



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Tenth Meeting of the Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area

PRESSURE 10-2019

Tallinn, Estonia, 9-12 April 2019

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### Background

This document contains extracts from the outcomes of [HELCOM 40-2019](#) (6-7 March 2019, Helsinki, Finland) and [HOD 55-2018](#) (4-5 December 2019, Helsinki, Finland). The outcomes of HELCOM working groups [Agri](#) and [State&Conservation](#) as well as subordinated expert groups of relevance for Pressure Group are reflected in the relevant documents on: nutrient recycling strategy, climate change, underwater noise, and marine litter. They are not included into this document to optimize the Group's work. Outcomes of the SOM platform meeting and ACTION project kick-off meeting will be presented at the BSAP update dedicated session and also not included into this document.

Information on the outputs of the work of the groups subordinated to Pressure Group will be considered under relevant agenda items. Currently, five expert groups are reporting to Pressure Group: EN-Marine litter, EN-Noise, CG PHARMA, EN DREDS and RedCore DG.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note and make use of the information in the PRESSURE 10-2019 work.

## Matters arising from other HELCOM work

HELCOM 40-2019 (6-7 March 2019, Helsinki, Finland)

### Agenda Item 2 Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

2.1 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 (document 2-7).

2.2 The Meeting took note that Mr. Urmas Lips, Estonia, was elected as Chair and Ms. Soile Oinonen, Finland, as Vice-Chair of the SOM Platform and congratulated Mr. Lips and Ms. Oinonen for their election.

2.3 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.

2.4 The Meeting took note that the approach for analysing sufficiency of measures was discussed in depth at the kick-off meeting of the SOM Platform and that it will be updated by the Secretariat and ACTION project (work package 6) **by 31 March 2019**. The updated approach will be circulated for comments to the SOM Platform before submission for endorsement at GEAR 20-2019. The technical work packages of the ACTION project will be presented for discussion at relevant HELCOM Working Groups in spring 2019.

2.5 The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to make offers to lead the work on specific topics **by 27 March 2019** (susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi). Questions related to the role of lead countries and the possibility to take on the lead on a more limited scope, as mentioned in document 2-7, can be directed to the Secretariat (ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi).

2.6 The Meeting took note of the view by Russia that the SOM Platform deals with complex issues and that it might be challenging to commit experts on all the topics addressed by the platform and of the study reservation on the outcome of the kick-off meeting of the SOM Platform. The Meeting took note of the clarification that the outcome will be circulated to the Contracting Parties soon.

2.7 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.

2.8 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. Based on this approach the Meeting agreed to proceed with the plans of work for the SOM Platform including making plans for the next meeting.

2.9 The Meeting welcomed that Sweden is looking into the possibility to co-lead the work on hazardous substances. The Meeting took note that the Finnish Environment Institute is leading the work on analysis of sufficiency of measures in the ACTION project (work package 6) and will also implement the analysis for topics covered by the SOM Platform as long as data is provided.

2.10 The Meeting noted that the target year of the updated BSAP will be considered by HOD at future meetings.

2.11 The Meeting recalled that a task for the SOM Platform is to prepare synopses to support identification of potential new HELCOM actions to be included in the updated BSAP. The Meeting took note that the SOM Platform has prepared a format for the synopses. The Meeting agreed that synopses on potential new HELCOM actions can be submitted by the Contracting Parties, HELCOM subsidiary bodies, international projects and HELCOM Observers.

- 2.12 The Meeting took note of the progress in the work by the Secretariat to make use of an activity-pressure matrix for the purposes of the BSAP update, in line with the HOD 55-2018 request (document 2-4).
- 2.13 The Meeting took note that the further mapping will be aligned with and contribute to the analyses of sufficiency of measures. The information will also be included in the updated database for HELCOM agreements (HELCOM Explorer).
- 2.14 The Meeting welcomed the work done so far and noted that comments to the document can be submitted to the Secretariat (ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi).
- 2.15 The Meeting took note of the comment by Denmark that reference to specific parts in the HELCOM Ministerial Declarations should always be provided in full in HELCOM documents.
- 2.16 The Meeting recalled that the current BSAP includes a segment on financing and that this issue also needs to be considered in the BSAP update process. The Meeting noted that such consideration could possibly build on offers from countries to look into certain aspects. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide ideas and views on how to address this topic to the Secretariat prior to HOD 56-2019.
- 2.17 The Meeting took note of the information on progress in reporting of HELCOM Recommendations to support the update of BSAP (document 2-5).
- 2.18 The Meeting recalled that as agreed by HOD 55-2018 the Agri Group will not report on HELCOM Recommendation 24/3 which is currently under revision in the group and also covered by the provisions of Annex III part II of the Helsinki Convention. The Meeting took note that the Agri Group will report on the implementation of Annex III part II as part of the BSAP follow-up.
- 2.19 The Meeting considered the draft progress reports on HELCOM voluntary commitments to the UN Ocean Conference 2017 (document 2-3) as well as comments submitted by Denmark (document 2-8) and agreed that they are submitted to UN via a dedicated website taking into account the comments by Denmark (document 2-8).
- 2.20 The Meeting discussed possible HELCOM voluntary commitments to the next UN Ocean Conference in 2020. The Meeting agreed that the update of the BSAP will be a HELCOM commitment to support implementation of SDGs. The Meeting suggested that another HELCOM commitment could include cooperation and sharing experiences in carrying out holistic assessments and implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan including the analysis of sufficiency of measures with other Regional Seas Conventions. The Meeting also pointed out that HELCOM could make a commitment on contributing to the UNESCO Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2020-2030.

***Thematic session on the latest scientific knowledge of relevance for the update of the BSAP***

- 2.29 The Meeting approved the proposal to develop a HELCOM science agenda, concomitantly with the update of the BSAP. The agenda is to outline existing and foreseen HELCOM regional science needs. The development of the agenda will be the opportunity to provide regional input to the BANOS CSA process. The Meeting further agreed that the science agenda will function as a good contribution to support processes under the UNESCO Decade of Ocean Science.
- 2.30 The Meeting noted that the OSPAR science agenda is currently being finalized and that this document could be used to inform the development of the respective HELCOM science agenda.

**Agenda Item 3**

**Matters arising from the subsidiary bodies**

- 3.24 The Meeting considered and adopted the draft updated HELCOM “Guidelines for the annual and periodical compilation and reporting of waterborne pollution inputs to the Baltic Sea (PLC-Water)” (document 3-7) as contained in **Annex 8** to the Outcome.
- 3.25 The Meeting also took note that the minor editorial comments on the current version of the Guidelines had been recently provided in writing by Poland and requested the Secretariat to account them before publication.

- 3.26 The Meeting considered and adopted the updated draft Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Network on dredging/depositing operations at sea (EN DREDS) for 2019-2021 (document 3-12-Rev.1).
- 3.27 The Meeting took note of the relation of the subjects of the EN DREDS ToR with the other maritime activities and the suggestion by Russia to link the work of the group with the other relevant HELCOM working groups, e.g. Maritime Working Group.
- 3.28 The Meeting took note of the current state of the discussion on the principles to apply the methodology to reallocate extra reductions of nutrient input (document 3-19).
- 3.29 The Meeting welcomed the information on the progress achieved by Denmark and Germany seeking for the consensus on formulation of the principle 8. The Meeting agreed to aim for the decision on this principle to use extra reduction to be taken at HOD 56-2019 at the latest to enable the use of the methodology in the PLC-7 assessment.
- 3.30 The Meeting invited Denmark and Germany to make a suggestion on the formulation of the principle 8 for the discussion at PRESSURE 10-2019 by the Contracting Parties with the understanding that the final decision will be made at HOD 56-2019.
- 3.31 The Meeting recalled the request of HOD 55-2018 for the Contracting Parties to consider co-financing of the continuation of the ENIREP project on estimation of reductions of atmospheric nitrogen deposition achievable by implementing the Gothenburg Protocol and the EU NEC Directive and decided to postpone the final decision on the continuation of the project to the HOD 56-2019 meeting.
- 3.32 The Meeting took note that the sooner the decision on the project is taken the more time would remain to integrate the project results into the PLC-7 assessment products. Thus, the Contracting Parties are invited to consider a possibility to inform on co-financing of the project at PRESSURE 10-2019.
- 3.33 The Meeting considered and adopted the updated HELCOM Data and Information Strategy, to replace the current HELCOM Data and Information Strategy (document 3-8) as contained in **Annex 9** to the Outcome.
- 3.36 The Meeting took note and considered the information on coordinated reporting and hosting of HELCOM continuous noise monitoring data (document 3-9) and decided on the proposed hosting solution (in ICES) for a HELCOM database on continuous underwater sound.
- 3.37 The Meeting took note of the position of Russia that the use of the data from the noise database in HELCOM work is to be clarified and that still for today there is no comprehensive scientific research in liaison to the direct influence of underwater noise on marine species.
- 3.38 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to regularly keep the HODs informed of the progress in reporting of the underwater noise database on their monitoring and how the data are analyzed for use in HELCOM.
- 3.39 The Meeting welcomed the information by Sweden that their offer to contribute to the funding of the database is still valid and the information by Denmark that they are investigating the possibility to make a financial contribution as well.
- 3.40 The Meeting agreed on the annual allocation from the HELCOM budget for the database maintenance as indicated in document 3-9 as well as authorized the use of the HELCOM budget to bridge any remaining gap for funding of the database establishment.
- 3.41 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to co-fund the establishment of the soundscape planning tool as indicated in document 3-9.
- 3.42 The Meeting took note of the comment by Denmark that it would be appreciated if, in the future when monitoring of underwater noise is established in both HELCOM and OSPAR, the data on underwater noise from the respective RSC's would be collated and maintained jointly or in a comparative manner.
- 3.43 The Meeting considered and endorsed the updated Roadmap on HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach (document 3-15).

3.44 The Meeting took note of the comment by Germany that, in general and for those Contracting Parties who are also EU Member States, regional cooperation on the implementation of the ecosystem approach should extend to also include work related to the Programs of Measures under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

3.45 The Meeting took note of editorial comments to the document from Denmark, agreed to include the comments and endorsed the revised updated Roadmap on HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach (document 3-15-Rev.1).

3.48 The Meeting considered BFFE's proposal for phosphorus (P) equivalent for eutrophication potential (document 3-11) as well as the comments by the EU on the proposal (document 3-20).

3.49 The Meeting took note of the information that current HELCOM PLC reporting already includes phosphate as mandatory reporting parameter. The Meeting pointed out that, according to the opinion of national experts from several countries, the bioavailability of phosphorus results from a complex of natural processes and can hardly be reflected by a single indicator and that total P remains the main indicator of phosphorus load.

3.50 The Meeting also took note of the information by Finland on the currently ongoing projects which could contribute to the development of a concept of the P equivalent for eutrophication potential.

3.51 The Meeting thanked BFFE for the proposal and requested the Pressure Working Group to consider the possibility to advance the assessment of nutrient loads.

3.52 The Meeting took note of the information on the FEAP initiative on further division of the HELCOM sub-basins (document 3-16).

3.53 The Meeting reflected on the FEAP's proposal pointing out that the suggested updates require significant changes of the existing model of nutrient fluxes in the Baltic Sea and, consequently, potential revision of regionally agreed environmental targets. The Meeting also recalled that according the latest HELCOM assessment all sub-basins of the Baltic Sea still demonstrate eutrophication status.

3.54 The Meeting took note of the intention by FEAP to bring this topic to the relevant Working Groups and provided guidance that careful consideration is needed of the technical possibility to update the currently used models and also their potential effect on the currently agreed environmental targets.

#### **Agenda Item 4                      Activities of the Commission during 2018 and contributions to the work of the Helsinki Commission**

4.1 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, as set out in **Annex 11**.

4.2 The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to provide any possible comments to the Activities report **by 22 March 2019**. The Meeting reconfirmed that the progress with regard to the strengthened cooperation and information sharing between HELCOM and BALTFISH should also be reflected in the report (c.f. paragraph 3.21 above).

4.3 The Meeting decided that upon finalization by the Secretariat, the HELCOM Activities report 2018 should be published in the Meeting Portal and will be utilized to prepare a publication targeted to the general public in the Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings.

#### **5    Accounts 2017–2018, budget 2019–2020 and other institutional and organisational matters of the Commission**

5.1 Following an open and competitive recruitment process, the Meeting agreed on the recommendation of the Recruitment Panel for the post of HELCOM Executive Secretary and 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.

5.11 The Meeting considered the application for observer status to HELCOM by the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation - NEFCO (document 5-1) and granted observer status to NEFCO. Further, the Meeting invited an active participation of NEFCO for the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

#### **Agenda Item 6 Any other business**

6.8 The Meeting took note of the information by Germany on the completion of finalizing the draft of the first nitrogen resolution submitted by India for the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) to be held in Nairobi, Kenya next week, and the invitation by Germany for interested parties to support the resolution. The Meeting also took note that a draft resolution on single use plastics has been submitted to UNEA-4 by India.

6.9 The Meeting expressed their appreciation to Mr. Matjaž Malgaj (EU) for his efforts and commitment to the work of HELCOM over the years, noting that he will be stepping down as EU Head of Delegation to HELCOM and therefore no longer attend meetings on a regular basis. The Chair and participants recognized the important contribution of the EU, as one of the ten Contracting Parties to HELCOM.

#### **Agenda Item 7 Next meeting(s) of the Commission**

7.1 The Meeting decided to arrange the next meeting of the Commission on 4-5 March 2020 at the Marina Congress Centre in Helsinki, and HELCOM Stakeholder Conference prior to HELCOM 41-2020 on 3 March.

7.2 The Meeting agreed to discuss the topic of the HELCOM stakeholder conference and the high-level segment of HELCOM 41-2020 in HOD 56-2019.

[HOD 55-2018 \(4-5 December 2019, Helsinki, Finland\)](#)

#### **Agenda Item 3 Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan**

3.3 The Meeting took note of the clarification that the HELCOM hot spots will be considered in the further implementation of HELCOM actions under the Pressure Group.

3.5 The Meeting took note of the updated information on implementation of national HELCOM actions provided via Working Groups and agreed to endorse the updates by informing the Secretariat by **31 January 2019** ([susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi](mailto:susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi)).

3.6 The Meeting agreed that the cases of “open ended” national actions in the BSAP are to be considered in the review of the existing BSAP actions, which will continue at the next meetings of the Working Groups.

3.7 The Meeting requested that future Working Group meetings will provide a separate report or annex to summarize discussions and activities related to the update of the BSAP.

3.8 The Meeting agreed on the list of HELCOM Recommendations to be reported to support the BSAP update as contained in **Annex 2**.

3.9 The Meeting mandated the Secretariat to arrange for the reporting and noted that it will be initiated in January-February 2019 and that the reporting period will be six weeks to cater for discussion of the results by the Working Group meetings in spring 2019. The Meeting welcomed that several Working Groups have initiated a review of HELCOM Recommendations and noted that this review can take place beyond the timetable of the BSAP update.

3.10 The Meeting agreed that the reporting of Recommendations will take place via submission of reporting forms by the Secretariat to Working Group representatives, keeping HOD informed. In the case

that several national representatives are nominated to the Working Groups the Secretariat will consult HOD in advance to agree which person to engage in the work.

3.11 The Meeting discussed the possibility to refer to, e.g. implementation of EU legislation when reporting on accomplishment of Recommendations and concluded that the reporting should primarily refer to the implementation through national legislation while supporting information can be provided in the reporting forms to indicate how other legislation partly or entirely fulfils the HECOM Recommendations.

