



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Expert Group on Monitoring of Radioactive Substances
in the Baltic Sea

MORS EG 5-2015

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Background

Recalling the decisions of the HELCOM Moscow Ministerial Meeting (2010) on the importance of continuing monitoring of radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea, HELCOM HOD 34-2010 established the HELCOM MONAS Expert Group on Monitoring of Radioactive Substances in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM MORS EG) and adopted its Terms of Reference.

HELCOM HOD 46-2014 adopted the new HELCOM working structure and the Terms of Reference for new HELCOM Groups as well as GEAR, finalized by the Task Group for streamlining HELCOM activities. MORS EG is now reporting to the new HELCOM Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (WG STATE & CONSERVATION), which is based on the previous Groups MONAS and HABITAT. The Terms of Reference of MORS EG have been updated accordingly (with reference to WG STATE & CONSERVATION).

Action required

The Meeting is invited to further discuss and plan future work based on the Terms of Reference of MORS EG (attached).

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF HELCOM EXPERT GROUP ON MONITORING OF RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES IN THE BALTIC SEA
(HELCOM MORS EG)**

adopted by HOD 34-2010

(references updated according to the renewed HELCOM working structure adopted by HOD 46-2014)

MORS EG reports to HELCOM Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (WG STATE & CONSERVATION) and follows HELCOM Rules of Procedure.

1. Introduction

The 2010 HELCOM Moscow Ministerial Declaration recalls that although annual doses are below safety limits, the Baltic Sea has the highest concentrations of ¹³⁷Cs of any regional sea around the world due to radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl accident, and that the Baltic Sea ranks third in the world with respect to ⁹⁰Sr in seawater, with only the Irish Sea and the Black Sea showing higher concentrations.

Development in the energy supply sector within both HELCOM Contracting Parties and in the Baltic Sea Region in general, shows growing trend for use of nuclear energy. This requires enhanced cooperation between the countries of the Region on matters related to prevention of environmental impacts on the Baltic Sea ecosystem from operating, as well as planned nuclear installations.

Therefore HELCOM reconfirmed at the HELCOM Moscow Ministerial Meeting in 2010 its task to continue monitoring programmes on radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea and to keep under observation trends of the export of radionuclides from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea and vice versa, especially the inflows of radioactivity from Sellafield to the Baltic Sea and the outflow of Chernobyl radioactivity from the Baltic Sea to the Skagerrak.

The HELCOM Expert Group on Monitoring of Radioactive Substances in the Baltic Sea (hereinafter – HELCOM MORS EG) aims to implement this task within the scope of work as described below. The HELCOM MORS EG will base its work on the expertise and knowledge of the HELCOM MORS Group collected since 1986 and will take over the responsibilities from the HELCOM MORS-PRO Project 2008-2011.

2. Overall objectives of the Expert Group

The overall objective of the HELCOM MORS EG is to implement the Helsinki Convention on matters related to monitoring and assessment of radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea. The work is based on relevant HELCOM Recommendations and will support the State and Conservation Working Group (HELCOM STATE & CONSERVATION).

More specifically the HELCOM MORS EG aims:

- to coordinate basic monitoring programmes on radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea carried out by the Contracting Parties in accordance with relevant HELCOM Recommendations and the valid Guidelines;
- to compile annually data on discharges of radioactivity from civil nuclear facilities to the Baltic Sea reported by the Contracting Parties;
- to compile annually data on discharges and environmental levels of radioactivity in the Baltic Sea submitted to the HELCOM databases, in accordance with relevant HELCOM Recommendations,
- to validate annually all data in the HELCOM MORS databases of environmental and discharge data and to make them available on relevant electronic media to MORS EG;
- to update annually HELCOM Indicator Fact Sheets on radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea;
- to keep the Guidelines on the monitoring of radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea updated;
- to coordinate and organise intercomparison exercises on seawater, sediments and biota to assure high quality of the monitoring data;
- to keep under observation the development of trends of export of radionuclides from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea and vice versa, especially the inflow of radioactivity (e.g. ⁹⁹Tc) from Sellafield to the Baltic Sea and the outflow of Chernobyl radioactivity from the Baltic Sea to the Skagerrak;
- to produce thematic reports, e.g. on naturally occurring radionuclides in the Baltic Sea, releases of man-made radionuclides from non-nuclear activities (e.g. hospitals), simple procedures for assessing doses to man from radioactivity in the Baltic Sea;

- to produce periodic assessments on radioactivity in the Baltic Sea. These assessments will include levels, inventories and trends for radioactivity in the Baltic Sea and the radiological impact on man and environment.

3. Expected results

The Group will be subordinate to HELCOM STATE & CONSERVATION and will provide

- annual reporting to the State and Conservation Working Group (HELCOM STATE & CONSERVATION) in order to keep the Commission and the Contracting Parties informed on:
 - collection, validation and evaluation of the environmental data and discharge data on radioactivity submitted to the HELCOM databases;
 - the risks to humans and marine life caused by direct discharges to the Baltic Sea as well as long-range transport of radioactive substances;
 - to ascertain that all aspects of quality assurance of analytical data are covered within the monitoring activities. This will be done in close co-operation with the IAEA;
 - to maintain expertise for the Contracting Parties on monitoring and assessment of radioactivity in the Baltic Sea taking into account the fact that ¹³⁷Cs concentrations in the Baltic Sea are high compared to those of the other shelf seas in the world;
- annual updates of the Indicator Fact Sheets.

4. Working procedure of the HELCOM MORS EG

- 4.1 The HELCOM MORS EG will consist of experts representing
 - national authorities and/or monitoring institutions that are *i.a.* responsible for protection of marine environment from contamination by radioactive substances within HELCOM Contracting Parties,
 - the European Commission,
 - the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**
 - Data Consultants responsible for maintenance of HELCOM MORS databases of environmental and discharge data;
- 4.2 The Chairperson of the HELCOM MORS EG shall be elected by the participants of the Group for a two-year period.
- 4.3 The Rules of Procedure applicable to the conduct of the business of the Helsinki Commission shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the work of the HELCOM MORS EG (cf. para 7.7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Helsinki Commission).
- 4.4 The Contracting Parties will be responsible to carry out the monitoring programme according to relevant HELCOM Recommendations and to cover the expenses for the participation of members in the work of the HELCOM MORS EG.
- 4.5 The HELCOM Secretariat will organize and make sure that services are provided for the HELCOM MORS EG Meetings.
- 4.6 The Secretariat may, in consultation with the Chairperson, invite additional experts on a case by case basis to the HELCOM MORS EG; to give presentations or to participate in its work;
- 4.7 Meetings shall be held at appropriate intervals and at least once a year in accordance with the Working Programme to be approved by HELCOM STATE & CONSERVATION/HELCOM HOD.
- 4.8 The HELCOM MORS EG shall regularly report to the HELCOM STATE & CONSERVATION as concerning monitoring and trends of the radioactive substances at sea as well as regarding inputs of radioactive substances to the Baltic from land-based sources.
- 4.9 The work of HELCOM MORS EG will be supervised and guided by the HELCOM Heads of Delegation through the reports of the HELCOM STATE & CONSERVATION.