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Background

The 15th Meeting of the Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (PRESSURE 15-2021) was held online on 2-4 November 2021. The Meeting was attended by all HELCOM Contracting Parties except for the European Union and Observers from CCB, BFFE, EurEau, Race for the Baltic and John Nurminen Foundation as well as invited guests from Baltic Nest Institute (BNI) and the Data Consultants from EMEP MSC-W and MSC-E. The Meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Pressure Working Group, Lars Sonesten, Sweden.

This document contains the Outcome of PRESSURE 15-2021. The complete Outcome including all Annexes can be found [here](#). Matters requiring specific action by HOD 61-2021 are outlined below.

Updated Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on Marine Litter for 2022-2024

HOD 55-2018 approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the HELCOM Expert Network on Marine Litter for 2019-2021 (EN-Marine Litter) ([Outcome of HOD 55-2018](#), para. 4.37 and Annex 5).

This document contains the draft updated ToR for the period 2022-2024, including the change of the name of the network from “Expert Network on Marine Litter (EN-Marine Litter)” to “Expert Group on Marine Litter” (EG Marine Litter). PRESSURE 15-2021 agreed on the change of the name of the network as well as endorsed the draft ToR to be submitted for approval by HOD 61-2021.

Updated Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on Underwater noise for 2022-2024

HOD 55-2018 approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the HELCOM Expert Network on Underwater Noise for 2019-2021 (EN-Noise) ([Outcome of HOD 55-2018](#), para. 4.38 and Annex 6).

This document contains the draft updated ToR for the period 2022-2024 including the proposed change of the name of the network from “Expert Network on Underwater Noise (EN-Noise)” to “Expert Group on Underwater Noise” (EG Noise).

PRESSURE 15-2021 agreed on the change of the name of the network, endorsed the draft ToR for submission to HOD 61-2021 for approval and expressed concern that additional resources may be needed to accomplish the actions in the ToR.

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

- updated Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on Dredging/Depositing Operations at Sea (EG DREDS) (document 6-1);
- HELCOM's participation in the EU Regional Seas Conventions joint event to be organised in conjunction with the 2022 MARLICE international forum, on 20 May 2022 in Seville, Spain (document 6-2);
- report on micropollutants in WWTPs' effluents to be published in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings (BSEP) series and the related draft policy briefs to be published as HELCOM policy messages (document 6-15);
- the PLC-7 project's report on the effectiveness of measures to reduce the input of nutrients to be published in the HELCOM BSEP series (document 6-3);
- updated HELCOM MAI core indicator and the updated indicator report (6-14);
- proposal to organize a PLC workshop on the effectiveness of measures and the analysis of implementation obstacles/best practice in 2022 (document to be submitted);
- draft revised HELCOM Recommendations 37-38/1 on waterborne pollution input assessment (PLC-WATER) and 37-38/2 on monitoring of airborne pollution input (document 6-4);
- draft HELCOM Recommendation on reduction of EPS and XPS emissions (document 6-13);
- draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Group on Hazardous Substances 2022-2024 (document 6-18).

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Outcome of PRESSURE 15-2021 in general and consider it as appropriate. Specifically, the Meeting is invited to:

- adopt the updated Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on Marine Litter (EG Marine Litter) (c.f. Annex 2 of the Outcome);
- adopt the updated Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on Underwater Noise (EG Noise) (c.f. Annex 3 of the Outcome);
- take note of the discussion and agreed procedures on starting the implementation and prioritizing the actions of the Revised Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML) (Outcome paras 3.17-3.25);
- approve that a workshop on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter will be organized back-to-back with PRESSURE 16-2022 on 25 April 2022 in Sweden;
- take note of the plan to finalize the remaining PLC-7 project deliverables by March 2022 to be submitted to HELCOM 43-2022 (Outcome, paras 7.10-7.14);
- take note of the discussion on the new hot spot-related actions in the updated BSAP and organisation of their regional implementation (Outcome, paras 8.1-8.4)
- approve that PRESSURE 16-2022 will take place on 26-29 April 2022 in Sweden; and
- approve that PRESSURE 17-2022 will tentatively take place on 18-21 October 2022 online.



Outcome of the 15th Meeting of the Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area
(PRESSURE 15-2021)

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Outcome of the 15th Meeting of the Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (PRESSURE 15-2021)

Introduction

0.1 In accordance with the decision by HOD 60-2021 (Paragraph 5.10), the 15th Meeting of the HELCOM Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (PRESSURE 15-2021) was held online, on 2-4 November 2021.

0.2 All Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention, except for the European Union, attended the Meeting. Observers from Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), Baltic Farmers' Forum on Environment (BFFE), European Federation of National Associations of Water and Wastewater Services (EurEau), Race for the Baltic and John Nurminen Foundation as well as invited guests from Baltic Nest Institute (BNI) and the Data Consultants from EMEP MSC-W and MSC-E also attended the Meeting. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Lars Sonesten, Chair of the Pressure Group. Ms. Lotta Ruokanen, Ms. Marta Ruiz and Ms. Susanna Kaasinen from the HELCOM Secretariat acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

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

Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other HELCOM work

2.1 The Meeting took note of the extracts from the outcomes of meetings of relevance to the work of the Pressure Working Group (document 2-3). The Meeting also took note of the Outcome of MARITIME 21-2021, specifically the discussions regarding continuous underwater noise with proposing close dialogue and cooperation between the Maritime and Pressure Working Groups in matters further addressed under Agenda Items 4 (underwater noise) and 6 (hazardous substances).

2.2 The Meeting considered the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan and the associated action documents and supporting documents (document 2-1, **Presentation 1**). The Meeting welcomed the successful outcome of the Ministerial Meeting and took note of the clarification by the Secretariat that as the 2021 BSAP was adopted less than two weeks ago the process on how to proceed with implementing the actions on Working Group and Expert Group levels will be defined in the coming weeks and months, and once guidance from HOD 61-2021 is received.

2.3 The Meeting also took note that the Work Plans for most of the Working Groups will be revised.

2.4 The Meeting took note of the request by Germany to have clarity as soon as possible on how the implementation of the updated BSAP actions, in particular the joint actions, will be tackled and prioritised and whether a lead country approach will be used, to provide Contracting Parties with sufficient time to come with concrete offers to PRESSURE 16-2022. Furthermore, Germany requested clarity on the role of the expert groups in implementing the updated BSAP, to be clarified in the Terms of Reference for each group.

