



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Expert Group on Monitoring of Radioactive Substances
in the Baltic Sea

MORS EG 9-2019

Roskilde, Denmark, 21-23 May 2019

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Background

The outcomes of the following meetings within the framework of HELCOM held in the intersessional period, relevant to MORS EG, are/will be available in the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#):

- 54th Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation ([HOD 54-2018](#)), Helsinki, Finland, 14-15 June 2018;
- Ninth Meeting of the HELCOM Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation ([STATE-CONSERVATION 9-2018](#)), Copenhagen, Denmark, 22-26 October 2018;
- 19th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach ([GEAR 19-2018](#)), Copenhagen, Denmark, 7-8 November 2018;
- 55th Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation ([HOD 55-2018](#)), Helsinki, Finland, 4-5 December 2018;
- 40th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission ([HELCOM 40-2019](#)), Helsinki, Finland, 6-7 March 2019;
- Tenth Meeting of the HELCOM Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation ([STATE-CONSERVATION 10-2019](#)), Hamina, Finland, 6-10 May 2019;
- 20th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (GEAR 20-2019), Berlin, Germany, 15-17 May 2019.

Action

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

Information extracted from the outcomes of meetings within HELCOM of relevance to
MORS EG
(in chronological order)

HOD 54-2018

The 54th Meeting of the Heads of Delegation was held in Helsinki, Finland, on 14-15 June 2018.

The Meeting recalled that the EU chairmanship of HELCOM is coming to an end on 30 June 2018 and took note of the account by EU on accomplishing the chairmanship priorities. The Meeting acknowledged the accomplishments of the EU chairmanship, especially the excellent organization and good outcome of the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in Brussels on 6 March 2018. The Meeting took note that progress has been made regarding the priorities by completing the second holistic assessment (HOLAS II) and Pollution Load Compilation products, promoting sustainable agriculture and advancing port reception facilities as well as improving regional cooperation with fisheries bodies. Further development of core indicators related to seafloor integrity and marine litter continue to be important priorities for HELCOM. Work still remains on improving the coherence of the MPA network. The Meeting thanked EU for the successful chairmanship.

The Meeting took note of and welcomed the following [priorities](#) of the Finnish chairmanship: updating the Baltic Sea Action Plan, reduction of nutrient inputs and nutrient recycling, Baltic Sea and climate change and synergy between Agenda 2030 and HELCOM work. The Meeting welcomed the Finnish chairmanship team, Ms. Saara Bäck, Chair of HELCOM, and Ms. Tarja Haaranen, Vice-Chair, from the Ministry of the Environment of Finland.

The Meeting approved the strategic plan for the update of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) (c.f. document 2-1, Annex 1).

The Meeting took note that the update of the BSAP coincides with the update of the EUSBSR Action Plan starting in autumn 2019 and stressed the importance of finding synergies with the update of the EUSBSR Action Plan and the BSAP.

The Meeting agreed that the update of the BSAP should be given a priority by the working groups in the round-up to the Ministerial Meeting 2021 and that this process will require enhanced cooperation and coordination of the groups.

STATE-CONSERVATION 9-2018

The Ninth Meeting of the HELCOM Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 22-26 October 2018.

The Meeting took note of the publication of the endorsed indicator reports on the HELCOM website, as supporting material to the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report.

The Meeting noted that work to review the HELCOM Indicators has commenced and will, in accordance with the work plan, be considered next by GEAR 19-2018, on 7-8 November 2018.

The Meeting took note of the information related to indicator development of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) - Expert Workshop on Marine Pollution Indicators under Sustainable Development Goal Target 14.1.1 as presented by the Secretariat.

The Meeting took note of the review of the Baltic Sea environment fact sheets (BSEFS), as presented by Sweden. The Meeting considered the overlap between BSEFS and the recently published "State of the Baltic Sea" report and core indicators, and agreed that wherever possible the BSEFS should be integrated into relevant indicator reports should be so, and that priority should be given to keeping the indicator report up to date.

The Meeting took note of the Progress of work in Expert group on Monitoring of Radioactive Substances in the Baltic Sea (MORS EG), as presented by Mr Sven Poul Nielsen, Denmark ([presentation 15](#)).

