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Background

The draft Guidelines on transboundary consultations, public participation and co-operation calls for engaging and cooperating with other pan-Baltic organizations on a continuous basis. More specifically it says that “Cooperation with industrial and other interests’ sectors is a prerequisite of proper and successful MSP. Their stakeholders/representatives may become increasingly involved in transboundary as well as pan-Baltic MSP processes in future, through active co-operation at national and pan-Baltic level. Furthermore they may also be represented within expert groups.” The Guidelines list a number of recommendations how such cooperation can be taken forward by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

Currently over 50 Intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations have observer status to HELCOM. When applying for observer status, an organization must show that it can contribute to matters dealt with by HELCOM, that it has a membership in a wide number of the Baltic Coastal States and an organized internal structure. [“Guidelines on granting observer status to intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations to the Helsinki Commission”](#) are followed when applying and deciding on observership.

Being Observer in HELCOM means access to information and involvement: official correspondence related to both meetings in HELCOM and intersessional work by the HELCOM working groups is also sent to the Observers. Observers are given access to the meeting documents (note: all documents are public after the meetings have been held), may submit their documents (information, proposals) for consideration by the Contracting Parties as well as intervene in the meetings. Only Contracting Parties have the right to vote though.

Observers choose themselves HELCOM topics of their specific interests they wish to follow.

HELCOM Observers greatly contribute to the work towards achieving the goals of the Helsinki Convention. Beyond the obvious benefit of HELCOM work and its decision-making gaining transparency, the organized and formalized cooperation with other organizations/governments, and stakeholder interaction in general, has the advantage that the organizations provide structured and official input on a matter in HELCOM meetings on behalf of their constituency.

The Network of HELCOM Observers represents stakeholders that could in principle be engaged in considering issues related to the transboundary/pan-Baltic MSP. It is yet to be explored which specific and real-life issues would be of mutual interest and how closer and structured cooperation could be initiated and maintained in the framework of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information on HELCOM Observers and use the information as appropriate.

HELCOM Observers

Government of Belarus, Government of Ukraine, ASCOBANS, Baltic 21, Baltic Pilotage Authorities Commission, Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Black Sea Commission, Bonn Agreement, European Network of Freshwater Research Organizations (EurAqua), The Great Lakes Commission, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, International Maritime Organization, Paris and Oslo Commissions, United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP/AEWA, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, World Meteorological Organization, Baltic Farmers' Forum

Environment, Baltic Operational Oceanographic System, Baltic Ports Organisation, Baltic Sea Forum, BirdLife International, John Nurminen Foundation, BONUS Baltic Organizations' Network for Funding Science (BONUS EEIG), Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC), European Chemical Industry Council, Coalition Clean Baltic, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe - Baltic Sea Commission, European Boating Association, European Chlor-Alkali Industry, European Community Shipowners' Association, Cruise Lines International Association Europe, Interferry, European Dredging Association, the Federation of European



Aquaculture Producers (FEAP), Fertilizers Europe, European Sea Ports Organisation, The Coastal and Marine Union, European Federation of National Associations of Water and Waste water Services, Federation of European Private Port Operators, Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe, International Association of Oil and Gas Producers, International Chamber of Shipping, International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions, Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation (KIMO International), Nordic Hunters' Cooperation, Oceana, Sea Alarm Foundation, Union of the Baltic Cities, World Wide Fund for Nature, [INTERTANKO, PlasticsEurope, Marine Stewardship Council* applications to be considered by HELCOM 37-2016.]

List of active* Observers currently involved in HELCOM working groups

*Attending meetings during the last three years/requesting to be informed via correspondence

HELCOM GEAR

Group on the implementation of the ecosystem approach

Works on region-wide co-operation on all elements of national marine strategies, building both on national activities based on a legal framework and HELCOM's work as well as commonly agreed measures, with the view to facilitate adaptive management. The also Group serves as a regional instrument for the national work of the HELCOM EU Contracting States in implementing the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. National members are from the environmental ministries and agencies and DG ENV.

from HELCOM Observers:

Baltic Sea Advisory Council, Nordic Hunters' Cooperation,

BirdLife International, Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), European Union for Coastal Conservation, John Nurminen Foundation, Oceana, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

European Network of Freshwater Research Organizations (EurAqua), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES),

Local Authorities International Environmental Organization (KIMO International), Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

HELCOM STATE&CONSERVATION and its expert groups

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation

Works with monitoring and assessment as well as issues related to nature conservation and biodiversity protection. National members are from environmental ministries, agencies and institutes and European Commission Joint Research Center (JRC).

from HELCOM Observers:

European Network of Freshwater Research Organizations (EurAqua), ICES,

Nordic Hunters Alliance,

KIMO International, Oceana, WWF

HELCOM MARITIME and its expert groups

Works to prevent any pollution from ships, including both deliberate operational discharges as well as accidental pollution. The group works closely together with the International Maritime Organization (IMO). National members are from maritime administrations and DG MOVE, DG ENV and European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

from HELCOM Observers:

International Maritime Organization (IMO), Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), OSPAR Commission,

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), European Boating Association (EBA), European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA), Interferry, International Chamber of Shipping (ICS),

European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO), Baltic Ports Organization (BPO), Feport - Federation of European Port Operators, Baltic Pilotage Authorities Commission (BPAC),

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), Baltic Sea Forum (BSF), KIMO International, European Network of Freshwater Research Organizations (EurAqua),

Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), Coastal and Marine Union (EUCC), WWF

HELCOM RESPONSE and its expert groups

Works to ensure efficient international response to pollution accidents and aerial surveillance of illegal polluting activities at sea. National members are from navies/coastguards/maritime administration and DG ECHO/EMSA.

from HELCOM Observers:

OSPAR, OSPAR/Bonn Agreement,

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC),

European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO), European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA),

European Network of Freshwater Research Organizations (EurAqua),

Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), KIMO International, Sea Alarm, WWF

HELCOM FISH and its expert groups

Group on ecosystem-based sustainable fisheries

Works to recognize the interactions between fisheries and environmental conservation objectives with the view to contribute to achieving the objectives of fisheries and environment policies simultaneously. National members are from ministries responsible for fisheries and of the environment and DG MARE.

from HELCOM Observers:

Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC), Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP), Nordic Hunters' Alliance,

EurAqua, ICES, Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), John Nurminen Foundation, Oceana, WWF

HELCOM PRESSURE and its expert groups

Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea catchment area

Provides technical basis to the work on inputs of nutrients and hazardous substances from both diffuse and point sources on land, as well as works on issues of marine litter and underwater noise. National members are from environmental ministries, agencies and institutes.

from HELCOM Observers:

Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), WWF, John Nurminen Foundation, KIMO International)

Baltic Farmers Forum on Environment (BFFE),

European Network of Freshwater Research Organizations (EurAqua), Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC),

HELCOM AGRI

Groups on sustainable agricultural practices

National members are from ministries responsible for agriculture and of the environment and EC.

from HELCOM Observers:

Baltic Farmers Forum on Environment (BFFE),

Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), EurAqua,

HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG

from HELCOM Observers:

BirdLife International, Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), The Coastal and Marine Union (EUCC), WWF

European Network of Freshwater Research Organizations (EurAqua), ICES.