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<b>Document title</b>	Matters arising from other HELCOM groups
<b>Code</b>	2-1
<b>Category</b>	INF
<b>Agenda Item</b>	2 – Matters arising from other HELCOM groups and VASAB work
<b>Submission date</b>	28.10.2021
<b>Submitted by</b>	HELCOM Secretariat
<b>Reference</b>	

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## Background

The document contains extracts from relevant HELCOM meetings held since HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021:

- [Outcome](#) of the 60th meeting of Heads of Delegation (HOD 60-2021), online, 3-4 June 2021;
- [Outcome](#) of the Intersessional meeting of the Heads of Delegation (HOD 60A-2021)1, online, 8-9 September 2021;
- [Outcome](#) of the HELCOM MetDev Workshop on Spatial Pressure and Impact Assessment (HELCOM MetDev SPIA WS 1-2021), online, 26-27 August 2021;
- [Outcome](#) of the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 13-2021);
- [Outcome](#) of the Intersessional Meeting of the Heads of Delegation (HOD 60B-2021), Lübeck, Germany, 19 October 2021;
- [List of the Decisions](#) of the Ministerial Meeting of the Helsinki Commission 2021, Lübeck, Germany, 20 October 2021.

The documents from these meetings are publicly available on the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#).

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information on the matters arising from other HELCOM Groups.

## Matters arising from other HELCOM groups

### Outcomes of the HELCOM events relevant to the work of the Working Group

HOD 60-2021

#### Agenda Item 2 German Chairmanship of HELCOM

- 2.1 The Meeting recalled the decision by Germany to have a Vice-Chair from each the two German federal states bordering the Baltic Sea, Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, which is related to the particular structure of Germany as a federal state, due to which the competency for marine environmental protection was divided between the federal level and the federal states.
- 2.2 The Meeting welcomed Mr. Andreas Röpke, Ministry for Agriculture and Environment (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), as the Vice-Chair of HELCOM from 1 July 2021 onward and took note of the introductory word by Mr. Röpke, noting in particular his long involvement in HELCOM work.
- 2.5 The Meeting approved the organization of a HELCOM Workshop on Blue Carbon in the Baltic Sea region on 17-18 November 2021 (one and a half day) in cooperation with Germany (document 2-1).
- 2.6 The Meeting approved in principle the organization of an online HELCOM Stakeholder Conference on climate change in the Baltic Sea region in cooperation with Baltic Earth and Germany, tentatively scheduled for week 10 in March 2022 (document 2-2).
- 2.7 The Meeting noted that the Workshop on Blue Carbon will specifically focus on mitigation measures related to the potential of the Baltic Sea for carbon sequestration while the Stakeholder Conference will address broader issues related to climate change, including the presentation of the joint HELCOM/Baltic Earth Climate Change Factsheets.
- 2.8 The Meeting further noted that the Stakeholder Conference should also focus on the implementation of the relevant actions contained in the updated BSAP that are related to climate change.

#### Agenda Item 4 Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

- 4.2 The Meeting noted that there are still ongoing national consultations by some Contracting Parties and reiterated that the final adoption of the BSAP will take place at the Ministerial Meeting. Furthermore, the Meeting noted a general study reservation by Russia on fisheries related actions.

#### BSAP Actions

- 4.7 The Meeting discussed the actions in document 4-1 Att.1, and approved the formulation and target years of the actions as indicated in the excel attachment to the outcome (Column "Action approved by HOD 60-2021", presented in dark green). For a number of actions approved at the meeting, amendments to the formulation or target year(s) were introduced (Column Action approved by HOD 60-2021, pending review, presented in light green). The Meeting agreed that for these actions Contracting Parties have the possibility to review the proposed changes, indicated by red text and invited Contracting Parties to provide their positions **by 11 June 2021** with the aim of discussing any remaining open issues for these actions at DG BSAP 7-2021 on 15 June 2021.
- 4.8 The Meeting clarified that actions, pending clarification by Contracting Parties as reflected in paragraph 4.5 above, are to be considered approved once the reservations have been lifted and agreed that any remaining open issues are to be considered in DG BSAP 7-2021 and submitted for approval at HOD 60A-2021.
- 4.9 The Meeting agreed to move action SN41 from the operative section of the updated BSAP and instead use the text of the action in the introduction of the Sea-based activities segment, utilising as appropriate also the corresponding supporting information contained in document 4-2-Rev.1. The Meeting

invited the Secretariat to draft a proposal for the text to be submitted for review and consideration by DG BSAP 7-2021 on 15 June 2021, and approval by HOD 60A-2021.

