



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

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

PRESSURE 7-2017

Vilnius, Lithuania, 24-26 October 2017

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Background

This document contains extracts from the outcomes of HOD 52-2017 (20-21 June 2017, Brussels, Belgium) and HOD 52A-2017 (26 September 2017, online) of relevance for PRESSURE. The major themes included into the extraction are: results of HOLAS II, their adoption and update plan; preparations for the Ministerial Meeting in March 2018; PLC-6 related issues.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note and make use of the information in the PRESSURE 7-2017 work.

Information on the outcomes of recent HELCOM meetings

HOD 52-2017 (20-21 June 2017, Brussels, Belgium)

Adoption of the Agenda

1.1 The Meeting highlighted that it is important in the process of the Ministerial preparations, including for an update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan, that the previous HELCOM commitments and the nutrient reduction targets are not re-opened.

Next HELCOM Ministerial Meeting

2.3 The Meeting discussed the draft outline material for the 2018 Ministerial Meeting ([document 2-7](#)) and agreed in general on the proposed approach and that the document is a good basis for further work on the Ministerial Meeting outcome. The Meeting agreed that:

- in a process of renewal of the BSAP to be taken up by the Ministerial Meeting the term “update” better suits the foreseen process, the previously agreed commitments should not be opened, and an analysis of the results of the first version of the ‘State of the Baltic Sea’ report will be an important next step to understand the underlying reasons for not reaching a good environmental status yet;
- it would be important that the Ministerial Meeting highlights the need to update and finalize the HOLAS II report by June 2018;
- Ocean-related SDGs provide the overall background framework for the Ministerial preparations and the BSAP update.

2.5 The Meeting took note of the comment by WWF that it is very important not to lose track of the implementation of the agreed MAI/CART targets, a particularly innovative dimension of HELCOM work. The Ministerial outcome could also utilise the cumulative impacts approach used in HOLAS work. Further, it is important to ensure and steer towards a sustainable blue economy. WWF will produce a Scorecard report for the 2018 Ministerial Meeting and welcome the Contracting Parties to provide and support structure to the analysis.

2.7 The Meeting took note of the proposal by Finland for developing a regional strategy on nutrient recycling ([document 2-4](#)), supported the initiative and agreed in principle to include it as a topic to the 2018 Ministerial preparations and outcome. At the same time, the Meeting agreed that the work should be based on a step-by-step approach starting with elaboration of definitions, general vision and strategic targets for nutrient recycling, taking into account also contributions of different pollution sources, which will form a basis for discussion at the Ministerial Meeting. The further steps might be embarked after the meeting based on the Ministerial decisions (two-year horizon).

2.8 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Finland to lead drafting on this topic and mandated both Agri group and Pressure group to support the preparatory work.

2.11 The Meeting agreed to divide the work on the Ministerial outline thematically to four drafting groups according to the segments of [document 2-7](#) (1. Reflecting on current state, pressures and impacts on the Baltic Sea, 2. Baltic Sea Action Plan beyond 2021 and towards 2030, 3. Enhancing economic and social analysis and innovation to implement ecosystem approach, 4. Implementing SDGs and regional ocean governance, with designated leads for each). All Contracting Parties will be informed of the progress in the drafting groups.

2.12 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Finland to lead drafting for segment 1, by the EU to lead work under segment 2, and by Sweden to lead drafting for segment 4. The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat will lead segment 3. The Meeting took note of the following information on the sharing of the work:

- Finland will actively contribute to segment 2 (BSAP), in addition to leading the drafting on the nutrient recycling strategy.
- Germany considers contributing to segment 4 (on regional governance); also interested in segment 2.
- Denmark is especially interested in segment 2; will inform on contact persons after the Meeting.
- Latvia is interested especially in segments 3 and 4; will inform on contact persons after the Meeting.
- Lithuania will inform on contact persons after the Meeting.
- Poland is willing to especially contribute to segment 4, in particular on the use of fisheries data within HELCOM as well as BALFISH cooperation.

2.13 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to submit further feedback on the draft Ministerial Meeting outcome included in [document 2-7](#), as well as expressions of interest to contribute to individual topics within the four themes, **by 21 August 2017** (monika.stankiewicz@helcom.fi), to be compiled by the Secretariat. The Meeting took note that the work will continue in online planning meetings, the first of which will be organised on 26 September 2017 and another on 13, 16 or 17 November 2017.

2.16 The Meeting agreed on the amended project proposal [to support preparations for the 2018 Ministerial Meeting] (as contained in [document 2-17-Rev.1](#) and **Annex 2**) in principle, pending clarification of study reservations by Poland and Denmark **by 26 June 2017**, and invited Contracting Parties and groups to contribute to the process.