2.5 The Meeting took note of the endorsement of indicators at STATE&CONSERVATION 15-2021 (document 2-2).

Agenda Item 3 Marine litter*Drafting HELCOM Recommendation on expanded and extruded polystyrene*

3.1 The Meeting discussed the draft HELCOM Recommendation on reduction of EPS and XPS emissions (document 3-1) and agreed to submit it to HOD 61-2021 for approval with a view to its adoption by HELCOM 43-2022.

3.2 The Meeting took note of the information provided by Finland on their voluntary Green Deal agreement with the construction sector which may be able to contribute to the development of best practice on handling EPS/XPS on construction and demolition sites included in the draft Recommendation.

Follow-up of EU and global processes related to marine litter

3.3 The Meeting took note of the information on the follow-up of the global and EU processes related to marine litter in connection to HELCOM work on the topic (document 3-4).

3.4 The Meeting discussed and agreed on HELCOM's participation in the EU Regional Seas Conventions joint event to be organised in conjunction with the 2022 MARLICE international forum, on 20 May 2022 in Seville, Spain to be submitted to HOD 61-2021 for approval, pending a study reservation by Denmark to be clarified by **22 November 2021**.

3.5 The Meeting discussed the modality/output of the joint event, was of the view that it is premature at this stage to decide on specific input to the UNEA process and agreed on it to be a roundtable on approaches towards global cooperation.

Outputs from the FanPLESStic-Sea project

3.6 The Meeting took note of the information on the implementation of the FanPLESStic-sea project (document 3-9).

3.7 The Meeting discussed the revised draft HELCOM policy brief "Tyre wear particles– how to mitigate the problem?" (document 3-2) and welcomed it as a project output, but was of the view that the document needs further improvement to be considered as a HELCOM policy brief.

3.8 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties and Observers to provide input to the revised draft HELCOM policy brief on "Tyre wear particles– how to mitigate the problem?" to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) by **15 February 2022**, so that a further developed policy brief can be submitted to PRESSURE 16-2022 for consideration.

3.9 The Meeting discussed the draft HELCOM policy brief "Existing and emerging technologies for microplastics removal from wastewater and stormwater" (document 3-6).

3.10 The Meeting suggested to further improve the draft HELCOM policy brief by including mentioning the importance of upstream measures with regards to WWTPs and their role as a pathway of microplastics and cost-effectiveness analysis of the available technologies described in the document, noting that additional information on the latter is expected to be available from an upcoming output of the FanPLESStic-sea project.

3.11 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties and Observers to provide input to the draft HELCOM policy brief on "Existing and emerging technologies for microplastics removal from wastewater and stormwater" to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) by **15 February 2022**, so that a further developed policy brief can be submitted to PRESSURE 16-2022 for consideration.

3.12 The Meeting discussed the draft HELCOM policy brief "Mapping microplastic flows and pathways" (document 3-8), welcomed the document, but was of the view that its content summarises technical aspects on sampling, analysing and monitoring methods which makes it research-oriented in nature rather than a HELCOM policy brief.

3.13 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to share the document with EN-Marine Litter and HELCOM Activity 3 on marine litter of the HELCOM BLUES project as a contribution to their work on monitoring and assessment of microplastics.

- 3.14 The Meeting took note of the draft report on mapping microplastics flows for a model region as well as the Excel-based tool to estimate each source of microplastics (document 3-7).
- 3.15 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties and Observers to provide input to the draft report on mapping microplastics flows to the Secretariat (matleena.vuola@helcom.fi) by **22 November 2021**, and noted that a further developed draft report will be presented at the FanPLESStic-Sea final conference to be held on **30 November 2021**.
- Implementation of the revised Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML)*
- 3.16 The Meeting took note that STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 was of the view that Recommendation 36/1 on the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter would be a better fit under the Pressure Working Group where other issues related to marine litter are also dealt with. The Meeting discussed the proposal by State and Conservation WG and agreed that the Pressure WG will host the updated Recommendation in its entirety.
- 3.17 The Meeting took note that the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting adopted the HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/3 on Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.
- 3.18 The Meeting discussed questions to be addressed for a successful start for the implementation of the Revised Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML, document 3-3). In particular, the Meeting discussed the template for an action implementation plan (Annex 1 in document 3-3) and agreed on the template with the following modifications:
- Change “main outcome” to “final outcome”; and
 - Add another row on “operational targets” to indicate the contribution of the action to the HELCOM ecological and management objectives on marine litter included in the 2021 BSAP.
- 3.19 The Meeting discussed and agreed on holding a workshop dedicated to the implementation of the Action Plan back-to-back with PRESSURE 16-2022.
- 3.20 The Meeting discussed the prioritization of actions in the revised RAP ML and supported the proposal by CCB to raise this question in the Final Conference of the FanPLESStic-Sea project in connection with actions related to microplastics.
- 3.21 The Meeting agreed on the following procedure to advance the prioritization of actions in the revised RAP ML:
- Contracting Parties to take the lead of individual actions in the Action Plan and inform the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) accordingly by **14 January 2022**;
 - Lead countries of the individual actions in the Action Plan to fill in the template for an action implementation plan by **15 February 2022**;
 - Meeting of EN-Marine Litter to be held in February/March (date tbc) for their contribution to the actions’ implementation plans; and
 - Further consideration of the implementation of the RAP ML in the Workshop on the matter to be held back-to-back with PRESSURE 16-2022.
- 3.22 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Denmark to lead actions RL10, RL12, RL13 and RS2 in the RAP ML.
- 3.23 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Finland to lead action RL9.
- 3.24 The Meeting took note that Sweden is considering to taking the lead on actions RS5 and RS8, which will be confirmed at a later stage.
- 3.25 The Meeting took note that HOD 60B-2021 agreed to include Recommendation 42-43/4 as an entry to the HELCOM Explorer online tool for tracking the progress of HELCOM commitments. The Meeting discussed and agreed on the mechanism to be used to follow up the implementation of the Recommendation.

Draft revised Terms of Reference for EN-Marine Litter

3.26 The Meeting agreed to change the name from “Expert Network on Marine Litter (EN-Marine Litter)” to “Expert Group on Marine Litter” (EG Marine Litter) (document 3-5).

3.27 The Meeting considered the updated ToR for HELCOM EG Marine Litter for the period 2022-2024 and endorsed their revised version as contained in **Annex 2** for submission to HOD 61-2021 for approval.

