



Document title	Outcome of RESPONSE 28-2020
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Background

The 28th Meeting of the HELCOM Responses Working Group (RESPONSE 28-2020) was held online on 3-5 November 2020. The Meeting was attended by all HELCOM Contracting Parties except for Russia, Observers from the Sea Alarm Foundation and WWF and invited guests from ITOPF, CEDRE and ISPRA. The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Heli Haapasaari, Chair of the Response Working Group 2019-2020.

This document contains the Outcome of RESPONSE 28-2020. The whole Outcome including all Annexes can also be found [here](#). Matters requiring specific action by HOD 59-2020 are outlined below.

Please note that the following issues will be considered in separate documents:

- Approval of the draft Joint Inter-Regional Marine HNS Response Manual;
- Approval of the draft revised HELCOM Response Manual; and
- Approval of the revised HELCOM Recommendation 31E/6 on Integrated wildlife response planning in the Baltic Sea Area;

Please also note that all issues related to the updating of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) will be discussed under Agenda Item 5 (Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan).

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Outcomes of RESPONSE 28-2020 in general and consider it as appropriate. Specifically, the Meeting is invited to:

- take note that RESPONSE 28-2020 approved the draft HELCOM Annual report on discharges observed during aerial surveillance in the Baltic Sea 2019 for publishing on the HELCOM web page (c.f. paragraph 10.5);
- take note that RESPONSE 28-2020 agreed that it is premature to publish Volume 1 of the draft Submerged Assessment on warfare materials and that the Meeting agreed on a proposed way ahead including drafting of new Terms of Reference for the Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (SUBMERGED) for consideration by RESPONSE 29-2020 (c.f. paragraphs 9.5-9.6);
- take note that progress has not been made on Volume 2 of the draft Submerged Assessment on wrecks in the Baltic Sea (c.f. paragraph 9.4);

- approve the proposal to withdraw the HELCOM [Recommendation 17/12](#) on measures to abate pollution by oil and other harmful substances in cases of grounding, collision, sinking of a ship or other maritime casualty (c.f. paragraph 13.13);
- approve the Work Plan for the HELCOM Response Working Group for 2021-2022 as contained in Annex 6 of the Outcome (c.f. paragraph 17.1);
- take note that Mr. Bernt Stedt (Sweden) was elected as the Chair and Mr. Torben Iversen (Denmark) was elected as Vice-Chair of the Response Working Group for the next two-year period (2021-2022 (c.f. paragraph 16.1-16.2);
- take note that Estonia offered to host RESPONSE 29-2021 in summer or autumn 2021 with the exact dates for the Meeting to be decided in due course (c.f. paragraph 17.3).



Outcome of the 28th Meeting of the
Response Working Group (RESPONSE 28-2020)

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Outcome of the 28th Meeting of the Response Working Group (RESPONSE 28-2020)

Introduction

- 0.1. The 28th Meeting of the HELCOM Response Working Group (RESPONSE 28-2020) was held online on 3-5 November 2020 in line with HELCOM policy on COVID-19.
- 0.2. The Meeting was attended by all HELCOM Contracting Parties except for Russia, Observers from the Sea Alarm Foundation and WWF invited guests from ITOPF, CEDRE and ISPRA. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 1**.
- 0.3. The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Heli Haapasaari, Chair of the Response Working Group.
- 0.4. Mr. Markus Helavuori, HELCOM Professional Secretary, and Ms. Laura Meski, Assisting Professional Secretary, acted as Secretaries of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Documents: 1-1 Rev.1, 1-2

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

Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from HELCOM meetings

Document: 2-1

- 2.1. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the 41st Meeting of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM 41-2020) held on 4-5 March 2020 in Helsinki, Finland and the 58th Meeting of the Heads of Delegation (HOD 58-2020) held online on 9-10 June 2020 and in particular the matters related to the HELCOM Response Working Group.
- 2.2. The Meeting noted that outcomes of subsidiary bodies to the Response Working Group will be dealt with under the relevant agenda items below.

Agenda Item 3 Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

Documents: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 3-7, 3-8, 3-9, 3-10

General

- 3.1. The Meeting took note of the Updated Work Plan for the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), endorsed by HOD 58-2020 (document 3-1 and **Presentation 1**).
- 3.2. The Meeting took note that HOD 58-2020 agreed on the year 2030 as the target year for implementing the BSAP. With regard to the target year for achieving good environmental status for the Baltic Sea, the Meeting had further agreed to include in the updated BSAP a reference to the 2007 BSAP and the HELCOM assessments
- 3.3. The Meeting took note of the detailed plan for drafting of the updated BSAP and the preliminary timetable (document 3-2).
- 3.4. The Meeting noted that the BSAP Drafting Group (DG BSAP) will play an important role in the further development of the preambles as well as operative sections of the BSAP. The Meeting encouraged participation in the work of the DG BSAP by contacting HODs who are responsible for nominations to the DG BSAP.

Sufficiency of measures

3.5. The Meeting considered the preliminary results of the analysis of sufficiency of measures for topics of relevance to the Response Working Group (document 3-4).

3.6. The Meeting took note of the methodology and progress of the cost-effectiveness analysis (document 3-8).

Drafting of the updated BSAP

3.7. The Meeting reviewed the first draft for the BSAP segment preamble for sea-based activities (document 3-3) in line with the guidance provided, made some general comments and proposals as contained in **Annex 7** to this outcome and endorsed it for submission to GEAR 23-2020 and to HOD 59-2020 for review, noting that the drafting will continue in the DG BSAP in spring 2021.

3.8. The Meeting considered the content and structure of the draft Annex for the sea-based activities segment of the updated BSAP (document 3-5). The Meeting supported the structure, noting that such an approach enables a more user friendly BSAP.

3.9. The Meeting discussed the two actions related to SeaTrack Web (STW) and noted comments that integration between satellite based spill detection and drift modelling by SeaTrack Web should be implemented in close cooperation with EMSA. The Meeting noted that EMSA is not in a position to confirm the possibilities of such work at present, and that it is premature to agree on the target implementation year for such an action until the issue is further clarified between HELCOM and EMSA. Furthermore, the Meeting noted the relevance of the new BSAP action proposed in document 3-9 by Denmark and Sweden, as well as further comments made in that context (c.f. separate Excel attachment to the Outcome) in relation to these existing actions.

3.10. The Meeting discussed the way forward to finalize the BSAP Annex prior to HOD 60-2021 and agreed to invite the Secretariat to develop a more complete draft, including also new actions after HOD 59-2020. The Meeting further agreed that the new draft should be circulated for comments in early 2021 and that an intersessional online meeting should be organized tentatively on 25-26 March 2021 to finalize the work to enable submission of the Annex to HOD 60-2021 for approval.

HELCOM Explorer

3.11. The Meeting took note of information on the [HELCOM Explorer](#) which serves to follow-up on the implementation of BSAP actions, commitments made at HELCOM Ministerial Meetings in 2010, 2013 and 2018 and presents the implementation status of selected HELCOM Recommendations.

3.12. The Meeting considered the information on the status of the joint actions of relevance for the Response Working Group as included in document 3-7. The Meeting reported as follows:

- Action ID 81 was agreed by the Meeting to be accomplished, noting, however, that further development of regional preparedness and response related services including SeaTrack Web is still needed. In this context the Meeting recalled the rephrased action agreed in principle by HOD 58-2020 for inclusion in the updated BSAP, which covers this issue;
- Action ID 88 on development of the Submerged Assessment was agreed by the Meeting to still be partly accomplished as the Submerged Assessment has not yet been finalized (c.f. Agenda Item 9 below); and
- Action ID 135 on revising HELCOM Response Manual Volume 2 was considered to be accomplished once HELCOM 42-2021 adopts the Joint-Inter Regional Marine HNS Manual agreed (c.f. Agenda Item 11 below). The Meeting also recalled the two rephrased actions agreed in principle by HOD 58-2020 on implementing and testing this new Manual, which replaces the Response Manual Volume 2.

Actions to be included in the updated BSAP

3.13. The Meeting considered the outcome of the BSAP UP Workshop on maritime activities, including underwater noise, non-indigenous species and response actions (BSAP UP WS-SEA) held online on 2-4 September 2020 and the BSAP UP workshop on hazardous substances and litter (BSAP UP WS-HZ) held online on 24-25 August 2020 (document 3-6).

- 3.14. Using the separate excel file in document 3-6-Add.1 Att.1, the Meeting endorsed for submission to HOD 59-2020 the proposed new actions taking into account the outcome of the BSAP UP Workshops. The Meeting did not propose reformulation of the actions, but comments made during the discussion are outlined in the separate Excel attachment to this Outcome. In this respect, the Meeting agreed that the comments may be useful in the further drafting of the Annex to the sea-based segment of the updated BSAP.
- 3.15. The Meeting took note of the suggested development of the SeaTrack Web (STW) system (document 3-9) and noted that the matter consists of two parts 1) Integrate and use current measurements within the SeaTrack Web system; and 2) Early warnings system for SeaTrack Web based on satellite images.
- 3.16. The Meeting noted that, depending on the detailed user requirements, the technical implementation process can take substantial time after a decision to go ahead is made.
- 3.15. Based on the proposal in document 3-9, the Meeting developed a proposal for STW as a new action for the updated BSAP using the synopsis format as set out in **Annex 3** and to be published on the Workspace containing all previously submitted synopses for proposed new BSAP actions.
- 3.16. The Meeting considered document 3-10 containing the following two proposals for new actions for the updated BSAP 1) Monitoring and pollution risk assessment regarding species and habitats in the Baltic Region 2) Strengthening mutual assistance for oiled wildlife response in the Baltic Region
- 3.17. The Meeting noted that the proposed action 1) would require cooperation also with the State & Conservation Working Group.
- 3.18. The Meeting supported inclusion of the four proposed actions concerning STW and oiled wildlife response into the updated BSAP and undertook a technical review and evaluation, as well as commented, as further detailed in the separate Excel attachment to this Outcome. The Meeting consequently endorsed the proposed actions for submission to HOD 59-2020.
- 3.19. The Meeting discussed possible gaps in the set of measures for the updated BSAP and noted a proposal that developing a response exercise framework and HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP) could be considered for inclusion in the BSAP. The Meeting, however, agreed that there this issue is sufficiently addressed by the HELCOM Response Manual and other separate documents which can be further developed by the Response Working Group and implemented by Contracting Parties even without inclusion in the BSAP.
- 3.20. The Meeting noted information provided by the Chair that a possible new project on risk analysis should be considered, taking into account that shipping in the Baltic Sea has changed considerably since the BRISK project which used data from 2008. The Meeting also noted that the official validity of BRISK extends only until the end of 2020 and that partners from various Contracting Parties would be needed for a large scale risk analysis to be undertaken.
- 3.21. The Meeting agreed that the results of the OpenRisk Project should be considered in the possible planning of any new risk assessments. In this context, the Meeting invited the Secretariat to contact the Norwegian Coastal Administration for more information on how the AISyRisk tool could be made available for HELCOM Contracting Parties.
- 3.22. The Meeting noted that a workshop to consider a risk analysis project was supposed to take place back to back with RESPONSE 28-2020 but may be organized back to back with RESPONSE 29-2021 instead, and that further information will be provided to the next meeting.
- 3.23. Following discussion, the Meeting supported a proposal that such an action on updating risk assessments should be included in the BSAP. A synopsis was developed during the Meeting (**Annex 4**) upon which a technical review and evaluation of the proposal was undertaken as further specified in the separate Excel attachment to this Outcome. To conclude, the Meeting endorsed the proposed action for submission to HOD 59-2020.

Agenda Item 4 Risk assessments, OPENRISK and Safety of Navigation

Documents: 4-1, 4-2

4.1. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the Eleventh Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Experts on Safety of Navigation (SAFE NAV 11-2020), which was held online on 13 May 2020 (document 4-1).

4.2. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the 31st Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group for Mutual Exchange and Deliveries of AIS & Data (AIS EWG 31-2020), which was held on 9-10 June 2020 (document 4-2).

4.3. The Meeting took note of information provided by Sweden that they are updating their national risk assessment for oil spills in Swedish waters (3rd edition). It is to be presented at an annual national conference on 26 November 2020. The presentation (in Swedish) will be filmed and published together with the report on the [MSB's website](#). The updated information will inter alia include an overview of the new fuel types, what kind of fuels are being used today, collected knowledge about the new fuels and what can be expected from a future spill.

Agenda Item 5 Matters related to recent response operations

Documents: 5-1

5.1. The Meeting took note of the information on significant response operations in 2019 as reported by Estonia and Finland (document 5-1) and discussed lessons learnt.

5.2. No significant response operations at sea nor on the shore took place in 2019 in Denmark, Germany Latvia and Poland. No information had been received prior to the Meeting from Lithuania, Russia and Sweden.

5.3. The Meeting noted that no response operations on shore took place in Sweden in 2019 and that a confirmation regarding possible operations at sea will be provided in due course. The Meeting encouraged Lithuania, Russia and Sweden to provide any possible information on response operations in 2019 to the Secretariat (laura.meski@helcom.fi) as soon as possible.

5.4. The Meeting took note of information provided by Sweden regarding a spill of 13 tonnes of plastic pellets on Skagerrak with large areas on the Swedish and Norwegian coast were polluted with pellets. The spill led to discussions up to ministerial level both in Norway and Sweden regarding responsibility for spills of "other substances". The countries made different conclusions, whereby Norway treated the case as a marine pollution incident while Sweden considered it a clean up operation to be handled by municipalities, which is why it was not reported in the context of document 5-1. As more spills of "other substances" than mineral oil are expected in the future, the Meeting noted that there may be a need to review the legislation to clarify how to respond to such spills in the future, both nationally but also regionally to enable coordination and cooperation across borders. The Meeting noted a comment that the provisions of the Nairobi Convention may be applicable for such cases.

5.5. The Meeting noted information provided by Lithuania regarding a response operation to combat a spill of diesel fuel from the Port of Klaipeda in August 2020.

Agenda Item 6 National preparedness at sea and on shore

Documents: none

6.1. The Meeting recalled the information on national developments response at sea, on shore and for oiled wildlife response, reported to RESPONSE 27-2020 and set out in Annex 4 of the Outcome to that Meeting. The Meeting took note of the additional information as follows:

- EU: Information on marine pollution response activities in 2020 was provided in **Presentation 2**. The Meeting noted that there is no final decision on what equipment for near shore will be procured in

2021, and that a consultation is being undertaken in this regard. The meeting also noted that a consultation regarding equipment to support response in HNS incidents will be launched in 2021 and that a procurement for HNS response equipment kits is plan for 2022. The Meeting noted that EMSA can be approached with regard to requests and needs by EU Member States. In addition, EMSA provided information on updates for EMSA's services for chemical spills in **Presentation 3**. The Meeting noted that Finland may test the MAR-ICE system during BALEX DELTA 2021;

- Finland: Information was provided in **Presentation 4**;
- Germany: Information was provided on the planned replacement of three of Germany's response vessels. The new vessels will be powered by LNG and will be designed for oil and HNS response, as well as fire-fighting. The first new vessel is expected to be delivered in 2023 and will most probably be placed in the Baltic Sea; and
- Lithuania: Information was provided regarding a tender for a new multi-purpose vessel with contract signing expected by the end of November 2020. Information was also provided on a diesel oil spill in the port of Klaipeda (c.f. paragraph 5.5 above).

Agenda Item 7 Sub-regional co-operation

Documents: 7-1, 7-2

7.1. The Meeting took note of the overview list and maps of bi- and trilateral agreements on joint response operations and response plans in response regions in the Baltic Sea (document 7-1). The Meeting recalled the discussion under Agenda Item 13 that clarification is needed with regard to the Poland-Germany sub-regional agreement area. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to update the map.

7.2. The Meeting took note of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Estonian and Finnish Ministry of Interior on co-operation in combatting the effects of marine pollution incidents (document 7-2).

Agenda Item 8 Response on the shore and wildlife response

Documents: 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-3-Rev.1

8.1. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the 15th and 16th Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 15-2020 and EWG OWR 16-2020) held as online meetings on 26 May 2020 and 22 September 2020, respectively (document 8-1).

8.2. The Meeting further took note of the report on the HELCOM EWG OWR online seminar on early incident response for cross-border wildlife incidents (document 8-2). The Meeting noted that there were a number of incorrect details in Danish information related to table top exercises.

8.3. The Meeting considered the annual report on oiled wildlife response activities and preparedness (document 8-3 and **Presentation 5**) and adopted the report as contained in document 8-3-Rev.1 with a correction in Annex 2 concerning the responsible authority for oiled wildlife response in Finland (still to be defined). The Meeting noted that all Contracting Parties except Russia had contributed to the report using the Self-Assessment Tool 2.0.

8.4. The Meeting took note of **Presentation 6** on the EUROWA-2 Project covering the Baltic, North and Mediterranean seas, as well as information on bird distribution maps.

8.5. The Meeting decided that the next meeting of the of the HELCOM Expert Coordination Network on Response on the Shore (SHORE Network 5-2021), will be held online during one of the two last weeks of January 2021 with the final date to be determined by a Doodle poll to be circulated by the Secretariat.

Agenda Item 9 Wrecks and other submerged hazardous objects

Documents: 9-1, 9-2, 9-3

9.1. The Meeting took note of the draft Submerged Assessment Volume 1 on warfare materials (document 9-1) and the comments received by Denmark and Germany on the draft assessment (document 9-2). While appreciating the extensive work done by members of the Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (SUBMERGED), the Meeting noted that information in Chapter 5 of the draft is still incomplete from some Contracting Parties, and notably completely missing from Latvia and Russia. It was noted that information for other chapters is also incomplete for a number of Contracting Parties. The question was raised whether the representatives of the Response Working Group have forwarded the request for input to the relevant national authorities, which in many cases are different than those represented in the Response Working Group.

9.2. The Meeting noted that in addition to incomplete national information from Contracting Parties, some other parts of the draft Submerged Assessment are also still not complete and in need of a few more weeks of drafting.

9.3. The Meeting noted inter alia the following comments:

- according to the SOM Analysis (c.f. Agenda Item 3), there are significant amounts of mercury in the Baltic Sea stemming from submerged munitions;
- the Submerged Assessment should be less detailed;
- there are still differing views regarding whether it is better to recover submerged munitions or leave them to slowly disintegrate in the sea; and
- the HELCOM [Report on Chemical Munitions in the Baltic Sea](#) (MUNI) is still valid when it comes to chemical munitions, while the draft Submerged Assessment provides some new information on the effects of such munitions, as well as introduces a wide range of new information on conventional munitions.

9.4. The Meeting noted that progress has not been made on Volume 2 of the draft Submerged Assessment on wrecks in the Baltic Sea.

9.5. The Meeting agreed that it is premature to publish the Submerged Assessment at this stage.

9.6. The Meeting discussed the next steps based on the proposal in document 9-3 and:

- noted that that the challenges of underwater munition described so far are interdisciplinary;
- noted that further work still remains to be done on a number of disciplines;
- agreed that the data on munitions in the Baltic Sea already collected by the Submerged EG should be incorporated in the HELCOM Map and Data Service e.g. by adding to the current layers on chemical munitions;
- agreed that interested parties should continue working on the draft Submerged Assessment Volume 1 and urge all Contracting Parties to provide input and data to be included in the Assessment;
- agreed that work should continue on closing obvious knowledge gaps and to assess the national situations regarding munitions in territorial waters of the Contracting Parties based on existing national inventories and data as well as complement those by recent scientific methodologies and by using up to date tools, e.g. DAIMON- Toolbox, UDEMM-Guideline and DAIMON-DSS;
- encouraged all Contracting Parties to share available data and approaches to obtain new results with the Response Working Group within the next 12 months.
- invited all Contracting Parties to nominate a national contact point to collate data on encounters in the Baltic Sea and to provide the Secretariat annually with a dataset (similar approach as OSPAR (ODIMS));
- invited interested parties to draft an excerpt based on the draft Submerged Assessment on “recent science on warfare materials”, to be submitted for approval to RESPONSE 29-2021 with the view to

publishing it as supporting guidance document for the process mentioned above. This document should focus on recent scientific results and background information found crucial to initiate a comprehensive interdisciplinary discussion on the national level among HELCOM Contracting Parties;

- agreed that new Terms of Reference are needed for the Submerged EG to implement the above tasks;
- invited interested parties to draft the new Terms of Reference for the Submerged EG, for approval by RESPONSE 29-2021 with the view to their subsequent adoption by HODs;
- agreed on the proposed way ahead.

9.7. The Meeting took note of the T-30 wreck pollution in Narva Bay, Estonia (**Presentation 7**). The Meeting noted concerns expressed by Estonia that insufficient information on matters related to wrecks are shared by Contracting Parties with meetings of the Response Working Group.

Agenda Item 10 Remote Sensing

Documents: 10-1, 10-2

10.1 Aerial surveillance

10.1. The Meeting took note that the 2020 annual meeting of the HELCOM Informal Working Group on Aerial Surveillance (IWGAS 2020) was cancelled due to COVID-19 and further took note of the tasks considered by correspondence during spring 2020 in order not to delay important ongoing processes (document 10-1).

10.2. The Meeting discussed the way forward with regard to agreement by IWGAS on the proposed changes to operational needs for satellite surveillance coverage. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to request approval on the changes by IWGAS contacts by correspondence.

10.3. The Meeting took note that Estonia has agreed to continue as Chair for IWGAS during 2021 as the 2020 annual meeting of IWGAS was cancelled.

10.4. The Meeting decided that the 2021 annual meeting of IWGAS (IWGAS 2021) should be held online in spring 2021, Chaired by Estonia, with the exact dates to be agreed at a later stage by the Chair and the Secretariat.

10.5. The Meeting took note of the Draft HELCOM Annual report on discharges observed during aerial surveillance in the Baltic Sea 2019 (document 2-10) and approved the report for publishing on the HELCOM web page.

10.6. The Meeting noted that 28 of the 72 confirmed mineral oil spills stemmed from a wreck in Polish waters and additionally three oil spills were detected from sunken ships in Swedish waters. The Meeting noted that within the Bonn Agreement spills stemming from a single wreck are counted as only one individual spill. The Meeting invited IWGAS 2021 to consider the reporting instructions with the view to proposing changes, if appropriate, in order to ensure that the spill statistics are representative.

10.7. The Meeting took note of a presentation by Finland on the EMSA Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) tests in summer/autumn 2020 (**Presentation 8**). The Meeting noted that EMSA also provides RPAS for emission control purposes and that plans are being made for providing such RPAS services to Lithuania.

