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Background

The 2018 HELCOM Ministerial Declaration includes a number of paragraphs related to activities under the mandate of the Pressure Working Group (Annex 1). These paragraphs give the direction for HELCOM work in the upcoming years but some need further specification in order to be turned into concrete tasks for the Working Group and associated Experts Groups, projects, or networks. This could include e.g. to define type of development work and products (e.g. targets for indicators, guideline, assessment) required to reach the goals of the Declaration and target years for achieving them. The aim is that the concretized actions that are not carried out by end of 2020 will be included in the updated BSAP to be agreed in 2021.

The implementation of existing HELCOM actions, including from the current BSAP and Ministerial Declarations in 2010 and 2013, have been followed-up through a coherent scheme since 2016. Some actions were however evaluated as too generically formulated to be followed-up, e.g. those lacking concrete aims and target years and those that were formulated as aspirations rather than commitments (we encourage, we strive for) (Annex 2). As agreed through the Strategic Plan for the BSAP update, these actions should be reviewed to check if some of them should be considered for uptake in the updated BSAP and in that case to concretize them in a similar way as outlined for paragraphs of the 2018 Ministerial Declaration. The relevant actions related to the Pressure Working Group are included in sheet 5 of [document 3-1 Add.2](#) to Pressure 9-2018.

The Meeting is invited to make initial proposals for how to concretize the actions listed in Annex 1 and Annex 2. In the case that the task is not completed the Meeting is invited to consider how to arrange further work, e.g. by Contracting Parties taking the lead to develop the actions further, or by convening an online-meetings. The initial proposal will be presented to HOD 56-2019 and the task is to be finalized by 2019 autumn meetings of Working Groups (cf. Work Plan activity 2.4).

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- to discuss the existing HELCOM actions which were set aside from the follow-up and agree on procedure to review them for potential reformulation and uptake to the renewed BSAP by PRESSURE 11-2019;
- to make initial proposal for concretized actions from HELCOM MD 2018.

Annex 1. Paragraphs from MD 2018 related to Pressure WG

The tables include an extract of paragraphs from the HELCOM 2018 Ministerial Declaration related to the Pressure Working Group ([HELCOM 2018 Ministerial Declaration](#)). An initial evaluation has been made if the paragraphs warrant more concrete formulation and targets for implementation. If not implemented by 2020 the concretized actions will be considered for uptake in the updated BSAP. Paragraphs using wording such as recall, encourage, strive for, acknowledge etc are in general not proposed to be concretized due to their general character.

Theme: Eutrophication

Paragraph from Ministerial Declaration	Initial evaluation
21. WE RECALL the Country-Allocated Reduction Targets for nutrients, which will lower nutrient inputs as specified by the 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, including through implementation of measures taken under relevant EU legislation for Contracting Parties being EU Member States and under relevant national legislation in the Russian Federation;	General
22. WE ACKNOWLEDGE that due to improved data on nutrient inputs in the reference period ¹ , the Country-Allocated Reduction Targets for nutrients are no longer always sufficient to achieve GES of the Baltic Sea with regard to eutrophication and that, therefore, the follow-up of the nutrient reduction requirements of the BSAP should focus on national commitments based on Maximum Allowable Inputs and that this should be taken into consideration when updating the BSAP;	Proposal for concrete action: to utilize national input ceilings to assess progress and to discuss the possibilities of incorporating nutrient input ceilings in the BSAP update (see suggestion in the document 6-1 , item 2.2).
23. WE DECIDE, as well as to engage with the relevant river basin authorities to better align national and international nutrient reduction requirements of the BSAP with those of coastal waters, whilst seeking synergies between relevant regimes	Proposal for concrete action: to organize a workshop with river basin management authorities; to make a trail calculation of the input ceilings for individual river basins and discuss at the Workshop with river basin management authorities (see suggestion in the document 6-1 , item 3.2).
24. RECOGNIZING with concern that large amounts of nutrients have accumulated in the Baltic Sea during the past decades due to anthropogenic activities, resulting in an enhanced internal flux of nutrients between sediments and sea water thereby exacerbating eutrophication	General
25. WE ENCOURAGE , as a first step, further improving the knowledge base regarding the nature and dynamics of internal nutrient reserves.	General
26. WE ENCOURAGE , as a second step, undertaking research on the potential of measures to manage internal nutrient reserves that have accumulated in the sediments due to anthropogenic activities in the last decades; WE EMPHASIZE that the risks to ecosystem and human health stemming from measures to manage internal nutrient reserves, as well as the long-term sustainability of their effects, need to be considered and thoroughly evaluated; WE ALSO ENCOURAGE in parallel developing and applying a risk assessment framework in	Proposal for concrete action: to elaborate the regional principles and the risk assessment framework to manage internal nutrient reserves and incorporated into the HELCOM acquis