Current state, pressures and impacts on the Baltic Sea

2.29 The Meeting considered the first version of the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report ([document 2-6](#)) and the comments provided in [documents 2-13](#) and [2-18](#), and for chapter 4.7 in [documents 2-12](#), [2-16](#) and [2-20](#), as well as in [document 2-19](#).

2.32 The Meeting agreed on the revised chapter 4.7 prepared by the drafting group as presented in [document 2-22-Rev.1](#) (**Annex 3**).

2.33 The Meeting agreed on changes to the content on the State of the Baltic Sea report as contained in [document 2-21-Rev.2](#) (**Annex 4**) and mandated the Secretariat to implement the editorial proposals listed in the document.

2.37 The Meeting considered and commented on a proposal for an introductory note on the upcoming update of the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report by 2018 as contained in [document 2-23-WP.1](#) and agreed on the amended note as contained in **Annex 5**. The introductory note will refer to a new final chapter to the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report titled "Further planned work" that lists planned improvements as listed in [document 2-8](#) and [document 2-9-Rev.1](#).

2.39 The Meeting approved the First version of the 'State of the Baltic Sea report, June 2017' and agreed on its publication on the HELCOM website, with the understanding that a final consolidated report will be prepared by June 2018.

2.40 The Meeting considered and agreed on arranging a regional consultation of the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report as outlined in [document 2-3](#).

2.41 The Meeting agreed to revise the proposed questions in [document 2-3](#) to the following:

- question starting "The overall evaluation.." to "The overall assessment provides good direction for the protection and sustainable use of the Baltic marine environment".
- question starting with "Existing and emerging..." to "Existing and emerging pressures on the marine environment and associated problems are sufficiently covered".
- delete question starting with "The evidence in..."

2.42 The Meeting took note that comments from the regional consultation will be handled by the HOLAS II core team and relevant HELCOM Working Groups from the beginning of March 2018, and that the summary of comments from the consultation can be prepared for the Ministerial Meeting 2018, if desired.

Matters arising from the HELCOM Groups

3.1 The Meeting took note of the further developed Draft report on potential sources of nutrient inputs: Baltic Sea ports handling fertilizers submitted by CCB ([document 3-3](#)).

3.3 The Meeting agreed that the information on the permitting system and practices to handle fertilizers in ports should be addressed by the HELCOM Maritime group including collection of the required data. The Meeting agreed to include the issue into the future work of the Maritime group in its work plan.

3.4 The Meeting also invited the Pressure group to evaluate the magnitude of the input of nutrients from handling fertilizers cargo using the data compiled by the Maritime group.

3.5 The Meeting took note of the view by Russia that the document submitted by CCB is based on expert assessment but not official data provided by the countries and suggested to consider an opportunity to launch a HELCOM project to assess leakage of nutrients from handling fertilizers in ports and its contribution to the total input of nutrients to the Baltic Sea.

3.17 The Meeting considered the revised HELCOM guidelines for establishing environmental targets for underwater noise ([document 3-6](#)).

3.18 The Meeting agreed on the title of the document as “HELCOM input to the process of establishing environmental targets for underwater noise” and noted that the suggested revised sentence in the legend to figure 1 related to migration corridors is to be included in the document (as follows “For migrating species it may be needed that migration corridors without physical or acoustic barriers are set aside”).

3.19 The Meeting agreed on the document pending the clarification of the study reservation by Germany and Russia to be clarified through written procedure **by 21 July 2017**. The Meeting agreed that the document could serve as regional input to other fora, including other Regional Sea Conventions as well as European processes.

3.20 The Meeting recalled the request by Russia expressed at HELCOM 38-2017 to, e.g., provide examples for how the decision support trees can be applied and to compare the natural and anthropogenic noise level. The Meeting agreed that such considerations will be prepared by relevant HELCOM groups in the future development of the subject on underwater noise.

3.21 The Meeting agreed that the approach will be further developed in the future once more experience is gained through testing of the decision support trees and more data becomes available and that the HELCOM Fish Group and SEAL EG will be engaged, and cooperation with ASCOBANS on this topic will be established.

3.22 The Meeting supported the proposal of GEAR to complement the document with future steps and associated timetable and to continue HELCOM work on underwater noise towards the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2018.

3.23 The Meeting supported the national testing for establishing environmental targets for impulsive and continuous noise (figures 2 and 3), to be followed up by the HELCOM EN-Noise in coordination with OSPAR and the European work as proposed by GEAR.

