



Outcome of the Meeting of the Heads of Delegation

(HOD 52B-2017)

Introduction

0.1 The Meeting of the Heads of Delegation was held online on 13 November 2017 to prepare for the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in March 2018.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by participants from all Contracting Parties except for Lithuania and Russia (regrets received), as well as by observers from Baltic Farmers' Forum on Environment (BFFE), CPMR Baltic Sea Commission and WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Helsinki Commission, Ms. Marianne Wenning.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Documents: 1-1, 1-2

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2 Further development of the draft Ministerial Meeting outcome

Documents: 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 2-7, 2-8, 2-8-Rev, 2-9

The Meeting thanked the leads of the four themes, Finland, EU, the Secretariat and Sweden, respectively, for preparing the text proposals for the Ministerial outcome and the remaining Contracting Parties for their contributions and comments provided in the intersessional drafting teams.

The Chair noted the good progress made in drafting the text proposals and recalled that the aim is to have a full draft of the Ministerial outcome ready for HOD 53-2017 on 12-13 December.

Theme 1 – Reflecting the current state, pressures and impacts on the Baltic Sea, led by Finland

2.1 The Meeting took note of the second version of the draft text for theme 1 by lead country Finland, prepared taking into account comments from Denmark and EU (document 2-2).

2.2 The Meeting took note of the comments to the draft text for theme 1 and noted that:

- Finland will check the statement that the fraction of area affected by eutrophication has increased since 2010 i.e. in comparison to the previous HELCOM eutrophication assessment
- clarification by Finland that certain proposals for amendments put forward in the drafting group seemed more suitable for the next stage of preparations when negotiations would start and have not been incorporated into the current proposal for the sake of clarify of the text
- the issue of social and economic considerations in identification of new measures is supported by Denmark and Poland and will be covered in theme 3.

- Germany underlined the character of HELCOM being a Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area to be kept in mind when discussing new issues such as blue growth.

Theme 2 – Renewing the Baltic Sea Action Plan beyond 2021 and towards 2030, led by EU

2.3 The Meeting took note of the draft text for theme 2 led by EU, prepared taking into account comments provided by Finland, Germany, Denmark and the Secretariat (document 2-7).

2.4 The Meeting considered the draft text and provided the following comments:

- make sure that the mandate on update of BSAP is not interpreted as a general postponement of achieving good environmental status 2021;
- high-light major HELCOM agreements and how far HELCOM has come in the implementation;
- reflect that current CART will no longer be sufficient to reach GES by 2021 (with focus needed in the future on nutrient input ceilings based on MAI);
- give biodiversity a clearer representation under this Theme
- mention cooperation aspects with e.g. OSPAR (here or under Theme 4)
- in terms of indicator and assessment approaches; consider overlap with theme 3 and to address these under a single theme;
- keep focus to protection of the Baltic Sea and limit reference to global frameworks e.g. in relation to climate change, for which the HELCOM thematic assessment “Climate change in the Baltic Sea area” (BSEP No. 137, 2013) exists.

2.5 The Meeting took note that Germany will provide proposals related to hazardous substances: to clearly divide between microplastics and micropollutants, and to write a new paragraph on hazardous substances, linked to micropollutants.

2.6 The Meeting took note of the hesitation by Denmark regarding the proposed wording related to quantitative reduction targets and threshold values for seabed and, marine litter, as in the view of Denmark threshold values should be established at the EU level. Furthermore, at present Denmark cannot support establishment of quantitative reduction targets until threshold values have been decided upon.

2.7 The Meeting took note of the view by WWF to discuss in the Ministerial preparations the commitment of the countries to reach CART and ensure transparency when setting new deadlines for actions.