10.2 Use of satellites for detecting illegal discharges

10.8. The Meeting took note of the CleanSeaNet Service (CSN) statistics for the Baltic region 1 January-31 December 2019 as presented by EMSA (**Presentation 9**). The Meeting further noted that the next CSN User Group Meeting will most probably be held online on 10 March 2021.

10.3 STW/AIS/SAT model

10.9. The Meeting noted information from Sweden that seven Contracting Parties have licences for HELCOM SeaTrack Web with SMHI and that three research institutions around the Baltic Sea have additional licences.

10.4 Investigation and prosecution of offenders of anti-pollution regulations

10.10. The Meeting noted information from Sweden regarding received support for investigation on persistent floaters including spills of plastic pellets as discussed in more detail above under Agenda Item 5.

Agenda Item 11 Other developments in response strategies and equipment

Documents 11-1, 11-1-Add.1-Corr.1

11.1 HNS Response

11.1. The Meeting took note of the progress with regard to the draft Joint Inter-Regional Marine HNS Response Manual as presented by Cedre (document 11-1 and 11-1 Add.1-Corr.1 and **Presentation 10**) and thanked the WestMOPoCo Project drafting team consisting of Cedre, ISPRA and ITOF for their excellent work. The Meeting noted that useful input had been provided by representatives of CG HNS Manual throughout the process.

11.2. The Meeting considered the Manual useful and agreed that Contracting Parties need to incorporate it into their national operational and command procedures.

11.3. The Meeting noted a comment with regard to exercises as part of the HNS Manual and agreed on the importance not to create separate exercise frameworks in the HELCOM Response Manual and the HNS Manual. The Meeting agreed that the text in the HNS Manual could be used in the HELCOM practical guide on response exercises, which is under development (c.f. Agenda Item 13).

11.4. Following discussion, the Meeting agreed on the draft HNS Manual as currently drafted, including the Annex templates on general information and regional specificities (Annex 1 and 2 of the draft Manual). The Meeting recognized, however, that certain aspects of the draft HNS Manual are still to be finalized, including internal links, photos, formatting, proofreading and the Annex on regional specificities. As no changes are expected to matters of substance, the Meeting agreed that the draft HNS Manual should be submitted to HOD 59-2020 for approval with a view to its adoption by HELCOM 42-2021 to replace the current HELCOM Response Manual Volume 2.

11.5. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to provide the relevant information and weblinks to be included in the annex on regional specificities for HELCOM in coordination with CG HNS Manual. In this context, the Meeting noted that such an annex on regional specificities will be included respectively for HELCOM, Bonn Agreement and REMPEC and that therefore the agreed template should be adhered to.

11.6. The Meeting instructed the Secretariat to review the final version of the Manual in the beginning of 2021 before publication in March 2021.

11.7. The Meeting encouraged Contracting Parties and Observers to provide relevant photos for the Manual, taking into account the identified needs detailed in the separate Excel attachment to document 11-1 -Add.1 -Corr.1.

11.8. The Meeting endorsed the way forward for the WestMOPoCo drafting team, the Secretariat and CG HNS Manual in finalizing the Manual

11.9. The Meeting recalled one of the rephrased existing actions agreed for inclusion in the updated BSAP with a commitment for testing the HNS Manual at BALEX DELTA 2022 to be hosted by Germany.

11.10. The Meeting noted that not all Contracting Parties have ratified the IMO HNS Protocol and encouraged all Contracting Parties to do so as soon as possible in order to ensure appropriate response capacities for HNS spills.

11.2 Response to oil in ice

11.11. No comments were made regarding response to oil in ice.

11.3 Places of Refuge

11.12. No comments were made regarding places of refuge.

11.4 Response at night/in bad visibility

11.13. No comments were made regarding response operations at night/in bad visibility.

11.5 Emergency towing

11.14. No comments were made regarding emergency towing.

11.6 Use of dispersants

11.15. No comments were made regarding use of dispersants.

11.7 Non-traditional fuel types

11.16. No comments were made regarding non-traditional fuel types.

Agenda Item 12 Exercises

Documents: 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 12-4

12.1 BALEX DELTA

12.1. The Meeting took note of the presentation by EU on the Modules field and table-top exercises (MODEX) (document 12-4 and **Presentation 11**). The Meeting considered the opportunity to develop a MODEX marine pollution exercise and to identify potential EU Member States willing to be involved.

12.2. The Meeting noted that there are no defined modules specifically for marine pollution response, but exercises can nevertheless be organized related to the response capacities of Member States.

12.3. The Meeting discussed how MODEX marine pollution could support the ongoing processes on HREP and/or the proposed new action on the framework for the holistic/integrated management of marine pollution that enables a coordinated response operation at sea and on shore. The Meeting agreed that MODEX can be a suitable exercise platform for marine pollution. The Meeting noted that the EU envisages that the first MODEX field exercise could be conducted in 2022 if there is clear engagement by interested EU Member States in the coming months.

12.4. The Meeting premiered the movie on HELCOM BALEX DELTA 2020 which was organized by Estonia on 26 August 2020 off the coast of Tallinn (document 12-3 and movie). A BALEX BRAVO (alarm exercise) was held on 11 August 2020.

12.5. The Meeting took note of the HELCOM BALEX DELTA 2020 report by the Exercise Evaluation Team (EET) (document 12-2). In discussing the recommendations set out in the report, the Meeting:

- agreed that involvement by all Contracting Parties in the BALEX DELTA planning cycle is very useful;
- noted that having a commercial ship as the “ship in distress” makes the exercise more realistic;
- agreed that the exercise project directive should state the intended duration of the exercise; and
- noted that the response rate to the questionnaire sent out by the EET was very low.

