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<b>Document title</b>	HELCOM Observer Review 2020
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<b>Category</b>	DEC
<b>Agenda Item</b>	6 - HELCOM institutional and organisational matters
<b>Submission date</b>	03.06.2020
<b>Submitted by</b>	Executive Secretary
<b>Reference</b>	HELCOM Observer Guidelines, Outcome of HELCOM 41-2020 para 7.8-7.10

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*Please note this revised document contains updated statistics reflecting the latest information received from observers, as well as an update of the number of observers in Attachment 2. This document will replace document 6-2.*

## Background

In response to an observer request by the Nordic Boat Council (NBC), HELCOM 41-2020 requested “more information on the connections between the NBC and the European Boating Association (EBA)”. HELCOM 41-2020 agreed to postpone the decision on granting observer status to NBC for HELCOM 42-2021.

Moreover, at HELCOM 41-2020, the Contracting Parties asked the Secretariat “to explore whether a higher number of observers leads to an increased workload to the Secretariat”.

The Secretariat is therefore providing additional information regarding the relationship between the NBC and the EBA and has considered the questions raised by HELCOM-41 regarding the number of observer organizations and conducted a review of its observer organizations with a view to extending their current status as appropriate, in accordance with the [HELCOM observer guidelines](#) (HELCOM 36-2015, Annex 14).

This document also contains, as Attachment 1, the letter and the blank survey form that was sent out to the observers, and as Attachment 2, the list of all current HELCOM observers.

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to agree to maintaining the observer status of observer NGOs as recommended by the Secretariat and to take note of the decision by the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) to renounce its observer status.

The Meeting is further invited to take note of the additional information clarifying the relationship between observer applicant Nordic Boat Council (NBC) and existing observer European Boating Association (EBA)(same document).

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## HELCOM Observer Review 2020

### Background

In response to an observer request from the Nordic Boat Council (NBC), HELCOM 41-2020 asked the Secretariat to provide “more information on the connections between the NBC and the European Boating Association (EBA)”. The EBA is already a HELCOM observer, while the NBC applied for observer status on 27 November 2019. The decision is pending.

In connection with the NBC application, at HELCOM 41-2020, the Contracting Parties asked the Secretariat “to explore whether a higher number of observers leads to an increased workload to the Secretariat, noting also that according to paragraph 5.4 of the Guidelines on granting observer status to intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental international organisations to the Helsinki Commission, observer status can be discontinued if the observer stays inactive, i.e. does not actively attend the HELCOM meetings, does not participate otherwise in the HELCOM work or fails to keep contact with HELCOM, for three consecutive years” (outcome item 7-10).

The Secretariat followed up on the request for more information by examining the relationship between NBC and EBA.

Moreover, the Secretariat considered the more basic question regarding the workload implications of a higher number of observers and conducted a review of its observer organizations with a view to extending their current status as appropriate, in accordance with [HELCOM observer guidelines](#) (HELCOM 36-2015, Annex 14).

As of 19 May 2020, HELCOM has 63 [observers](#), of which two governments (Belarus and Ukraine), 18 intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and 43 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

### Nordic Boat Council

The NBC is not officially affiliated to the EBA and does not pay membership fees to the latter. But since all NBC members are also part of the EBA, the NBC does have a relationship with the EBA, by virtue of the fact that the same organizations are involved in both frameworks. NBC members usually meet on the sidelines of the EBA meetings, and the NBC does function as a *de facto* but unofficial observer to the EBA. The Chair of the NBC is typically participating in EBA meetings in her capacity of representative of her own national organization but not as a representative of the NBC as a whole. The EBA itself considers the NBC as part of “other organisations with which the EBA is involved”.

It should be noted that in a similar situation concerning EuroChlor (observer since HELCOM 15-1994) and the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC, observer since HELCOM 23-2002), with EuroChlor being a CEFIC affiliate, both organizations were granted observers status, although in this case the affiliate was granted observer status before the umbrella organization.

### Observer review

HELCOM carried out a review of its NGO observers between 20 April 2020 and 18 May 2020, comprised of a questionnaire sent out to the organizations and a review of involvement in HELCOM processes, assessing participation in HELCOM Meetings (main groups, expert groups and networks) and attendance of the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference 2020.

The assessment only included the international NGO observers, with country and IGO observers not subject to review as stated in the HELCOM observer guidelines.

## Results

Overall, the majority of NGO observers are actively involved in HELCOM processes, with about two thirds or 60 percent of observers\* having attended a HELCOM Meeting in the past three years, and 21 percent having participated in the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference 2020.

