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## Background

At the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting in the HELCOM Maritime Group on the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 the Baltic Sea states expressed their preference for a parallel, synchronized process of designation of NOx Emission Control Areas (NECA) in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

Meanwhile, the North Sea countries and the Baltic Sea countries have discussed timing and procedural steps for a possible parallel process at a technical meeting in Helsinki in June 2015.

In order to facilitate the discussions on this issue at HELCOM Maritime 15, Denmark has on behalf of all the North Sea countries (Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and United Kingdom) drafted the attached proposal for a roadmap for the future work on the designation of the Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECAs.

## Action required

The Meeting is invited to consider, discuss and agree on the roadmap for designating a NOx emission control area (NECA) in the Baltic Sea in parallel with the North Sea.

## Draft roadmap for the Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECAs

### Background

The Baltic Sea states have decided to submit an application to the IMO for designation of the Baltic Sea as NECA, but are still undecided on the specific date for submission. At the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting in the HELCOM Maritime Group on the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 the Baltic Sea states furthermore expressed their preference for a parallel, synchronized process of NECA designation in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

The North Sea states are ready to submit their application to the MEPC and have a strong preference for synchronizing North Sea and Baltic Sea NECA designations.

Therefore the North Sea countries invited the Baltic Sea countries to a technical meeting, hosted by Finland in Helsinki in June 2015 for common discussion on the options and modalities for parallel NECA applications. The aim of the meeting was to facilitate a common understanding of the timing and procedural steps for a possible parallel process, i.e. a roadmap for parallel Baltic Sea and North Sea NECA designations.

At the meeting it was concluded that it is relevant to propose the formal decision process reactivated in parallel. The North Sea and the Baltic Sea states should consider and agree on the date for submission of the applications to the IMO as well as the “compliance date” from when new ships have to comply with the Tier III emission standards. It was furthermore agreed that Denmark, on behalf of the North Sea countries, would submit a proposal for a common roadmap for the North Sea and the Baltic Sea NECA designations. This document presents the proposed roadmap as discussed on the technical meeting in Helsinki.

### Strategy

To ensure that the process is brought on track, we need a tangible process and timeline for the HELCOM and the North Sea decision on submission of NECA applications. As discussed on the technical meeting in Helsinki, it is realistic to submit the applications to the MEPC 70, which will be held in October 2016. It is proposed by the North Sea countries, that the industry is given three years from the date of adoption by the IMO to the Tier III emission standards should apply (compliance date). For this reason it will take more than four years from the agreement on a submission is in place, till the NECA will actually be effective (Figure 1).

### Proposed process and timeline for Baltic Sea and North Sea NECAs

- 30 June 2015: Technical meeting was held among the Baltic Sea and the North Sea countries to discuss the possibilities of a parallel designation of the Baltic Sea NECA and the North Sea NECA.
- 23-25 November 2015: Consideration by the HELCOM Maritime Group of the North Sea countries' proposal on a common roadmap.
- 10-11 December 2015: Decision by the HELCOM HoD (possibly by the HELCOM Commission 9-11 March 2016).
- After HELCOM decision: Silent procedure between North Sea states in support of the HELCOM decision.
- January-May 2016: Update of the North Sea and Baltic Sea NECA applications.
- Spring 2016: Possible meeting between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea countries to discuss elements for the applications.
- 1 June 2016: Final approval by all North Sea and Baltic Sea countries of the submission of the applications to the MEPC 70 and the agreed compliance date.
- 1 July 2016: Submission of the Baltic Sea and the North Sea NECA applications to MEPC 70 (22 July 2016: 13-week deadline for MEPC 70 submission.)
- 24-28 October 2016: MEPC 70, approval.
- 2017: MEPC 71, adoption.
- 1 June 2020: Compliance / effective date.
- Close coordination of the EU position is necessary throughout the process, with appropriate involvement of the Shipping Working Party.

### Procedural steps, possible timing and duration for a synchronized designation of the Baltic Sea and North Sea NECAs

The roadmap would firstly have to be considered by the HELCOM Maritime group at their 15<sup>th</sup> meeting in November 2015. Thereafter a decision should be made either by the HELCOM Heads of Delegation, which will meet the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> of December this year, or by the HELCOM Commission, which will meet in March 2016. The decision made by HELCOM has to be supported by the North Sea countries in order to continue, which is proposed to be in form of a silent procedure between North Sea states. The MEPC 70 takes place in October 2016, so the applications should be submitted by July 2016, which would allow sufficient time to update the studies and applications.