4.19 The Meeting agreed that the remaining open issues will be further discussed at DG BSAP 7-2021 on 15 June 2021.

## **Agenda Item 5 Matters arising from the HELCOM Groups**

### *HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group*

5.48 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the 22nd Meeting of the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021), held online on 20-21 April 2021 (document 5-6) and approved that HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 23-2021 will be held on 16-17 November 2021.

5.49 The Meeting supported cooperation with the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina on underwater heritage in MPS with the view to develop a regional guideline.

5.50 The Meeting endorsed the draft Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 for adoption at the 2021 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting (document 5-8).

5.51 The Meeting approved the prolongation of the mandate for HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG for the next 9 years, until 2030, in line with the timespan of the new Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 (document 5-7). The Meeting noted that 85th meeting of the VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region (CSPD/BSR) agreed on the prolongation for the MSP WG on 6 May 2021.

## **Agenda Item 6 HELCOM institutional and organisational matters**

6.2 The Meeting considered the additional information to the application for observer status to HELCOM by the Nordic Boat Council (NBC) (document 6-2) and granted observer status to the NBC, in accordance with the pronouncement by HELCOM 42-2021 to defer the decision on granting observer status to the NBC to HOD 60-2021.

6.3 The Meeting took note of the comment by Russia that an NGO observer review should be conducted every five years in order to evaluate the compliance and the input of observers with the HELCOM Observer Guidelines.

6.4 The Meeting considered the proposal by Russia to amend Rule 6 “Submission of Documents for Meetings of the Commission” of the Rules of Procedure of the Helsinki Commission (document 6-3), suggesting to add a requirement for co-sponsorship by at least one Contracting Party for documents submitted by NGO observers that require further decision and implementation by the Contracting Parties in accordance with the practice followed by other international organizations. Russia pointed out that observers, especially regional non-governmental organizations, contribute to the work of the Organization by drawing attention to the most sensitive and still unresolved issues of environmental protection in the Baltic Sea regions and the restoration of its good ecological status. At the same time, observers provide their knowledge and experience based on their studies and observations, which allow the Contracting Parties to make more informed and balanced decisions. But documents with proposals that require a decision, including amendments to the Convention as well as various Regional Action Plans, should be submitted by observers in co-sponsorship with one or more Contracting Parties, as being carried out by all Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention.

6.5 The Meeting discussed the role of observers in the development of the regional policy framework and, recognizing the valuable contribution of various observer organizations to the HELCOM agenda as well as in the development of concrete regional documents, and agreed that HELCOM provides an appropriate participatory framework.

6.10 The Meeting further agreed to opening access rights to all meeting documents and meeting registrations to all HELCOM Meeting Portal user groups as part of the portal renewal. The Meeting noted

that this change in procedure will be implemented as soon as possible. The Meeting further agreed to take into use a self-managed contact list of HELCOM groups and networks, and also agreed that HELCOM HODs will be responsible for the nominations to the main groups, and that the HODs of the main groups (Gear, Maritime, Pressure, Response, State and Conservation, Agri, Fish and HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG) will be responsible for nominations to sub-groups, expert working groups and networks under the respective main groups. The same procedure would also apply to HELCOM observers. This change in procedure will be used as soon as the new Meeting Portal is operational

#### **Agenda Item 7      Any other business**

7.1            The Meeting took note of the concerns raised by Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB) related to recent large infrastructure projects in the Baltic Sea (document 7-2), namely the D33 offshore oil exploration project (Russia), the artificial island Lynetteholm which is planned off the port of Copenhagen (Denmark), and the deepwater container terminal to be built in Świnoujście (Poland).

7.2            The Meeting noted a comment by Denmark regarding the Lynetteholm project, for which a construction law was adopted by the Danish Parliament on 4 June 2021. In this regard, Denmark stated that an EIA has been conducted, showing that the project does not have significant transboundary environmental consequences, which would have necessitated consultations with HELCOM Contracting Parties in accordance with Article 7 of the Helsinki Convention. The Meeting further noted that Denmark has consulted Sweden throughout the process and that Parties to the Espoo Convention have been provided with a description of the project.