The Meeting approved the draft Terms of Reference of MORS EG ([document 7J-7](#)).

The Meeting took note of the information on the project BONUS Future Marine Assessment and Monitoring of the Baltic (FUMARI), focusing on gap analysis and applicability of new monitoring methods, which started in October and will run for eighteen months.

The Meeting took note of the information regarding the BONUS SEAM (Towards Streamlined Baltic Sea Environmental Assessment and Monitoring) project as presented by the Co-Chair. The Meeting noted that SEAM will focus on benthic, pelagic and hazardous substances monitoring, and will run for eighteen months.

The Meeting considered that work of both these projects is very relevant for the work of State and Conservation and asked the Secretariat to invite the Project Coordinators of the respective projects to come and present the work at State and Conservation 10-2019.

[GEAR 19-2018](#)

The 19th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 7-8 November 2018.

The Meeting took note of the ongoing work for HELCOM indicator review.

The Meeting agreed that the upcoming indicator workshop will be organised as a joint GEAR and State and Conservation (policy and technical) event, with the inclusion of indicator leads and relevant technical experts.

The Meeting agreed that the indicator workshop invitation will be extended to other relevant HELCOM Working Groups and expert groups identified as necessary (e.g. HELCOM PRESSURE, FISH or ESA) and to any institutions identified for cooperative work (e.g. OSPAR or JRC).

The Meeting acknowledged that the indicator workshop will require extensive background preparations both at the Secretariat and at national level. The preparatory work and the workshop will bring together policy needs and technical expertise to develop a clear understanding of the path forward. The Workshop should give consideration to overarching assessment questions to frame indicator work. Issues to consider with relevance to this process include: incorporating the SDGs, the relevance of this work to the third holistic assessment, linkages between indicators (e.g. relevance of indicators to multiple MSFD descriptors such as MSFD Descriptors 1 and 3), priorities listed in document 5-4 to this Meeting, and the incorporation of 'risk' (i.e. the major risk identified for the Baltic Sea) within the process.

The Meeting highlighted the importance of clearly defining the aim of the workshop and agreed that the outcome consists of a work plan to be submitted to HOD-56 in June 2019 (as outlined in the 'Future work on HELCOM indicators' process approved by HOD-54) forming the basis of actual development or adjustment work on indicators.

The Meeting agreed that preparations for the workshop will be supported by a 'core group' of nominated HELCOM Working Groups' members (e.g. from GEAR) and the Secretariat.

The Meeting agreed that the indicator workshop could be divided into thematic sections (hazardous substances, litter and noise, biodiversity and eutrophication) and is anticipated to last 2.5 days. The workshop is proposed to be held back-to-back with GEAR 20-2019 (to be held in Berlin, Germany, 15-17 May 2019).

The Meeting considered the proposal by the Secretariat on initiating the process of engaging HELCOM groups to detail the practical way forward regarding cooperation with OSPAR, using the review and reporting on the Recommendations for the BSAP update as a starting point.

The Meeting endorsed the proposed process and invited the Secretariat to include a question on the suitability for cooperation and suggested partner(s) in the review and report of the recommendation by the Working Groups.

[HOD 55-2018](#)

The 55th Meeting of the Heads of Delegation was held in Helsinki, Finland, on 4-5 December 2018.

The Meeting approved the work plan for the BSAP update (c.f. document 2-1, Annex 2), noting that it will be updated by the Secretariat when additional agreements regarding the BSAP update are made.

The Meeting recalled that HOD have been requested to consider a proposal for the establishment of an *ad hoc* Expert Group on analyses of sufficiency of measures to support the implementation of the strategic plan for the BSAP update. The Meeting agreed that the work will be carried out via an interdisciplinary platform for the implementation of the analyses (SOM Platform), which is to engage the existing HELCOM ESA (social and economic analysis) network, national technical experts on the topics to be addressed by the group, and the Chairs of HELCOM Working Groups.

The Meeting approved the [Work Plan](#) for the State and Conservation Working Group 2019-2020.