¹ Pre-BSAP period (1997-2003).

HELCOM to meet the necessary environmental requirements for measures planned for the open sea and any other measures having potentially significant transboundary effects; WE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE the need to elaborate in line with the Helsinki Convention commonly agreed regional principles as guidance for internal nutrient reserves management.	
27. WE COMMIT to elaborating by 2020 a Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy that aims for reduced nutrient inputs to and eutrophication of the Baltic Sea	The work on the strategy is ongoing jointly with AGRI group.
28. WE DECIDE to also develop, as a follow-up to the Strategy, possible nutrient recycling measures to be included in the updated BSAP	PRESSURE contributes to the work with regard to nutrient recycling in waste water sector.

Theme: Marine Litter

Paragraph from Ministerial Declaration	Initial evaluation
29. BEING CONCERNED that marine litter, and in particular plastic waste, continues to be a problem in the Baltic Sea, WE STRESS the importance of eliminating discharges of litter from land and sea-based sources to the Baltic Sea;	General
30. WE ARE DETERMINED to combat marine litter through coordinated implementation of the Regional Marine Litter Action Plan;	Aspiration to implement RAP ML
31. WE RE-COMMIT to preventing and reducing marine litter from land and sea-based sources and to achieving a significant quantitative reduction by 2025. To that end WE COMMIT to regional work on developing baselines and threshold values for maximum levels of marine litter in the Baltic Sea, in close coordination with work undertaken by Contracting Parties in other relevant fora. If additional efforts are needed to achieve those levels, WE COMMIT to developing ambitious, regionally coordinated, quantitative targets to reduce input of litter;	<p>“developing baselines and threshold values for maximum levels” is to be considered by State and Conservation.</p> <p>A concrete action could be formulated as it is stated in the Recommendation 36/1: The Contracting Parties review and, if necessary, update this Recommendation and its action plan in 2021.</p> <p>The results of SOM could be utilized for quantification of potential reduction by 2025.</p>
32. WE ALSO COMMIT to strengthening regional research and developing harmonised monitoring methods on the sources, distribution , amounts and impacts of marine litter including micro-plastics, in coherence with similar work undertaken by Contracting Parties in other relevant fora, and to improving assessment of the effectiveness of measures;	<p>“developing harmonised monitoring methods” is to be considered by State and Conservation.</p> <p>Proposal on concrete action: a method to quantify effectiveness of measures to prevent littering of the marine environment will be developed by SOM platform.</p>
33. WE SUPPORT measures aimed at preventing plastics, including micro-plastics, from contaminating the marine and coastal environment, at addressing the entire lifecycle of products, and at examining efficient and cost-effective options to reduce plastic and micro-plastic releases from products and processes into the environment;	aspiration to implement HELCOM RAP ML

Theme: Hazardous substances

Paragraph from Ministerial Declaration	Initial evaluation
35. WE AGREE to re-examine the effectiveness of measures and recommendations for legacy pollutants and to identify the scale of problems of contaminants of emerging concern, including micro-pollutants in coastal and marine waters and, based on this knowledge, to consider possible cost-effective mitigation measures. WE WELCOME the joint HELCOM-UNESCO-EUSBSR status report on pharmaceuticals in the aquatic environment in the Baltic Sea Region as the information basis for developing measures, as appropriate, to prevent pharmaceuticals from reaching the Baltic Sea, and also WELCOME the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) regional cooperation platform to reduce pharmaceuticals in the Baltic Sea;	Proposed concrete action: to revise the regional priority pollutants; to advance the HELCOM indicators including information on sources and pathways of pollutants to identify emerging pollutants; to develop measures to prevent pharmaceuticals from reaching marine environment; to develop a framework for responding to the emergent/alarming pollutants.
36. WE ALSO AGREE to identify and assess further hazardous substances and contaminants from offshore sources, which may give rise to pollution effects, and develop appropriate mitigation measures.	Proposed concrete action: regional inventory of offshore sources and identification of priority contaminants from offshore sources.