3.12 The Meeting considered the proposal on how to link the BSAP to other policies (Presentation 1, document 3-3). The Meeting agreed to include overarching principles and higher level aims from the Helsinki Convention, UN SDGs and other relevant policies in the pre-amble of the updated BSAP document and also to maintain the 'Vision' of the current BSAP. The Meeting supported that climate change will be a key component of the pre-amble.

3.13 The Meeting agreed to include reference to sustainable development targets in the narrative of the updated BSAP document, for example by clarifying which HELCOM actions will contribute to the implementation of specific SDG targets.

3.14 The Meeting discussed the proposed adjustment of the main segments of the BSAP structure, noting that it builds on the four original segments of the current BSAP, while expanding on the topics covered by the segments (Presentation 1, document 3-3). The Meeting recalled that the ecological objectives of the current BSAP reflect the desired state of the environment while the management objectives under the Maritime segment mainly reflect the desired level of reduction of pressure. The Meeting noted that the proposal is not directly linked to the HELCOM working structure and the implementation of each segment may be a shared responsibility by several Working Groups.

3.15 The Meeting welcomed the proposal by Finland for an alternative structure for further work on the BSAP updating (document 3-9), which is based on mapping, through core indicators, the HELCOM objectives for biodiversity, non-indigenous species, water quality, contamination, marine litter and noise against clusters of manageable human activities with the titles 'Land-based sources', 'Maritime sources' and 'Preservation activities' and to use the result to support the selection of new HELCOM actions. Mapping of pressures would also be added to the matrix.

3.16 The Meeting discussed the pros and cons of the two structures and was of the view that the Finnish proposal provides a good tool for further elaborating the links between activities, pressures and status while there are important merits of close links to the structure of the current plan which is well known and which will provide consistency between the existing and updated BSAP.

3.17 The Meeting took note of the comments by the Contracting Parties to document 3-3 and agreed provisionally to maintain the original segments for the updated BSAP with the following preliminary adjustments, noting that the detailed content to be covered by the segments is still to be further defined and that the agreement on the BSAP structure is aimed for at HOD in December 2019:

- to address marine litter under the segment on Hazardous substances and to consider changing the name to 'Hazardous substances and marine litter';
- to include under the Maritime segment a broader set of sea-based activities, e.g. construction work, dredging, extraction of mineral resources, fishing, and consider changing the name of the segment to 'Sea-based activities'. The topics underwater noise and loss and disturbance of the seabed are tentatively assigned to this segment;
- to use the approach presented by Finland (document 3-9) as a tool to further clarify how activities and pressures are linked to the different segments;

- to request Working Groups to initiate the development of ecological or management objectives for the topics marine litter, underwater noise, and loss and disturbance of the seabed.

3.18 The Meeting took note of the further development of the supporting framework for the BSAP update and that mapping of HELCOM action areas, management objectives and ecological objectives, will continue according to the approach and draft structure presented in document 3-3 in spring 2019.

3.19 The Meeting endorsed the guidance to the Working Groups for the review of the existing and proposing new ecological and management objectives as presented in document 3-3.

3.20 The Meeting noted the proposal by GEAR 19-2018 to change the term “ecological objectives” to “environmental objectives”, and the proposal by Finland to change the term to “ecosystem health objective” and agreed to come back to the issue at a later stage.

3.21 The Meeting took note that the HELCOM ACTION project application has passed the first evaluation step (document 3-5). The HELCOM application was submitted in response to an EU call on "Marine Strategy Framework Directive - Second Cycle: Implementation of the new GES Decision and Programmes of Measures". If financed, the project will cover the analysis of sufficiency of measures for a number of topics of relevance for the BSAP update; by-catch, impacts on the seabed, MPAs as a measure for protecting the Baltic Sea, and eutrophication.

3.22 The Meeting took note that input from all Contracting Parties is needed for the ACTION project, and the Contracting Parties will be engaged, for example, through contribution of data, participation in workshops, and through the guidance that will be supplied via HELCOM Working Groups as outlined in the project description (document 3-5). The Meeting welcomed the interest of Russia to engage their experts to participate in the project activities.

3.23 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 (c.f. document 3-1, activity 2.5). The Meeting considered a proposal for how to carry out the analyses of sufficiency of measures as contained in document 3-6. The Meeting agreed that the work will be carried out via an interdisciplinary platform for the implementation of the analyses (SOM Platform) (Annex 3), 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.

#### **Agenda Item 4                      Matters arising from the HELCOM Groups**

##### *Future meetings and workshops*

4.3 The Meeting took note of the suggestion by Denmark to move PRESSURE 11-2019 a week or two earlier than it was proposed due to national holidays.

4.4 The Meeting also took note that the Eleventh Meeting of the Pressure Working Group (PRESSURE 11-2019) and the Eleventh Meeting of the State and Conservation Working Group (STATE & CONSERVATION 11-2019) are planned to be organized during the same week 21-25 October 2019. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to clarify the dates with the hosting countries and avoid overlapping of the meetings of the groups.

##### *Election of Chairs*

4.5 The Meeting took note that Mr. Lars Sonesten was re-elected as Chair of the Pressure Working Group for the next two-year period (2019-2020) and congratulated Mr. Sonesten for his re-election.

##### *Work Plans*

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4.10 The Meeting considered and approved the Pressure Working Group 2019-2020 (document 4-5);

*Pressure Group*

4.20 The Meeting supported the joint actions in relation to the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (c.f. document 4-4).

4.21 The Meeting took note of the information that the data on phosphogypsum stacks has been reported and that the data processing is in progress by the Secretariat (c.f. document 4-4).

4.22 The Meeting took note of the activity to collect information by launching a regional questionnaire with the aim to improve medical waste handling (c.f. document 4-4).

4.23 The Meeting considered and approved the updated “Guidelines for the annual and periodical compilation and reporting of waterborne pollution inputs to the Baltic Sea (PLC-Water)” (document 4-15) and agreed to submit it for adoption by HELCOM 40-2019.

4.24 The Meeting considered and approved the PLC-6 Executive summary (document 4-22) and agreed on its publication.

4.25 The Meeting congratulated the PLC-6 team for the work done highlighting that integration of the regular PLC assessments into the HELCOM workflow as the PLC assessment products are an asset of HELCOM assessment work. The Meeting suggested to include the information on denitrification into the executive summary and also integrate some editorial corrections.

4.26 The Meeting pointed out the need to reduce overlapping between the consecutive PLC projects.

4.27 The Meeting considered and approved Draft Core Indicator - Inputs of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) to the sub-basins of the Baltic Sea (2016) (document 4-16) and agreed on its publication.

4.28 The Meeting took note of the clarification that the Core Indicator report and the assessment of progress towards national reduction targets are based on different datasets and, therefore, could not be combined in a single assessment product.

4.29 The Meeting considered the evaluation of the implementation of the PLC-6 project tasks (document 4-25) and agreed that the PLC-6 project can be considered as accomplished.

4.30 The Meeting discussed and decided to postpone the decision on the timeline for the PLC-8 assessment to HOD 56-2019. Meanwhile, the Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to elaborate national positions with regard to the PLC-8 timeline and discuss the timeline once again at PRESSURE 10-2019.

4.31 The Meeting considered and approved the draft Terms of Reference for the Group to draft the regional principles and risk assessment framework for management of internal nutrient reserves (ad hoc Group MINUTS) (document 4-8).

4.32 The Meeting took note that Finland nominates two experts to the work of the ad hoc Group MINUTS and will consider possibility to co-lead the work. The Meeting also invited the Contracting Parties to nominate experts to the group by 20 December 2018 and consider co-leading of the work.

4.33 The Meeting considered the information on potential continuation of the ENIRED project on estimation of reductions of atmospheric nitrogen deposition achievable by implementing the Gothenburg Protocol and the EU NEC Directive (document 4-26).

4.34 The Meeting acknowledged the importance of the project results for PLC-7 and the ongoing work on the BSAP update. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Germany to consider to contribute up to 20.000 euro to finance the project.

4.35 The Meeting invited the remaining Contracting Parties to consider the possibility to co-finance the project and inform the Secretariat accordingly by 31 January 2019 with the view of taking a final decision on the project at the annual HELCOM meeting, in order to let project results to be included into the PLC-7 project assessment.

4.36 The Meeting considered the draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Network on Marine Litter for 2019-2021 (document 4-6).

4.37 The Meeting considered the changes to the ToR proposed by the EU and Russia (document 4-6-Rev.1) and further elaborated the ToR (document 4-6-Rev.2). The Meeting approved the revised version of the Terms of Reference for the Expert Network on Marine Litter for 2019-2021 as included in document 4-6-Rev.3 (Annex 5).

4.38 The Meeting considered and approved the draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Network on Underwater Noise for 2018-2021 (documents 4-7 and 4-7-Corr.1), as contained in Annex 6.

#### *State and Conservation Group*

4.63 The Meeting considered and reviewed and further developed the draft structure and process of HELCOM climate change work and the draft Terms of Reference for EN CLIME and the proposed work plan (documents 4-24, 4-24.Rev.1).

4.64 The Meeting welcomed the proposed close collaboration between HELCOM and Baltic Earth.

4.65 The Meeting took note of the information that the Baltic Earth Science Steering Group approved the proposed work process, the establishment of Expert Network on Climate Change and its ToRs. Should the proposals be approved by HOD 55-2018, Baltic Earth will start the process of identifying experts and nominees as well as mapping the parameters to the planned work under the Baltic Earth Assessment Reports already in 2018.

4.66 The Meeting took note of the information that the Baltic Earth Science Steering Group discussed the commitment by Baltic Earth to the work. It was clarified that the commitment of Baltic Earth experts to the work is on a voluntary basis and that it is left to the discretion of each individual expert how extensive their contribution is.

4.67 The Meeting supported the suggestion by the Baltic Earth Science Steering Group that the lists of parameters are left open and that their titles and division will be further discussed at the first meeting of EN CLIME as some of them are possibly repetitive and could, e.g., potentially be clustered, and some might warrant transferring from one category to another.

4.68 The Meeting took note that the work is intended to be done in close cooperation with other HELCOM Working Groups, and that Pressure and Maritime WG have been informed of the planned work and are considering where and how their respective expertise could add the most value to the work.

4.69 The Meeting highlighted that climate change is an important aspect of the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan and that this is currently not reflected in the document. The Meeting invited the Expert Network during their first meeting to consider the possibility to take active part in the update process, e.g. the review of any relevant material related to sufficiency of measures.

4.70 The Meeting approved the proposed work process, the establishment of the Expert Network on Climate Change and its ToRs (as presented in document 4-24-Rev.2 and contained in Annex 8), with the aim of starting nomination process and holding the first online meeting in early 2019.

*Agri Group*

4.71 The Meeting took note of the progress in elaborating the Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy (c.f. document 4-21).

*Data and information strategy*

4.91 The Meeting took note and considered the information on coordinated reporting and hosting of HELCOM continuous noise monitoring data (document 4-14) and further deliberated on funding options for hosting indicator data for continuous noise from the Contracting Parties.

4.96 The Meeting agreed that document 4-14 will be further elaborated by the Secretariat and considered at the annual HELCOM meeting in March 2019.

4.98 The Meeting considered and in general approved the draft updated HELCOM Data and Information Strategy (Document 4-18), however, agreed that the updated Strategy should be communicated with all relevant HELCOM groups, striving to submit the HELCOM Data and Information Strategy for adoption to HELCOM 40-2019.

*Other matters*

4.101 The Meeting took note of the comments by Germany, the CCB and WWF that, in their view, mussel farming is not considered to be a cost-efficient measure to reduce eutrophication due to the low salinity in a large part of the Baltic Sea, which does not secure optimal mussel growth.

**Agenda Item 7                      Next meeting(s)**

7.1 The Meeting decided that the next meeting (HOD 56-2019) will be held on 18-19 June 2019 in Helsinki. The Meeting decided that HOD 57-2019 will be held tentatively on 10-11 December 2019.