12.6. The Meeting took note of the presentation by Finland on HELCOM BALEX 2021, which will take place near Kotka during week 34 of 2021 (**Presentation 12**). The Meeting noted that the exercise is planned as a full scale oil and chemical recovery exercise and that the initial planning conference is to be held online on 19 January 2021. The Meeting noted that HEDMOT members will be nominated by 20 November 2020 (from Estonia, Finland, Germany and Latvia).

12.2 National exercises

12.7. No information was presented to the Meeting.

12.3 HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP)

12.8. The Meeting took note of the proposed HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP) (document 12-1 and **Presentation 13**).

12.9. The Meeting approved the HREP and agreed that implementation of it should start for BALEX 2021 to be hosted by Finland.

12.10. The Meeting considered the proposed HELCOM Response Exercise Development and Monitoring Team (HEDMOT) as a replacement for the EET as further detailed in document 13-4 in the context of the HELCOM Response Manual. The Meeting agreed that the number of Contracting Parties represented in the HEDMOT should be four. It was also agreed that the HREP and HEDMOT should be gradually implemented, with a focus on overall aims for future exercises. Thus, the BALEX 2021-2023 exercises will only be marginally affected.

12.11. The Meeting established the HEDMOT and welcomed the offer by Sweden to provide support.

12.12. The Meeting agreed to include a standing HEDMOT agenda item on the agenda for future Response Working Group meetings.

12.13. The Meeting agreed that the HREP should remain as a continuous task in the Work Plan of the Response Working Group.

Agenda Item 13 HELCOM Recommendations and Response Manual

Documents: 13-1, 13-2, 13-3, 13-4, 13-5

13.1. The Meeting considered the draft revised HELCOM Response Manual (document 13-1), reviewed it on the screen, made some minor changes to the text based on comments reflected in the margin and took action as follows:

- The Meeting invited Lithuania to provide updated contact information in Chapter 1, the missing information in Annex 2 and list of waypoints used in aerial surveillance (Annex 10) to the Secretariat (laura.meski@helcom.fi) by 6 November 2020 at the latest by 6 November 2020;
- The Meeting invited the Secretariat to request updates to the Russian contact information in Chapter 1 as well as the aerial surveillance waypoints in Annex 10;
- The Meeting combined sections 10.1 and 10.2 and drafted a new introductory text as the EU States Guidelines on oil sampling referred to in that section will not be ready before adoption of the Response Manual;
- The Meeting invited Sweden to submit any remaining terms used in the manual for inclusion in Annex 1 of the Manual before its submission to HOD 59-2020;
- The Meeting noted that there is an error in Map 3 in Annex 3 with regard to the Poland-Germany sub-regional agreement area. The Meeting consequently invited the Secretariat to update the map using data provided by Germany;
- The Meeting did not agree to include Annex 4 to the Manual, as there may be confusion with regard to when POLREP should be used and when the form for requesting assistance from another Contracting Party set out in the proposed Annex 4 should be used. The Meeting further noted that the form in Annex 4 is not appropriate for the Response Manual;
- The Meeting did not agree to include Annex 5 to the Manual;
- The Meeting invited the Secretariat to improve the image in Annex 9, if possible;

- The Meeting agreed that the information in Annex 12 does not provide any added value in the Response Manual. The Meeting consequently agreed to delete it from the Manual but instead consider using it in the Practical Guide for response exercises under development; and
- The Meeting noted that in Annex 15 there is information on sampling from helicopters based on Danish procedures which is not up to date. The Meeting agreed that this text should be revised and welcomed the offer by Germany to provide new text in close cooperation with Denmark, to be circulated to contact points of the Response Working Group for tacit approval before submission of the Manual to HOD 59-2020.

13.2. The Meeting discussed an agreed on the structure and content of the new exercise framework as presented in document 13-4 and **Presentation 14**. In this context, the Meeting agreed with the proposed Chapter 8 for the Response Manual to replace Chapter 8 of the version set out in document 13-1 as well as the proposed Annexes 13 and 15.

13.3. The Meeting agreed that Annex 14 (practical guide for response exercises) presented in document 13-4 should be developed further, using e.g. experiences from the HEDMOT in upcoming exercises, and published at a later stage as a separate guidance document but not as part of the Response Manual. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties and Observers to provide comments that they may have at this stage to Sweden.

13.4. The Meeting welcomed the work done by Sweden and agreed that the exercise framework is very useful.

13.5. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to perform consequential edits to Chapter 8 of the Response Manual, which currently makes reference to Annex 14.

13.6. The Meeting agreed that development of the practical guide for exercise projects should be included in the Work Plan of the Response Working Group.

13.7. The Meeting noted a comment regarding the long term objectives in the exercise framework and agreed that individual exercise host countries should plan their exercises in accordance with their capacities even if that would occasionally lead to slight delays in meeting the long term objectives.

13.8. The Meeting considered the revised Chapter 7 on co-operation in oiled wildlife response for the revised HELCOM Response Manual (document 13-5) and, after revising Figure 3, agreed to include it in the Manual to replace the previous Chapter 7.

13.9. The Meeting agreed to the draft Revised HELCOM Response Manual and invited the Secretariat to perform changes based on all the above decisions and undertake a final editorial review before submission to HOD 59-2020 for approval with a view to adoption by HELCOM 42-2021.

HELCOM Recommendations

13.10. The Meeting considered the proposal by Finland on the draft revised HELCOM Recommendation 12/7 on *Special cooperation in case of a chemical tanker accident in the Baltic Sea* (document 3-3).

13.11. The Meeting noted concerns with regard to several elements of the draft revised Recommendation still being obsolete as they have already been implemented, at least for all Contracting Parties that are EU Member States. The Meeting, however, noted that it could not comment on the situation with regard to its implementation by Russia. Consequently, the Meeting agreed that the matter should be revisited at RESPONSE 29-2021.