Other issues related to marine litter

3.28 The Meeting took note that HOD 60-2021 adopted the revised HELCOM Recommendation 23/5-Rev. 1 on reduction of discharges from urban areas by the proper management of storm water systems (Outcome of HOD 60-2021, para. 5.16 and Annex 3) which is available on the [HELCOM website](#).

3.29 The Meeting took note of and welcomed the information on the Clean Games and its Baltic Cup as contained in document 3-10.

Agenda Item 4 Underwater noise*Implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise (RAP Noise)*

4.1 The Meeting took note that the HELCOM Recommendation on the Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise has been adopted and is available on the [HELCOM website](#) as Recommendation 42-43/1.

4.2 The Meeting discussed the template for a regional action implementation plan (document 4-1) and noted that it is straightforward and simple. The Meeting agreed on the template for a regional action implementation plan (Annex 1 in document 4-1).

4.3 The Meeting discussed the template for reporting on implementation of regional and voluntary national actions (Annex 2 in document 4-1) noting that only regional actions of the RAP will be followed up. The Meeting was of the opinion that the template on implementation needs further work.

4.4 The Meeting invited EN-Noise and the Secretariat to develop a revised version of the template for PRESSURE 16-2022, taking on board the following input by the Meeting:

- the implementation plan of each action and prioritization of actions will help to clarify the follow-up to be as simple as possible;
- further develop how to include the information on the costs referred to in the template, possibly in a cost-benefit form, with support from EN ESA;
- to further clarify the schedule and required contributions of CP's, EN-Noise and Lead Countries for reporting requirements;
- to be further considered how to quantify the achieved reductions of the environmental pressure in the reporting requirements.

4.5 The Meeting discussed and agreed on the mechanism to be used to follow up the implementation of the Recommendation, taking into account the suggestions by Germany and Sweden to update the Excel table with an additional column for milestones or status related to prioritized actions to have more detailed information of the status than just “on-going” as well as a column on areas encountered during the implementation, which will require more resources.

4.6 The Meeting discussed the prioritization of actions (document 4-4), thanked CCB for a good and practical proposal and supported the suggestion on emphasizing the actual noise reducing measures when there is enough information based on pilot studies and literature as a very good basis for the prioritization.

4.7 The Meeting invited EN-Noise to work on the prioritization of actions and provide a proposal to PRESSURE 16-2022 for consideration. The Meeting pointed out that such prioritization is to consider actions which are mature and ready to be implemented and taking into account document 4-4.

Report on the activities of EN-Noise

4.8 The Meeting took note of the report on the activities of HELCOM EN-Noise (document 4-3).

Draft revised Terms of Reference for EN-Noise

4.9 The Meeting agreed to change the name of the “Expert Network on Underwater Noise (EN-Noise)” to “Expert Group on Underwater Noise” (EG Noise) (document 4-2).

4.10 The Meeting considered and endorsed for submission to HOD 61-2021 for approval the updated ToR for HELCOM EG Noise for the period 2022-2024 as included in **Annex 3**.

4.11 The Meeting expressed their concerns that additional resources may be needed to accomplish the actions in the ToRs and invited the Secretariat to raise this issue when submitting the document to HOD 61-2021.

Other issues related to underwater noise

4.12 The Meeting took note that MARITIME 21-2021 was held on 27-29 October 2021. Underwater noise issues were considered under Agenda Item 11 ([Outcome of MARITIME 21-2021](#), paragraphs 11.3-11.12). There, the meeting invited the Secretariat to inform PRESSURE 15-2021 of the discussions regarding continuous underwater noise and agreed that a close dialogue and cooperation between the Maritime and Pressure Working Groups should be maintained in matters related to continuous underwater noise. In this regard, MARITIME 21-2021 considered the following documents:

- working paper “How can ports act to reduce underwater noise from shipping? Identifying effective management frameworks” ([document 11-2](#));
- underwater noise emissions from Baltic Sea shipping in 2006 – 2020 ([document 11-5](#)), which is based on AIS data and modelling, and which is to be shared with HELCOM EG Noise; and
- review of studies on the potential of slow steaming for reducing emissions and underwater radiated noise as presented by CCB ([document 11-3](#), [Presentation 9](#)) and agreed to make use of this information when implementing relevant actions of the updated BSAP and the HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/1 (RAP Noise).

4.13 The Meeting took note that MARITIME 21-2021 noted a comment that although the studies referred to in document 11-3 indicate a reduction in underwater noise through slow steaming, other studies (c.f. e.g. document 11-5) show that noise levels have been increasing with increased ship traffic and more frequent slow steaming, and that the matter therefore needs to be considered further. The meeting invited Contracting Parties and Observers to submit documents presenting results from studies on underwater noise and its environmental impacts to MARITIME 22-2022, including also information on other sources of continuous underwater noise than shipping. The meeting also agreed that inviting the Chair of EG Noise and relevant experts on underwater noise to participate in MARITIME 22-2022 would be useful noting the offer by CCB to arrange a seminar on continuous underwater noise before MARITIME 22-2022 to enable a more detailed presentation and discussion of the documents to be submitted to the meeting.

4.14 The Meeting took note of Russia’s proposal to have an expedition in the Baltic Sea to identify sources of underwater noise hosted by Russia. The Meeting thanked Russia for the proposal and encouraged the Secretariat to discuss the possible expedition with Russian experts in the frame of EG Noise.

Agenda Item 5 Physical damage to the seafloor*State of reporting on handling of dredged material at sea*

5.1 The Meeting considered the state of the reporting on handling of dredged material in the Baltic Sea (document 5-2) and noted that also Russia and Denmark have reported their data after the submission of the document. The Meeting further took note that the Secretariat will check whether the reporting by Lithuania has been received and that Latvia will finalise their reporting after some missing data is included.

Draft revised Terms of Reference for EN DREDS

5.2 The Meeting agreed to change the name “HELCOM Expert Network on dredging/depositing operations at sea” to “HELCOM Expert Group on dredging/depositing operations at sea” (document 5-1).

