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<b>Document title</b>	Update of information regarding anthropogenic threats to Kurgalskiy Nature Reserve, Leningrad Oblast, Russia
<b>Code</b>	7-2
<b>Category</b>	CMNT
<b>Agenda Item</b>	7 – Any other business
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<b>Submitted by</b>	Coalition Clean Baltic
<b>Reference</b>	<a href="#">Outcome</a> (para 4.133) and <a href="#">document 4-18</a> of HELCOM HOD 49-2015

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## Background

CCB expressed its concerns regarding potential threats of industrial and urban developments in the vicinity of Kurgalsky Peninsula and Nature Reserve, the site of international importance, both listed as HELCOM MPA (#166) and the Ramsar Convention wetland (#690) at HELCOM HOD 49-2015 (see references above). Several Contracting Parties supported CCB's position and concerns, and referred to the need for better transparency in case of planning and implementing development projects that may have environmental impacts in transboundary context, as requested by Article 7 of the [Helsinki Convention](#) and HELCOM Recommendation [17/3](#).

Relevant information that was compiled and presented to HELCOM, as well as forwarded by CCB to Russian authorities in 2015, was mainly related to the observed conflicts between industrial (port activities) and urban developments and nature protection in cases of several MPAs along the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland. However, in meantime yet another potential anthropogenic pressure on those natural amenities has emerged – the proposed route of the Nord Stream II gas pipeline. As contained in the attached information, collected from the project developer itself, one of the considered pipeline routes, if implemented, will cross Kurgalskiy Nature Reserve, thus adding to already existing pressure factors in the area.

