doing ecosystem-based MSP.

New guideline on ecosystem-based approach in MSP in the Baltic Sea

The application of an ecosystem-based approach in MSP got an extra boost this year. A procedurally oriented guideline developed by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group will fulfil a commitment made in the Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap (2013-2020). As a result, an ecosystem approach as an underlying overall principle for MSP in the Baltic Sea will become easier to apply.

Another set of regional guidelines has been under development for carrying out cross-border consultations on maritime spatial plans between the Baltic states. The primary aim is to ensure early and efficient information exchange and engagement.

Shipping & Response

Article on AIS

HELCOM celebrates 10 years of exchanging data on ships' movements

This year marked a decade of successful Automatic Information System (AIS) information exchange on ship movement in the Baltic region. The HELCOM regional system to exchange and collect ship position messages sent through AIS devices went live in summer 2005, and has been used since that time to track, in near real time, ship traffic across the Baltic sea.

In addition to promoting and facilitating navigation safety, the vast amount of data collected has also been used for other initiatives. This year, the first versions of traffic density maps were prepared for case study areas—one in the Baltic Sea southwest and the other between Estonia, Latvia and Sweden—in support of a two-year maritime spatial planning project, Baltic SCOPE.

Adopting the technology

AIS was originally developed for aviation but at the turn of the millennium it began rapidly gaining in popularity for on-board use on larger ships, a trend strengthened by the 2000 decision to make AIS mandatory in some commercial vessels.

The widespread use of AIS made it possible to view an automatically updated picture of ship traffic in the entire region in near real time. This revolution was made possible through the use of interlinked coastal antennas to collect radio messages from all AIS devices within the combined listening range.

The decision to establish a HELCOM AIS system for monitoring Baltic-wide ship traffic was made in 2001 after the Baltic Carrier accident, one of the most serious oil spills in the Baltic Sea during last decades. As a result of the event, how to improve the safety of navigation in the region through i.a. the use of AIS became a strong priority.

The first meeting of the HELCOM AIS Expert Working Group was held in February 2002, chaired by Mr. Benny Pettersson—one of the innovators behind maritime AIS applications and a driving force on the topic also at global forums such as the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The HELCOM AIS system was launched in 2005, when the transmission of a live Baltic-wide traffic picture became possible. Historical data of activity has also been collected since that time by the Danish Maritime Authority on behalf of the HELCOM network. The system was the fruit of several years of work by members of the dedicated HELCOM AIS working group.

AIS today

The regional HELCOM AIS system continues to provide the coastal states and the HELCOM Secretariat with AIS data, which has also become of interest to new user groups such as maritime spatial planners, researchers, as well as commercial actors such as environmental consultancies. In 2016, the expert group (HELCOM AIS EWG) will focus on future developments concerning access to data. Further products making use of the extensive data will be released as part of the coming 2016 Maritime Assessment.

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Next Maritime activities assessment will be comprehensive

Preparations speed up for a comprehensive HELCOM assessment of maritime activities in the Baltic Sea area, anticipated to be approved for release in December 2016.

Based on national submissions, HELCOM updates annually a number of datasets on maritime activities in the Baltic Sea area covering issues such as spills observed via aerial surveillance, shipping intensity (AIS) and accidents, response operations, fisheries activities and dredging. The HELCOM Maritime Assessment will synthesize the information and utilize different ongoing assessment activities as well as other sources to get a comprehensive overview of maritime activities and their environmental effects.

The Maritime Assessment, focusing on the years 2005–15, will be an opportunity to consider the long term effects of shipping regulations in the region.

Blocking alien species through ballast water

Ships' ballast water may carry alien species which are harmful to the marine environment – that is why HELCOM has worked regionally on ballast water issues for over a decade. One part of the work is to obtain a realistic view of the needs for safe ballast water exchange, as depending on the voyages any environmental precautions aren't always required. How to carry out such exemptions and exceptions to the rules of the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) has moved ahead as HELCOM has been actively working on regional aspects of the Convention. The Joint Harmonized Procedure for ballast water exemptions of HELCOM and OSPAR from 2013 has been considered within IMO as a good example of inter-regional cooperation.

A final milestone was reached during autumn 2015 when, based on field trials around the Baltic Sea 2013-2014, the joint procedure was revised for even more cost efficiency and when a Baltic Sea target species list was added to the Procedure. The system is now ready for use by the Contracting Parties.

The dedicated HELCOM/OSPAR task group, formed by the participating countries, shipping industry and NGOs, has also discussed the revision of the criteria for target species, or species of special interest. Such target species are a key feature in the procedure which aims at assessing in a scientifically justifiable way the risk of deviations from the ballast water practices outlined in the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention.

Cruise ship sewage in Baltic ports thoroughly mapped

During 2015, HELCOM countries have negotiated intensively about the enforcement of the Baltic Sea's special area status for sewage, decided on by IMO in 2011. The proposed dates for not discharging passenger ship sewage to the Baltic Sea have been postponed - as of IMO meeting in April 2015 - to 1 January 2019 for new ships and 1 January 2021 for existing ones.

HELCOM has continued the technical cooperation on sewage delivery within the Port Reception Facilities (PRF) Cooperation Platform between the administrations, industry stakeholders and the civil society with more events in the pipeline 2016.

HELCOM published an overview report in early 2015. The overview, covering active cruise voyage months of 2014, describes in detail the cruise ships operating in the Baltic Sea, their length of sea voyages, frequency and duration of port visits as well as sewage facilities.

Advancing the safety of winter navigation

HELCOM has updated its recommendation on the safety of winter navigation (25/7), which gives guidelines on essential cold weather-related issues to member states. In particular, a revised correspondence chart has been included to allow Finnish-Swedish ice classes and other key ice class systems to be easily compared. Importantly, it provides up-to-date information on approximate correspondence as the chart takes into account updates made in recent years to other classification systems. Such updates are part of HELCOM's ongoing work to ensure navigational safety in the Baltic Sea.

