



Outcome of the 14th Meeting of the Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (HELCOM PRESSURE 14-2021)

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Introduction

0.1 In accordance with the decisions by PRESSURE 13-2020 (Outcome, Paragraph 12.4) and HOD 59-2020 (Outcome, Paragraph 4.19), the 14th Meeting of the HELCOM Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (PRESSURE 14-2021) was held online, on 13-16 April 2021.

0.2 All Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention attended the Meeting. Observers from Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), Baltic Farmers' Forum on Environment (BFFE), the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP), European Federation of National Associations of Water and Wastewater Services (EurEau), Race for the Baltic, and John Nurminen Foundation as well as invited guest from Baltic Nest Institute (BNI) and the City of Helsinki also attended the Meeting. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Lars Sonesten, Chair of the Pressure Group. Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, assisted by Ms. Laura Kaikkonen, Ms. Marta Ruiz and Ms. Susanna Kaasinen, from the HELCOM Secretariat acted as secretary of the Meeting.

0.4 The Meeting took note that Denmark is not in the position to discuss the content of the late document 7-1 but is willing to consider options for its further advancement.

0.5 The Meeting took note that Sweden had insufficient time to consider document 10-1, which will be considered at AGRI 12-2021. Sweden places a study reservation on the document with the intention to clarify their position at AGRI 12-2021.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda of the Meeting as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other HELCOM work

2.1 The Meeting took note of the extracts from the outcomes of meetings of relevance to the work of Pressure Working Group (**document 2-1**).

2.2 The Meeting took note of the concern expressed by Germany regarding the Estonian study reservation on the revised nutrient input ceilings and that the argumentation had not been brought to PRESSURE for appropriate expert consideration. Germany expressed disappointment that none of the opportunities (e.g., workshops, WG Meetings etc) were used by Estonia to discuss the scientific background for the revised NICs. Germany considers NICs as an essential part of the regional policy agreement to abate eutrophication and regrets that at present discussion on the matter is only ongoing within DG BSAP but not in PRESSURE, where leading regional experts could be involved.

Agenda Item 3 Marine litter

3.1 The Meeting considered the accomplishment of actions RL1 and RL3 in the RAP ML based on the work conducted on the matter (**document 3-5**) and agreed that they can be considered accomplished. The Meeting thanked Germany for leading the implementation of the actions.

3.2 The Meeting recalled that a draft version of the revised HELCOM Recommendation 23/5 on storm water management was endorsed by PRESSURE 13-2020 and submitted to HELCOM 42-2021 for adoption.

3.3 The Meeting took note that HELCOM 42-2021 considered the revised HELCOM Recommendation 23/5, provided input and agreed to mandate HOD 60-2021 adopt the Recommendation assuming that Germany is in the position to lift their study reservation by HOD 60-2021 (Outcome of HELCOM

42-2021, para. 5.27-5.33). The Meeting agreed to consider action RL4 on the improvement of stormwater management accomplished after adoption of the revised HELCOM Recommendation 23/5 by HOD 60-2021.

3.4 The Meeting considered the accomplishment of action RS1 on end-of-life boats in the RAP ML (**document 3-3**), noting that the HELCOM policy message on End of Life Boats is available in the HELCOM website. The Meeting took note that a new action is being formulated in the revised RAP ML to fulfil the steps mentioned in the policy message.

3.5 The Meeting agreed that the action RS1 in the current RAP ML is accomplished and thanked Finland for the successful leadership that has resulted in the implementation of the action.

3.6 The Meeting considered the accomplishment of action RS2 in the RAP ML based on the work conducted (**document 3-6**).

3.7 The Meeting took note that the background document was finalized in 2016 and the workshop held in 2018. The text presented in the document therefore reflects the situation at this time, in particular the discussions preceded the amendment to the Port Reception Facilities Directive, adopted in 2019 (2019/833) and replacing 2000/59/EC.

3.8 The Meeting took note that Denmark does not agree with all parts of the background report and the recommendations, particularly, with the conclusions regarding the efficiency of PRF related inspections conducted under the framework of PSC.

3.9 The Meeting agreed that the action is accomplished and expressed high appreciation of the effort done by Germany to accomplish the action. The Meeting further acknowledged that the legal framework has been developed since publication of the background report.

3.10 The Meeting considered the revised RAP ML (**document 3-1**) as well as comments and proposals by Sweden on the formulation on some of the actions in the revised RAP ML (**document 3-9**).

3.11 The Meeting discussed the formulation of actions in the revised RAP ML.

3.12 The Meeting agreed to delete the dedicated section on education and raising awareness and to transfer action RE1 to the preamble and RE2 to the section on sea-based activities.

3.13 The Meeting did not support action RL2 in its current formulation and agreed that an alternative formulation and a proposal for a related clause in the introduction will be provided by Denmark, Germany and Sweden to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) by **30 April 2021**.

3.14 The Meeting in general agreed on the revised list of actions as contained in Annex 2 to the Outcome, acknowledging that some clarifications are still needed concerning e.g., shipping related activities and the fact that the RAP has not been considered by MARITIME WG. The Meeting invited countries to clarify national position on the actions which still require consultations and to inform the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) by **30 April 2021**.

3.15 The Meeting discussed the introductory section of the revised RAP ML and in general agreed on the updated draft as included in Annex 3 to the Outcome, recalling that a clause related to RL2 on the support of HELCOM for of a global agreement on plastics including national plastic management plans based on a holistic view on plastic life cycle will be still proposed, as the Meeting did not support action RL2 in its current formulation.

3.16 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to edit the introduction ensuring coherency throughout the segment.

3.17 The Meeting discussed the draft updated text of the Recommendation 36/1 and updated it as included in **Annex 4** to the Outcome.

3.18 The Meeting concluded that the text of the Recommendation should be streamlined renewing reference to the regional commitments and agreed to provide relevant input, utilizing Annex 4 to the Outcome as starting point, to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) by **30 April 2021**.

- 3.19 The Meeting discussed the draft revised Appendix I - Reporting format on implementation of actions and in general agreed on its contents as included in Annex 5 of the Outcome.
- 3.20 The Meeting agreed that reporting on the Recommendation should be conducted every second year.
- 3.21 The Meeting provisionally discussed potential leadership of individual actions in the revised RAP ML, taking note that Finland considers leading implementation of action RL9.
- 3.22 The Meeting acknowledged that the Contracting Parties did not have time to adequately consider potential leadership of individual actions in the revised RAP ML during the meeting and agreed to inform the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) about potential leadership of specific actions by **30 April 2021**, acknowledging that no leadership commitments will be made by the Contracting Parties until after the RAP ML is adopted.
- 3.23 The Meeting recalled that the revised RAP ML should be submitted to HOD 60-2021 for endorsement. In this respect, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to compile the written comments received from the Contracting Parties on the various parts of the Regional Action Plan by **30 April 2021**, and to integrate them in a single document. The Contracting Parties will be given at least one week to review the document before submission to HOD 60-2021 by **12 May 2021**.
- 3.24 The Meeting considered the draft HELCOM Recommendation on reduction of EPS and XPS emissions to the environment presented by Denmark (**document 3-7**), taking note that there was insufficient time to thoroughly discuss the draft and thus agreed to provide input to the draft Recommendation to Denmark (Ms. Lone Munk Søderberg, lomu@mim.dk) by **31 May 2021**.
- 3.25 The Meeting took note that Denmark is not in the position to conduct the entire work on the development of the HELCOM guideline for best practice on handling EPS/XPS on construction and demolition sites as indicated in the draft Recommendation alone, and that the implementation of the task demands additional resources. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to consider opportunities for a HELCOM project or a project financed from external sources to accomplish the work.
- 3.26 The Meeting highly valued the work done by Denmark and suggested that the first draft of the Recommendation will be communicated to HOD 61-2021. The Meeting invited Denmark to update the draft HELCOM Recommendation on reduction of EPS and XPS emissions to the environment, incorporating input which will be supplied by **31 May 2021** and submit it to PRESSURE 15-2021.
- 3.27 The Meeting considered the five proposals for a HELCOM operational reduction target for marine litter as contained in **document 3-2** and agreed that they can be used as a starting point to elaborate a suggestion on quantitative targets to reduce marine litter for the updated BSAP.
- 3.28 The Meeting exchanged views and concluded that majority of countries prefer proposals 2 and 3, in addition to proposal 5. The Meeting agreed that the discussion will continue during a dedicated PRESSURE WG meeting, to be held online on **10 May 2021**, 13:00-15:00h EEST. The outcome of the meeting will form the proposal for HELCOM BSAP operational reduction targets for marine litter to be submitted to HOD 60-2021.
- 3.29 The Meeting took note of the information on the implementation of the FanPLESStic-sea project (**document 3-8**).
- 3.30 The Meeting considered the draft report on traffic microplastics (**document 3-4**) and agreed to provide feedback on the draft report to the Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) by **23 April 2021**. The input will be further utilized by the Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) to finalize the report.
- 3.31 The Meeting also noted that the Danish Environmental Agency has published a report on removal of microplastic and micro-rubber from stormwater discharges, which might have relevance for the FanPLESStic report: <https://www2.mst.dk/Udgiv/publikationer/2020/12/978-87-7038-252-6.pdf>.
- 3.32 The Meeting discussed the policy brief *Traffic microplastics – how to mitigate the problem?* and concluded that as the policy brief is planned to be published as a HELCOM policy message, more time is needed for additional scrutiny. The Meeting agreed to provide comments on the policy brief to the