5.3 The Meeting considered the draft updated ToR for HELCOM EG DREDS and welcomed that supporting the reporting to London Convention/London Protocol and cooperation with EN BENTHIC are included in the updated ToR. The Meeting took note that Sweden welcomed the proposed update of the group's 'Recommendation and Guidance for handling dredged material at sea' and associated BAT and BEP, as these are important for national work. The Meeting agreed to include the below mentioned matters into the updated ToR and invited the Secretariat to make the updates. The Meeting endorsed the updated ToR for submission to HOD 61-2021 for approval with these updates included:

- consider and provide expert input to all relevant actions in the updated BSAP ;
- control concentration of mercury in dredged material and undertake possible measures to prevent its release during dredging operations and handling of dredged material;
- The group will deliver: e) proposals for HELCOM measures to reduce physical disturbance and loss caused by dredging/depositing operations.

Agenda Item 6 Hazardous substances

Publication of the report on micropollutants in effluents from wastewater treatment plants, policy messages and database availability

6.1 The Meeting considered the draft report on micropollutants in WWTPs' effluents (document 6-1) and agreed in principle to recommend it to be published in the HELCOM BSEP series.

6.2 The Meeting took note of the views that the comparison of freshwater EQS values and WWTP effluents is questionable, as direct application of these values for assessment of the level of contamination of effluents from WWTPs does not consider dilution in mixing zones in water bodies. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to add a clarification on the use of EQSs only as indicative comparison on the magnitude of contamination in tables and the introduction, and to correct some editorial inconsistencies in detection frequencies and the terms detection limit and limit of quantification, decimals and table captions.

6.3 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties and Observers to provide input to the draft report to the Secretariat (Dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi) by **12 November 2021**, so that the finalized report can be submitted to HOD 61-2021 for approval to be published in the HELCOM BSEP series.

6.4 The Meeting decided that the HELCOM joint action on micropollutants in WWTPs' effluents is accomplished when the report is published, noting that further regional work will continue within the EG HAZ as the report and policy briefs highlight knowledge gaps, indicate research needs and call for the development of concrete actions.

6.5 The Meeting considered the draft policy briefs and endorsed in principle their publication as HELCOM policy messages to be submitted for approval by HOD 61-2021 with a possibility for Contracting Parties and Observers to send editorial corrections and updates by **12 November 2021** to the Secretariat (Dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi).

6.6 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to complete the missing literature references in some of the policy briefs and to find a more visible place on the HELCOM website for all HELCOM policy briefs.

6.7 The Meeting took note that the report on micropollutants in WWTPs' effluents and policy briefs were prepared in cooperation with Interreg projects BSR WATER and CWPHERMA, and BONUS CLEANWATER project. The Meeting welcomed the contribution of the projects to HELCOM work and thanked the projects for the work done.

6.8 The Meeting exchanged views on opportunities of establishing and maintaining databases on hazardous substances available for the expert community and recalled that there are several actions under the 2021 BSAP where there is a task to increase data availability on hazardous substances (e.g. HL21 and HL22).

6.9 The Meeting highlighted the importance of building on some already existing HELCOM database or data sharing framework, and to take into account the upcoming HOLAS III data management and expected

EG HAZ work. The Meeting recalled that there is a Creative commons licence for all HELCOM data and in [the HELCOM monitoring and assessment strategy](#) (non-commercial free use with reference to the origin).

6.10 The Meeting agreed to make the data reported for the call on micropollutants publicly available when the above-mentioned matters are taken into account.

Status of the screening campaign

6.11 The Meeting took note of the status of the wide-scope screening campaign on hazardous substances with sampling going on until 1 March 2022, and noted that the target and non-target screening campaign on marine mammals that Germany has conducted is finalized and that the upcoming report will be shared with State and Conservation and Pressure WGs.

Draft revised Terms of Reference for the EN-HZ and developing the hazardous substances work of HELCOM

6.12 The Meeting considered the draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Group on Hazardous Substances (document 6-3), and welcomed the updated ToR noting that the higher ambition level requires further support of Contracting Parties and a clear work plan.

6.13 The Meeting supported the proposal for the expansion of responsibilities and the transformation to being an Expert Group jointly guided by State and Conservation and Pressure Working Groups.

6.14 The Meeting endorsed the draft ToR to be submitted to HOD 61-2021 for approval.

Loads of metals and PAHs from shipping and leisure boating

6.15 The Meeting took note of the information from MARITIME 21-2021 regarding volumes of various substances discharged from ships ([document 11-4 to MARITIME 21-2021](#)) and metal and PAH loads from ships and boats in the Baltic Sea ([document 11-6 to MARITIME 21-2021](#)).

6.16 The Meeting considered the information to be very relevant for addressing the total loads of hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea and thanked MARITIME 21-2021 for sharing this information with the Group. The Meeting noted that shipping appeared to be responsible for about 1/3 of the total copper load to the Baltic Sea.

Airborne input of hazardous substances, EMEP report and approval of the Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets

6.17 The Meeting considered the draft Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets on the airborne input of selected hazardous substances (document 6-2, **Presentation 2**), thanked EMEP for the interesting and useful reports, and invited EMEP to add general information on contributing sectors, country-wise sources, and maps on emissions and deposition that were in the presentation.

6.18 The Meeting took note of the comments by RedCore DG chair including the proposed requests for EMEP on a new contract (document 7-14).

6.19 The Meeting in principle approved the publication of the Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets on the airborne input of selected hazardous substances, pending revisions presented in document 7-14 and in the Meeting and agreed on a written procedure to gather suggestions for updating the Fact Sheets by **12 November 2021** to EMEP (alexey.gusev@msceast.org) with a copy to the Secretariat (lotta.ruokanen@helcom.fi). The Meeting invited EMEP to provide the revised Fact Sheets to the Secretariat by **30 November 2021**.

Agenda Item 7

Eutrophication

Airborne input of nutrients, EMEP report and approval of the Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets

7.1 The Meeting considered the draft Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets on nitrogen emissions and deposition (document 7-5, **Presentation 3**), thanked EMEP for the excellent information and report, and proposed some updates on the policy context, statistical analyses, and including the Gothenburg Protocol review process.

7.2 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to deliver the report to the Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices for consideration when planning measures to control ammonia emissions mainly produced in the agricultural sector, and to request a clarification from the GREEN TEAM under Maritime WG regarding possible eutrophication risks associated with ammonia as a ship fuel.

7.3 The Meeting took note of the comments by RedCore DG chair including the proposed requests for EMEP on a new contract (document 7-14).

