

**Statement by the German Chairmanship of HELCOM on behalf of the  
European Union and the Contracting Parties to HELCOM that are Member  
States of the European Union**

The European Union and the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention, HELCOM) that are Member States of the European Union are deeply troubled by and unequivocally condemn the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, a fellow Contracting Party to HELCOM.

This unprovoked and unwarranted use of military force against a sovereign state constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of international law. It is, moreover, inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Helsinki Convention, the preamble of which welcomes “the improved opportunities for closer cooperation which have been opened by the recent political developments in Europe and on the basis of peaceful cooperation and mutual understanding”, explicitly recalling also the pertinent provisions of the 1975 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

The HELCOM Contracting Parties that are Member States of the European Union and the European Union also note and condemn the fact that the Russian Federation is using the territory of Belarus as a partial staging ground for its military operations against Ukraine and that this breach of international law on the part of the Russian Federation is therefore being carried out against one observer state to our organization – Ukraine – from the territory of and with the complicity of the other observer state – Belarus.

In light of these developments, and in line with their respective positions with regard to relations with the Russian Federation against the background of the Russian Federation’s ongoing violation of international law, the Contracting Parties to HELCOM that are Member States of the European Union have unanimously declared that they are not in a position to attend the 43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM 43-2022), scheduled to take place on 3 and 4 March 2022, which would involve the Russian Federation as a Contracting

Party to HELCOM. The European Union as a Contracting Party to HELCOM will also not participate in this meeting.

Germany, as the Contracting Party currently holding the chairmanship of HELCOM, therefore sees no other option but to postpone the HELCOM 43-2022 meeting until further notice. The European Union and the Contracting Parties to HELCOM that are Member States of the European Union will review options with regard to overall HELCOM operations in the current circumstances and will communicate their position in due course.

Dessau, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022



Dr. Lilian Busse

Chair, Helsinki Commission