7.3            The Meeting took note of information by Poland that an EIA will be undertaken with regard to the container terminal planned in Świnoujście.

7.5            The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to check their possibility of hosting and propose venues/dates for meetings that have not yet been confirmed.

7.8            The Meeting thanked Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky for his excellent work and dedication during his term as Professional Secretary, which will come to an end on 30 June 2021 and noted that he will continue to work for the Secretariat in his new capacity of Special Advisor as of July 2021.

#### **Agenda Item 8      Next meeting(s)**

8.1            The Meeting recalled that two intersessional HOD meetings will be held in preparation for the 2021 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, namely HOD 60A-2021 on 8-9 September 2021, as an online meeting, and HOD 60B-2021 on 19 October 2020 in Lübeck, Germany in person.

8.2            The Meeting further recalled that HOD 59-2020 endorsed the future mode of HELCOM meetings (HOD 59-2020 document 7-1). In accordance with the plan one physical and one online HOD meeting will be held per year.

8.3            The Meeting decided that the next regular meeting of Heads of Delegation (HOD 61-2021) will be held on 8-9 December 2021 as an online meeting.

8.4            The Meeting agreed to decide on the dates for HOD 62-2022 via correspondence taking into account the German public holiday on 6 June 2022.

8.5            The Meeting decided that HOD 63-2022 is tentatively scheduled for 30 November – 1 December 2022 as an online meeting.

[HOD 60A-2021](#)

#### **Agenda Item 3      Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan**

3.3 The Meeting approved the finalized formulation of actions as presented in the Excel attachment to the Outcome, with the exception of actions SN28 and EN20/EE26. The Meeting approved action HLN07/HLN11 pending the study reservation by Sweden to be clarified by 15 September.

3.6 The Meeting took note of the proposal by Finland to still include the following new action in the updated BSAP: “Cooperate to create and further develop sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea Region in order to implement Recommendation 37/3 also with an objective to enhance nutrient recycling, reduce environmental impacts, enhance innovation and sustainable business opportunities; and to improve policy coherence”. The Meeting invited Finland to provide a rationale for the action in writing and send it to the Secretariat ([susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi](mailto:susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi)) **by 17 September at the latest** to be circulated to the Contracting Parties.

3.18 The Meeting amended and agreed to the finalized BSAP texts as presented in document 3-1-Rev.3.

3.22 The Meeting reviewed, amended, and provisionally approved the additional information for the actions as presented in document 3-4-Rev.2. The Meeting acknowledged that for some of the actions the additional information remain open either due to lack of consensus, because the action text is yet to be approved or because the action text was approved by the Meeting and thus additional time is needed for reviewing the additional information.

3.28 The Meeting recalled that HOD 59-2020 provisionally approved the final draft of the HELCOM Science Agenda, noting that amendments to selected topics may take place in spring 2021 based on ongoing HELCOM processes.

3.29 The Meeting considered the amended chapters for the remaining open topics as well as additional content added to Annex 2 of the Science Agenda (document 3-5), invited the Secretariat to amend the document taking into account the minor changes proposed by Germany and Sweden and approved the complete Science Agenda for submission as a supporting document to the Ministerial Meeting 2021.

#### **Agenda Item 4 Any other business**

4.1 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the XXI International Environmental Forum “Baltic Sea Day” (document 4-1). Russia thanked all participants and informed that the Forum’s outcomes will also be published on the helcom.ru website in mid-September 2021.

4.2 The Meeting noted that the next “Baltic Sea Day 2022” Forum will be held on 22-23 March 2022 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, and took note of the event’s provisional main topics (document 4-1). The Meeting welcomed the invitation by Russia to the HELCOM working groups to provide suggestions for the agenda of the next Baltic Sea Day Forum, such as issues of common interest or reflections that may result from the Ministerial Meeting 2021.

4.3 The Meeting noted that the implementation of the updated HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) could be one of the topics for the Baltic Sea Day 2022.

4.4 The Meeting decided that HOD 62-2022 will be held in Helsinki, Finland, on 14-15 June 2022, if possible as an in-person event.

4.5 The Meeting took note of the statement by the European Union on financing and legislation as included in **Annex 2** to this Outcome.

## HELCOM MetDev SPIA WS 1-2021

**Agenda Item 4      Temporal resolution of the Spatial and impact assessment**

4.2            The Meeting discussed the possibility to introduce seasonality in the assessment and recognised that this would need to be considered across the EC pressure matrix, indicating where there is temporal aspects.

4.3            The Meeting acknowledged the temporal aspect is important in order to ensure that impact is not overrepresented and, ultimately, for the use of the tool for management and measures. The Meeting recommended seasonal distribution, seasonality of the pressure and seasonality of sensitivity of a given EC to a pressure be included. However, the Meeting agreed that it is something that can only be implemented post-HOLAS III. The Meeting recommended that a test case could be trialled, using the responses to the questionnaire as a basis to identify suitable layers for inclusion.

4.4            The Meeting discussed what years to include in the assessment, as using only a six-year period (the period of the assessment) is likely to skew the layers based on the limited amount of data reported under such a short period. The Meeting agreed to use a set baseline and to also indicate changes over time.

**Agenda Item 5      Uncertainty, confidence and validation of the Spatial and impact assessment**

5.1            The Meeting took note of information how uncertainty was considered in the Swedish cumulative impact assessment "SYMPHONY".

5.2            The Meeting took note of the information how the uncertainty was handled in the cumulative impact assessment in HOLAS II assessment.

5.3            The Meeting considered the available options of how the uncertainty considerations could be improved in HOLAS III and welcomed the idea of using Monte Carlo simulation to assess the uncertainty in the sensitivity score values, and possibly broadening the scope of the simulation to included other parts of the assessment.

5.4            The Meeting took note of the idea to use the acceptance process of ecosystem and pressure layers for HOLAS III, as one indication of confidence.

5.8            The Meeting discussed options for how to validate the assessment and recommended to validate the assessment by comparing the results to similar cumulative impact assessment in the region and also to compare the results to different status assessments carried out at EU level or done under other HELCOM work strands.

## HELCOM FISH 13-2021

**Agenda Item 6      HELCOM data interests**

6.7 The Meeting took note of the recommendation from the Baltic Sea Region Maritime Spatial Planning Data Expert Sub-group on common requirements for aggregated fisheries data (document 6-2), as presented by the Secretariat. In this context, the Meeting in particular noted that the HELCOM BLUES project plans to make an advice request to ICES to produce fishing effort maps needed for HOLAS III (cumulative impacts on benthic biotopes and for bycatch indicator).

## HOD 60B-2021

**Agenda Item 2 Preparations for HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2021**

- 2.17 With the open issues resolved, the Meeting approved the draft updated BSAP to be submitted to the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting for adoption as included in document 2-2-Rev.1.
- 2.18 The Meeting considered the remaining open issues in the supporting document “Additional information on the actions in the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan” (document 2-3).
- 2.19 The Meeting resolved the open issues regarding the additional information for action HL17.
- 2.20 The Meeting agreed to change the target year for action S3 to reflect the timeline specified in the revised Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission (BSHC)-HELCOM Harmonized Hydrographic Re-Survey Scheme, which is different for individual Contracting Parties.
- 2.21 The Meeting approved the supporting document “Additional information on the actions in the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan” for submission to the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2021 for information, as contained in document 2-3-Rev.1.

**Agenda Item 3 Any other business**

- 3.1 The Meeting took note that the HELCOM Explorer will be updated after the adoption of the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan.
- 3.2 The Meeting agreed to include in the HELCOM Explorer the Recommendation 42-43/3 on Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, once adopted.
- 3.3 The Meeting recalled that HELCOM 42-2021 had decided to arrange the next meeting of the Commission (HELCOM 43-2022) on 16-17 March 2022. However, noting that these dates overlap with the dates for BBNJ IGC-4, the Meeting decided to reschedule HELCOM 43-2022 to take place on 3-4 March 2022.

## Ministerial Meeting 2021

**Agenda Item 5 Adoption of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the Ministerial Statement**

- 5.1 The Commission adopted the updated HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.
- 5.2 As noted in the preamble of the updated BSAP, the following documents are considered adopted along with the updated BSAP:
- HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/2 on Amendments to Part II Annex III “Criteria and Measures Concerning the Prevention of Pollution from Land-Based Sources” of the 1992 Helsinki Convention
  - HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/3 on Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML)
  - Regional Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2021-2030
  - Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy
  - Guidelines for Sea-Based Measures to Manage Internal Nutrient Reserves in the Baltic Sea Region
  - HELCOM Science Agenda
- 5.3 The Commission adopted the Ministerial Statement.