The Meeting took note of the information that STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016 agreed that HELCOM Recommendation 29/2, which includes Guidelines on sampling and reporting of marine litter found on beaches, will be superseded by Recommendation 36/1 once the HELCOM monitoring guidelines for marine litter on beaches have been developed and included in the HELCOM Monitoring Manual.

The Meeting agreed that HELCOM Recommendation 29/2 will be discussed in PRESSURE 10-2019 with the aim of superseding Recommendation 29/2 by Recommendation 36/1.

The Meeting in principle agreed that, following the discussion in the Pressure Group, HELCOM Recommendation 29/2 on marine litter within the Baltic Sea Region can be considered superseded by Recommendation 36/1 on Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, which is to be proposed for a decision by HELCOM 41-2020.

The Meeting took note that the Terms of Reference for the Intersessional Network on Eutrophication, Expert Network on Hazardous Substances and Expert Group on Monitoring of Radioactive Substances have been updated.

[HELCOM 40-2019](#)

The 40th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission was held in Helsinki, Finland, on 6-7 March 2019.

The Meeting took note of the status of work on the implementation of the analyses of sufficiency of measures (SOM), including the kick-off meeting of the SOM Platform held on 28 February – 1 March 2019.

The Meeting recalled that the SOM Platform will contribute to the analyses of sufficiency of measures to support the BSAP update for the topics hazardous substances, marine litter, underwater noise, non-indigenous species, and biodiversity. Other topics relevant for HELCOM will be covered by the ACTION project, which is co-financed by the EU. The Meeting noted that the analyses of sufficiency of measures under HELCOM SOM Platform and ACTION project will be coordinated and make use of the same methodological framework for the analyses.

The Meeting noted that the work under the SOM Platform is a joint effort in HELCOM. Through the planned engagement of HELCOM expert groups, networks, all Contracting Parties have a possibility to take part and contribute to the work. The data and information used in the analyses will furthermore be validated by HELCOM Working Groups. The Meeting took note that Heads of Delegation will be kept informed of the offers on lead and co-lead countries, which expert groups that will be involved in the work, and progress overall and specifically for different topics of the SOM Platform and the ACTION project.

The Meeting endorsed the updated [Roadmap](#) on HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach.

The Meeting adopted the updated [HELCOM Data and Information Strategy](#).

The Meeting took note of the [statement](#) by Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary of HELCOM, on the work of the Secretariat, including her comments and evaluation of the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies during 2018.

The Meeting decided to appoint Mr. Rüdiger Stempel as the next HELCOM Executive Secretary. The appointment is for an initial period of three years starting from 1 August 2019, with a possibility of a prolongation.

The Meeting granted observer status to the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation - NEFCO. Further, the Meeting invited an active participation of NEFCO for the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

The Meeting adopted the “HELCOM Green Workplace guidelines” (cf. [Outcome](#), Annex 14).

[STATE-CONSERVATION 10-2019](#)

The Tenth Meeting of the HELCOM Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation was held in Hamina, Finland, on 6-10 May 2019.

The Meeting took note of the progress and results of the BONUS project FUMARI (Future Marine Assessment and Monitoring of the Baltic), as presented by Project Coordinator Kristian Meissner ([presentation 1](#)).

The Meeting took note of the information regarding the BONUS SEAM (Towards Streamlined Baltic Sea Environmental Assessment and Monitoring) project as presented by Henrik Nygård ([presentation 2](#)).

The Meeting took note of the information that a holistic synthesis of reviews and analysis of current Baltic Sea monitoring will soon be available from the SEAM project.

The Meeting considered the work of both these projects valuable for the work of State and Conservation.

The Meeting noted that both projects will work on analysing the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of monitoring, which is in line with the task outlined in the State and Conservation workplan.

The Meeting invited both projects to present their results at State and Conservation 12-2020, after both projects have finalized their work.

[RECOMMENDATION 19/3 MANUAL FOR THE HELCOM JOINT COORDINATED MARINE MONITORING](#)

The Meeting recalled decision of STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 that reporting on the Recommendation should take the form of an overview of reported data and gaps from the different data repositories, to be provided annually for the fall meeting of State and Conservation.

The Meeting took note of information from the Secretariat on the progress of the matter. The Meeting noted that the Secretariat is contacting different data repositories, and hope to have the overview in place by STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019.