7.4 The Meeting in principle approved the publication of the Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets on nitrogen emissions and deposition, pending revisions presented in document 7-14 and in the Meeting and agreed on a written procedure to gather suggestions for revising the Fact Sheets by **12 November 2021** to EMEP (michael.gauss@met.no) with a copy to the Secretariat (lotta.ruokanen@helcom.fi). The Meeting invited EMEP to provide the revised Fact Sheets to the Secretariat **by 30 November 2021**.

PLC-7 Thematic report on the assessment of effectiveness of selected measures to reduce input of nutrients to the Baltic Sea

7.5 The Meeting considered the report on the effectiveness of measures to reduce the input of nutrients (document 7-2) as well as an outline of the work planned for this subject in PLC-8, thanked Finland for the substantially improved report as a valuable product for national work and welcomed it as a PLC-7 output. The Meeting observed that the analysis focused on point sources and that there is a need for similar work concerning diffuse sources, particularly agriculture.

7.6 The Meeting took note of the position of Germany that the recommendations in chapter 7 cannot be considered as binding requirements but rather as advice. Germany also highlighted that the future work on the effectiveness of measures in PLC-8 needs to align with action E1 in the updated BSAP in order to support Contracting Parties in their fulfilment of this action and to avoid double work.

7.7 The Meeting noted a remark by CCB that the report contributes to the implementation of the BSAP action E23 on strengthening the Recommendation 28E/5.

7.8 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to do an editorial check and layouting for the report, endorsed the report and recommended HOD 61-2021 to approve its publication in the HELCOM BSEP series.

PLC-7 project implementation

7.9 The Meeting took note of the report on national methodologies applied for PLC-7 assessment and its publication as part of the PLC-7 project materials (document 7-12).

7.10 The Meeting considered the PLC-7 project implementation report taking note that most of the PLC-7 products except for the thematic report on the sources and pathways of nutrients and the PLC-7 executive summary have been delivered (document 7-7).

7.11 The Meeting discussed the proposed content of the report on the sources and pathways of nutrients to the Baltic Sea proposed by the Project Manager and welcomed the inclusion of new information in the thematic report. However, the Meeting pointed out that pie charts are not always the most suitable way to present very detailed information, and invited the PLC implementation group to consider the substitution of pie charts by tables with absolute values of inputs from different sources or stacked bar charts, or using pie charts reflecting areal proportional inputs for illustrating changes in the contribution of different sources.

7.12 The Meeting took note that the delay of the delivery of the thematic report on sources and pathways of nutrients as well as the PLC-7 executive summary is caused by the delay of PLC periodic data reporting.

7.13 The Meeting recalled that the whole work on identification of nutrient sources was originally planned as a contribution to the development of river basin management plans under WFD which have been already finalized. The Meeting pointed out that the delay hinders the use of the products for national purposes, and that measures to minimize the risk of such delay of key deliverables of PLC-8 project are to be undertaken. The Meeting also pointed out that the comparison of the periodic reporting years 2017 and 2021

will be of specifically high importance for the PLC-8 project since it would indicate the effects of changes in the methodologies, e.g. on natural background losses.

7.14 The Meeting expressed appreciation of the amount of work, including continuous improvement of the methodological base, done by the PLC implementation group and agreed on the proposed plan to finalise remaining PLC-7 project deliverables (document 7-7, **Presentation 4**) with

- the draft source apportionment report delivered to PLC-8 IG **by 1 December 2021** for discussion in PLC-8 IG6 on 15-17 December 2021;
- circulation of the final draft source apportionment report **by mid-January 2022** to the Pressure WG together with draft Executive Summary of the PLC-7 project for endorsement via correspondence **by 1 February 2022**;
- if necessary, arrange an extra PLC-8 IG meeting **in February** for finalising the two products;
- submit these two products for approval to HELCOM 43-2022 in **March 2022**.

Revised PLC Water Guidelines and possible revision of Rec 37-38-1 and 37-38-2

7.15 The Meeting considered the revised HELCOM PLC-water Guidelines (document 7-6).

7.16 The Meeting took note that some references between the chapters will still be updated, and formulas corrected in chapter 10.

7.17 The Meeting welcomed the introduction of the new sub-chapter “Accounting for extra reduction in the evaluation of fulfillment of MAI and NIC” into the guidelines as well as the harmonization of the document with the respective guidelines by OSPAR. The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to utilize the guidelines when obtaining national PLC data, highlighting the importance of harmonized and scientifically sound methodology for reporting on natural background loads.

7.18 The Meeting adopted the guidelines and agreed to submit them to HOD 61-2021 for information to supplement the document on the revision of HELCOM Recommendations 37-38/1 and 37-38/2.

7.19 The Meeting considered the proposed revision of HELCOM Recommendations 37-38-1 and 37-38-2 (document 7-1).

7.20 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to check the first paragraph on page 3 of the draft Recommendation 37-38/2 for consistency of the text.

7.21 The Meeting took note of the clarification that the reporting deadline has been removed from the draft Recommendation 37-38/1 and included in the PLC-Water Guidelines to gain a more flexible approach.

7.22 Noting that the recommendations must be approved by the annual meeting of HELCOM, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to consider whether HELCOM recommendations were the most appropriate mechanism for implementing these monitoring activities.

7.23 The Meeting agreed not to include mercury in the mandatory monitoring programme in Recommendation 37-38/2 since it is currently not monitored by all Contracting Parties but to keep it as part of the voluntary national or joint programmes.

7.24 The Meeting endorsed the documents with the agreed changes for approval by HOD 61-2021 with a subsequent adoption by HELCOM as included in **Annexes 4 and 5**.

Revision of the Strategy for future PLC deliverables document

7.25 The Meeting considered the updated Procedures for the reporting of data for HELCOM pollution load compilation (PLC) and releasing of PLC products based on the reported data (document 7-3).

7.26 The Meeting pointed out an error of the reporting year in step 4 of the periodical data reporting and corrected it to “following the second year after data collection”.

7.27 The Meeting agreed on the proposed procedures and their timeframe as well as to include the document in the PLC-Water Guidelines as an annex.