- 39 observers qualify for maintaining their status, either because they have taken part in HELCOM Meetings and/or other processes, have explicitly stated their intention in written to maintain their status, or have been observers since less than three years
- One observer has renounced its observer status: European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC)
- Four observers have not yet provided feedback, and their situation under paragraph 5.4 of the Observer Guidelines is unclear: Baltic Sea Forum (BSF), Fertilizers Europe, Federation of European Private Port Operators (Feport), and International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)

In general, HELCOM observers do not significantly increase the workload of the Secretariat, save for the periodic review and minimal efforts due to managing contacts for invitations to the HELCOM meetings.

Rather, observers do positively contribute to HELCOM work and processes. In addition to the overall high participation in meetings and events as stated above, one observer for instance, Sea Alarm, is currently chairing the Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR), and at least five observers have submitted synopses of actions to be considered for the updated BSAP (during the 2019 call for synopses on potential new BSAP actions).

The observer survey form was returned by 30 organizations, showing that 63 percent of respondents are planning to actively contribute to HELCOM work and processes, and 50 percent indicating considering common/joint activities with HELCOM.

HELCOM observers are also outreach multiplier agents of HELCOM work. In the observer survey, 83 percent of respondents have indicated that they use their observer status for informing their own members and stakeholders about HELCOM work.

*\*) Note that the European Manufacturers of Expanded Polystyrene (EUMEPS) wasn't included in the survey and total tally because only being granted observer status by HELCOM 41-2020. The results are therefore based on a tally of 43 observers, including CEFIC which has renounced its observer status on 12 May 2020.*

## Recommendation for existing observers

In general, the Secretariat echoes the recognition by HELCOM 41-2020 of “the importance of involvement and contribution by observer organizations to the work of HELCOM”, which was further confirmed by the findings of the observer review and survey.

The HELCOM Secretariat therefore recommends maintaining the status of all observers, except for CEFIC that has expressly declined in writing to maintain its status.

In light of possible COVID-19 related work and communication disruptions and due to the very low additional workload, the Secretariat further recommends maintaining the four observers that have not yet provided feedback. HELCOM will reach out to these observers again in the near future to determine whether they wish to retain their status or not.



To  
HELCOM Observers

**Extending HELCOM observer status**

Helsinki, 20 April 2020

Dear HELCOM Observer,

HELCOM is conducting a periodic review of its observer organizations with a view to extending their current status as appropriate, in accordance with [our guidelines on observers](#). Your organization is currently listed as a HELCOM observer in our documentation.

If you wish to extend your observer status, you will need to fill in the attached form and return it to us by latest **Friday, 8 May 2020** (email to [dominik.littfass@helcom.fi](mailto:dominik.littfass@helcom.fi)).

Please also review your contact details as well as the presentation text of your organization currently [featured on the HELCOM website](#) and provide updates if needed.

We would also like to offer you an opportunity to share with us which current or future activities of your organization might be of possible interest to HELCOM, especially on the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) which will feature heavily on our agenda in the months to come.

We are looking forward to continuing cooperation with your organization and do hope that further avenues for collaboration may arise for our common objective of a healthy Baltic Sea.

Best regards,

Rüdiger Stempel  
Executive Secretary



**HELCOM observer form (April 2020)**

Return by latest Friday, 8 May 2020 to [dominik.littfass@helcom.fi](mailto:dominik.littfass@helcom.fi)

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**Contact details**

Official name of organization:	Designated contact person*:
Acronym:	Email (contact person):
Website:	Phone (contact person):
Email (general):	<i>* ) The designated contact person should sign up to the <a href="#">HELCOM Meeting Portal</a> in order to receive invitations and communications from HELCOM.</i>
Phone (general):	
Address:	

Is HELCOM an observer of your organization?

Yes  No

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**Do you wish to maintain your HELCOM observer status?**

Yes  No

If no, why:

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**Main reason(s) for being a HELCOM observer:**

- To actively contribute to HELCOM work and processes
- To plan common activities and projects with HELCOM
- To share your organization's position with HELCOM and its Contracting Parties
- To stay informed on HELCOM activities and Baltic Sea environmental issues
- To forward relevant information to own members and networks
- Other:

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**General areas of interest of your organization**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial and municipal releases | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine litter and underwater noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marine protected areas            | <input type="checkbox"/> Maritime spatial planning          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring and assessment         | <input type="checkbox"/> Response to spills                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Species and biotopes              | <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                            |   |

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**HELCOM Groups (and their meetings) your organization has a particular interest in:**

		Your contact person(s) for this area*
<input type="checkbox"/>	HELCOM Annual Meetings/ Heads of Delegation (HOD)	Name (if different from main contact): Email:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gear Working Group	Name: Email:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maritime Working Group	Name: Email:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pressure Working Group	Name: Email:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Response Working Group	Name: Email:
<input type="checkbox"/>	State and Conservation Working Group	Name: Email:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agri Working Group	Name: Email:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fish Working Group	Name: Email:
<input type="checkbox"/>	HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group	Name: Email:

*\*) The contact person will be sent invitations to attend the indicated Working Group Meetings. The contact person should sign up to the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#) in order to receive invitations and communications from HELCOM.*

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**Did your organization attend any HELCOM meetings or events in the past three years?**

- Yes    No    Not known

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**Is your organization planning to attend any future HELCOM event other than the HELCOM Group meetings indicated in the table above?**

- Yes    No    Maybe

If yes, which one(s):

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**Other contribution to HELCOM work (participation in expert groups, documents, events, projects...):**

In the past three years:

Planned:

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**What activities relevant to HELCOM and the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea did your organization undertake in the past three years? (100-150 words recommended)**

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**What are some future activities of your organization that could be of possible interest to HELCOM? (100-150 words recommended)**

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**What opportunities would you identify as particularly relevant for the [updated Baltic Sea Action Plan](#) (BSAP)? (100-150 words recommended)**

*Thank you for your answers!*

## HELCOM observers as of 19 May 2020

<b>Governments</b>	<b>Status granted</b>
1 Belarus	HC 16/1995
2 Ukraine	HC 17/1996
<b>Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs)</b>	
1 Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (UNEP/AEWA)	HC 24/2003
2 Baltic 21 - An Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region/CBSS	HC 21/2000
3 Baltic Pilotage Authority Commission (BPAC)	HC 32/2011
4 Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)	HC 23/2002
5 Black Sea Commission	HC 33/2012
6 Bonn Agreement	HC 24/2003
7 Great Lakes Commission	HC 26/2005
8 Intergovernmental Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)	HC 18/1997
9 Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO)	HC 10/1989
10 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	HC 6/1985
11 International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	HC 1/1980
12 International Maritime Organization (IMO)	HC 1/1980
13 Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO)	HC 40-2019
14 Oslo and Paris Commissions (OSPAR)	HC 3/1982
15 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE)	HC 1/1980
16 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	HC 1/1980
17 World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO)	HC 1/1980
18 World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	HC 7/1986
<b>International Non-Governmental Organisations</b>	
1 Baltic Farmers Forum on Environment (BFFE)	HC 20/1999
2 Baltic Operational Oceanographic System - BOOS	HC 25/2004
3 Baltic Ports Organization (BPO)	HC 16/1995
4 Baltic Sea Action Group (BSAG)	HC 39-2018
5 Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC)	HC 36-2015
6 Baltic Sea Forum (BSF)	HC 31/2010
7 Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC)	HC 38-2017
8 BirdLife International	HC 16/1995
9 BONUS Baltic Organizations' Network for Funding Science (BONUS EEIG)	HC 29/2008
11 Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB)	HC 12/1991
12 Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) - Baltic Sea Commission	HC 21/2000
13 European Anglers Alliance (EAA)	HC 37-2016
14 EUCC - The Coastal and Marine Union	HC 15/1994
15 European Boating Association (EBA)	HC 24/2003
16 EuroChlor - European Chlor-Alkali Industry	HC 15/1994
17 European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA)	HC 31/2010
18 European Manufacturers of Expanded Polystyrene (EUMEPS)	HC 41/2020
19 Cruise Lines International Association Europe (CLIA)	HC 33/2012
20 European Dredging Association (EuDA)	HC 33/2012
21 European Network of Freshwater Research Organizations (EurAqua)	HC 36-2015
22 European Fertilizer Manufacturers Association (EFMA)/Fertilizers Europe	HC 16/1995
23 European Sea Ports Organization (ESPO)	HC 18/1997
24 European Union of National Associations of Water Suppliers and Waste Water Services (EUREAU)	HC 24/2003
25 Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	HC 36-2015
26 Federation of European Private Port Operators (Feport)	HC 33/2012
27 Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe	HC 31/2010
28 Interferry	HC 36-2015
29 INTERTANKO	HC 37-2016
30 International Association of Oil & Gas Producers (OGP)	HC 23/2002
31 International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)	HC 31/2010
32 International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions (IDUM)	HC 34/2013
33 John Nurminen Foundation (JNF)	HC 36-2015
34 KIMO International (Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation)	HC 30/2009
35 Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE)	HOD 52-2017
36 Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)	HC 37-2016
37 Nordic Hunters' Alliance (NHA)	HC 34/2013
38 OCEANA	HC 33/2012
39 PlasticsEurope	HC 37-2016
40 Race For The Baltic	HC 39-2018
41 Sea Alarm Foundation	HC 31/2010
42 Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)	HC 15/1994
43 Waste Free Oceans Foundation	HC 39-2018
44 World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF International)	HC 12/1991