The Meeting recalled that STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 agreed that exhaustive reviews and revisions of the HELCOM Monitoring Manual should be carried out every six years, next time being in 2019. The Meeting took note that the manual and associated guidelines are living documents and can be gradually updated in S&C Meetings also between exhaustive revisions.

The Meeting concluded that it is important to have early information exchange with the EU, to ensure that the update is in line with the reporting requirements for reporting on Article 11 under the MSFD.

The Meeting took note of the information that the upcoming EU WG DIKE meeting will discuss guidelines for reporting under Article 11 in June 2019.

Meeting took note of the comment by Finland, that State and Conservation should not conduct a complete revision of the monitoring based solely on EU monitoring but ensure that the existing functional system is maintained.

The Meeting noted that the current revisions should be done concomitantly with the upcoming revision of the HELCOM website.

The Meeting agreed to amend the name of the Monitoring Manual to better reflect the content of the manual and avoid confusion with the HELCOM Monitoring Guidelines and the previous HELCOM Combine Manual.

The Meeting agreed to start the review process once the guidance is available from the EU Commission. It is to be sent out to State and Conservation, together with the HELCOM Monitoring Manual, with a deadline for providing comments and input for how to amend or revise the manual by end of 31 October 2019. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to collate the received input by 29 November 2019 and provide the information for lead country Estonia to use when preparing a draft update of the Monitoring manual to be presented for review prior to STATE & CONSERVATION 12-2020.

The Meeting took note that for some contracting parties the timeline for public consultation for Article 11 reporting precludes any updates of the HELCOM Monitoring Manual from being included in the work.

The Meeting acknowledged that the plan to update the manual every 6 years was intended to align the work with the reporting and updating of the monitoring programs under the MSFD, and agreed that the update frequency might need to be revised to better align with EU processes in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 26/3 MONITORING OF RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

The Meeting recalled that there is currently no Lead country for this recommendation and that the reporting on the implementation on this Recommendation has not been specified.

The Meeting discussed setting up a reporting scheme for the recommendation and invited MORS EG to make a proposal for a reporting scheme to report on the implementation of the Recommendation.

Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets

The Meeting recalled that STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 reviewed the status of the BSEFS and agreed on action for each sheet, including integrating Baltic Sea environment fact sheets (BSEFS) into relevant indicator reports with priority to keep the indicator reports up to date. STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 further agreed that the relevant leads will commence with implementing the actions. The Meeting took note of the actions agreed in STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 ([document 6J-1](#)).

The Meeting took note that the following BSEFS have been updated since STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018:

- Nitrogen emissions to the air in the Baltic Sea area
- Atmospheric emissions of heavy metals in the Baltic Sea region
- Atmospheric emissions of PCB-153 in the Baltic Sea region
- Atmospheric emissions of benzo(a)pyrene in the Baltic Sea region
- Atmospheric nitrogen deposition to the Baltic Sea
- Atmospheric deposition of heavy metals on the Baltic Sea
- Atmospheric deposition of benzo(a)pyrene on the Baltic Sea
- Atmospheric deposition of PCB-153 on the Baltic Sea
- Bacterioplankton growth
- Population Development of Baltic Bird Species: Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*)

The Meeting recalled that the fact sheets are living documents and that direct approval by State and Conservation is only required for new, not previously published fact sheets.

[Continued development of HELCOM core indicators](#)

The Meeting took note that first HELCOM indicator workshop (HELCOM Indicator WS 1-2019 on 14-15 May 2019 in Berlin) takes place to initiate the future work on HELCOM indicators, and the provisional plans for a second workshop (autumn 2019), which will finalize the planning for the HELCOM indicator development.

[Next meetings](#)

The Meeting confirmed that the next Meeting of the Working Group (STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019) will be organized in 21-25 October in Latvia. The Meeting agreed that STATE & CONSERVATION 12-2020 will take place 11-15 May 2020 and welcomed the offer by Estonia to explore hosting STATE & CONSERVATION 12-2020.

[GEAR 20-2019](#)

The 20th Meeting of the Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach will be held in Berlin, Germany, 15-17 May 2019.