Theme: Underwater noise

Paragraph from Ministerial Declaration	Initial evaluation
39. WE AGREE to develop an action plan, preferably by 2021, and regionally coordinated actions on underwater noise, aiming, in the long-term, at addressing adverse effects of underwater noise on marine species identified as sensitive to noise, whilst safeguarding the potential of the Baltic Sea for sustainable human activities;	Ongoing and anticipated to be adopted before updated BSAP.

Theme: Loss and disturbance to the seabed

Paragraph from Ministerial Declaration	Initial evaluation
41. WE AGREE to do regional work on developing threshold values for the adverse effects of anthropogenic physical disturbance and, based on the best available scientific information in close coordination with other relevant fora, if needed to achieve GES, to develop the necessary regionally coordinated quantitative targets for the reduction of physical disturbance caused by human activities and habitat loss;	“developing threshold values for the adverse effects” is to be considered by State and Conservation Proposal on concrete action: to develop a method to evaluate losses and disturbance caused by handling dredged material at sea and thus, contribute to regional quantitative targets. to develop the targets a contribution of HELCOM FISH group is vital.
42. WE AGREE , based on best available scientific advice, to work together to elaborate regional and national actions aiming at delivering the necessary reductions in adverse effects of physical disturbance caused by human activities.	Proposal on concrete action: to propose actions to reduce adverse effect of handling dredged material at sea.

Theme: Ocean Governance

Paragraph from Ministerial Declaration	Initial evaluation
54. WE DECIDE to continue the concrete cooperation on HELCOM Hotspots with the aim to eliminate the remaining hotspots WE WELCOME recent efforts made so far in addressing those hotspots via multi-stakeholder cooperation, such as for the Krasnyi Bor landfill involving NEFCO;	This is an inspirational paragraph. Concrete actions are in the HELCOM hot spot list.
56. WE STRIVE for joint approaches and synergies among HELCOM and relevant multilateral environmental agreements including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas. WE STRESS the importance of transboundary cooperation, transparency, and information-sharing among Contracting Parties in order to assess, prevent, mitigate, and compensate the impacts arising from human activities such as nuclear energy projects, offshore projects of oil drilling and construction of gas pipelines, in line with international legislation;	The first part “WE STRIVE..” of the paragraph is mainly for S&C to consider. The “WE STRESS...” is of inspirational character as the relevant regulations are in the Article 7 of the Helsinki Convention or Espoo Convention etc.
59. WE AGREE to strengthen the fruitful cooperation with OSPAR on transboundary issues and common challenges to gain efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of SDGs such as ballast water management and introduction of invasive alien species, the issue of underwater noise, micro-plastic, migratory birds, MPA network and management, and threatened and endangered species;	Proposal on concrete action: To organise a workshop with OSPAR on the development of a microliter indicator on sediments in coordination with EU TG Litter. (It is now a candidate indicator in OSPAR, and the HELCOM network indicated that it would be good to cooperate with then on this, and maybe not to advance on microlitter in the water column). To organise a follow up meeting (following the one organised in 2017) with the OSPAR ICG Noise and in coordination with EU TG Noise to advance on the assessment of underwater noise indicators.

Annex 2. Existing commitments that are not included in the follow-up system

The commitments listed below that were previously assigned as “too general” are proposed to be considered for inclusion in the updated BSAP.