2.8 The Meeting took note of the proposal for the update of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan by Executive Secretary and EU (document 2-3) and that the aim is to finalize and agree on the document at HOD 53-2017 for adoption at HELCOM 39-2018 to be held on 5 March 2018. The Meeting took note of the comment by Germany that the proposed document provides for a good background for further consideration, however, that the proposed document itself does not constitute for a mandate for the BSAP update. In addition to the issues raised in the document, the Meeting proposed to reflect on the following issues:

- the regularly updated core indicators could also be the basis when drafting measures;
- measures and actions taken at the regional level;
- make sure that the update is in line with SDGs;
- to reflect in the document that decision on new actions should also utilize the outcome of social and economic analysis currently undertaken in the HOLAS II context, while acknowledging that reaching a final agreement on measures is a political process;

- 2.9 The Meeting proposed that a Task Force for the update of the BSAP should be established involving HODs and a project plan for background issues could to be developed in addition to support the work of the task force.
- 2.10 The Meeting considered a suitable timetable for the updating of the Baltic Sea Action Plan and suggested the update would start in 2018 and be finalized with adoption by mid-2021 at the latest.
- 2.11 The Meeting took note of the proposed paragraphs for the Ministerial outcome regarding developing a regional nutrient recycling strategy and background information to support the development prepared by Finland (document 2-8). The Meeting noted that the background document has been prepared taking into account comments from the previous online meeting of HODs, Agri group online consultation meetings, PRESSURE 7-2017 and written comments by Sweden and BFFE.
- 2.12 The Meeting took note that AGRI 5-2017 discussed the proposed text and suggested amendments (document 2-8-rev) acknowledging that the suggested text is an opinion of the AGRI group and does not reflect coordinate positions of CPs.
- 2.13 The Meeting considered the proposed text and took note of the proposal by Germany that HELCOM principles such as the prevention of nutrients entering into the Baltic Sea and source control should be added to the first paragraph of the text, and also risk assessment should be included in the text utilizing the outcome of the HELCOM-EUBSR workshop on internal nutrient reserves on 28-29 November.
- 2.14 The Meeting took note of the German proposal to reflect on the issue of prevention of hazardous substances from sewage sludge entering into the environment in the background information on nutrient recycling.
- 2.15 The meeting took note of the comment by BFFE that the following topics should be added to the Ministerial outcome text regarding the strategy: the importance of soil and fertilizer management, the availability of nutrients to the plants, the timing of fertilization and concern for persistent organic pollutants from sewage sludge.
- 2.16 The Meeting clarified that the background document is intended as background information to support the process of drafting the text of the Ministerial Declaration to be agreed at the level of the Heads of Delegation.
- 2.17 The Meeting took note of the draft report on implementation of HELCOM agreements in comparison of the HOLAS II (document 2-1) prepared by the Secretariat as a background document for the Ministerial Meeting.
- 2.18 The Meeting took note that the colour coding used to present the accomplishment of actions currently adheres to the follow-up of the BSAP used at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2013.
- 2.19 The Meeting took note of the view by Germany that also national initiatives and other legislations related to the marine environment should have been included in the report to reflect a more comprehensive view of measures taken, also in support of HELCOM recommendations. The Meeting agreed to clarify in the introduction that the report is limited to HELCOM agreements since 2007 while many other national, EU and international initiatives and legislation contribute to improving the state of the Baltic Sea, too.
- 2.20 The Meeting took note that WWF is preparing a 'score card' on the implementation of the action plan based on the HELCOM Explorer and the view that the user friendliness of the HELCOM explorer could be improved. The Meeting noted that the content of the HELCOM Explorer will be updated based on complementary national reporting and ongoing clarification of implementation of actions however that the user interface will not be updated at this time.
- 2.21 The Meeting took note that Finland, Latvia, Poland and Sweden have provided their view on the proposed interpretation of the fisheries related actions in the BSAP so far, and that complementary information on implementation of nation actions are still expected from Germany and Lithuania, and invited the remaining countries to do so **by 17 November** at the latest. Comments to the draft report are also to be submitted **by 16 November** (ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi).

Theme 3 – Enhancing economic and social analysis and innovation to implement ecosystem approach, led by Secretariat

2.22 The Meeting took note of the draft text for theme 3 (document 2-6) prepared by the Secretariat taking into account comments provided by Finland, Sweden and Germany as well as input by the HELCOM workshop on social and economic analysis, held on 1 November.

2.23 The Meeting considered the proposed text and provided the following comments:

- Proposal to move section reflecting MPAs and EBSA to theme 2 to form paragraphs related to biodiversity;
- The opening paragraphs overlap with the existing similar text in other themes;
- Consider including reflection on that a healthy Baltic Sea will not be achieved by 2021

2.24 The Meeting took note that Denmark cannot support the current phrasing to include information on EBSAs in Maritime Spatial Planning.