13.12. The Meeting approved the revised HELCOM Recommendation 31E/6 on *Integrated wildlife response planning in the Baltic Sea Area* (document 13-2), as set out in **Annex 5**, and agreed to submit it to HOD 59-2020 for approval and HELCOM 42-2021 for adoption.

13.13. The Meeting recalled that revision of HELCOM Recommendation 17/12 on *Measures to abate pollution by oil and other harmful substances in cases of grounding, collision, sinking of a ship or other maritime casualty* has been discussed during several previous Meetings of the Response Working Group. The

Meeting agreed that there is no need to revise the Recommendation and instead recommended to HOD 59-2020 that the Recommendation should be withdrawn.

13.14. The Meeting invited Russia to provide information on comparing the requirements of the national legislation with HELCOM Recommendation 20/5 on *Minimum ability to respond to oil spillages in oil terminals* to RESPONSE 29-2021 in order to make a future decision on the continued need for the Recommendation based on the provided information.

Agenda Item 14 Activities within other organizations and initiatives

Documents: none

14.1 The Meeting took note of information by the EU on the Revision of the Decision No. 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism and future funding opportunities (**Presentation 15**). The Meeting expressed interest in the funding opportunities and discussed possibilities of using these opportunities for the work needed with regard to the proposed new BSAP actions on SeaTrack Web and risk analysis. The Meeting noted, however that the EU is not able to fund activities that directly involve the development of EU systems such as CleanSeaNet.

14.2 The Meeting also noted the invitation from the EU to make use of the Common Assessment Framework for Lessons Learned (CTG MPPR, 2012) within the HELCOM lessons learned processes as well as of the suggested template slide for the follow-up on the lessons identified.

14.3 The Meeting took note of information regarding other activities within EMSA (**Presentation 16**).

Agenda Item 15 Any other business

Documents: 15-1 Rev.1

15.1. The Meeting checked and updated the list of contact addresses and Observers of the Response Working Group (document 15-1-Rev.1) as contained in **Annex 2**.

Agenda Item 16 Election of Chair and Vice-Chairs

Documents: none

16.1. The Meeting elected Mr. Bernt Stedt (Sweden) as the Chair of the Response Working Group for the next two-year period (2021-2022).

16.2. The Meeting elected Mr. Torben Iversen (Denmark) as Vice-chair of the Response Working Group for the next two-year period (2021-2022).

16.3. The Meeting thanked Ms. Heli Haapasaari, Mr. Ojars Gerke and Mr. Alexander von Buxhoeveden for their dedication, commitment and expertise over the years as Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Response Working Group, respectively.

Agenda Item 17 Future work and meetings

Documents: 16-1, 17-1

17.1. The Meeting updated the Work Plan of the Response Working Group 2021-2022 contained in **Annex 6** and agreed to invite HOD 59-2020 to approve it.

17.2. The Meeting took note and considered the preliminary list of upcoming HELCOM and other meetings (document 16-1) and invited Contracting Parties and observers to keep the Secretariat informed of any meetings related to pollution response issues, in order to avoid overlaps

17.3. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Estonia to consider hosting RESPONSE 29-2021 in summer or autumn 2021 with the exact dates to be determined later by the Chair, the host and the Secretariat.

17.4. The Meeting noted that the EMSA calendar of MPPR events 2021 has been circulated to participants, contacts and observers of the Response Working Group.

Agenda Item 18 Outcome of the Meeting

Documents: 18-1

18.1 The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of the Meeting as contained in document 18-1.

18.2 The final Outcome of the Meeting has been finalized by the Secretariat and made available on the HELCOM Meeting Portal together with the documents and presentations given during the Meeting.

Annex.6. Draft Updated Work Plan for HELCOM Response Working Group 2021-2022

ACTION	INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES/ RESPONSIBLE	RESULTS/ TIME FRAME
Maintain and further develop the standing operational network for trans-national response in case of incidents		
Keep the HELCOM Response Manual up to date	Contracting Parties/Secretariat Intersessional work	Continuously Scrutiny at HELCOM Response WG
Share experiences of initial implementation of the Joint Inter-Regional Marine HNS Response Manual	Contracting Parties	Meetings of Response WG (2021-2022)
Improve the usability and ease of updating of the Response Manuals by exploring new electronic means of publishing including i.e. smartphone apps.	Secretariat	Continuously Scrutiny at HELCOM Response WG
Implementation and continued development of the HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP)	Contracting Parties HEDMOT	Annual activities
Develop and implement Practical Guide for Response Exercise Projects	Led by HEDMOT (rotating lead country) Response WG	Continuous
Carry out operational and other kinds of exercises in order to train the topics included in the HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP)	Lead Countries/Contracting Parties BALEX 2021: Lead country Finland BALEX 2022: Lead country Germany Other HELCOM and sub-regional exercises On shore response exercises and OWR exercises, which can be combined with other exercises, as appropriate.	BALEX 2022 RESPONSE 31-2022
Build and follow up new knowledge on dispersants' use and applicability in the Baltic Sea	Contracting Parties	Continuously
Implement a three-tier approach to ensure adequate response to incidents in the Baltic Sea Area, with a special focus on the second tier (sub-regional level)		
Develop tools and methodology for regular regional assessments of maritime risks Utilize the results of the OpenRisk Project and possible use of AISyRISK tool.	Contracting Parties Response WG Maritime WG (SAFE NAV)	Continuously Further discussion at RESPONSE 29-2021
Conclude/implement sub-regional agreements	Contracting Parties	Continuously