Revisiting minimum fines for ships

Since the 1990s HELCOM has had in place a system of minimum fines for any ship violating the anti-pollution regulations in the Baltic Sea region. The latest concerned HELCOM Recommendation (19/14) is from 1998 and it specifies the minimum recommended level of fines region for infringements of international environment legislation relevant for shipping (i.a. MARPOL).

Updating of these regional minimum fines for ships-to correspond to the more stringent regulations -has been the task of a dedicated Correspondence Group under the HELCOM Maritime Working Group in 2015 led by Denmark.

Sille Juhl Prang, lead of the Correspondence Group on updating HELCOM Recommendation 19/14 on ships' fines:

"Adequate level of fines for infringements is an important element in enforcing the environmental regulations for shipping in the Baltic Sea, including MARPOL special area rules, and thus ensuring a level playing field for fully compliant members of the industry. To this end Denmark is working with the other coastal countries to find a common regional level of minimum administrative fines via the revision of HELCOM Rec. 19/14 -fully aware that some coastal countries focus more on criminal sanctions."

Boosting capacity for better pollution response

Marine pollution response at sea is one of the longest working areas of HELCOM cooperation. The current Baltic set-up on minimum national response capacity - or availability of vessels, gear and human resources - is specified in the HELCOM Recommendation (31/1). With the recent increase in the size of ships the HELCOM Response Working Group is reconsidering such regional minimum capacity recommendations.

Besides the Baltic-wide Helsinki Convention 1992 and the bi- and trilateral response agreements which the countries have signed with their neighbours, the HELCOM Response Working group has been recently further exploring a third geographic level of cooperation via the concept of four “response regions” according to Rec. 28E/12. Within these regions the Baltic coastal countries would more fully utilise their response capacities. Finland is leading the intersessional work to consider recommendations for such response regions.

Successful oil disaster response operation at Pomeranian Bay

Twenty ships under the HELCOM flag conducted a successful operation in September to contain and recover two simulated oil spills from vessels collided off the Polish coast in the Pomeranian Bay, as part of the annual Baltic Sea pollution response exercise Balex Delta 2015. A large-scale national onshore exercise was organized simultaneously for deployment of the clean-up units as well as for rehearsing coordination.

For over 25 years HELCOM has sustained the international operational preparedness in maritime emergencies and polluting accidents at sea, in one of the most vulnerable and busiest sea areas in the world. The fact that the HELCOM member states send their vessels each year for an international oil drill is quite special as such a well-established framework is rare in other parts of the world.

Flight hours declining to detect spills from ships

The total number of surveillance flight hours in the Baltic Sea in 2014 dropped by 20% compared to the average in 2000-2013 according to the annual HELCOM report on aerial surveillance. There is a risk that the declined flight hours impair the reliability of information on detected spills from ships in the Baltic Sea, compiled by HELCOM since 1988.

The number of mineral oil spills in 2014 was the lowest ever recorded in the Baltic Sea at 117 spills, indicating a continuous decreasing trend in oil spills. The focus of the recent report is on detected illegal spills of mineral oil, as HELCOM helps to monitor any violations on the existing regulations on prevention of pollution from ships. However, for the first time in 2014, the HELCOM Member States also reported spills of other detected substances

Illegal discharges under joint surveillance in the Baltic and North Seas

Aircraft from six countries from Baltic Sea and North Sea areas carried out a joint international aerial surveillance operation with the purpose of detecting illegal discharges at sea during 42 total flight hours.

The operation, hosted by the Danish Defence Command, resulted with only one observation of a minor discharge of vegetable oil and another spot of an unknown substance detected in the 62,000 sq km operation area over Skagerrak and Kattegat.

The 2015 Super CEPCO - Coordinated Extended Pollution Control Operation – was participated by Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Norway and Sweden. Such coordinated assignment is a regular biannual effort of the HELCOM member states, this time conducted jointly with the Bonn Agreement and with the Danish Defence Command Air Station Aalborg (EKYT) as a base. The purpose of the operation is to continuously survey the selected area where there is a high probability of illegal discharges, to identify, record, document and report the detected pollutions and polluters and to improve co-operation.

Working to improve regional airborne surveillance

Steps have been taken to improve regional airborne surveillance, which is vital to the detection of oil spills and other hazardous substances entering the marine environment. HELCOM Recommendation 34E/4 revised this year recommends that regular surveillance be undertaken by air across the entire region and that existing remote sensing systems be improved to allow for use in night and hostile weather conditions. Improved surveillance may contribute to better identification—and, potentially, the prosecution—of offenders. HELCOM has fostered cooperation on aerial surveillance among Baltic coastal states since the 1980s.

Cleaner shores and safer wildlife in case of an accident

Response to spillages of oil and other harmful substances on the shore is one mandate under HELCOM. The related Response Manual, Volume III, has been under revision by the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Response on the Shore (EWG SHORE). EWG SHORE is an ad hoc group under HELCOM Response Working Group that works as a regional platform for exchange of information on recent national and regional developments on on-shore response, best practices and exercises in addition to developing new policy proposals.

More systematic work on oiled wildlife response is one more recent part of HELCOM preparedness work on spills. The HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR) has regular meetings, exchanges information on OWR developments, keeps trainings and exercises and reports regularly to HELCOM Response Working Group. Currently the EWG OWR is working on an assessment of oiled wildlife response preparedness in the Baltic region and has also provided inputs to the development of a wildlife chapter in Volume III of the HELCOM Response Manual.

Annex - Report on the activities of the Helsinki Commission from 1 January to 31 December 2015

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMISSION

HELCOM Chair

Mr Harry Liiv acted as HELCOM Chair and Mr Urmas Lips as Vice-Chair (Estonian Chairmanship).

HELCOM Secretariat

The responsibilities of the Secretariat include implementing of policies, strategies and programmes approved by the Commission and Heads of Delegation, providing technical and administrative support to the Commission, to the Heads of Delegation and to subsidiary bodies of the Commission, and ensuring effective communication between all parties involved. In addition the Secretariat (Executive Secretary) has the power of initiative to propose strategies, policies, Recommendations, decisions and any other actions.