2.25 The Meeting took note of the clarification by Secretariat on limitation of the proposed work on social and economic analysis in supporting the identification of measures.

Theme 4 – Implementing SDGs and regional ocean governance, led by Sweden

2.26 The Meeting took note of the second draft for theme 4 (document 2-9) prepared by Sweden, taking into account comments provided by the Contracting Parties such as Germany. Sweden informed that the intention is that the draft will be used to prepare a condensed textual proposal for theme 4 focusing more on the HELCOM role and providing a more action oriented text.

2.27 The Meeting considered the proposed text and provided the following comments:

- While addressing global agreements; keep focus on the regional dimension.
- Maintain a forward looking approach, including for the UN governance process, and minimize reference to past events
- Make reference to the HELCOM document on alignment between HELCOM agreements and SDGs

2.28 The Meeting took note of the information by the Secretariat that based on the agreement in the previous online meeting of HODs, HELCOM-VASAB MSP 17-2017 (7-8 November 2017, Warsaw, Poland) suggested the input for further consideration in the preparation of the Ministerial outcome. The proposed input is to be consulted by the members of the group nationally and the Secretariat is to be informed **by 15 November 2017** accordingly. The input is as follows:

“Recognize the Baltic Sea region as a forerunner in regional cooperation on MSP, involving HELCOM and VASAB and facilitated by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, and the important contribution MSP can make to fulfil the Agenda 2030, in particular SDG 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

Re-iterate the common goal of all Baltic Sea countries to, by 2020, establish maritime spatial plans that are coherent across borders and apply ecosystem approach, and in this regard, stress the importance to utilize/follow the agreed principles and guidelines in the planning practice and develop them further as needed”

Next steps

2.29 The Chair concluded the next step is to merge the proposed text for themes 1, 2 and 3 as well as condense the material for theme 4 into a text proposal, and finalize a full draft of the Ministerial outcome to be submitted to HOD 53-2017.

2.30 The Meeting noted that EU will take up this task with the assistance of the Secretariat and invited Contracting Parties and Observers to provide any additional input to the existing drafts under the four themes **by 15 November 2017** end of business. The Meeting also noted that the intention is to submit the full draft to the HOD meeting by 28 November 2017. Chair recalled that at this stage the aim is to focus on substantial issues, and not on minor drafting improvements.

2.31 The Meeting clarified that the aim is to have a concise Ministerial outcome and as many issues as possible agreed at HOD 53-2017. The process after the HOD 53-2017 will very much depend on the status of the agreement.

2.32 The Meeting took note of the proposal of Germany to have a task force including CPs that will further consider the draft declaration text, to have a clear picture for the HoDs in December, and given that not all CPs participated in the process, so far.

Supporting information

2.33 The Meeting took note of the supporting information for preparing the Ministerial outcome regarding climate change (document 2-4), marine litter and underwater noise (documents 2-5) as well as the information on the HELCOM-BONUS projects workshop held on 6 November 2017, in Stockholm, Sweden.

Agenda Item 3 OSPAR participation in the Ministerial Meeting

Documents:

3.1 The Meeting took note of the information that Executive Secretaries and Chairs of HELCOM and OSPAR met online to discuss a possible way forward regarding potential OSPAR contribution to the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting and based on its outcome it is recommended that a pragmatic approach is taken due to the time limitations. It was decided that a paragraph on regional coordination would be inserted under Theme 4, with specific references to (non-exhaustive) list of areas of possible coordination for OSPAR and HELCOM. However, this paragraph will not be "negotiated" with OSPAR beforehand.

3.2 The Meeting re-iterated the invitation to OSPAR to provide input and/or make a statement at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting and agreed to share the full draft of the Ministerial outcome with OSPAR to provide context for OSPAR consideration on the issue.

Agenda Item 4 A programme of the Ministerial Meeting

Documents: 4-1

4.1 The Meeting took note of the draft programme for the Ministerial Meeting 2018 prepared by EU (document 4-1).

4.2 The Meeting discussed an approach to the Ministerial debate and agreed to have a debate based on 1-2 questions within the scope of the Ministerial outcome, to be confirmed at HOD 53-2017. In addition, the Contracting Parties will need to be prepared for few issues that might still need to be discussed to reach an agreement.

4.3 The Meeting took note of the planned side-event by WWF and CCB to be held back-to-back with the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting. The side-event will be opened to all participants of the Ministerial Meeting.

Agenda Item 5 Any other business

Documents: 5-1

5.1 The Meeting took note of the information by the Executive Secretary that three new organizations: Race For The Baltic, Waste Free Oceans Foundation and the Baltic Sea Action Group, have applied for Observerships in HELCOM. The applications have been circulated to the Heads of Delegation for comments. No comments to the application by the Race for the Baltic have been received by the suggested deadline of 10 November. Comments to the other two applications are invited by 8 December. HELCOM 39-2018 will make a decision on the observership.

5.2 The Meeting agreed to make a final decision on potential participation of the Race for the Baltic at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting at HELCOM HOD 53-2017

Agenda Item 6 Outcome of the Meeting

Documents: 6-1

6.1 The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of the Meeting as contained in document 6-1. The final Outcome, incorporating the comments by the Meeting, will be prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair and made available in the HELCOM Meeting Portal.

Annex 1 List of participants

*) Head of Delegation

Representing	Name	Organization	Email address	Online/At Secretariat
Chair of HELCOM	Marianne Wenning	European Union	marianne.wenning@me.com	Online
Contracting Parties				
Denmark	Lone Munk Söderberg *)	Ministry of Environment and Food	lomu@mfvm.dk	Online
European Union	Matjaž Malgaj *) Vice-Chair of HELCOM	European Commission, DG Environment	matjaz.malgaj@ec.europa.eu	Online
European Union	Clémentine Leroy	European Commission, DG Environment	clementine.leroy@ec.europa.eu	Online
Estonia	Rene Reisner *)	Ministry of the Environment	rene.reisner@envir.ee	Online
Estonia	Katarina Oganjan	Ministry of the Environment	katarina.oganjana@envir.ee	Online
Estonia	Agni Kaldma	Ministry of the Environment	Agni.kaldma@envir.ee	Online
Finland	Maria Laamanen *)	Ministry of the Environment	maria.laamanen@ym.fi	Online
Germany	Monika Luxem-Fritsch *)	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety	monika.luxem-fritsch@bmub.bund.de	Online
Latvia	Baiba Zasa *)	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development	baiba.zasa@varam.gov.lv	Online
Poland	Joanna Kopczyńska *)	Ministry of Environment	joanna.kopczynska@mos.gov.pl	Online
Sweden	Annika Nilsson *)	Ministry for Environment and Energy	annika.nilsson@regeringskansliet.se	Online
Sweden	Martin Larsson	Ministry for Environment and Energy	martin.h.larsson@regeringskansliet.se	Online
Sweden	Linda Rydell	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	linda.rydell@havochvatten.se	Online
Observers				
BFFE	Liisa Pietola	Baltic Farmers' Forum on Environment	liisa.pietola@mtk.fi	At Secretariat
CPMR	Janne Tamminen	CPMR Baltic Sea Commission	janne.tamminen@uudenmaanliitto.fi	At Secretariat
WWF	Ottilia Thoreson	WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme	ottilia.thoreson@wwf.se	Online
HELCOM Secretariat				
Executive Secretary	Monika Stankiewicz	HELCOM Secretariat	monika.stankiewicz@helcom.fi	At Secretariat
Professional Secretary	Hermann Backer	HELCOM Secretariat	hermanni.backer@helcom.fi	At Secretariat
Professional Secretary	Jannica Haldin	HELCOM Secretariat	jannica.haldin@helcom.fi	Online

Professional Secretary	Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky	HELCOM Secretariat	dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi	At Secretariat
HOLAS II Manager	Ulla Li Zweifel	HELCOM Secretariat	UllaLi.Zweifel@helcom.fi	At Secretariat
Communication Coordinator	Sara Estlander	HELCOM Secretariat	sara.estlander@helcom.fi	Online
Project Manager	Susanna Kaasinen	HELCOM Secretariat	susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi	At Secretariat