3.24 The Meeting considered the proposal by Sweden and Finland on organizing the HELCOM-EUSBSR workshop on internal nutrient reserves in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 28-30 November 2017 ([document 3-4](#)) and agreed on the proposal. The Meeting pointed out that the workshop will be focused on scientific aspects of the phenomena of the internal load of nutrients as well as legal aspects of the potential measures to manage internal loads.

3.25 The Meeting took note that Germany welcomed the addition of political and legal aspects as issues for the planned workshop and pointed out to specifically look into the environmental risks when

discussing new methods. However, Germany also proposed broadening the agenda by adding point source-related measures and possibilities of common objectives and enhanced cooperation possibilities between HELCOM and EUSBSR PA Nutri.

3.26 The Meeting also took note of the information by Finland that a procurement notice of the Assessment of the contribution of the Baltic Sea's internal nutrient stores on eutrophication has been published (<http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:227809-2017:TEXT:EN:HTML&src=0&tabId=0>).

3.29 The Meeting took note of the state of the PLC-6 project implementation and the timeframe for elaboration of its major products ([document 3-9](#)). The Meeting acknowledged that reporting of national data on apportionment of nutrient's sources is the major potential obstacle to produce relevant PLC-6 products in time and urged countries to complete the reporting.

3.30 The Meeting considered the updated version of the draft HELCOM core indicator on nutrient inputs. The Meeting thanked the PLC-6 team for the work done and endorsed the publication of the document ([document 3-7-Rev.1](#)).

Any other business

5.1 The Meeting took note of the information on the change in the approach to implementing the Nitrates Directive in Poland ([document 5-1](#)). The Meeting welcomed the positive development in the national environmental legislation in Poland and consequent adoption of programs of measures.

5.3 The Meeting took note of and welcomed the information by Denmark that it takes a lead in implementation of the action on expanded polystyrene of the HELCOM RAP ML.

5.5 The Meeting took note and welcomed the offer by Germany to host PRESSURE 8 in spring 2018 tentatively in Berlin but another location might be suggested.

Next meeting(s)

6.1 The Meeting decided that the next HELCOM HOD meeting (HOD 53-2017) will be held on 12-13 December 2017 in Helsinki taking into account preparations for the Ministerial Meeting.

6.2 The Meeting agreed on extra (online) HOD meetings to focus on the Ministerial preparations to be held on 26 September 2017 and on 13, 16 or 17 November 2017.

[HOD 52A-2017 \(26 September, online\)](#)

Draft Ministerial Meeting outcome (cf. HOD 52-2017 document 2-7)

2.3 The Meeting discussed the general form of the Ministerial outcome and agreed to aim for a concise outcome.

2.6 The Meeting agreed that the HELCOM Executive Secretary will contact the new Executive Secretary of OSPAR regarding OSPAR participation and contribution in the run up to the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting.

2.7 The Meeting agreed on the possibility of joint paragraphs to be developed jointly by OSPAR and HELCOM for the Ministerial outcome and invited HELCOM Heads of Delegations to provide input on possible topics of interest for future collaboration **by 1 October 2017**. The Meeting also suggested that initial drafting on the possible joint paragraphs could be prepared by HELCOM as a proposal for OSPAR.

2.9 The Meeting took note that the selection of topics for the Ministerial debate requires some careful consideration and should be discussed at the HOD online meeting on 13 November 2017.

2.9 The Meeting pointed to the need to link the four themes when preparing the Ministerial outcome.

Theme 1 – Reflecting the current state, pressures and impacts on the Baltic Sea, led by Finland

2.12 The Meeting thanked Finland for the work on the draft [[document 2-1](#)], discussed the suggestion by Finland and took note of the comments by Poland, Germany and Denmark to the draft text. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide further comments to the draft to the lead country Finland by emailing maria.laamanen@ym.fi within two weeks' time, i.e. **by 10 October 2017** in order to present the further developed draft at the online HOD meeting 13 November 2017.

Theme 2 – Renewing the Baltic Sea Action Plan beyond 2021 and towards 2030, led by EU

2.13 The Meeting took note of the proposal for the focus and structure of the report on implementation of HELCOM agreements in comparison with the results of the HOLAS II report as information document for the Ministerial Meeting and HELCOM's future work ([document 2-2](#)).

2.15 The Meeting agreed on the structure of the report and the proposed timetable and mandated the Secretariat to engage the specific HELCOM working groups and expert groups as listed in Annex 3 of the document.

2.17 The Meeting invited Contracting Parties that have not yet done so to finalize the questionnaire on national actions **by 17 November 2017**. The Secretariat will approach the individual countries with specific requests.

2.19 The Meeting took note of the suggestions regarding the update of BSAP ([documents 2-1, 2-4](#) and [2-6](#)) and of the information by EU that they will prepare a proposal on how to address the BSAP update for consideration by the Contracting Parties and with the aim to have draft text discussed in the HOD online meeting on 13 November.

2.20 The Meeting took note of the information by Finland on nutrient recycling prepared to support drafting of a Ministerial decision on the development a HELCOM nutrient recycling strategy ([document 2-5](#)).

2.21 The Meeting supported the document submitted by Finland in principle and thanked Finland for the work done highlighting the step by step approach in elaborating the strategy as agreed by HOD 52-2017.

2.22 The Meeting took note of the input of Germany that the issues related to sewage sludge management raised in the respective HELCOM Recommendation have already had a good start with HELCOM work and that Germany has a new respective legislation that could also contribute into the draft document for nutrient recycling. The Meeting also agreed that further research collaboration on the theme is needed.

2.23 The Meeting welcomed the initiative to already have a draft outcome document text and updated background document concerning how to address the regional nutrient recycling strategy in the Ministerial meeting ready by the next HOD meeting on 13 November noting that input by Pressure and Agri groups will also be taken into account in further developing the proposal.

2.4 The Meeting took note that Sweden will provide comments on the document on nutrient recycling **by 10 October** to the lead country (Finland). Other Contracting Parties are also invited to provide possible comments.

2.25 The Meeting noted that the EU will provide text on litter and noise, but also welcomed the updates of the expert networks.

2.26 The Meeting agreed to engage HELCOM marine litter network and underwater noise network in their upcoming meetings to prepare background material and proposals for possible next steps regarding marine litter and underwater noise.

Theme 3 – Enhancing economic and social analysis and innovation to implement ecosystem approach, led by Secretariat

2.27 The Meeting took note of the comments regarding theme 3 ([documents 2-4](#) and [2-6](#)).

2.28 The Meeting agreed to utilize the outcomes of the workshop on social and economic analysis (1 November, Riga), HELCOM-EUSBSR workshop on internal nutrient reserves (28-29 November), and HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG meeting (7-8 November) for providing input to drafting the text proposals.

2.29 Contracting Parties are invited to provide further input to theme 3 **by 15 October 2017**.

Theme 4 – Implementing SDGs and regional ocean governance, led by Sweden

2.32 The Meeting took note of the comments regarding theme 4 ([documents 2-4](#) and [2-6](#)).

2.33 The Meeting noted the lead country Sweden's initial thoughts about the theme, to focus on Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for reaching the goals of the BSPA, as well as utilizing HELCOM, and the BSAP, as a regional platform for reaching the marine SDG. Sweden also intends to put focus on the importance of education and ocean literacy.

2.36 The Meeting welcomed Sweden's suggestion of inviting the members of the drafting group to a drafting meeting, which will either take place in Stockholm or online, to further develop the draft for Theme 4 to be presented at the HOD online meeting.

General

2.37 The Meeting noted that the lead countries for each theme and each country has committed to prepare drafts for the next meeting and invited Contracting Parties to engage with the drafting group members at their earliest convenience.

2.38 The Meeting highlighted the possibility to use already developed material and the upcoming meetings of the expert networks as indicated above and gave the Secretariat the mandate to contact workshops and meetings to this end, with the aim that outcomes of these meetings can feed into the Ministerial preparations under the respective leads.

Follow-up of HOD 52-2017

3.1 The Meeting took note of the revised HELCOM input to the process of establishing environmental targets for underwater noise. The Meeting welcomed the information that Germany has lifted the study reservation on the document, and invited Russia to clarify their study reservation.

3.2 The Meeting regretted that the project to support preparations of the Ministerial Meeting proposed at HOD 52-2017 could not be launched and, however, agreed to follow-up on the topics raised in the proposal, in particular investigating reasons why GES has not been reached yet, in the context of GEAR.

Next meeting(s)

4.1 The Meeting confirmed that the next online HOD meeting will be held on 13 November 2017 and that the following HELCOM HOD meeting (HOD 53-2017) will be held on 12–13 December 2017 in Helsinki.

4.2 The Meeting agreed that HOD 54-2018 will tentatively be held on 14–15 June 2018.

Any other business

5.1 The Meeting considered the proposal on a Ministerial Meeting side event by WWF and CCB (document 5-1). The Meeting welcomed the idea of a side event in principle, and commented that certain practical issues need to be clarified first.