In 2015 the composition of the Secretariat was as follows:

Executive Secretary	Ms Monika Stankiewicz
Professional Secretaries	Mr Hermanni Backer - Maritime Working Group (Maritime) - Response Working Group (Response) - Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG), changed to Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (Fish) Ms Ulla Li Zweifel - Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (Gear) - Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (State and Conservation) Mr Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky - Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (Pressure) - Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri) - Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (Fish) changed to Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG)
Information Secretary	Ms Johanna Laurila
Administrative Officer	Ms Satu Raisamo
Assisting Professional Secretaries	Ms Minna Pyhälä (until 30 June) Ms Laura Meski Ms Petra Kääriä
Associate Professional Secretary	Ms Marta Ruiz (from 1 July)
Administrative Assistant	Ms Leena Heikkilä
Professional Assistant	Ms Teija-Liisa Lehtinen
ICT Administrator	Mr Håkan Blomberg
Data Coordinator	Mr Joni Kaitaranta

Trainees	Ms Malla Kirjokangas (from 4 February to 30 June) Ms Triin Jaagus (from 20 April to 7 August) Ms Thaysa Portela (from 1 September) Mr Nazmus Sakib (from 1 September) Ms Iiris Kokkonen (from 14 September)

Project Staff

The HELCOM team also included project personnel, working both in projects fully financed from the HELCOM budget and in projects part-financed by the European Union funds and other external sources:

Ms Lena Avellan, Project Manager (HELCOM CORESET II and further work on development of indicators)
Ms Lena Bergström, Project Coordinator (HELCOM HOLAS II)
Ms Janica Borg, Project Coordinator, (HELCOM ECONET and modernization of the HELCOM MPA Database)
Ms Vivi Fleming-Lehtinen, Project Manager (HELCOM EUTRO-OPER)
Mr Manuel Frias, Project Coordinator (PRF work and BalticSCOPE)
Ms Susanna Kaasinen, Agri-Environment Coordinator (from 1 October)
Ms Johanna Karhu, Project Coordinator (BALSAM until 31 May and BalticBOOST from 15 September)
Mr Michael Knapek, Project Officer (HASPS) (from 17 July)
Ms Leena Laamanen, Project Coordinator (HASPS) (from 1 August)
Mr Marco Milardi, Project Coordinator (BalticBOOST) (from 1 December)
Mr Florent Nicolas, Project Researcher (PRF work and BalticSCOPE)
Ms Marta Ruiz, Project Coordinator (work on RAP Marine Litter) (until 30 June)
Mr Sriram Sethuraman, Project Manager (HELCOM PLUS and modernization of the HELCOM MPA Database)

Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Commission, the subsidiary bodies and their sub-groups and projects

Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)

Mr Harry Liiv, Estonia
Chair of the Helsinki Commission
Mr Urmas Lips, Estonia
Vice-Chair of the Helsinki Commission

Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (HELCOM GEAR)

Ms Heike Imhoff, Germany
Chair of HELCOM GEAR

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (State and Conservation)

Ms Penina Blankett, Finland
Co-chair (nature conservation)
Mr Dieter Boedeker, Germany
Vice Co-chair (nature conservation)
Mr Urmas Lips, Estonia
Co-chair (monitoring and assessment)
Mr Samuli Korpinen, Finland
Vice Co-chair (monitoring and assessment)

Mr Anders Galatius, Denmark
Chair of the Ad hoc HELCOM Seal Expert Group (HELCOM SEAL)

Mr Olle Karlsson, Sweden
Vice-Chair of Ad hoc HELCOM Seal Expert Group (HELCOM SEAL)

Ms Iveta Jurgensone, Latvia
Chair of Project on Quality Assurance of Phytoplankton Monitoring in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM PEG)

Mr Jens Olsson, Sweden
Chair of the Project on Baltic-wide assessment of coastal fish communities in support of an ecosystem-based management (HELCOM FISH-PRO II)

Mrs Elena Gorokhova, Sweden
Chair of the project on Zooplankton Indicator Integration to Monitoring in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM ZEN ZIIM)

Mr Georg Martin, Estonia
Chair of the intersessional expert network on benthic habitat monitoring

Ms Tarja Ikäheimonen, Finland
Chair of the Expert Group on Monitoring of Radioactive Substances in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM MORS EG)

Volker Dierschke, Germany
Co-Chair of Joint ICES/OSPAR/HELCOM Working Group on Seabirds (JWGBird)

Ms Maria Laamanen, Finland
Chair of the HELCOM Second Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II Project)

Maritime Group (HELCOM MARITIME)

Ms Anna Petersson, Sweden
Chair of HELCOM MARITIME

Mr Jorma Kämäräinen, Finland
Vice-Chair of HELCOM MARITIME

Ms Natalia Kutaeva, Russia
Vice-Chair of HELCOM MARITIME

Mr Omar Eriksson, Denmark
Chair of Expert Working Group for Mutual Exchange and Deliveries of AIS data (HELCOM AIS EWG)

Mr Manfred Rolke, Germany
Co-chair (HELCOM) of HELCOM/OSPAR TG BALLAST (until May 2015)

Ms. Susanne Heitmüller
Co-chair (HELCOM) of HELCOM/OSPAR TG BALLAST (from November 2015)

Mr Henrik Ramstedt, Sweden
OSPAR Co-chair (OSPAR) of HELCOM/OSPAR TG BALLAST

Mr Andreas Holmgren, Sweden
Chair of the 6th Meeting of the HELCOM Group of Experts on Safety of Navigation (SAFE NAV)

(The Group is chaired by hosting country unless otherwise decided)

Ms. Narine Svenssson
Coordinator of HELCOM Correspondence Group concerning enforcement of the new limits for SOx emissions (CG SECA), Coordinator of Correspondence Group on effective dates of the special area requirements under Annex IV of MARPOL

Ms. Anita Mäkinen, Finland
Coordinator of HELCOM Correspondence Group on Ballast Water Management (CG BALLAST), Coordinator of Correspondence Group on ship-to-ship and bunkering transfer operations.

Ms. Sille Juhl-Prang, Denmark
Coordinator of Correspondence Group on updating HELCOM Recommendation 19/14 (CG FINES)

Mr. Antti Nironen, Finland
Coordinator on Correspondence Group on Undel Keel Clearance.

Response Group (HELCOM RESPONSE)

Ms. Heli Haapasaari, Finland
Chair of HELCOM RESPONSE

Mr Ojars Gerke, Latvia
Vice-Chair of HELCOM RESPONSE, Chair of Task Group to draft a HELCOM Recommendation for means of communication to be used for HELCOM POLREPs when alerting and requesting/offering assistance for pollution incidents at sea and on the shore in Baltic Sea Area (TG POLREP)

Ms Sonja Dobo, Sweden
Vice-Chair of HELCOM RESPONSE, Chair of the Expert Working Group on Response on the Shore (EWG SHORE)

Mr Hugo Nijkamp, Sea Alarm
Chair of the Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response

Mr Igor Kuzmenko, Lithuania
Chair of HELCOM IWGAS, Coordinator of HELCOM BALEX DELTA exercise 2016 (Lithuania)

Mr Jacek Beldowski, Poland
Co-chair of HELCOM Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (HELCOM SUBMERGED)

Mr Jens Sternheim, Germany
Co-chair of HELCOM Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (HELCOM SUBMERGED)

Mr Gunnar Möller, Sweden
Vice chair of HELCOM Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (HELCOM SUBMERGED)

Mr Jorma Rytkönen, Finland
Vice chair of HELCOM Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (HELCOM SUBMERGED)

Mr Klaus Daginnus, Germany

Chair of Task Group on revising the HELCOM Response Manual Volume II (TG HNS MANUAL)

Mr. Marek Rezko, Poland
Coordinator of HELCOM BALEX DELTA exercise 2015 (Poland)

Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (Pressure)

Mr Lars Sonesten, Sweden
Chair of Pressure WG (from October 2014 onwards)

Mr Lars M Svendsen
Chair of Reduction Scheme Core Drafting Group (RedCore DG)

Ms Stefanie Werner, Germany (until June)
Chair of expert work to develop Marine Litter Regional Action Plan

HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based sustainable fisheries (Fish group)

Mr Marcin Ruciński, Poland
Chair of Fish group

HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (HELCOM Agri group)

Mr Dietrich Schulz, Germany

Chair of Agri group

Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG)

Ms Anita Mäkinen, Finland
Co-chair (HELCOM)

Mr Andrzej Cieslak, Poland
Co-chair (VASAB)

Mr Kai Trümpler, Germany
Vice-co-chair (VASAB)

Mr Joacim Johannesson
Vice-co-chair (HELCOM)

Finances

According to the Convention, the contributions by the Contracting Parties to the budget of the Commission are based on equal shares. In addition, the Government of Finland pays a HQ contribution to cover the rent of the office as well as communication and equipment expenses.

In the financial period 2014-2015 the shares of each country were (after deducting from the budget total the Finnish HQ contribution, the 2.5% share of the European Union and the interest): Denmark, Finland and Sweden 13.0%; Estonia, Germany, Poland and Russia 11.1%, Latvia 9.2% and Lithuania 7.4%. There is an annually reviewed transitional arrangement on sharing the costs until all countries have reached the equal share by 2016-2017. In addition to the budget, special contributions from many Contracting Parties, the EU and the Nordic Council of Ministers were received to finance projects and activities.

The distribution of expenditures of the Commission during the financial year from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 was as follows (€):

Meeting expenditures	105 618,70
Salaries and remunerations	993 303,02
Data and consultant services	188 800,00
Travel expenses	37 779,40
Communications	67 000,00
Rent and maintenance	173 000,00
BSEPs and other information	74 077,70
Material and equipment	50 000,00
Miscellaneous	24 754,17
Meeting support	5 888,42
Projects	650 529,83
Total	**2 370 751,24**

Cooperation with Other Governments

The Governments of Belarus and Ukraine are observers of the Commission.

Cooperation with Other International Organizations

The following International Organizations are observers of the Commission (situation 31 December 2015):

Inter-governmental organizations:

- African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (UNEP/AEWA)
- Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (UNEP/ASCOBANS)
- Baltic 21 - Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)
- Baltic Pilotage Authorities Commission (BPAC)
- Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)
- Black Sea Commission
- Bonn Agreement
- Great Lakes Commission
- Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO
- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)
- International Maritime Organization (IMO)
- OSPAR Commission
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO)
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Non-governmental international organizations:

- Baltic Farmers Forum on Environment (BFFE)
- Baltic Operational Oceanographic System (BOOS)
- Baltic Ports Organization (BPO)
- Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC)
- Baltic Sea Forum (BSF)
- BirdLife International
- BONUS Baltic Organisations Network for Funding Science EEIG
- Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB)

- Coastal and Marine Union (EUCC) (formerly European Union for Coastal Conservation)
- Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) - Baltic Sea Commission
- Cruise Lines International Association Europe (CLIA Europe)
- European Boating Association (EBA)
- European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC)
- European Chlor-Alkali Industry (EURO-CHLOR)
- European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA)
- European Dredging Association (EuDA)
- European Federation of National Associations of Water and Wastewater Services (EUREAU)
- European Network of Freshwater Research Organizations (EurAqua)
- European Sea Ports Organization (ESPO)
- Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)
- Federation of European Private Port Operators (Feport)
- Fertilizers Europe (former EFMA)
- Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe
- Interferry
- International Association of Oil & Gas Producers (OGP)
- International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)
- International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions (IDUM)
- John Nurminen Foundation (JNF)
- Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation (KIMO International)
- Nordic Hunters' Alliance (NHA)
- OCEANA
- Sea Alarm Foundation
- Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF International)

Meetings in the HELCOM Framework

(cf. Attachment 1)

HELCOM Representation at International Level

(cf. Attachment 2)

