



Document title	Observer status application by EUMEPS
Code	7-2
Category	DEC
Agenda Item	7 - Accounts 2017–2018, budget 2019–2020 and other institutional and organisational matters of the Commission
Submission date	12.2.2020
Submitted by	Executive Secretary
Reference	

Background

The HELCOM Secretariat has received an application for observer status to HELCOM from the association for European Manufacturers of Expanded Polystyrene (EUMEPS).

In accordance with Rules 2.1-2.3 of the “Guidelines on granting observer status to inter-governmental organisations and non-governmental international organisations to the Helsinki Commission”, the Executive Secretary has forwarded the application (attachment) to the Contracting Parties on 4 June 2019 for information and possible comments by email. No comments were received from the Contracting Parties to the application or observer status to HELCOM.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the application by EUMEPS and decide as appropriate.



The association for European Manufacturers of Expanded Polystyrene (EUMEPS) is the voice of the Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) industry.

Our members are **23 National Associations of Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) in Europe, including National Associations in 6 of the Helsinki Commission countries: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.**

The National Associations represent local EPS converters, raw material suppliers, additive suppliers, EPS recyclers, and machinery provider companies.

Altogether our membership represents approximately 1.000 companies, most of them small and medium sized companies (SMEs), which employ around 60.000 people in Europe.

EUMEPS activities focus on two main market segments: Construction and Power Parts, including packaging and shape moulded parts.

Together with our members we have joined forces to reach the ambitious European **recycling targets** by 2025. Published in 2018, the [EUMEPS Pledge](#) is a step towards this goal, demonstrating our ambition and commitment to accelerating our current recycling programme.

EUMEPS is member of the [Circular Plastics Alliance](#) launched with the support of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Vice-President Jyrki Katainen in December 2018.

EUMEPS and marine litter

EUMEPS acknowledges that marine litter is a significant global challenge and that any waste entering our rivers and oceans is unacceptable.

EUMEPS welcomes all effective and proportionate initiatives aimed at preventing marine litter, and believes that to make progress it is crucial to join forces in order to stop waste of any kind, including plastic waste, from being littered into the marine environment.

We strongly believe that the priority should be to improve waste management practices and raise awareness on the importance of changing irresponsible behaviours.

EUMEPS and its National Associations have engaged in:

- [Operation Clean Sweep®](#) initiative which promotes proper pellet containment along the entire plastic value chain.

To date, many large multinational plastics producers, covering the majority of Europe's production and facilities, have signed the Operation Clean Sweep® pledge or implemented similar programmes. **EUMEPS is one of the 14 associations in Europe** addressing pellet loss with dedicated initiatives.

- OSPAR Action 49- [Oceanwise project](#) a three-year project (January 2018-December 2020) design to develop long-term measures to reduce the impact of Expanded Polystyrene in the North-East Atlantic Ocean.

The EUMEPS Secretariat and its National Associations have engaged in the mapping of the European industry and its applications, as well as participated in the stakeholders' events in March 2019 in Lisbon (Portugal), Vigo (Spain) and London (UK), and in May 2019 in Dublin (Ireland).

- HELCOM- The EUMEPS Secretariat and its National Associations engaged in the [Survey of polystyrene foams \(EPS and XPS\) in the Baltic Sea](#) published in February 2019.
- National awareness raising actions to remove litter from the beaches in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Spain...

HELCOM Observer Status

EUMEPS would like to engage with those institutions aiming at combating efficiently marine litter, including plastic waste, and kindly asks to become HELCOM observer to participate both in short-term and long-term actions to:

- Share knowledge on the material to improve current monitoring techniques.
- Share Best Practices on Expanded Polystyrene recycling activities in Europe.
- Engage in education and outreach activities about Expanded Polystyrene.
- Engage in awareness raising actions, including removal actions in beaches.