7.28 The Meeting strongly encouraged the Contracting Parties to keep to the agreed deadlines for reporting.

Update of the MAI core indicator and the updated indicator report

7.29 The Meeting considered the HELCOM core indicator on inputs of nutrients (document 7-16, Presentation 5).

7.30 The Meeting welcomed the document, especially the analysis on the underlying factors for the changes in nutrient inputs and the separate analyses on waterborne and airborne inputs, and provided the following comments:

- In 2019, the actual inputs were below MAI in almost every basin while this is not true for the flow normalized inputs. However, this would be an important result to highlight as the actual nutrient inputs affect the eutrophication status.
- There has been an increase in normalized total nitrogen inputs e.g. to BAP from Sweden in recent year, but the corresponding actual inputs decreased and it would be good to provide explanation on the possible causes e.g. changes in the calculation methods or weather conditions.
- The text should more clearly indicate the contribution of small ships to the emissions from shipping.
- The text on trend analysis in the annex should be revised or alternatively it could be deleted and a reference to the PLC guidelines could be added.
- The texts concerning EMEP need to be revised and EMEP is invited to provide the amended texts to the Project Manager.

7.31 The Meeting endorsed the document in principle and invited the Contracting Parties to submit additional comments to the Project Manager (lms@dce.au.dk) and the Secretariat (lotta.ruokanen@helcom.fi) **by 10 November 2021**, followed by the submission of the revised document to HOD 61-2021 for approval.

PLC workshop in 2022

7.32 The Meeting took note of the proposed scope of the PLC workshop on the effectiveness of measures and the analysis of implementation obstacles/best practice (document 7-8) and invited the Secretariat to prepare a proposal on the workshop for HOD 61-2021 based on the document.

PLC-8 project implementation

7.33 The Meeting took note of the final draft report “Statistical aspects in relation to Baltic Sea Pollution Load Compilation” under PLC-8 project (document 7-15) and welcomed the report as a very useful document also for national statistical analyses and the work with river basin management authorities.

7.34 The Meeting took note of the progress of the PLC-8 project and the tasks already completed (document 7-13) and welcomed the good progress achieved so far.

7.35 The Meeting highlighted that it would be important to have the follow-up results of the new NICs available as soon as possible. The Meeting recalled that in the updated BSAP it is agreed that the NIC follow-up will take place every second year and took note that the first follow-up of the new NICs is planned for autumn 2022 based on the 2020 data.

7.36 The Meeting regretted that the follow-up results are not available earlier since there is a high demand for the results by the HELCOM community as well as projects. The Meeting also pointed out that the results of the follow-up would be a valuable input for the planned PLC workshop in 2022. The Meeting invited the RedCore DG to find a solution to have draft product, based on the latest NIC assessment, indicating possible changes due to the new NIC values already available for PRESSURE 16-2022.

Marine eutrophication in the review of the Gothenburg Protocol

7.37 The Meeting took note of the report on progress achieved by RedCore DG in establishing communication with the Ad-hoc group on Marine Protection (AMP) on accounting for marine eutrophication in the review of the Gothenburg protocol and agreed on the proposed methodology to calculate critical atmospheric inputs (CAI) (document 7-9, **Presentation 6**).

7.38 The Meeting acknowledged that the results are intended for guidance and additional information to achieve MAI and NIC. The Meeting took note that the presented approach is based on the polluter pays principle but a more complex approach with integrated assessment modelling taking into account cost-effectiveness could be developed.

7.39 The Meeting agreed that geographical information of the Baltic Basins as well as the respective CAI data are delivered to the Coordination Centre of Effects (CCE) of CLRTAP, which will integrate the marine receptor data into the database for critical loads for terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. CCE under the CLRTAP inter alia is responsible for performing the common exceedance calculations and mapping of critical loads for eutrophication.

7.40 The Meeting discussed the possibility of deriving CAIs for coastal waters and took note of an example calculation by Germany (**Presentation 7**). The Meeting pointed out that deriving CAIs for coastal waters could bring added value to the national work to reach the WFD targets but took note that currently there is no intention in including coastal waters in the process.

7.41 The Meeting took note that the general aim of the cooperation with the Gothenburg Protocol is that the revised reduction targets of the Protocol up to 2030 would take into account also marine waters.

7.42 The Meeting agreed on the continuation of the cooperation on the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol based on the proposed methodological approach.

Draft HELCOM policy message based on the BEST project recommendations

7.43 The Meeting considered the draft policy brief on Industrial wastewaters at municipal treatment plants (document 7-4, **Presentation 8**).

7.44 The Meeting took note of the following comments:

- The size of the utility is not in all cases an indication of the wastewater treatment efficiency.
- The third recommendation in the policy brief could be formulated to be more easily understandable.
- Regarding the fifth recommendation, the wording could be broadened to indicate that also regional guidelines could be used in place of national harmonization to support regulation.

7.45 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties and Observers to send additional comments to John Nurminen Foundation (Marjukka.porvari@jnfoundation.fi) by **31 December 2021**. The Meeting also invited the Secretariat to connect the recommendations in the policy brief with the relevant BSAP actions and HELCOM Recommendations and to submit the revised policy brief to PRESSURE 16-2022.

Report on nutrient loading from phosphogypsum stacks

7.46 The Meeting considered the report on the state of the phosphogypsum stacks in the Baltic Sea Region based on reported data (document 7-10)

7.47 The Meeting discussed the discrepancies with table 1 in the report and took note that the Lithuanian data in table 1 does not represent the phosphorus load to the Baltic Sea but the load used in the production process and this load is not released to the environment. The Meeting noted that this information should be clarified in the report. The Meeting also took note that there is a monitoring programme in place but according to the reported data it only contains wastewater and groundwater.

7.48 The Meeting took note of the view by John Nurminen Foundation that the data in the report is of questionable quality and that more focus should be placed on protection measures, especially protective side walls, that considerably reduce the risk of leakage.

7.49 The Meeting took note of the concern by Finland that there still might be significant leaching from the stacks and that exchange of information should be continued. Finland also wished more measurement data on phosphorus concentration in the Martwa Wisła River and on measuring points from Police to assess the sources of leakage.

7.50 The Meeting agreed not to publish the report at this stage but to organize an extended meeting of the RedCore DG dedicated to phosphogypsum stacks and welcomed the offer by the John Nurminen Foundation and CCB to support the meeting and invite relevant experts.

Report on sewage sludge handling

7.51 The Meeting considered the draft overview of sewage sludge handling in the Baltic Sea region in 2018 (document 7-11).

7.52 The Meeting took note of the minor corrections to the document provided by Russia on the Rules of Cold Water Supply and Sanitation and waste incineration.

7.53 The Meeting took note of the concern by CCB and EurEau regarding the quality of the data especially in tables 1 and 4. The Meeting also took note of the information on the EU portal regarding the implementation of the UWWTD that is relevant for the update of the report.

7.54 The Meeting took note that the Danish reporting is missing as Denmark does not have a national database for sewage sludge but the information is stored by the municipalities.

7.55 The Meeting agreed to publish the report, after an editorial review, as a living document indicating that it will be updated.

7.56 The Meeting discussed the revision of the HELCOM Recommendation 38/1 on sewage sludge handling noting that according to the Recommendation, the review is due in 2021. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to circulate **by 12 November 2021** an invitation to the Contracting Parties to submit proposals for the needs for revision of the Recommendation **by the end of 2021**. The Meeting further invited the Secretariat to submit a compilation of the feedback to PRESSURE 16-2021.

Agenda Item 8 New hot spot related actions in the updated BSAP and organization of their regional implementation

8.1 The Meeting welcomed the hot spot related actions in the updated BSAP and discussed their implementation (document 8-2). The Meeting observed that hot spot work had been very successful and was now closely associated with the "HELCOM Approach".

8.2 The Meeting took note that hot spots are a priority for the German Chairmanship of HELCOM and welcomed the offer by Germany to take a lead in developing criteria for designating new hot spots for nutrient inputs and submit an outline to PRESSURE 16-2022. However, the Meeting further took note that Germany would require assistance in identifying a suitable approach of how to address this topic and that Germany would not look at hazardous substances, litter or other emerging topics.

8.3 The Meeting took note of the view by John Nurminen Foundation that the deletion of hot spots should not be rushed to ensure that the appropriate measures have been taken and the pollution load reduced, that the designation of hot spots should focus on the pollution source and that the criteria should focus on the impacts and pollution load reduction and not measures.

8.4 The Meeting discussed the implementation of the actions and took note of the initial views that there could be a dedicated expert group, a time limited project or the PLC project plan could be expanded to support the work.

8.5 The Meeting took note of the management measures taken under the regime of the Water Framework Directive and the Odra Commission as well as the Habitats and other EU Directives regarding the river Odra and the Odra lagoon catchment area (German part) (document 8-1).

8.6 The Meeting took note that Poland will provide information on the management measures taken by Poland to PRESSURE 16-2022.

8.7 The Meeting discussed the documentation for the proposed deletion of the Odra lagoon hot spot and provided the following comments:

- It is not fully clear from the documentation if the measures have already been taken or if they are only planned. It seems that most of the planned measures are focused on hydromorphological issues and not devoted to eutrophication. There should be a more detailed description on the reduction of nutrient load from agriculture, especially phosphorus inputs.
- It should be clarified whether the water quality of the lagoon is in compliance with the set criteria.
- It would be good to provide references to clarify why downstream measures are not considered relevant.
- It seems that trials with zebra mussels (extractive aquaculture) have been conducted in the lagoon although in other countries they are considered invasive.
- Due to the lack of the documentation by Poland, there is no information on the measures taken to prevent pollution from the Polish phosphogypsum stack.
- There are inconsistencies with the tables and figures in the documentation and it should be clarified if also the total nitrogen load has been reduced.

8.8 The Meeting took note of the proposal by CCB to HELCOM to cooperate with the International Commission for the Protection of the Odra River against Pollution for further evaluation of the application.

8.9 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties and Observers to send further comments to Germany (clemens.engelke@lung.mv-regierung.de).

8.10 The Meeting took note of the actions that have been and will be taken to improve agricultural water protection in the catchment area of the Archipelago Sea catchment area so that by 2027 the site can be removed from the HELCOM's hot spot list of major polluters (document 8-3) and invited Finland to report on the progress of the project in future Pressure WG meetings.

Agenda Item 9 Any other business

9.1 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties and Observers to check the contact information for Pressure WG in document 9-1 and inform the Secretariat (susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi) of any changes.

9.2 The Meeting congratulated Bo Gustafsson for receiving the [2021 Ruth Patrick Award](#), awarded by the Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography to honour an aquatic scientist whose research leads to the identification, analysis or solution of critical environmental challenges.

9.3 The Meeting took note of the [HELCOM Workshop on Blue Carbon Potential in the Baltic Sea region](#) to be organized online on 17-18 November 2021 and the request by Germany that more Contracting Parties and especially authorities should register.

9.4 The Meeting took note that the final call for project proposals by the [BSAP fund](#) is open.

9.5 The Meeting took note of the document by CCB, John Nurminen Foundation and Race for the Baltic on the work to reduce nutrient losses from fertilizer handling in ports submitted to MARITIME 21-2021 as [document 6-1](#).

9.6 The Meeting took note of the [webinar](#) on the implementation of the Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy organized by PA Nutri and PA Bioeconomy on 22 November 2021.

Agenda Item 10 Election of Vice-Chair(s)

10.1 The Meeting took note that there were no nominations for Vice-Chair and agreed to come back to the issue of the election of Vice-Chair(s) in PRESSURE 16-2022. The Meeting thanked Mr. Ari Kangas, Finland, for his contribution to the work of the Group as Vice-Chair in 2019-2021.

Annex 2. Draft Terms of Reference for HELCOM Expert Group on Marine Litter for 2022-2024

The call for establishing this expert group has been raised through the need to (i) facilitate the implementation of the revised Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, (ii) develop regional core indicators on marine litter and (iii) carry out regional assessments on occurrence and impacts of marine litter in the Baltic Sea.

The duties of the expert group are detailed in the following sections to be fulfilled in the period 2022-2024, in coherence with similar work undertaken by Contracting Parties in other relevant fora. Pressure Working Group will regularly revisit the progress of the work according to these ToR and will consider, together with State and Conservation Working Group, arrangements for further work beyond 2024.

Objectives and tasks

Facilitate the implementation of the revised Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter

As part of the work of the Pressure Working Group and in cooperation with Maritime Working Group and other groups as appropriate, the HELCOM EG Marine litter will:

- Provide expertise to facilitate practical implementation of the HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/3. More specifically, the HELCOM EG Marine Litter will support the Lead Parties for the implementation of individual actions and provide expertise to facilitate implementation of actions with no lead.
- Seek synergies with other Regional Seas Conventions, namely OSPAR, ~~the Barcelona Convention~~ and the Bucharest Convention and the Barcelona Convention, Northwest Pacific Action Plan, and Arctic Council but also other international fora, such as the ICES, the UN, its specialized agencies and the EU. Contracting Parties being also EU member states will regularly coordinate with the MSFD Technical Group on Marine Litter.
- Provide expert input, as may be requested by HELCOM working groups e.g. Maritime WG, on relevant measures to reduce further inputs of marine litter from sea- and land-based sources and impacts of marine litter in the HELCOM area.
- Provide expert input to the relevant action in the updated BSAP.

Monitoring and assessment

The HELCOM EG Marine Litter will act as the platform for discussion and review of HELCOM indicators on marine litter being developed by Lead Countries and appointed experts as part of the work by State and Conservation Working Group. More specifically, the HELCOM EG Marine Litter will support Lead Countries in the further development of HELCOM indicators on marine litter, taking account, as appropriate, of developments on these topics under the EU MSFD for the EU member states namely:

- Further develop the HELCOM pre-core indicator on marine litter on the seafloor aiming at shifting it to core indicator.
- Further work on developing the HELCOM candidate indicator on microlitter towards core indicator.
- Consider the development and establishment of biological indicators to predict for the impacts of marine litter in the Baltic Sea area.
- Building reliable knowledge base on monitoring of microlitter in storm water, effluents of sewage treatment plants and sewage sludge applied as fertilisers in the environment.
- Improve coordinated monitoring programmes for the beach litter and seafloor litter indicators Develop a proposal of a regionally coordinated monitoring sub-programme on abundance and characteristics of micro-plastics as well as other types of anthropogenic particles constituting microlitter.

- Work on developing baselines and threshold values for maximum levels of marine litter in the Baltic Sea in coherence with similar work undertaken by Contracting Parties under other relevant fora.
- Update the indicator reports at regular intervals as decided in HELCOM.
- Ensure timely and quality assured delivery of indicator based assessments of marine litter.
- Provide suggestions for regional action on monitoring of litter and micro-plastics as well as other types of anthropogenic particles constituting microlitter in rivers in order to identify sources of marine litter.

Working procedures

The expert group consists of experts nominated by Contracting Parties and will be open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. Additional experts and representatives of organizations can be invited to the meetings. The expert group will function as a joint expert group of Pressure WG and State and Conservation WG receiving guidance from both HELCOM working groups according to their mandates (Pressure WG overall coordination of the RAP ML; State and Conservation indicators, monitoring and assessment) and providing and receiving support from other groups, in particular Maritime WG and EG HAZ, as may be requested.

The mode of work for the expert group will be mainly via correspondence and tele-meetings, with at least one physical meeting organized annually. A Chair for the expert group will be elected. The products will be handled at HELCOM Meeting Portal workspace dedicated to this use. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the expert group.

Annex 3. Draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Group on Underwater Noise for 2022-2024

Rationale

The call for establishing this expert group has been raised through the need to (i) facilitate the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise, (ii) develop regional core indicators on underwater noise and (iii) carry out regional assessments on occurrence and impacts of underwater noise in the Baltic Sea.

The duties of the expert group are detailed in the following sections to be fulfilled in the period 2022-2024, in coherence with similar work undertaken by Contracting Parties in other relevant fora. Pressure Working Group will regularly revisit the progress of the work according to these ToR and will consider, together with State and Conservation Working Group arrangements for further work beyond 2024.

Objectives and tasks

Facilitate the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise

As part of the work of the Pressure Working Group and in cooperation with Maritime Working Group and other groups as appropriate, the HELCOM EG Noise will:

- Provide expertise to facilitate practical implementation of the HELCOM Recommendation 42-43/1. More specifically, the HELCOM EG Noise will support the Lead Parties for the implementation of individual regional actions and provide expertise to facilitate implementation of actions with no lead.
- Seek synergies with other Regional Seas Conventions, namely OSPAR, the Barcelona Convention and the Bucharest Convention, Northwest Pacific Action Plan, but also other international fora, such as the UN, its specialized agencies and EU. Contracting Parties being also EU member states will regularly coordinate with the MSFD Technical Group on Noise.
- Provide expert input, as may be requested by HELCOM working groups e.g. Maritime WG, on relevant measures to reduce pressures and impacts from underwater noise sources in the HELCOM area aiming, in the long-term, at addressing adverse effects of underwater noise on marine species identified as sensitive to noise, whilst safeguarding the potential of the Baltic Sea for sustainable human activities.
- Provide expert input to relevant actions in the updated BSAP.

Monitoring and assessment

The HELCOM EG Noise will act as the platform for discussion and review of HELCOM indicators on underwater noise being developed by Lead Countries and appointed experts as part of the work by State and Conservation Working Group. More specifically, the HELCOM EG Noise will support Lead Countries in the further development of HELCOM indicators on underwater noise, taking account, as appropriate, of developments on these topics under the EU MSFD for the EU member states namely:

- Develop and operationalize common indicators and associated definition of Good Environmental Status (GES) related to underwater noise for application in the assessment of the state of the Baltic Sea marine environment.
- Act as a platform for discussion and review of HELCOM indicators on underwater noise being developed by Lead Countries and appointed experts. In particular, support the Lead Countries in the further elaboration of the underwater noise indicators.
- Update the indicator reports at regular intervals as decided in HELCOM.
- Review the state of the art knowledge on impacts of anthropogenic noise on marine species identified as sensitive to noise in the Baltic Sea and in particular the cumulative impacts of noise from multiple activities.
- Update information on available and suitable noise mitigation measures in the Baltic Sea.

- Assist countries in the reporting of national monitoring data on continuous noise and impulsive noise events to the already established regional databases, to ensure availability of high-quality data for regular assessment of the state of underwater noise in the Baltic Sea area.
- Continue working on the analysis of sensors, devices and methods used to measure underwater noise to ensure the reliability and repeatability of the collected data.

Participants

The expert group will consist of experts nominated by the Contracting Parties and will be open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. Additional experts and representatives of organizations can be invited to the meetings. The network will cater for cross-sectorial expertise to carry out the tasks as needed.

Working procedures

The expert group works under the mandate of Pressure WG. The expert group will receive guidance from and contribute to State and Conservation WG according to its mandate as well as from Maritime WG (on IMO related issues) and provide support to other groups, in particular HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and EG MAMA, as may be requested.

The mode of work for the expert group will be mainly via correspondence and tele-meetings, with physical meetings being organized as needed. A Chair for the expert group has been elected. A detailed work plan for the expert group might be elaborated. The products will be handled at HELCOM Meeting Portal workspaces dedicated to this use. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the expert group.