Attachment 1

Meetings in the HELCOM framework in 2015

Date and place	Name of Meeting	Participation
16 January 2015 Online	Fourth Meeting of the HELCOM Intersessional Group on Programmes of Measures (GEAR IG POM 4-2015)	U. Zweifel, P. Kääriä
28-30 January 2015 Jurmala, Latvia	Joint BALSAM/CORESET II Bird expert meeting	L. Avellan
29 January 2015 Online	Third Meeting on Marine Litter (MARINE LITTER 3-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, M. Ruiz
29-30 January 2015 Gothenburg, Sweden	Tenth Meeting of the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 10-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, H. Backer, L. Meski
2-4 February 2015 Helsinki, Finland	CORESET II thematic meeting on hazardous substances and bio-effects (CORESET II 2015 HZ BE)	U. Zweifel, L. Avellan, J. Karhu, J. Kaitaranta
4-5 February 2015 Berlin, Germany	Ninth Meeting of the HELCOM Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (HELCOM GEAR 9-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, U. Zweifel, M. Pyhälä, J. Karhu
9-11 February 2015 Gdynia, Poland	Fourth Meeting of the project on Making the HELCOM eutrophication assessment operational (EUTRO-OPER 4-2015)	U. Zweifel, V. Fleming-Lehtinen, J. Kaitaranta
9 February 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Second Meeting of the Reduction Scheme Core drafting Group (RedCore DG 2-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, M. Pyhälä, J. Laurila, M. Frias
10-11 February 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Eighth workshop of the Project on Development of a HELCOM Pollution Load User System (PLUS 8-2015)	M. Pyhälä, S. Sethuraman
10-12 February 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	Second Meeting of the Project for Baltic-wide assessment of coastal fish communities in support of an ecosystem-based management (HELCOM FISH-PRO II 2-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, P. Kääriä
10-12 February 2015 Gdynia, Poland	CORESET II 2015 thematic meeting on benthic and pelagic indicators (CORESET II 2015 BP)	U. Zweifel, L. Avellan
3-4 March 2015 Helsinki, Finland	36th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM 36-2015)	All staff
10-11 March 2015 Sopot, Poland	Annual HELCOM Meeting of the Informal Working Group on Aerial Surveillance (IWGAS 2015)	L. Meski, L. Avellan (online)
11 March 2015 Online	Third Meeting of the Reduction Scheme Core drafting Group (RedCore DG 3-2015)	M. Pyhälä, M. Frias
11 March 2015 Online	Second Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 2-2015)	U. Zweifel, J. Borg, P. Kääriä
17 March 2015 Online	Third Meeting of the HELCOM Task Group on revising the HELCOM Response Manual Volume II (TG HNS MANUAL 3-2015)	H. Backer

17-18 March 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Second Meeting of the Project for the development of the second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II 2-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, U. Zweifel, L. Bergström, L. Avellan, J. Karhu, P. Kääriä
18-19 March 2015 Gothenburg, Sweden	Partner Kick-off Meeting of Baltic Scope Project	H. Backer, L. Meski, M. Frias, F. Nicolas
1 April 2015 Online	Memo of the third meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 3-2015)	U. Zweifel, J. Borg, P. Kääriä
14 April 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Fourth Meeting of the Reduction Scheme Core drafting Group (RedCore DG 4-2015)	M. Pyhälä
15 April 2015 Online	Informal Expert Meeting of the Correspondence Group on Ballast Water Management (CG BALLAST 1-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, H. Backer, M. Ruiz
15 April 2015 Online	Tenth Meeting of the Expert Working Group on Response on the Shore (EWG SHORE 10-2015)	L. Meski
15-16 April 2015 Warsaw, Poland	Second Meeting of HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 2-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, D. Frank-Kamenetsky, P. Kääriä
17 April 2015 Stockholm, Sweden	HELCOM/PA Hazard Preparatory meeting for assessment on pharmaceuticals	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, U. Zweifel
21 April 2015 Online	Tenth Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR 10-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, U. Zweifel, M. Pyhälä, Chairs of other WGs L. Sonesten, H. Haapasaari, A. Mäkinen, J. Johannesson
22-23 April 2015 Bonn, Germany	Second Meeting of HELCOM expert group on environmental risks of hazardous submerged objects (SUBMERGED 2-2015)	H. Backer, M. Pyhälä
24 April 2015 Brussels, Belgium	Final conference of the three New Knowledge pilot projects IRIS-SES, JMP NS/CS and BALSAM	U. Zweifel, J. Karhu, J. Kaitaranta
24 April 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Fourth Meeting on Marine Litter (MARINE LITTER 4-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, D. Frank-Kamenetsky, M. Ruiz
28-29 April 2015 Oldenburg, Germany	Workshop on status of nutrient bookkeeping in the Baltic Sea countries	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, L. Meski
5 May 2015 Tallinn, Estonia	Fifth Meeting of the Reduction Scheme Core drafting Group (RedCore DG 5-2015)	M. Pyhälä
5 May 2015 Hamburg, Germany	RESPONSE TG HNS Workshop	H. Backer
6-7 May 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	Baltic Scope, SWB case, first planners meeting	J. Kaitaranta, M. Frias, F. Nicolas

6-8 May 2015 Tallinn, Estonia	Second Meeting of Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (PRESSURE 2-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, D. Frank-Kamenetsky, M. Pyhälä, M. Ruiz, L. Heikkilä
11-15 May 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Second Meeting of the HELCOM Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (STATE&CONSERVATION 2-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, U. Zweifel, P. Kääriä, V. Fleming-Lehtinen, J. Borg, J. Karhu, J. Kaitaranta, L. Avellan, L. Bergström
18 May 2015 Online	Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, P. Kääriä
18 May 2015 Uppsala, Sweden	Workshop on total uncertainty in input estimates (Uncertainty WS 1-2015)	M. Pyhälä
19 May 2015 Uppsala, Sweden	Workshop on transboundary inputs and retention (Transboundary inputs WS 1-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, M. Pyhälä
19-20 May 2015 Gdynia, Poland	26th Meeting of the Expert Working Group for Mutual Exchange and Deliveries of AIS data (HELCOM AIS EWG 26-2015)	H. Backer, M. Frias, F. Nicolas
19-20 May 2015 Berlin, Germany	11th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR 11-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, U. Zweifel, L. Avellan, V. Fleming-Lehtinen
19-21 May 2015 Oulu, Finland	Fifth Meeting of the Expert Group on Monitoring of Radioactive Substances in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM MORS EG 5-2015)	J. Kaitaranta, T-L Lehtinen
20-21 May 2015 Uppsala, Sweden	Eighth Meeting of the Sixth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation Project (PLC-6 8-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, M. Pyhälä
22 May 2015 Uppsala, Sweden	Sixth Meeting of the Reduction Scheme Core drafting Group (RedCore DG 6-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, M. Pyhälä
22 May 2015 Riga, Latvia	Baltic Scope, LV-EE-SE case, first planners meeting	M. Frias, F. Nicolas
27-29 May 2015 Braunschweig, Germany	Second Meeting of the Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (AGRI 2-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, D. Frank-Kamenetsky, L. Meski
1-3 June 2015 Brussels, Belgium	20th Meeting of the Response Working Group (RESPONSE 20-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, H. Backer, L. Meski
2 June 2015 Online	Fifth Meeting of the project on 'Making the HELCOM eutrophication assessment operational (EUTRO-OPER 5-2015)	V. Fleming-Lehtinen
2-4 June 2015 Öregrund, Sweden	FISH-PRO II Workshop "The role of essential habitats for fish in the Baltic Sea"	P. Kääriä
2-4 June 2015 Helsinki, Finland	HELCOM workshop for the European Red List of Habitats (EU RED LIST HABITATS WS 2-2015)	J. Borg