- Review of BSAP environmental targets - this process should also aim for further regional differentiation of the targets, in particular in the coastal zone, with the view to seek coherence between open sea and coastal waters targets
- Periodical review and revision of maximum allowable inputs and nutrient reduction requirements using harmonised approach and updated information
- Actions to reduce nutrient load shall be undertaken
- Jointly address common challenges, including through sub-regional and bilateral projects, as well as develop additional reduction measures as needed based on cost-efficiency
- Facilitate exchange of information on best available treatment techniques (WWTP), including showcasing of best examples (“List of Green Baltic Spots”)
- Launch pilot activities regarding municipal waste water treatment by engaging a wider network of municipalities, and where appropriate enhancing co-operation in environmental field under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (for those CPs that are EU MS)
- Encourage educational cooperation and exchange of best practices and experiences of solving the problem of municipal sewage in smaller municipalities and scattered settlements
- Encourage voluntary use of P-free dishwasher detergents
- Transboundary pollution originating in the non-Contracting States to be addressed by joint activities e.g. by bi- and/or multilateral projects, other existing funding mechanisms and international agreements such as the 1992 UNECE Convention on Transboundary Waters and Lakes, and the RBMPs of the EUWFD, for HELCOM Contracting States being also EU Members
- List of priority installations contributing to transboundary pollution of the Baltic Sea
- Governments of the HELCOM Contracting Parties shall make use of the assessments of the inputs and effects of airborne nitrogen to the Baltic Sea in the revision of the emission targets for nitrogen under CLRTAP
- Address the need for additional measures within transportation, combustion and agriculture (as the three major sources of atmospheric emissions of nitrogen these sectors) with the aim to ensure a Baltic-wide application of uniform standards
- Monitor and evaluate regularly the progress in implementing the measures (for nutrient reduction to reach CART)
- Identify and prioritize the remaining investment needs for further reduction of nutrients, with the aim to bridge the gap in translating HELCOM nutrient reduction targets into area or site specific implementation and thus strengthen local contributions towards regional goals
- Assess potential significant sources of nutrient pollution on land e.g. industries, fur- and fish-farming, and when needed, address them with abatement measures and/or emission limits;
- Development of measures addressing airborne transport of hazardous substances
- Promote and continuously support actions aiming at changing e.g. consumer behavior towards “greener” (less associated with use of hazardous substances) products, processes and services
- Encouraging continued research on hazardous substances of specific concern to the Baltic Sea, including on their interactions and cumulative effects as well as source reduction measures and development of cost-efficient end-of-pipe solutions
- Assessing the need for joint measures to reduce emissions and discharges of hazardous substances
- Making use of information generated by REACH Regulation, EU WFD and EU MSFD, e.g. substance-specific risk assessments and dossiers, etc.

- Raising the awareness of the public regarding the effects on human health and the environment of hazardous substances
- Capacity building within and between authorities as well as for industries on the identification and implementation of requirements concerning hazardous substances
- Raising public awareness of the negative environmental and economic effects of marine litter in the marine environment, including effects of “ghost fishing” of lost or discarded fishing gear
- Further investigate possibilities for the substitution of the use of polyphosphates as builders in dishwasher detergents for consumer use
- Carry out further investigations on alternative builders in detergents, especially on their use and environmental effects
- Further assess in cooperation with the BALTEX community, the current and predicted effects of climate change on the pressures affecting the marine ecosystem
- Follow up the progress in hot spots remediation and support exchange of information and knowledge especially on application of BAT for remaining industrial hot spots
- Start work on strict restrictions of use for perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), nonylphenol/nonylphenolethoxylates (NP/NPEs), short-chain chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs)
- If relevant assessments show the need, initiate adequate measures for medium-chain chlorinated paraffins (MCCPs), octylphenols (OP)/Octylphenol ethoxylates (OPE), perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), decabromodiphenyl ether (decaBDE) and hexabromocyclododecane (HBCDD) (2009)
- Application of strict restrictions on the use of mercury in products and from processes and support the work towards further limiting and where feasible totally banning mercury in products and from processes (BSAP); to start checking by 2011/12 the feasibility of reducing and avoiding the use of mercury in products and from processes as well as further reducing mercury emissions, e.g. from large combustion sources (MD 2010)
- Input to international forums to influence work on hazardous substances (e.g. revision of BREFs, WFD, REACH, plant protection and biocides regulation, etc.)
- Promotion and support of identification and inclusion of new candidate substances to Stockholm POPs Convention and CLRTAP Aarhus Protocol
- Promotion of and participation in Strategic Approach on International Chemicals Management (SAICM) implementation process