## Action requested

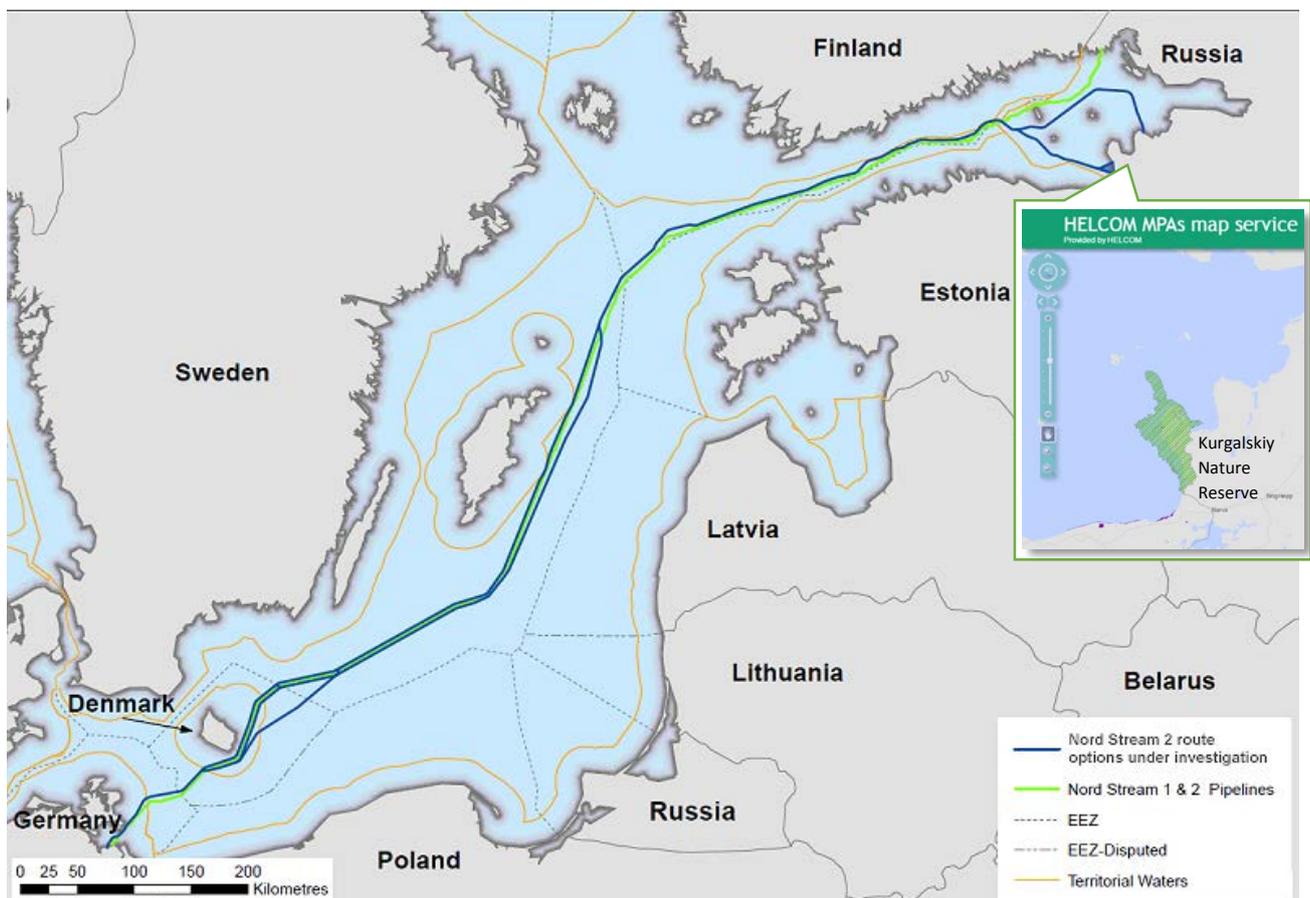
The Meeting is invited to

- take note of the presented information
- urge the Government of the Russian Federation to undertake all appropriate measures to comply with fundamental principles and requirements of the Helsinki Convention with regards to application of precautionary principle (Art.3), environmental impact assessment (Art. 7), nature conservation and protection of biodiversity (Art.15) and access and exchange of information (Art. 16-17);

## Brief Description of the Current Situation with constructing plans of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> strings of Nord Stream gas pipeline (Nord Stream II)

In June 2015 Gazprom, E.ON, Royal Dutch Shell and OMV signed Memorandum of Intent stipulating the cooperation among the companies within the project for constructing the gas transmission infrastructure for direct supply of Russian gas to European consumers. The Memorandum reflects the parties' intent to implement a project for the construction of two gas pipeline strings from the Russian coast to the German coast via the Baltic Sea. The capacity of the new gas pipeline will reach 55 billion m<sup>3</sup> annually. ([Gazprom, 2015](#)).

According [Gazprom Management](#), the start of the marine section in Russia was predetermined as well as a landfall location in Germany. The entry point to the Baltic Sea will be different from that of Nord Stream-1. The Nord Stream-1 submerges from the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland near Primorsk, **while the marine section of the third and fourth strings will begin at Kingisepp District of the Leningrad Oblast near Ust-Luga** (see below the scheme from [Nord Stream II](#)). One of the proposed underwater pipeline start areas is located within the borders of Kurgalskiy Nature Reserve. In late 2015, local environmental activists have observed the Gazprom geodesic investigators in the Kurgalskiy nature reserve.



According to the [Nord Stream's release](#) dated October 2012, the undertaken research had proved that the construction of one or two additional strings of the gas pipeline is technically and environmentally feasible, as well as financially viable. It was decided to conduct further development of this project within the frame of the new company to be created during 2013. The Nord Stream's Project Information Document ([2013](#)) unveiled that a screening of the Russian south coast of the Gulf of Finland for identification of potential pipeline landfall locations was performed based on requirements derived from connecting Russian upstream natural gas transport systems.

Two locations along the south coast of the Russian part of the Gulf of Finland were identified as being potentially suitable for the pipelines landfall site: cape Kolganpya at the Soikinsky peninsula and Kurgalsky peninsula near the Estonian border. The Kolganpya coastline is approximately 5 km long and is deemed potentially suitable for the landfall in its entire length. The Kurgalsky coastline is approximately 10 km long. Any location within these limits was considered potentially feasible with some variations in offshore dredging and onshore routing requirements. It was specifically pointed in the [PID \(2013\)](#) that among other advantages, the Kurgalsky landfall option significantly reduces onshore and offshore pipeline route length.

So, according to the available information one of the potential routes of the planned gas pipeline may go through the territory of Kurgalsky Nature Preserve, the unique natural object, HELCOM MPA and Ramsar wetland of international importance. The alternative option of laying the pipeline with a big probability will also touch another protected area of regional (Leningrad Oblast) importance, the Kotelsky Nature Preserve.

Gas pipeline construction will inevitably lead to the destruction of the unique natural complexes including places of habitat of a big number of rare and endangered species that will represent the violation of both national legislation as well the norms of international law. One of such cases is the grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*), the [CMS species](#). According the [HELCOM](#)'s assessment of national seal management plans, half of its Baltic population is inhabiting areas around the Kurgalsky peninsula. Information about other natural objects that would be disturbed in case of choosing this route was earlier provided by CCB to HELCOM.

In this respect, Nord Stream's statements regarding environmental acceptance of construction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> strings of the Nord Stream II route do not reflect the real picture and actual environmental impacts. Many Baltic environmental NGOs had informed the Nord Stream about our concerns, however our arguments were not taken into account so far. For this reason, we would like to raise attention of HELCOM Contracting Parties to these issues and undertake relevant actions to prevent damage to the Baltic marine environment.