10-11 June 2015 Tallinn, Estonia	48th Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation (HOD 48-2015)	P-staff, L. Avellan, T-L Lehtinen
15 June 2015 Gothenburg, Sweden	HELCOM Workshop to support the development of a biodiversity assessment tool within HOLAS II (Biodiversity tool WS 1-2015)	L. Bergström, L. Avellan
15 June 2015 Online	Fifth Meeting of the HELCOM Intersessional Group on Programmes of Measures (GEAR IG POM 5-2015)	P. Kääriä
16-17 June 2015 Gothenburg, Sweden	Third Meeting of the project for the development of the second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II 3-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, L. Bergström, L. Avellan
22 June 2015 Online	Seventh Meeting of the Reduction Scheme Core drafting Group (RedCore DG 7-2015)	M. Stankiewicz
26 August 2015 Tallinn, Estonia	1st HELCOM Workshop on IMO BWMC target species, criteria and revision process (WS TS 1-2015)	M. Ruiz
1-2 September 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Eighth Meeting of the Reduction Scheme Core Drafting Group (RedCore DG 8-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, S. Sethuraman
8 September 2015 Online	Sixth Meeting of the project on Making the HELCOM eutrophication assessment operational (EUTRO-OPER 6-2015)	V. Fleming-Lehtinen, J. Kaitaranta
8 September 2015 Swinoujscie, Poland	Eleventh Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Response on the Shore (EWG SHORE 11-2015)	L. Meski
9-11 September 2015 Swinoujscie, Poland	HELCOM BALEX DELTA Exercise	J. Laurila, L. Meski
16-17 September 2015 Gdansk, Poland	Sixth Meeting of the Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on Ballast Water Management Convention Exemptions (HELCOM-OSPAR TG BALLAST 6-2015)	H. Backer, M. Ruiz
25 September 2015 Online	Third Meeting of the Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 3-2015)	L. Meski
28 September 2015 Online	HELCOM MPA Task Group 4-2015 meeting (MPA TG 4-2015)	P. Kääriä, J. Borg, U.Zweifel, I. Kokkonen, J. Kaitaranta
28 September 2015 Riga, Latvia	Baltic Scope partner meeting and steering group meeting	M. Stankiewicz
29 September 2015 Riga, Latvia	Baltic Scope Kick-off Conference	M. Stankiewicz, D. Frank-Kamenetsky, L. Meski, F. Nicolas, M. Frias, L. Laamanen
30 September 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	Joint Meeting of Intersessional Correspondence Group on Underwater Noise, HELCOM Expert Network on Underwater Noise and EU Technical Group on Underwater Noise (ICG Noise - HELCOM EN Noise - EU TG NOISE 1-2015)	M. Ruiz, L. Avellan

30 September -1 October 2015 Helsinki, Finland	HELCOM Workshop to develop a framework for economic and social analyses within HOLAS II (HOLAS II ESA WS 1-2015)	U. Zweifel, L. Bergström
30 September -1 October 2015 Riga, Latvia	Eleventh Meeting of the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 11-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, D. Frank-Kamenetsky, L. Meski, L. Laamanen, L. Avellan
1 October 2015 Stockholm, Sweden	Sixth Meeting of the HELCOM Group of Experts on Safety of Navigation (HELCOM SAFE NAV 6-2015)	H. Backer
1-2 October 2015 Riga, Latvia	First Meeting of the Baltic Sea Region MSP Data Expert Group (BSR MSP Data ESG 1-2015)	J. Kaitaranta, L. Laamanen, D. Frank-Kamenetsky
7-9 October 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	Third Meeting of the Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (PRESSURE 3-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, D. Frank-Kamenetsky, M. Ruiz, L. Avellan, L. Heikkilä
9 October 2015 Online	6th Meeting of GEAR IG PoM	U. Zweifel, M. Ruiz
9 October 2015 Online	Fifth Meeting of the Task Group on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas (MPA TG 5-2015)	J. Borg, P. Kääriä
14-15 October 2015 Gothenburg, Sweden	Third Meeting of the Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (SUBMERGED 3-2015)	H. Backer
26 October 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Ninth Meeting of the Reduction Scheme Core Drafting Group (RedCore DG 9-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky
27-28 October 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Ninth Meeting of Sixth Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation Project (PLC-6 9-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky
28-29 October 2015 Warsaw, Poland	First Workshop of the HELCOM Intersessional Group for MSFD Programmes of Measures (GEAR IG PoM WS 1-2015)	U. Zweifel, H. Backer, M. Ruiz, J. Karhu
29 October 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Ninth Workshop of the Project on Development of a HELCOM Pollution Load User System (PLUS 9-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, S. Sethuraman
29-30 October 2015 Warsaw, Poland	Twelfth Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR 12-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, U. Zweifel, M. Ruiz
9-11 November 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	First meeting of HELCOM-OSPAR-ICES joint working group on waterbirds (JWGBird)	L. Avellan
9-13 November 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Third Meeting of the HELCOM Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, U. Zweifel, J. Laurila, P. Kääriä, M. Ruiz, V. Fleming-Lehtinen, J. Borg, L. Bergström
13 November 2015 Helsinki, Finland	HELCOM Workshop on the HOLAS Pressure and Impact Index (HOLAS II Pressure Index WS 1-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, L. Bergström, J. Borg, L. Avellan, L. Laamanen, M. Milardi

19-20 November 2015 Helsinki, Finland	HELCOM Workshop on nutrient standards	M. Stankiewicz, D. Frank-Kamenetsky, L. Meski, S. Kaasinen
23-25 November 2015 Klaipeda, Lithuania	15th Meeting of the Maritime Working Group (MARITIME 15-2015)	H. Backer, T-L Lehtinen, T. Portela, N. Sakib
24-25 November 2015 Berlin, Germany	Fourth Meeting of the Project for the development of the second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II 4-2015)	U. Zweifel, L. Bergström, L. Avellan
24-25 November 2015 Gothenburg, Sweden	Seventh Meeting of the Project on making the HELCOM eutrophication assessment operational (EUTRO-OPER 7-2015)	V. Fleming-Lehtinen, J. Kaitaranta
26-27 November 2015 Warsaw, Poland	Third Meeting of the Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable fisheries (FISH 3-2015)	M. Stankiewicz, H. Backer, P. Kääriä
30 November 2015 Stockholm, Sweden	Tenth Meeting of the Reduction Scheme Core Drafting Group (RedCore DG 10-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky
1 December 2015 Stockholm, Sweden	First Workshop of the Project Operationalization of the nutrient reduction scheme follow-up system (MAI-CART OPER 1-2015)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky
2-4 December 2015 Berlin, Germany	Ninth Meeting of the ad hoc Seal Expert Group (SEAL 9-2015)	U. Zweifel, P. Kääriä, J. Kaitaranta
10-11 December 2015 Helsinki, Finland	49th Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation (HOD 49-2015)	P-staff

Attachment 2

HELCOM representation at international level 2015

Date and Place	Name of Meeting	Participation
21-22 January 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	Workshop on cross-cutting issues in relation to the review of the GES decision and Annex III of MSFD	U. Zweifel, L. Bergström, L. Avellan, V. Fleming-Lehtinen
27-28 January 2015 Jurmala, Latvia	MARMONI Final Conference "Innovative indicators, methods, monitoring & assessment of marine biodiversity in the Baltic Sea"	L. Avellan, L. Bergström
9 February 2015 Brussels, Belgium	EU/MSFD 15th Meeting of the Marine Strategy Coordination Group (MSCG)	M. Stankiewicz
10-11 February 2015 Oslo, Norway	North Sea NECA meeting	H. Backer
12 February 2015 Lisbon, Portugal	11th Inter-Secretariat meeting between Regional Agreements, DG ECHO and EMSA on Pollution Response	B. Stedt (RESPONSE outgoing Chair), M. Stankiewicz, H. Backer
12 February 2015 Stockholm, Sweden	Seminar on sea-based methods to reduce consequences of eutrophication	D. Frank-Kamenetsky
23-24 February 2015 Ispra, Italy	Working meeting on the MSFD Expert Network Contaminants	L. Avellan
27 February 2015 Brussels, Belgium	Second EMODnet-MSFD coordination meeting	J. Kaitaranta
5 March 2015 Brussels, Belgium	Conference Pan-European dialogue between cruise operators, ports and coastal tourism stakeholders	M. Stankiewicz
6 March 2015 Berlin, Germany	European Sustainable Phosphorus Conference	M. Stankiewicz
9-10 March 2015 Hamburg, Germany	Baltic Earth Advisory Board meeting	U. Zweifel (online)
18-20 March 2015 St. Petersburg, Russia	XVI International Environmental Forum "Baltic Sea Day"	M. Stankiewicz, D. Frank-Kamenetsky, J. Laurila, M. Ruiz
23-26 March 2015 Amsterdam, Netherlands	Interspill 2015 Conference and Exhibition	H. Backer, L. Meski
7 April 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) meeting	U. Zweifel
15 April 2015 Turku, Finland	UBC Communications Seminar	J. Laurila
15-16 April 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	EEA, OSPAR, HELCOM, UNEP/MAP and BSC meeting to discuss the cooperation for the benefit of Regional and European marine assessments	U. Zweifel
16-17 April 2015 Brussels, Belgium	Sea Alarm Oiled Wildlife Response planning training course	L. Meski

17 April 2015 Stockholm, Sweden	Preparatory meeting for assessment of pharmaceutical substances in the BS (HC-PA Hazard)	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, U. Zweifel, L. Sonesten (PRESSURE Chair), U. Lips (HELCOM Vice-Chair)
21 April 2015 Vantaa, Finland	ECGFF Risk Analysis Procedures seminar	H. Backer
22-23 April 2015 Brussels, Belgium	13th Meeting of the GES WG (MSFD)	U. Zweifel
24 April 2015 Brussels Belgium	Final conference of the three New Knowledge pilot projects IRIS-SES, JMP NS/CS and BALSAM	U. Zweifel
27-28 April 2015 Stockholm, Sweden	Planning for EUSBSR Communication Strategy	J. Laurila
18-21 May 2015 Gdansk, Poland	Conference "Nutrient Removal and Recovery: Moving Innovation into Practice"	A. Dembowska (Poland)
19 May 2015 Malmö, Sweden	Maritime Education and Training Symposium	L. Eriksson (MARITIME former Chair)
20 May 2015 Warnemünde, Germany	International Workshop “The Major Baltic Inflow of December 2014”	V. Fleming-Lehtinen
20 May 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Joint Latvian Embassy and BONUS MSP Seminar	L. Meski
26-27 May 2015 Riga, Latvia	Informal Meeting of Water and Marine Directors of the EU; Candidate and EFTA Countries	M. Stankiewicz
28-29 May 2015 St. Petersburg, Russia	VII Nevsky International Ecological Congress	J. Laurila
28-29 May 2015 Athens, Greece	European Maritime Day 2015	H. Backer
4 June 2015 Turku, Finalnd	Baltic Sea Region Forum	D. Frank-Kamenetsky
8-9 June 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	EC/JRC "Marine Pilot II Meeting"	J. Kaitaranta
14 June 2015 Jurmala, Latvia	Promoting Maritime Dimension in the Baltic Sea Cooperation	M. Stankiewicz
15-16 June 2015 Jurmala, Latvia	Sixth Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)	M. Stankiewicz, J. Laurila, T. Jaagus
16 June 2015 Jurmala, Latvia	Baltic communicators’ meeting	J. Laurila
18 June 2015 Riga, Latvia	Baltic Sea Science Congress	L. Avellan
19 June 2015 Brussels, Belgium	11th meeting of the Working Group on Data, Information and Knowledge Exchange (WG DIKE)	J. Kaitaranta
22-23 June 2015 Varna, Bulgaria	e-navigation/e-maritime - Current status and implementation in Black Sea	H. Backer

	and East Med 2015 International Maritime Conference	
24 June 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	Baltic LINes Project planning meeting	H. Backer
23-25 August 2015 Stockholm, Sweden	UNESCO events at the World Water Week	M. Ruiz
24-26 August 2015 Magdeburg, Germany	Meeting of Executive Secretaries of European Water Commissions	M. Stankiewicz
26-27 August 2015 Stralsund, Germany	Regional Seas Commissions meeting the Federal Minister for Environment of Germany	M. Stankiewicz, J. Laurila
31 August 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Visit by the EU Commissioner Carlos Moedas to the BONUS Steering Committee meeting	M. Stankiewicz, J. Laurila
31 August - 1 September 2015 Rostock-Warnemünde, Germany	24th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)	H. Liiv (HELCOM Chair)
31 August – 1 September 2015 Dwelft, Netherlands	Third INSPIRE Marine Pilot meeting	J. Kaitaranta
7-9 September 2015 Ispra, Italy	EU/MSFD Descriptor 1 Workshop	L. Avellan
14-18 September 2015 Stralsund, Germany	Fourth International Conference "Progress in Marine Conservation in Europe (PMCE 2015)"	U. Zweifel, D. Boedeker (S&C WG Vice-Co-Chair)
18 September 2015 Paris, France	Informal meeting on cooperation between OSPAR and Barcelona RSC regarding Regional Action Plans on Marine Litter	M. Stankiewicz, M. Ruiz
21-22 September 2015 Oslo, Norway	First Meeting of the Arctic Council's Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation	M. Stankiewicz
22 September 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	ICES Marine Science Communicators' Networking meeting	J. Laurila
29-30 September 2015 Ispra, Italy	Workshop on the revision of the Commission Decision on MSFD Descriptor 5	V. Fleming-Lehtinen
30 September 2015 Brussels, Belgium	Expert Roundtable of the Baltic Sea Group (inter-group of the European Parliament)	J. Laurila
5-6 October 2015 Brussels, Belgium	EU MSFD 14th Meeting of the Working Group on Good Environmental Status (WG GES)	U. Zweifel
12 October 2015 Brussels, Belgium	EU MSFD 12th Meeting of the Working Group on Data, Information and Knowledge Exchange (WG DIKE)	J. Kaitaranta

13-14 October 2015 Tallinn, Estonia	First international Partner Meeting on Baltic Water Peers and Interreg BSR Proposal	P. Kääriä
13-15 October 2015 Lisbon, Portugal	OSPAR meeting on MPAs (ICG-MPA)	J. Borg
20-21 October 2015 Oostend, Belgium	EMODnet Open Conference and Second EMODnet Chemistry Expert Workshop	J. Kaitaranta
20-21 October 2015 Oostend, Belgium	INTERACT 'Knowledge of the Seas' network meeting under the theme Coastal and maritime tourism	J. Laurila
20-22 October 2015 Vladivostok, Russia	NOWPAP MERRAC (Northwest Pacific Action Plan Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre) Oiled Wildlife Response Expert Group Meeting	L. Meski
20-22 October 2015 Istanbul, Turkey	17th Global Meeting of the UNEP Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (GMRS) and Regional Seas Indicators WG	M. Stankiewicz, J. Laurila
22-23 October 2015 Riga, Latvia	Meeting of Natural Resources and Environment Committee of the Baltic Assembly	H. Liiv (HELCOM Chair)
28 October 2015 Warsaw, Poland	Joint meeting on sustainable development agenda (CBSS, EUSBSR, HELCOM, EC)	M. Stankiewicz, J. Laurila
29 October 2015 Warsaw, Poland	Meeting of EUSBSR NC and HALs/PACs	J. Laurila
5 November 2015 Brussels, Belgium	17th Meeting of the EU Marine Strategy Coordination Group (MSCG)	M. Stankiewicz
5-6 November 2015 Stralsund, Germany	Greener Agriculture for a Bluer Baltic Sea (GABBS) Conference	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, S. Kaasinen
9-10 November 2015 Brussels, Belgium	UNEP/EC Workshop on Regional Ocean Governance	M. Stankiewicz
23-24 November 2015 Cologne, Germany	Conference “Microplastic in the Environment – Sources, Impacts & Solutions”	S. Werner (Germany)
1 December 2015 Helsinki, Finland	Forum “The State and Future of the Gulf of Finland”	H. Liiv (HELCOM Chair), J. Laurila
1-2 December 2015 Brussels, Belgium	BONUS Advisory Board meeting	M. Stankiewicz
7 December 2015 Brussels, Belgium	EU Conference on Maritime Spatial Planning Stakeholder and the Marine Environment	M. Stankiewicz
9-10 December 2015 Rotterdam, Netherlands	OSPAR/the Netherlands Policy Conference "Closing the plastic value chain: measures for reducing micro plastic emissions”	M. Ruiz

15 December 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	BSR - Stakeholder Conference on Pharmaceuticals	D. Frank-Kamenetsky, L. Sonesten (PRESSURE Chair)
16 December 2015 Copenhagen, Denmark	11th Meeting of the EUSBSR PA 'HAZARDS' Steering Group	D. Frank-Kamenetsky