If the applications are approved at MEPC 70 they will be forwarded to MEPC 71 for adoption. The dates for MEPC 71 are not yet set, but in the roadmap the meeting is assumed to take place in May 2017. The NECA would enter into force at least 16 months later, which would be in October 2018. The entry into force will of course only apply to the ships constructed/engines installed on or after the “compliance date”, which could be on the date of adoption (at the earliest) or any later date as specified in the amendment designating the NECAs. The North Sea countries suggest that the industry is given three years from the date of adoption until the date of compliance – which means that the compliance date could be on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2020 (based on MEPC 71 being in May 2017). This would imply the Tier III emission standards to be applicable to ships constructed on or after this date. At MEPC 65 Russia proposed to move the effective date/compliance date five years back, namely to the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021. Those two proposals are very close to each other.

Between the EU Member States there is further an obligation to coordinate positions within the EU.

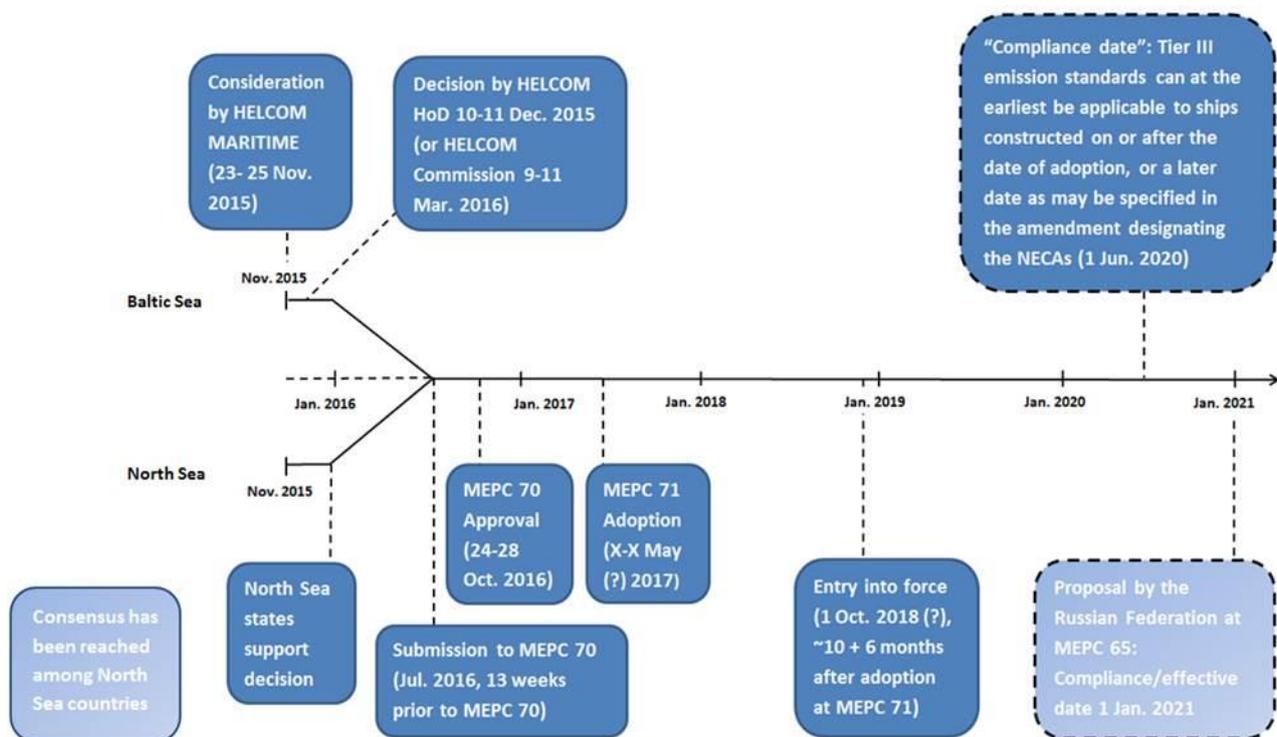


Figure 1 Proposed roadmap for parallel NECA designations in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea.