

**Article 12 Technical Assessment
and Conclusions from the Regional Meeting with
the Member States Parties to HELCOM**

Article 12 report on the Baltic Sea cooperation and coordination

- First and foremost, all Member States discuss the prominent role of HELCOM as a cooperation and coordination platform and the work done within its various working groups and projects (such as HELCOM CORESET and HELCOM TARGREV). The use of HELCOM assessment indicators and the outcomes of the HELCOM HOLAS assessment are mentioned by several Member States as being a primary contributor to the coherence across Baltic States' initial assessment. However, several Member States also note that the level of development of common indicators is unequal across the eleven descriptors and that more work is needed in this area in view of the next reporting cycle.
- One Member State (EE) has submitted the HELCOM Roof Report of December 2012 along with its other official submissions to the Commission and another (FI) has made a direct reference to it in its description of regional cooperation.
- Several Member States have described a number of cooperation difficulties, the first of which related to the time constraints of the MSFD and the differences in the time schedules of the Member States (e.g. longer public participation procedures in certain Member States have forced them to draft their reports earlier than others). The lack of systematic participation in HELCOM working meetings by Member States was also noted.

Conclusions from Regional Meeting with the Member States Parties to HELCOM following the Assessment of the Commission on the MSFD implementation (Article 12 report)

On the basis of the discussion, the HELCOM EU Member States committed themselves to:

- Further develop together and revise their definition of GES on the basis of relevant EU legislation and the agreed core and, where possible pre-core, indicators, of HELCOM and consequently using them at national level as soon as possible and in 2018 at the latest.
- Prioritise further areas where greater regional convergence can be achieved in relation to environmental targets by 2018 over and above the approach for nutrient pollution (descriptor 5).
- Improve the adequacy, completeness and coherence of the initial assessment in the Baltic Sea by **developing the next HELCOM Holistic Assessment (HOLAS2) as an integral part of the initial assessment of all Member States ("roof report") and include a draft HOLAS2 report in the national public consultation and the final HOLAS2 report in the report for the initial assessment to the Commission.** HOLAS2 will be based on the agreed core and pre core indicators and the coordinated GES mentioned above.

- Reflect further on the timing of the HOLAS2 report where a draft report would be agreed by mid-2017, then used for public consultation and finalised and adopted by HELCOM, reflecting the feedback from the public consultations and possibly with some updated information that became available in the meantime, in mid-2018, in time for inclusion in the national reports to the Commission in October 2018.