Co-operate by conducting trainings and organizing exchange programmes to ensure swift and adequate response capacity to shoreline pollution and to develop best practices	Contracting Parties Response WG Intersessional work	Continuously
Ensure that response on the shore is integrated with overall contingency planning Make proposals on how to improve access to national and regional information on sensitive areas and sensitive coasts Provide annual cross-border or international exercises Follow up the outcome of relevant projects Ensure wide participation	Contracting Parties RESPONSE Intersessional work SHORE Network	Continuously Work plan of SHORE Network Response WG to implement outcomes of SHORE Network
Carry out Baltic wide mapping of prioritised coastal areas (sensitivity mapping).	Contracting Parties SHORE network	Further discussion at SHORE Network 5-2021 and RESPONSE 29-2021
Integrate oiled wildlife response (OWR) into existing contingency plans Exchange of information on development of national OWR plans, authority-NGO cooperation, national trainings and exercises Develop OWR protocols and facilities Develop OWR preparedness and response Ensure wide participation	Contracting Parties, Sea Alarm, WWF and other stakeholders. Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR)	Baltic Oiled Wildlife network meeting 2021 Reports to Response WG Response WG to implement outcomes of EWG OWR
Continued review of the RESPONSE related HELCOM Recommendations	Contracting Parties Response WG Response Sub-Groups In consultation with MARITIME Intersessional work	Intersessional discussion Further discussion at RESPONSE 29-2021
Contribute to the finalization of the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP)	Contracting Parties Response WG DG BSAP	2021
Follow up on Response related actions in the updated BSAP	Contracting Parties Response WG Response WG Sub-Groups	Starting after 2021 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting

Enhance co-operation with regard to places of refuge according to HELCOM Recommendation 31E/5		
Make the Mutual Plan for Places of Refuge operational and implemented within/through sub-regional agreements	Contracting Parties	Continuously Reports to Response WG and Maritime WG
Ratify the relevant compensation and liability conventions according to HELCOM Rec. 31E/5	Contracting Parties Secretariat to provide update of the ratification status of relevant conventions at each RESPONSE meeting	Reports to Response WG and Maritime WG
Detection, investigation and prosecution of anti-pollution regulations		
Co-ordinate aerial surveillance flights and harmonize aerial surveillance with satellite surveillance	IWGAS (Lead Country 2019-2021: Estonia) In co-operation with EMSA (CleanSeaNet)	Meetings of IWGAS and Response WG
Identify operational needs for satellite surveillance in each sub-region of the Baltic	IWGAS	Continuously
Carry out CEPCO and other flights:	Lead Countries/Contracting Parties	Annual activities
Harmonize aerial surveillance reporting systems with Bonn Agreement area	IWGAS	Continuously
Maintain Seatrack Web/AIS/SAT for improved identification of possible polluters	STW/AIS/SAT partnership	Continuously
Co-operate/assist and exchange experience in investigations	Contracting Parties	Continuously
Co-operate with the Network of the Prosecutors on Environmental Crime (ENPRO)	Contracting Parties/Secretariat	Continuously
Carry out information exchange about offshore activities to be able to respond to accidental spills from such installations		
Report on ongoing/planned offshore activities (exploration/exploitation)	Contracting Parties	When applicable
Collect information/exchange experience/promote development and use of new technology and best practices		
Collect and publish information on shipping accidents and response operations in the Baltic and their impact on marine environment	Secretariat/ Contracting Parties in cooperation with HELCOM MARITIME Data flows from EMSA's EMCIP to be established	Annual report on shipping accidents in the Baltic
Developing response related indicators and update the existing core indicator on spills	Response WG and IWGAS	Meetings of Response WG
Keep track of studies on effects of and response to oil spills on the sea-bed (sunken oil).	Response WG	Meetings of Response WG
National and sub-regional reports on response operations and lessons learned	Contracting Parties	Meetings of Response WG
Collect, compile and publish regional summaries of response operations and lessons learned using the format agreed at RESPONSE 21-2016	Secretariat/ Contracting Parties	Meetings of Response WG

		New chapter to be added to the Annual report on shipping accidents in the Baltic
Collect information on observed deliberate, illegal oil discharges, other substances and unknown substances and related statistics	Secretariat/ Contracting Parties	Annual report on discharges observed during aerial surveillance Indicator on oil spills
Update HELCOM map and data service with RESPONSE related information Further develop regional preparedness and response related services including HELCOM SeaTrackWeb, HELCOM AIS, HELCOM POLREP, HELCOM GIS towards a second generation HELCOM oil response information system	Secretariat/ Contracting Parties	Annually Meetings of Response WG
Update of national equipment list in CECIS MP database	Contracting Parties	Continuously
Exchange information with other regional agreements including work on lessons learned and funding priorities identified by RESPONSE	Chair/Secretariat RESPONSE	Meetings between regional agreements, EMSA and DG ECHO Meetings of Response WG
Enhance use and development of technology to respond to accidents at night, in bad visibility, in bad weather, oil on ice, accidents involving heavy oil, chemical incidents	Contracting Parties	Meetings of Response WG
Sharing information on common workspace regarding non-traditional oils	Contracting Parties	Continuously Meetings of Response WG
Participate in and share information of research on non-traditional fuel types	Contracting Parties	Continuously Meetings of Response WG
Collect and assess information on submerged hazardous objects including contaminated and potentially polluting wrecks and maintain work on dumped chemical munitions	Contracting Parties HELCOM Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (SUBMERGED)	Meetings of Response WG
Distribute the background document (result of HELCOM-SUBMERGED) on conventional munitions in the Baltic Sea and support to establish links between responsible authorities for common, interdisciplinary assessments of munition objects, wrecks from WW I + II and former munitions dumpsites in the Baltic Sea Region.	SUBMERGED Response WG	Report back on recent achievements to Meetings of Response WG

Develop, approve and implement new Terms of Reference for SUBMERGED	Response WG SUBMERGED	Intersessional work RESPONSE 29-2021 According to new ToR of SUBMERGED
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