Secretariat (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) by **14 May 2021**. The Meeting further agreed to return to consideration of the policy message at PRESSURE 15-2021.

3.33 The Meeting took note of the information on the “[Plastic Free Ocean](#)” project, recently accomplished by CCB, which produced, among other outputs, the “[Guideline on How Municipalities Can Reduce the Use of Single-Use Plastics on a Local Level](#)” and invited Contracting Parties to familiarize themselves with the [project outcomes](#).

Agenda Item 4 Underwater noise

4.1 The Meeting discussed the draft HELCOM Recommendation on the Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise (**document 4-1** and **document 4-1 Rev.1**), recalling that HELCOM 42-2021 agreed to mandate HOD 60-2021 to adopt the Recommendation on the Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise (Outcome of HELCOM 42-2021, para. 5.34-5.38).

4.2 The Meeting took note that Sweden supports the Action Plan on Underwater Noise, emphasizing the importance of measures listed in the Action Plan to mitigate the disturbance caused by underwater noise for harbour porpoise and the spawning of east Baltic cod.

4.3 The Meeting took note that Germany supports the draft Recommendation but suggests reviewing the recommendation within a six-year period.

4.4 The Meeting discussed the reporting frequency for the recommendation and a starting date for the Regional Action Plan and agreed to start annual reporting in 2022 to coincide with the expected preliminary results from the HELCOM BLUES project.

4.5 The Meeting discussed the target year for the revision, provisionally proposing 2027, but agreed that the final confirmation will be given at HOD 60.

4.6 The Meeting endorsed the submission of the draft HELCOM Recommendation on the Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise as contained in Annex 6 to HOD 60-2021 for adoption.

4.7 The Meeting took note of the report on the activities of HELCOM EN-Noise (**document 4-2**), including national data available in the continuous noise database and the impulsive noise registry. The Meeting encouraged countries to report their national data to the HELCOM database for their use in the underwater noise assessment in HOLAS III.

4.8 The Meeting took note that Germany welcomes the work of EN-noise and including EN Noise’s call to report data on underwater noise with regard to the assessment of HOLAS III. Germany is willing to continue and further improve its reporting in the future and recommends that the outcomes of the BIAS project be incorporated in the future work within the HELCOM BLUES project to ensure a continuity between previous HELCOM work and the current assessment process.

Agenda Item 5 Physical damage to the seafloor

5.1 The Meeting considered the Baltic Sea Environmental Fact Sheets on dredging/depositing operations at sea in 2019 (**document 5-1 rev.1**).

5.2 The Meeting welcomed the report, pointed out some inconsistencies in Danish data regarding the sources of deposited material in figures 14 and 15, and invited Denmark to check them and clarify the matter.

5.3 The Meeting endorsed the draft for publication as a Baltic Sea Environmental Fact Sheet after clarification of the inconsistency in Danish data by **23 April 2021**.

5.4 The Meeting noted that CCB urged the Contracting Parties which do not report data on all hazardous substances in dredged material, particularly organotin compounds, to analyze the reasons for that and if needed, undertake measures to improve this part of the reporting.

5.5 The Meeting noted that CCB proposed that data on dredging and depositing operations will be considered in the regional action plan on hazardous substances, which is planned to be included as one of

the actions to the updated BSAP, as one of the sources of information on specific legacy contaminants related to sediments.

5.6 The Meeting considered the consolidated report to LC/LP on depositing dredged material at sea in 2019 (**document 5-2**) and approved the report to be submitted to LC/LP.

5.7 The Meeting noted that CCB welcomes the work done by HELCOM Contracting Parties regarding the promotion of beneficial use of dredged material (e.g. beach nourishment) instead of dumping it in the sea.

5.8 The Meeting took note that some Contracting Parties have already reported data to LC/LP and requested the Secretariat to include a notification about that in the report to avoid double accounting of reported data.

5.9

Agenda Item 6 HOLAS III

6.1 The Meeting took note of the structure, timelines, and process of work towards the Third State of the Baltic Sea report, as well as timing and envisioned contribution of the Working Group to the HOLAS III assessment process (**document 6-1, [presentation 1](#)**).

6.2 The Meeting welcomed the presentation, emphasizing the high level of ambition of the HOLAS III project and its thorough organization and planning.

6.3 The Meeting discussed the involvement of PRESSURE WG and related expert groups in the HOLAS III work. The Meeting expressed concern that the linkages between the state of the Baltic Sea and pressures originating from land-based sources are not well articulated in the outline of the HOLAS III thematic reports. In particular, the proposed "Pollution" thematic report appears focussed on sea-based activities and is not suitable to include polluting activities in the catchment. This might result in a gap in comprehensively linking the state of the marine environment and land-based activities causing major environmental pressures.

6.4 The Meeting discussed whether the Drivers and Activities should be included in the respective eutrophication and hazardous substances thematic reports and acknowledged that this would, however, require the active involvement of Pressure and Agri WGs.

6.5 The Meeting further emphasized that the outcomes of the PLC and HOLAS processes should be coordinated to the highest extent possible, acknowledging that full coordination does not seem possible due to a number of external factors influencing the implementation plans of both HELCOM activities.

6.6 The Meeting also took note of the ongoing analysis of data flows as a part of preparatory stage for HOLAS III, which is specifically aimed at harmonization and streamlining of data flows which are supposed to be used in the HOLAS III assessment. The Meeting welcomed the information that relevant EU data streams, e.g., CMEMS and EuroStat, will be considered and addressed.

6.7 The Meeting also took note that all indicators, planned to be utilized in the HOLAS III assessment, should be approved by the HOD meeting held at the end of 2021. Indicators without threshold values, such as surveillance of hazardous substances, could be considered and approved at later stages. The Meeting requested that the PRESSURE group will be informed about progress in indicator development.

6.8 The Meeting was of the opinion that an inadequate understanding of the linkages between state changes and pressures was a key shortcoming in HOLAS II and SOM analyses. To avoid similar issues, the Meeting recommended experts of AGRI and PRESSURE WGs to be more involved in the HOLAS III working process, particularly by giving them an opportunity to contribute to the thematic reports regarding assessment of related pressures. The Meeting also emphasized that the holistic assessment requires a more holistic working structure, including dedicated workshops on eutrophication, hazardous substances, and marine litter in Spring 2022 with involvement of experts from different expert and working groups.

6.9 The Meeting further acknowledged that as countries may report data for different time periods, with challenges in particular associated with including 2021, the consequences of using data from different years should be properly considered and addressed in the assessment.

Agenda Item 7 Update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

7.1 The Meeting took note of the information that the updated HELCOM Explorer was launched in autumn 2020 and that reporting on national actions by the countries, as well as the reporting on the joint actions by the Working Groups endorsed by HOD 59-2020, has been included to the HELCOM Explorer.

7.2 The Meeting took note that a short report on the implementation of the current BSAP, based on the data compiled in the HELCOM Explorer, will be developed as a background information for the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting and will be considered by HODs intersessionally.

7.3 The Meeting took note of the brief information on the current state of the BSAP update ([presentation 2](#)).

7.4 The Meeting considered the additional information on BSAP actions related to the Pressure WG (**document 7-1**). The Meeting took note that since the submission of the document, the work on finalizing the formulations of the actions has substantially advanced.

7.5 The Meeting took note of the list of activities and pressures contained in the document. The Meeting pointed out that the list could be further refined.

7.6 The Meeting recalled that Denmark has not had time to study the document due to its late submission and withheld from reviewing the formulations. The Meeting considered supplementary information on the actions within the group's mandate and agreed in general on the proposed formulations as given in the Attachment 1, pending clarification of the Danish position by **19 April 2021**.

7.7 The Meeting took note that to evenly distribute the workload between WGs, actions proposed for the updated BSAP were forwarded for consideration to only one group, despite some actions being relevant to several working groups e.g., actions on underwater noise are mainly considered by MARITIME WG. The Meeting recognized that this demands more intense national coordination prior to the decision by HOD.

7.8 The Meeting expressed concern regarding the challenging timeframe for the preparation of the tables with additional information, also bearing in mind that actions are currently being developed by DG BSAP but not main HELCOM WGs and that some aspects of the discussions in DG BSAP segment teams may not be considered in this work.

7.9 The Meeting took note that in line with the procedure agreed by HELCOM 42-2021, the work should be accomplished by the submission deadline for HOD 60-2021 on **12 May 2021**. The Meeting noted that HOD 60-2021 will review the document and the final approval will take place at an intersessional HOD meeting in the beginning of September 2021.

7.10 The Meeting agreed that compilation and reviewing of supplementary information for all actions is not feasible by the deadline given for submission of decision and commenting documents to HOD 60-2021 due to other commitments and the need to engage multiple experts in the work. The Meeting acknowledged that the adequately reviewed formulations can be submitted to HOD-60-2021 only as a late document.

7.11 The Meeting discussed distribution of the workload for accomplishment of the task and agreed on the following:

- RedCore DG coordinated by the Chair (Lars M Svendsen) will draft supplementary information for actions related to eutrophication;
- Germany (Wera Leujak) will draft supplementary information for the five actions related to hotspots, when actions have been agreed by DG BSAP;

- Supplementary information for actions on hazardous substances will be prepared jointly by the Secretariat, the Chair of Pressure, Sweden and Germany and this subgroup will meet on **17 May 2021**.

7.12 The Meeting agreed that the draft proposals on all actions will be ready by **18 May 2021**.

7.13 The Meeting agreed to arrange an intersessional Pressure group meeting on **25 May 2021** to discuss the proposed formulations and finalize the work for late submission to HOD 60-2021.

7.14 The Meeting invited the Secretariat to circulate the latest versions of the actions to the participants who have offered their support in the process. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to clarify the process for collection of supplementary information for the group of actions related to sea-bed loss and disturbance.

Agenda Item 8 Hazardous substances

8.1 The Meeting considered the draft Regional policy document on hazardous substances (**document 8-2**, [presentation 3](#)), welcomed the report and thanked for the work done.

8.2 The Meeting recommended to publish the Regional policy document on hazardous substances as HELCOM BSEP. The Meeting agreed that the document requires some editorial work before submission to HOD 60-2021 for approval and agreed that comments on the report will be supplied to Emma Undeman (emma.undeman@su.se) with a copy to the Secretariat (Dmitry.Frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi) by **30 April 2021**.

8.3 The Meeting considered the draft summary providing recommendations based on findings of the Regional policy document (**document 8-2**). The Meeting further agreed that comments on the summary can be provided to Emma Undeman (emma.undeman@su.se) with a copy to the Secretariat (Dmitry.Frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi) by **30 April 2021**.

8.4 The Meeting welcomed the recommendations and agreed that the document is to be utilized in the development of the HELCOM framework for hazardous substances and particularly in the development of the regional action plan (strategic approach) proposed for the updated BSAP. The Meeting highlighted that this work should be launched relatively soon, and thus organizational issues should be clarified by the end of 2021 at the latest.

8.5 The Meeting emphasized that the current HELCOM structure does not include a designated body dealing with all the aspects related to the contamination of the marine environment by hazardous substances. The mandates of existing EN-hazards and PLC implementation groups do not cover the whole management cycle, resulting in significant knowledge gaps regarding the connections between the state of the marine environment, inputs of pollutants, and management decisions.

8.6 The Meeting further pointed out that coordinating such a group requires an extension of related resources and competence within the Secretariat.

8.7 The Meeting discussed practical steps for improvement of HELCOM work on hazardous substances and agreed to establish a short-term ad hoc group (under PRESSURE WG). The group will be tasked to draft a proposal for Terms of Reference for a HELCOM body which would demonstrate a holistic approach to the problem of contamination of the marine environment, combining the follow-up of the implementation of related measures, development of new measure and tracing related changes in inputs, sources, pathways and the state of the marine environment. The ToR will also specify concrete deliverables for this body and its relations within the existing HELCOM structure.

8.8 The Meeting recalled that there are good examples of such groups or networks demonstrating a holistic approach. The Meeting agreed that it may not be necessary to establish a new expert group rather it could be preferable to modify the ToR for an existing group or network e.g. EN-hazards.

8.9 The Meeting invited participants to inform the Secretariat (Dmitry.Frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi; laura.kaikkonen@helcom.fi) on their willingness to participate in the ad hoc group by **30 April 2021**. The Meeting requested the ad hoc group to draft a proposal for ToR and submit it to

PRESSURE 15-2021 for consideration. The Meeting also kindly invited Emma Undeman, the author of the Regional policy document on hazardous substances to attend the ad hoc group.

8.10 The Meeting considered the draft PLC-7 thematic report on the input of hazardous substances (**document 8-1**).

8.11 The Meeting recommended the publication of the report as a HELCOM BSEP.

8.12 The Meeting took note that Lithuania and Germany would like to provide written comments clarifying some issues related to the description of data quality and analytical procedures. The Meeting agreed that editorial comments can be provided to Lars Sonesten (lars.sonesten@slu.se) with a copy to the Secretariat (Dmitry.Frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi) by **30 April 2021**.

8.13 The Meeting also took note that additional data on the inputs of hazardous substances from direct point sources are available from Denmark. The Meeting welcomed the willingness of Denmark to improve the reporting of national PLC data on hazardous substances, acknowledged that the PLC-7 project has been already formally closed, and invited Denmark to make this data available for PLC-8.

8.14 The Meeting took note of the organization of the wide-scope screening campaign on hazardous substances (**document 8-4**, [presentation 4](#)) and discussed the provisional plans outlined for the project and for the surveillance indicator.

8.15 The Meeting welcomed the development of the pilot project. The Meeting highlighted that the project is focused on components of marine environment and, particularly, on biota. This approach does not measure emerging contaminants at source and thus, the screening campaign does not serve as an early warning system for emerging pollutants at source. The Meeting admitted that since this is a pilot project, it is a good start for this type of assessment work. The Meeting took note that the proposed indicator on Wide-scope screening for hazardous substances will be further discussed at HELCOM State & Conservation.

8.16 The Meeting invited the HELCOM Secretariat to present the information on the campaign at OSPAR's MIME meeting (preliminary date 22 – 26th November) 2021.

8.17 The Meeting took note of the progress in the draft report on micropollutants in WWTP effluents as presented by the Secretariat ([presentation 5](#)).

8.18 The Meeting welcomed the presentation, took note that the comments provided in the previous commenting round had been addressed and agreed to further consider the draft report intersessionally.

8.19 The Meeting took note that WWTPs should not be considered as source of pollution but rather as a pathway and that streams of contaminants from various sources which end up in WWTPs have been analysed in a number of projects (e.g., COHIBA).

8.20 The Meeting took note of the revised Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (**document 8-3**).

8.21 The Meeting discussed how the activities of the Policy Areas could contribute to the implementation of the revised BSAP:

8.22 The Meeting thanked the coordinators of PA NUTRI and PA Hazards for the information pointing out the importance of cooperation with the EU SBSR which is also reflected in the HELCOM Ministerial commitments.

8.23 The Meeting recalled previous successful cooperation between HELCOM and Policy Areas which resulted in a number of tangible products and agreed that the cooperation should be continued and concretized.

8.24 The Meeting took note of the proposal by Germany to include projects that address the removal of old and potentially new regional hot spots and support the implementation of the nutrient recycling strategy as priorities of the Policy Areas. The Meeting further took note that Germany is not in favor of prioritizing measures to manage internal nutrient resources pointing out that related projects should follow the Guideline which is being currently developed by HELCOM.

8.25 The Meeting also took note of the view of EurEau that increasing the nutrient removal rate of WWTPs, which is considered as part of one of the actions in the revised action plan of the EU SBSR, can be challenging and costly, especially because of many of the WWTP's have already high nutrient removal in place.

Agenda Item 9 Eutrophication

9.1 The Meeting considered the policy recommendations of the BEST project on management of industrial discharges at municipal wastewater treatment plants (**document 9-5, presentation 6**).

9.2 The Meeting discussed how to address the recommendations in the HELCOM policy framework.

9.3 The Meeting agreed that these recommendations are highly relevant for HELCOM work and that they can be utilized for revision of existing or development of new HELCOM Recommendations related to the wastewater sector in line with actions proposed for the updated BSAP.

9.4 The Meeting in general agreed that the recommendations of the BEST project can be developed to a HELCOM policy message but that it requires additional time for national consultations with subsequent adjustment of formulation of these recommendations. The Meeting agreed that proposals will be provided by contracting parties by **17 September 2021** to JNF (Marjukka.Porvari@jnffoundation.fi) with copy to the Secretariat (Laura.kaikkonen@helcom.fi). The Meeting welcomed the kind offer by John Nurminen Foundation to cooperate in the development of the document and to present a draft policy message to PRESSURE 15-2021.

9.5 The Meeting took note of the proposal to consider marine eutrophication in the review and possible revision of the Gothenburg Protocol (**document 9-3**).

9.6 The Meeting discussed the potential role of HELCOM in this process and took note of a coming meeting of CLRTAPs Working Group in September 2021 where the HELCOM's participation would be desirable.

9.7 The Meeting thanked Germany for this initiative to consider a joint effort of HELCOM countries to reduce input of nutrients to the Baltic Sea. The Meeting agreed to prioritize the task and recommended taking into consideration the following points:

- assessment and comparison of costs and benefits of measures addressing airborne reduction versus waterborne reduction;
- how the critical load analysis could consider nutrient limitations;
- BALTSEM model would be a helpful tool to compute various scenarios;
- increasing ammonia emissions which are not transported as far as NOX in the atmosphere.

9.8 The Meeting agreed to task RedCore DG and PLC IG to look into the issue at their earliest convenience, to establish communication with ad hoc group on marine protection (AMP) under the working group on effects of CLRTAP (via: Gudrun.Schuetze@uba.de), and to report to PRESSURE 15-2021 on the progress.

9.9 The Meeting took note of the German draft concept for the analysis of implementation obstacles and propagation of best practice examples for eutrophication (**document 9-4**).

9.10 The Meeting discussed the concept and thanked Germany enthusiastically for this valuable initiative, expressing full support to the proposal.

9.11 The Meeting took note of the provisional timeline for the work involving consideration of the first results at PRESSURE 15-2021 and extended consideration of material at a workshop in spring or early summer 2022.

9.12 The Meeting took note of the willingness of experts from most of HELCOM countries to participate in the initiative and requested RedCore DG and PLC IG to be involved in this work, as these expert

groups have valuable experience regarding compiling information on the effectiveness of measures as well as projecting future reductions.

9.13 The Meeting further took note that statistical analysis of projected reductions should be treated with care as they may produce unreliable results.

9.14 The Meeting took note that analysis of distance to targets is ongoing nationally in some CPs and this experience could be utilized in this work. The Meeting also emphasized the importance of the task to identify anthropogenic loads as well as the importance of involving the river basin management authorities in this work.

9.15 The Meeting took note that BNI is willing to cooperate providing data and scientific advice where needed.

9.16 The Meeting took note of the information on the best practice example “Model Region Schlei” given by Matthias Boeldt (**document 9-6, presentation 7**)

9.17 The Meeting welcomed the approach demonstrating how various tools available in the EU framework can be efficiently utilized to mitigate loads from multiple sources. The Meeting further noted that the Schlei fjord may experience internal nutrient loads similar to Mariager fjords in Denmark, resulting in continued nutrient loading when all land-based sources have been addressed.

9.18 The Meeting further suggested that this example and advisory systems like LEVA and Greppa Näringen (Grip the Nutrients) in Sweden could be utilized in the PLC-8 project on assessment of effectiveness of measures.

9.19 The Meeting noted that the presented information provides inspiration for further efforts to reduce input of nutrients, for example to delete the last remaining agricultural hot spot in Finland and encouraged exchanging experience with similar projects and initiatives around the Baltic Sea and seeking for opportunities for mutual support.

9.20 The Meeting considered the draft PLC-7 thematic report on nutrient input by seven big rivers (**document 9-1**), thanked authors for the report and recommended HOD 60-2021 to approve the publication of the thematic report as HELCOM BSEP. The Meeting noted that some issue in the report should be improved before publication e.g., figure 4 (colour for Göta älv catchment), references and proof-reading.

9.21 The Meeting considered the draft PLC-7 background information report (**document 9-7**) and agreed on its publication as PLC-7 project materials.

9.22 The Meeting took note that Poland and Germany would like to make some minor corrections in the report and invited them to provide written input to the PLC Project Manager (lms@dce.au.dk) by **22 April 2021**.

9.23 The Meeting took note of the progress of the PLC-8 project and the finalization of the remaining PLC-7 tasks. The Meeting agreed on the extended deadlines for three remaining PLC-7 products as proposed in **document 9-8**.

9.24 The Meeting considered the report on the revised Nutrient input ceilings (NIC) for the BSAP update (**document 9-2**).

9.25 The Meeting agreed that the report is very useful and its publication timely and valuable. Nonetheless, the Meeting was of the view that the report requires editorial improvements before publication. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to circulate an MS Word version of the report to the PRESSURE group immediately after the meeting and invited participants to provide written recommendations to improve the report by **30 April 2021** to the author Bo Gustafsson (bo.gustafsson@su.se) and to the Secretariat (laura.kaikkonen@helcom.fi). The Meeting further invited the author to implement any received comments and submit an updated version of the document to HOD 60-2021 to approve its publication in HELCOM BSEP.

Agenda Item 10 Nutrient recycling strategy – measures to improve recycling of nutrients- finalizing the strategy

10.1 The Meeting considered the draft Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy (**document 10-1**)

10.2 The Meeting took note of the comments by EU on the draft Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy (**document 10-2**).

10.3 The Meeting agreed on the document and recalled that the document will also be considered by AGRI 11-2021.

10.4 The Meeting took note that Sweden lifted the study reservation on the document placed in the beginning of the Meeting.

10.5 The Meeting further noted of the following comments by Germany:

- insert reference to the EU Green Deal in the introduction;
- include a measure on coupling livestock to the agricultural land available under objective 1;
- remove “recycling of nutrients from eutrophicated waters to land” from the introduction and the measure “promote the development of methods and technologies to manage accumulated nutrient reserves” from objective 4.

10.6 The Meeting invited the AGRI group to consider the proposed changes to the nutrient recycling strategy and amend the document accordingly. The Meeting further requested the Secretariat to circulate the final version of the document to PRESSURE after consideration by AGRI for editorial check.

10.7 The Meeting considered the policy briefs on solutions to recycle nutrients in the wastewater sector (**document 10-3**).

10.8 The Meeting welcomed the policy messages admitting that they provide useful background information for the regional nutrient recycling strategy. The Meeting agreed to provide written feedback on the policy messages by **28 May 2021** to the Secretariat (Dmitry.Frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi) and invited the BSR-water project to consider them before publishing the documents as project materials.

10.9 The Meeting took note of the policy recommendations from the SuMaNu project platform (**document 10-4**), welcomed them as useful background material for the implementation of the Baltic Sea regional nutrient recycling strategy and supported their publication as project material. The Meeting recalled a previous demonstration of the effectiveness of the farm gate nutrient balances as a tool for smart nutrient management in the presentation on the improvement of the environmental status of the Schlei catchment area. The Meeting further noted that more specific comments will be provided by national experts at AGRI 12-2021.

Agenda Item 11 Development of the HELCOM framework on internal nutrient load management

11.1 The Meeting considered the new draft of the HELCOM Guideline constituting the risk assessment framework for the management of internal nutrient reserves (**document 11-1**).

11.2 The Meeting welcomed the comments by Finland on the document 11-1 (**document 11-2**) and in general supported them, however noting that some of the issues still require thorough consideration at the MINUTS group meeting with involvement of national expert in legal affairs.

11.3 The Meeting reflected on the new arrangement of the document with the view that the final draft is to be submitted to HOD 60-2021, pointing out that:

- the list of measures should be kept open;
- the document should serve as a support in building a relevant knowledge base;
- the risk assessment should focus on environmental aspects.

11.4 The Meeting emphasized that the guideline is not legally binding and should not intervene in national permitting procedures which are solely in the hands of national authorities. The Meeting requested that this nature of the guideline is to be clearly stated in the guideline.

11.5 The Meeting agreed that the updated BSAP should include a clear statement encouraging using the document when considering sea-based measures to manage internal nutrient reserves and thus ensuring that all potential risks are properly addressed in this consideration.

11.6 The Meeting discussed how countries are planning to use the HELCOM risk assessment framework nationally. The Meeting took note that most of the Contracting Parties are planning to distribute the guideline to national permitting authorities recommending utilizing it when considering relevant projects, acknowledging that none of the countries are planning to make any updates in their national legislation.

11.7 The Meeting took note of the position of Germany, as well as some other countries, that it would be in favor of having a HELCOM Recommendation as a part of the risk assessment framework. Several contracting parties regretted that the proposed structure of the framework has been reduced to a stand-alone guideline, which brings additional uncertainty to the understanding of the use of the risk assessment framework.

11.8 The Meeting took note that Germany and CCB would like to see a stronger HELCOM role in evaluation of the potential environmental risks which might be caused by realization of sea-based measures to manage internal nutrient reserves.

11.9 The Meeting acknowledged significant knowledge gaps, particularly with regard to side effects of measures and sustainability of their positive environmental effects.

11.10 The Meeting further suggested that the efficiency of the guideline will be evaluated in the future after some experience of its application.

11.11 The Meeting took note that Germany would be in favor of detailed information exchange on the planned sea-based measures including technical details, expected environmental effects, potential risks etc. The Meeting agreed that the value of the guideline is providing support to national authorities and sharing information on various aspects of sea-based measures ensuring a learning process. This concerns all projects in the open sea and in coastal waters, which may have transboundary effects.

11.12 The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to share information on innovative measures to related HELCOM WG to encourage knowledge exchange between countries.

11.13 The Meeting requested the MINUTS group to finalize the guideline for submission to HOD 60-2021, fully utilizing the views and encouraged the Contracting Parties to delegate national representatives to the group meeting, including legal experts.

Agenda Item 12 Any other business

12.1 The Meeting considered a proposal from STATE&CONSERVATION to move Recommendation 10/2 under PRESSURE WG (**document 12-1**).

12.2 The Meeting agreed that the Recommendation primarily concerns the assessment of the state of the marine environment and thus, better fits under the mandate of State&Conservation WG. The Meeting further expressed the view that currently the HELCOM framework for the assessments of the state of the Baltic Sea covers all provisions of this Recommendation and therefore it could be set aside.

12.3 The Meeting invited State&Conservation, as the group primarily dealing with the issues related to the marine and coastal status assessment to consider the withdrawal of the Recommendation and prepare the appropriate justification for the Helsinki Commission.

12.4 The Meeting took note of the Climate Change Fact Sheet (**document 12-2**).

12.5 The Meeting took note that Sweden has already sent comments to the Secretariat, hoping that they are given full consideration.

12.6 The Meeting took note of the view of Germany that the fact sheet contains highly heterogeneous information where some issues are scientifically well justified while others remain rather uncertain. Germany also highlighted that the development of wind power is considered in the document without a comprehensive analysis of its effects on the marine ecosystem, particularly with regard to biodiversity. The Meeting took note that many topics could have been considered more critically from an environmental point of view, emphasizing environmental risks.

12.7 The Meeting took note that Germany has embarked on the process to delete the last German hot spot, the Odra lagoon. The hot spot is shared with Poland, and Germany is seeking cooperation with Poland to develop documentation for considering the deletion of this hot spot at PRESSURE 15-2021.

12.8 The Meeting noted that this was the last meeting of the professional secretary Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky and warmly thanked Dmitry for all his hard work and continuous dedication to advancing the HELCOM work in a highly skilled manner.

Agenda Item 13 Future work and meetings

13.1 The Meeting confirmed that PRESSURE 15-2021 will take place from 2 to 5 November 2021 in Sweden in case the COVID-19 restrictions allow to meet in person.

13.2 The Meeting also agreed that PRESSURE 16-2022 will tentatively take place on the week starting from 25 April 2022.

Agenda Item 14 Outcome of the Meeting

14.1 The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of the Meeting.

14.2 The Outcome of the Meeting was finalized by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Chair and made available in the HELCOM Meeting Portal together with all documents and presentations given during the Meeting.

Annex 1 List of participants

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Annex 2 Formulation of actions in the revised RAP ML

1. Actions addressing land-based sources of marine litter

CODE	ACTION	COMMENTS	Specific comments by PRESSURE 14
	Waste prevention and management		
RL1	Share best practices and guidelines for municipalities and other responsible authorities regarding environmentally sound and effective cleaning, sorting and collection infrastructure of plastic litter on beaches and other coastal areas.	<p><u>SE: is still unsure whether the HELCOM Guidelines are too ambitious, and the action might be kept as sharing best practices?</u></p> <p><u>SE: We had the impression that this action concerned beaches and coastal areas. Bearing in mind that there may be differences in the way for instances municipalities are organized in different Helcom countries and given that Helcom guidelines most likely would have to be adjusted to national conditions as well as translated we believe it is more efficient to share best practices including existing national guidelines and focus our resources. What comes out of these sharing of best practice could then be used as appropriate and as suitable, adapted to national conditions. Therefore we suggest to adjust the phrasing. This has nothing to do with ambition but rather on how we focus our efforts in a resource-efficient way.</u></p>	DE: calls to be ambitious and concrete and ensure the follow up the implementation of the actions. Agreed
RL2	Develop national plastic management plans based on a holistic view on plastic life cycle to reduce marine plastic litter and achieve BSAP targets.	<p>DE&SE: need consultations.</p> <p>DE: suggests including a link to the global negotiations in the preamble.</p>	DE: global plastic convention is the priority and then development of national action plans can be considered. Not supported in this formulation but proposed to include in the introductory part with reference to the global context. DK&DE&SE will provide wording for the introduction and possible reformulation of the action with the aim to reflect global context. FI: has national plastic roadmap.
RL3	Evaluate top findings according to the knowledge available and recommend environmentally sound alternatives to phase out top plastic and rubber litter items.	SE: whether “alternative” includes “stop using”?	“Stop using” is one of the environmentally sound alternatives which can be reflected in the implementation plan. Agreed.

CODE	ACTION	COMMENTS	Specific comments by PRESSURE 14
RL4	Establish a regional pilot project in collaboration with river basin authorities to assess input of macro litter by rivers to build sound regional knowledge base. a -- for establishing national monitoring where relevant.		FI: no related data Agreed in revised version.
RL5	Reduce marine litter by sharing best practices on national return and refund deposit systems for drink packaging striving to establish such systems in all HELCOM countries and investigate possible bilateral and multilateral solutions to establish such systems in relation to passenger ships and border shops.	SE: needs consultation. SE new comment: can agree to the proposed formulation of the action.	FI: establishing systems for passenger ships is challenging. FI places reservation for further consultations. Agreed in general pending reservation by FI.
RL6	Identify environmentally open applications using plastics (e.g. agriculture foil, coastal erosion protection, etc...) which need to be addressed and recommend relevant actions.		Agreed.
Micro particles			
RL7	Based on the evaluations made in the EU and among the contracting parties of the most significant products and processes that release both primary and secondary microplastics, assess if they are covered or not by legislation, and act, if appropriate, to influence or adjust the legal framework, or identify other necessary measures to reduce emissions to the aquatic environment.		Agreed in revised formulation.
RL8	Evaluate the possibility to introduce regional recommendations to reduce release of microparticles from WWTP utilizing the outcome of related studies.		Agreed.
RL9	Development of a HELCOM guideline on establishment and operation of artificial turfs, to prevent plastic losses.	To put this action on hold until proposal by ECHA in the first quarter of 2021. FI: Needs also consultation with various measures and BATs which are being developed or are already in force in the member states.	Even in case of the EU restrictions, HELCOM guideline will have added value. Agreed in general pending reservation by SE.
Single use plastics			
RL10	Investigate opportunities for substitution with subsequent phasing-out non-degradable shot wads and launch information campaigns targeted at hunters.		Agreed.
RL11	Provide guidance on best-practice examples and regulatory options for municipalities in the Baltic Sea region to reduce the generation of single use plastic litter.	Implementation will be triggered by publication of related guidance by Germany.	CCB ready to provide input to implementation. Germany is working on the matter in broader context then single use plastics. Agreed.

CODE	ACTION	COMMENTS	Specific comments by PRESSURE 14
RL12	Prevention and reduction of single use plastics consumption and littering at major events and promotion campaigns through the establishment of a catalog of possible measures to be utilized by the organizers and authorities.	SE: See comment below	Agreed.
RL13	Phase out intentional releases of inflated balloons and consider phasing out the use of plastic components of firework and confetti outdoors.		DK&SE: needs consultation on fireworks part. Agreed in principle including the addition, but still pending results of consultations.
RL14	Encourage ceasing free distribution of both air and gas inflated balloons at promotion campaigns and other events	SE: Considering that the nature of this paragraph has been altered substantially we are wondering if this would, in its current format, better be included in RL12? Suggest then to delete this paragraph and also include promotion campaigns in RL 12.	Agreed to merge with RL12.

2 Actions addressing sea-based sources of marine litter

CODE	REGIONAL ACTION	COMMENTS	Specific comments by PRESSURE 14
	Actions addressing shipping related activities		
RS1	Investigate opportunities for developing ELB management and recycling methodologies including potential financial arrangements (e.g. producer’s responsibility, eco-fee for registered boats).	EU: the work is ongoing in the EU and information will be shared. DK&SE: need consultations.	Consider the EU processes in the implementation plan. Agreed.
RS2	Support-Encourage the development of buoys, floats and docks, which do not release expanded polystyrene (EPS) and other problematic materials to the marine environment with the aim to phase out the use of those containing unprotected EPS and problematic materials.		Agreed.
RS3	Cooperate with transport and tourism shipping sector to optimize onboard waste management enhancing segregationseparation , fostering recycling, and phasing out the use of single-use plastics.	SE: check related action in IMO action plan on plastic litter from ships.	FI: needs consultation. Agreed.
RS4	Develop common guidelines for crisis management together with national competent authorities in the event of accidental cargo losses causing littering of marine environment.	DE&SE: needs consultations with maritime authorities.	DE&SE: still needs time for consultations. to be implemented based on the outcome of RS5. Not agreed
RS5	Investigate the problem caused by spills of plastic pellets from ships and, based on the findings, consider developing common guidelines for crisis management in such events.		SE: Implementation of this action could precede the action RS4. Agreed.

Actions addressing ALDFG and other fisheries related litter			
RS6	Ensure Encourage collection of ALDFG and separation of collected from ALDFG of from end-of-life gear and ALDFG in fishing harbours, if feasible, with a view to establish regional targets for collection of end-of-life fishing gear.	SE: Needs further national consultation. This action requires strong cooperation with HELCOM MARITIME. EU: needs to check	DK&SE&EU: need consultations. Agreed in general pending the consultations.
RS7	Elaborate guidelines on the best practices and undertake relevant measures to reduce the input of ALDFG to the Baltic Sea from recreational fisheries with a focus on gillnets taking into account geographical particularities.		Agreed
RS8	Evaluate the amounts and composition of lost angling gear in the Baltic Sea including fishing lures and casting weights with corresponding hooks, soft plastic baits and light components and develop appropriate measures to prevent their further loss.	DE: can provide available initial data. SE: also possesses data on lost angling gear.	Agreed
RS9	Investigate available options for fishing gear marking as a tool to prevent and reduce gear losses and produce recommendations to improve gear marking to increase the effectiveness of this tool	The main idea is to promote responsible fisheries. Development of strategies has already been covered by general action proposed for the updated BSAP. FI: already covered by SUP directive?	Agreed
RS10	Consider innovative constructive features of fishing gear as a tool to prevent and reduce gear losses and a tool to prevent and reduce lost fishing gears from ghost fishing.	SE: Consider to also include gear design as a tool to prevent and reduce gear losses and a tool to prevent and reduce lost fishing gears from ghost fishing (for example by using so called rescue kits to find lost fishing gear, ghost thread to avoid ghost fishing, correct length on the attached ropes to cages or buoys, sufficient weight on cages and traps to prevent them from easily drifting away).	Agreed
RS11	Continue the mapping of areas with high potential for ALDFG accumulation (hot spots) in all HELCOM countries with subsequent update of the HELCOM Map&Data service.		Agreed.
RS12	Initiate removal of ghost nets and their safe management on land applying the best practices for ALDFG removal in national or international campaigns.	The aim is to increase the removal and disposal of the nets, and that statistics are available to confirm the increasing trend.	Agreed
RS13	HELCOM to join the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) which is the world's largest cross-sectoral alliance committed to driving solutions to the problem of ALDFG worldwide.		Agreed.

RS14	Engage fishermen (both recreational and commercial) and general public to report on lost and observed ghost fishing gear utilizing related reporting tools (e.g. Swedish example of GhostGuard app or German Geistertaucher).		Agreed.
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3.Actions addressing education and outreach on marine litter

CODE	REGIONAL ACTION	COMMENTS	Specific comments by PRESSURE 14
RE1	Continue regional and national work to increase public awareness and literacy on occurrence and harmful effects of marine litter as well as on measures to prevent plastic pollution of the Baltic Sea.	This action will also address ELB <u>SE: Due to the overall character of the action, we propose to move the action to the preamble.</u>	DE: considers action broader than just public awareness but building evidence base. DK: there is action related to harmful effects in the updated BSAP. Agreed to move to preamble.
RE2	Consider the development of HELCOM Recommendation and guidelines on the reduction of marine litter through the implementation of Sustainability Education Programmes for Fishers taking into account results of the ongoing work on the revision of IMO STCW-F.	The Recommendation could include the dissemination of the best practices for net cuttings and the best practice in relation to onboard waste management for various types of fishing vessels (RS5). <u>SE: If the CP’s agree to move RE1 to the preamble, we propose to move this action to the seabased section and discard the educational section.</u>	Agreed. to be moved to sea-based.

Annex 3 Introductory text of the revised RAP ML

ACTIONS TO REDUCE THE INPUT AND PRESENCE OF MARINE LITTER IN THE BALTIC SEA AS PART OF THE HELCOM REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON MARINE LITTER (RAP ML)

HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter is considered as the main regional tool to achieve the marine litter ecological and managerial objectives in the BSAP. In line with HELCOM Recommendation 36/1 “The Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML)” the Contracting Parties agreed to start implementation of actions on marine litter as included in this Annex to be further developed jointly, assisted by the relevant HELCOM subsidiary bodies including via a lead country/actor approach. In a follow up process to implement the RAP ML, the intention is to propose for each action concrete steps to implement them, including target years for their accomplishment. In doing so, cost-effectiveness of measures and ongoing activities which can be used for the implementation should be considered. Regional communication on marine litter issues is key for the accomplishment of actions contained in this Action Plan.

The actions contained in this Action Plan require a joint approach by Contracting Parties ~~and of a large-scale, widespread and transboundary character.~~ Theis joint approach could be, for instance, to address other organizations or institutions having the specific competence to act (e.g. exclusive competences of the European Union, the International Maritime Organization regarding new regulations for shipping).

Actions are divided into ~~three~~ two themes: (i) actions to combat land-based and (ii) sea-based sources of marine litter which include also actions on removal and disposal of litter already present in the marine environment, ~~and (iii) actions for education and outreach.~~ Producing less litter by means of smart production as well as education and outreach ~~is~~ are treated as an integral theme. Contracting Parties will continue regional and national work to increase public awareness and literacy on occurrence and harmful effects of marine litter as well as on measures to prevent plastic pollution of the Baltic Sea.

The list of actions has been developed based on lessons learnt from the implementation of the Action Plan since its adoption in 2015 as well as on available information on main items and composition of marine litter found in the coastal and marine environments and amounts and sources of marine litter in the Baltic Sea. Thus, the list represents areas in which, to the best knowledge, the Contracting Parties need to act. In this regard, sharing of information and experiences, including activities addressing plastic bags is encouraged.

The Contracting Parties agreed to reach a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea by ~~2020/2021~~ 2030[‡], and the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter will be reviewed by ~~XXX~~ [2027] and, if necessary, based on the revision conducted, updated in ~~XXXX~~ [2028].

The following tables compile a number of actions for the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention for joint implementation on the regional scale. Coordination on these collective actions is a key for implementing the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.

Concrete steps to implement the actions including target years for their accomplishment will be subsequently prepared following a lead country approach in order to assign the actions to those countries which are willing to develop them further into concrete measures. The action plan will be revised if necessary. The desired results, or output of the actions should also be specified in course of the planning. Cooperation is ongoing between the European Regional Seas Conventions in order to implement the Regional Action Plans in a coordinated way e.g. to build on each other’s work and jointly plan implementation.

[‡] To be updated to be aligned with the updated BSAP.

Annex 4 Revised RAP ML: Draft updated text of the Recommendation 36/1



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION X/X

Supersedes HELCOM Recommendation 29/2 and 36/1

Adopted XX,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON MARINE LITTER (RAP ML)**THE COMMISSION,**

BEING CONCERNED about the harmful effects of litter on the marine ecosystem such as entanglement in and ingestion of marine litter by marine organisms, litter as potential source of accumulation of toxic substances within the marine food web and pathway for transport and introduction of alien species as well as damage, degradation and smothering of marine habitats;

BEING ALSO CONCERNED about the harmful effects of marine litter on the human beings, including safety risks caused by marine litter such as sharp items at beaches or entanglement of divers, the potential introduction of toxic and endocrine disruptors in fish and shellfish for human consumption and of risk to navigation safety at sea;

BEING AWARE of the severity of the marine litter problem in the oceans, while recognizing that more [evidence-knowledge](#) is needed to adequately [reflect about the scale of react on](#) the problem in the Baltic Sea;

BEING FURTHER CONCERNED about the harmful effects of marine litter, especially from fishing activities, on archaeological sites on the seafloor and therefore human heritage;

BEING ALSO AWARE that the main sources contributing to marine litter inputs in the Baltic Sea are associated with household related/municipal solid waste activities, coastal-based recreational and tourism activities, transport and waste collection/dumping, fishing activities as well as land-based activities involving the use and generation of micro-particles;

NOTING at the same time the socio-economic losses that marine litter is causing to many activities carried out at the Baltic Sea, e.g. fishing, shipping, coastal tourism, cooling water systems;

RECALLING the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its obligations for States to protect and preserve the marine environment (Art 192) including to take measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution (Art 194) and related United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, recently Resolution A/RES/68/71 (2013) and earlier submissions;

RECALLING FURTHER [the importance of the United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 3/7 and the long-term ambition of eliminating discharge of plastic litter and microplastics into the oceans to avoid detriments to marine ecosystems and human activities dependent on them;](#)

RECALLING ALSO the Rio +20 commitment to take action to achieve significant reductions in marine debris by 2025 and the achievement of the goals and strategy objectives of the Honolulu strategy, as outlined in Resolution A/RES/66/288 (2012);

RECALLING FURTHER the London Convention 1972 and the 1996 Protocol thereto aiming to promote the effective control of all sources of marine pollution and to take all practicable steps to prevent pollution of the sea by dumping at sea of wastes and other matter generated on land;

ACKNOWLEDGING marine litter to be one of the eight contaminant categories of UNEP's Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Sources (GPA) as well as one of the key issues of the Regional Seas Programme (RSP) of UNEP;

RECALLING FURTHERMORE the provisions on ship generated waste management under Annex V of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 73/78);

RECALLING other relevant regional programmes and activities developed in the framework of structures stemming from international agreements such as the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Agreement 2014-1);

RECALLING ALSO the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (2007) on encouragement of projects to remove litter from the coastal and marine environment, and related HELCOM Recommendations, among others Recommendation 28E/10 on application of the No-special-fee system to ship-generated wastes and marine litter caught in fishing nets in the Baltic Sea Area and agreement to raise public awareness on the negative environmental and socio-economic effects of marine litter in the marine environment;

RECALLING FURTHER the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (2021) on XX

NOTING related agreed HELCOM actions to reduce litter input in the Baltic Sea environment, especially *via* Recommendations 10/5 concerning guidelines for the establishment of adequate reception facilities in ports (1989); 10/7 concerning general requirements for reception of wastes (1989); 19/14 concerning a harmonized system of fines in case a ship violates anti-pollution regulations (1998); 19/9 (supplemented by 22/1) concerning the installation of garbage retention appliances and toilet retention systems and standard connections for sewage on board fishing vessels, working vessels and pleasure craft (1998) and 31E/4 concerning proper handling of waste/landfilling (2010);

RECALLING the HELCOM Moscow Ministerial Declaration (2010) with agreement to take further steps to carry out national and coordinated monitoring of marine litter and identify sources of litter;

RECALLING ALSO the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration for further coherent action in addressing the pollution of the marine environment by litter, prevention and reduction of marine litter from land- and sea-based sources, together with the decision to develop a Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter by 2015 in order to achieve a significant reduction of marine litter by 2025;

RECALLING FURTHER the 2018 HELCOM Brussels Ministerial Declaration's commitments on marine litter emphasizing the coordinated implementation of the Regional Marine Litter Action Plan and the goal to achieve a significant quantitative reduction of marine litter by 2025;

RECALLING that this complementary approach is without prejudice to the implementation of related regulations and policy initiatives applicable for HELCOM countries being EU members, related regulations of the Russian Federation as well as provisions concerning marine litter management contained in other national, regional or international instruments or programmes;

ACKNOWLEDGING related, including stricter, national and international legislation, provisions, criteria and guidance for marine litter prevention and sustainable management as complementary marine litter approaches;

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention to jointly implement, assisted by the relevant HELCOM subsidiary bodies including *via* a lead country approach, the actions of this Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.

DECIDES to base further work on fundamental principles, as contained in Articles 3, 6, 8, 9 and 15 of the Helsinki Convention, as well as the following approaches:

- a) “Public participation and stakeholder involvement”: Procedures and methods to create awareness of the problems of marine litter and ensuring a sense of public ownership for broad-based support to preventive and removal measures;
- b) “Sustainable consumption and production”: The use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing (1) the use of natural resources; (2) the generation of toxic materials; (3) the emissions of pollutants and waste generation over the life cycle of the service of product;
- c) “Best available knowledge and socio-economic effectiveness”: Actions and operational aspirational targets to be based on available knowledge of the predominant amounts, materials, items and sources of marine litter found in the Baltic Sea as well as social and economic costs of degradation compared to the cost and benefits of proposed measures and, where available, costs for non-action;
- d) “Integration”: Marine litter management to be an integral part of the solid waste management to ensure any environmentally sound anthropogenic management including rational use of resources;
- e) “Application of waste hierarchy”: Solid waste management to follow the five-step waste hierarchy, as introduced by the EU legislation in 2008², starting from prevention to preparing for re-use, recycling, other recovery up to final disposal;
- f) “Ecosystem approach”: Management of human activities according to the 2003 Joint HELCOM and OSPAR Ministerial Statement on the Ecosystem Approach to the Management of Human Activities;

RECOMMENDS ALSO to

- a) finalize, by the end of 2021, common indicators and associated definition of Good Environmental Status (GES) related to beach litter and litter on the seafloor for regional application in the years to follow;
- b) finalize, by the end of 20XX, a common indicator and associated definition of GES related to microlitter for regional application in the years to follow;
- c) identify and further develop additional common indicators and associated definition of GES related to litter in other compartments;
- d) improve coordinated monitoring programmes for the beach litter and seafloor litter indicators including data collection for regular assessment of the state of marine litter in the Baltic Sea area;
- e) establish by XXXX coordinated monitoring programmes for microlitter including data collection for regular assessment of the state of marine litter in the Baltic Sea area;
- f) report on the implementation of actions and the effectiveness towards achieving their corresponding targets for the first time by 2023 as part of the implementation plan to be drafted for each of the actions following the lead country approach and thereafter on an annual basis;
- g) engage in a dialogue and enhanced cooperation with the business and industry, sea users, local communities and other relevant civil society groups as well as national stakeholders focusing on marine litter, at the appropriate level, to promote the removal of litter from the marine environment in a practical, feasible and environmentally sound manner, to develop best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practice (BEP), including identification of circumstances of “escapes” of litter into the marine environment as well as new waste management and adaptation practices to achieve a good environmental status;

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Contracting Parties review this Recommendation and its action plan by XXX, and, if necessary, based on the revision conducted, update it in XXXX.

RECOMMENDS FURTHERMORE that the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention foster cross-sectorial cooperation and seek close cooperation with other relevant regional and global organizations and initiatives to combat marine litter, including UNEP and other Regional Seas Conventions (i.a. OSPAR Commission, Barcelona Convention, Black Sea Commission), the International Maritime Organization, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Baltic Sea Advisory Council, and River Basin Commissions including via partnerships with the private sector and with non-governmental organizations.

² *Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC (art. 4).*

Annex 5 Draft revised Appendix I - Reporting format on implementation of actions

Appendix I – Reporting format on implementation of actions

Country	
Date	
Contact person	
Affiliation	
E-mail	
Code of action ¹	
Action	
Status of the action ²	
Justification of the achieved progress ³	
Estimation of the achieved reduction of the environmental pressure <i>where appropriate</i> ⁴	
Estimation of costs <i>costs</i> of the implementation.	

1 – Please provide the code of the action as listed in the Annex to the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.

2 - Please select accordingly: not initiated, on-going, accomplished.

3 - Please briefly describe progress achieved or justify the accomplishment of the action.

4 - Please provide an estimation of quantified reduction of the input of litter achieved through the implementation of the action where relevant.

Annex 6 Draft HELCOM Recommendation on the Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION X/X

Adopted X,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON UNDERWATER NOISE (RAP NOISE)

THE COMMISSION,

BEING AWARE that sound plays a significant role in the functioning of the aquatic ecosystems and **NOTING WITH CONCERN** that human-generated impulsive and continuous underwater noise severely affects noise sensitive aquatic species and may cause degradation of their population;

BEING AWARE of the severity of the underwater noise problem in the oceans, while **EMPHASIZING** the need to further improve our understanding of the adverse impacts of underwater noise on those identified noise sensitive marine species and in particular the cumulative impacts of impulsive noise from multiple activities;

BEING ALSO AWARE that human-generated sources of impulsive noise with the highest intensity are explosions, pile driving, seismic explorations and low frequency sonars, whereas anthropogenic noise of a more continuous nature encompasses sources such as pipelines, oil platforms, dredging, shipping, and offshore windfarms among other sources;

NOTING that underwater noise is among the most widely distributed pressures causing impacts in the Baltic Sea which is preventing it from achieving Good Environmental Status;

RECALLING the Guidelines on Reducing Underwater Noise from Commercial Shipping, to address adverse impacts on commercial shipping on marine life approved in 2014 by the International Maritime Organization;

RECALLING the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration determination to take further measures, initiatives or efforts needed to reach a healthy marine ecosystem supporting a prosperous Baltic Sea region, including impacts on marine organisms from underwater impulsive and continuous noise;

RECALLING FURTHER the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration agreement that the level of ambient and distribution of impulsive sounds in the Baltic Sea should not have negative impact on marine life and that human activities that are assessed to result in negative impacts on marine life should be carried out only if relevant mitigation measures are in place;

RECALLING FURTHERMORE that 2018 HELCOM Brussels Ministerial Declaration committed to develop an action plan, preferably by 2021, and regionally coordinated actions on underwater noise, whilst safeguarding the potential of the Baltic Sea for sustainable human activities; to continue fruitful cooperation between European Regional Seas Conventions and other relevant fora including UNEP Regional Seas Programme; to continue regional work in developing scientifically sound threshold values for underwater noise that are consistent with GES for species identified as sensitive to noise in the Baltic Sea;

RECALLING that this complementary approach is without prejudice to the implementation of related regulations and policy initiatives applicable for HELCOM countries being EU members, related regulation of the Russian Federation as well as provisions concerning underwater noise management contained in other national, regional, European or international instruments or programmes;

ACKNOWLEDGING related, including stricter, national, European and international legislation, provisions, criteria and guidance for underwater noise prevention and sustainable management as complementary underwater noise approaches;

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention to implement the actions of this Regional Action Plan on Underwater Noise, where such actions have scientific justification and taking into account socioeconomic impacts, having the scope to define and achieve good environmental status of the Baltic Sea;

RECOMMENDS ALSO to

- h) develop and operationalize common indicators and associated definition of Good Environmental Status (GES) related to underwater noise for application in the assessment of the state of the Baltic Sea marine environment, taking into consideration ongoing work at EU level for HELCOM countries who are EU Member States;
- i) continue and improve reporting of national monitoring data on continuous noise and impulsive noise events to the already established regional databases, to ensure availability of high-quality data for regular assessment of the state of underwater noise in the Baltic Sea area;
- j) report on the implementation of actions for the first time ~~in~~ by ~~{2022}~~ and thereafter on an ~~{annual basis}~~;

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Contracting Parties review and, if necessary, update this Recommendation and its action plan in [~~2030~~2027/8];

RECOMMENDS FURTHERMORE that the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention foster cross-sectorial cooperation and seek close cooperation with other relevant regional and global organizations and initiatives to combat underwater noise, including UNEP and other Regional Seas Conventions (i.e. OSPAR Commission, Barcelona Convention, Black Sea Commission), the International Maritime Organization, the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS), including via partnerships with the private sector and with non-governmental organizations.