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Agenda Item	2 - Outcome of and follow-up to the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2021
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Reference	

Background

As outlined in the 2021 Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) HELCOM Ministerial Meetings serve to review the progress of implementing the BSAP actions and reaching the goals, objectives and targets under the BSAP. In addition, the Ministerial Declarations, stemming from the Ministerial Meetings, may complement the BSAP actions to ensure that the implementation of the BSAP remains up-to-date and relevant throughout its lifespan. As part of the considerations on implementation of the BSAP it would thus be relevant to initiate early planning of how to optimally place Ministerial Meetings within the implementation period leading up to 2030.

According to the Rules of Procedure of the Helsinki Commission – Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, the Commission shall hold a meeting at ministerial level at least every three years, unless the Heads of Delegation decide otherwise (paragraph 3.1).

HELCOM Ministerial Meetings and other high-level events have been held in the last decade as follows:

- Ministerial Meeting on 20 October 2021, Lübeck, Germany,
- High-level segment as part of HELCOM 41-2020, Helsinki, Finland,
- Ministerial Meeting on 6 March 2018, Brussels, Belgium,
- High-level segment as part of HELCOM 38-2017, Helsinki, Finland,
- Ministerial session on 18 May 2016, as part of the European Maritime Day, Turku, Finland,
- Ministerial Meeting on 3 October 2013, Copenhagen, Denmark,
- Ministerial Meeting on 20 May 2010, Moscow, Russia.

The chairmanship of the Commission rotates between the Contracting Parties every two years, starting on 1 July, according to the alphabetical order of their names in English. Ministerial Meetings have customarily been hosted by the Contracting Party holding the chairmanship. The rotating chairmanship of HELCOM will be as follows during the period of implementation of the 2021 BSAP:

- Latvia, July 2022 - June 2024,
- Lithuania, July 2024 - June 2026,
- Poland, July 2026 - June 2028,
- Russia, July 2028 - June 2030;
- Sweden, July 2030 – June 2032.

Tracking progress of the BSAP is twofold, on the one hand looking at the level of implementation of the actions and on the other looking at the environmental effect of the measures.

In the 2021 BSAP two target years for reporting on the level of implementation have been agreed. The first reporting on the implementation of actions will take place in 2025 and the second reporting in 2029. With regard to the effect on the environment two iterations of the holistic assessment of the state of the Baltic Sea are envisioned within the implementation period of the 2021 BSAP, the first concluding in 2023 and the second projected to be concluded by the end of 2029. These processes will provide highly relevant information on the direction and level of progress of the BSAP and could be used as a basis to strengthen mandates, implementation and actions, as relevant. It is therefore proposed that the preliminary timing of future Ministerial Meetings could be aligned with these processes, as follows:

- Early 2024 (with focus on the results of the HOLAS III and the BSAP and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Convention 1974),
- Second half of 2026 (reporting on BSAP implementation),
- Second half of 2028 (consideration of the need for, and possible approval of, a mandate for updating BSAP beyond 2030),
- Second half of 2030 (reporting on BSAP implementation, results of the HOLAS IV assessment, possible adoption of next BSAP).

With the 50th anniversary of the signing of the original Helsinki Convention falling on 22 March 2024, holding a Ministerial Meeting in spring 2024 should be considered in order to commemorate this special occasion.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to discuss the timing of the next Ministerial Meeting(s).