



Document title	Overview of HELCOM Recommendations on waste water management proposed for amendment to address microlitter
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Category	DEC
Agenda Item	3 – Marine litter
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Submitted by	Secretariat
Reference	Outcome of PRESSURE 6-2017, para 3.10

Background

PRESSURE 6-2017 decided to consider a revision of the HELCOM Recommendations on waste water management with a view to integrate provisions aimed at prevention of microlitter in the marine environment into those Recommendations, and invited the Contracting Parties to consider leadership in the revision ([Outcome of PRESSURE 6-2017](#), para 3.10).

There are four HELCOM Recommendations dealing with waste water management:

- [HELCOM Recommendation 18/4](#) on Managing wetlands and freshwater ecosystems for retention of nutrients (1997);
- [HELCOM Recommendation 23/5](#) on Reduction of discharges from urban areas by the proper management of storm water systems (2002);
- [HELCOM Recommendation 28E/5](#) on Municipal wastewater treatment (2007); and
- [HELCOM Recommendation 28E/6](#) on On-site wastewater treatment of single family homes, small businesses and settlements up to 300 person equivalents (P.E.) (2007).

The status of accomplishment of two of these four HELCOM Recommendations: HELCOM Rec. 28E/5 and 28E/6 is to be followed as part of the BSAP follow-up ([Outcome of PRESSURE 2-2015](#), para 2.9 and Annex 3 of [document 2-6-Rev.1](#)).

The recommendations have been reviewed, resulting in the attached overview of sections in the HELCOM Recommendations that could be amended to integrate provisions aimed at preventing the release of microlitter from waste water treatment plants and urban and other storm waters into the marine environment. Sections in need of updating are also identified.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- consider the overview;
- review the initial proposals to update the HELCOM Recommendations dealing with waste water management and discuss the scope of the amendments to guide further work;
- agree on next steps and timetable to revise these Recommendations with the aim to prevent the releases of microlitter from waste water treatment plants and urban and other storm waters into the marine environment.

Contracting Parties are invited to consider taking the lead on the revision of the individual recommendations.

Overview of HELCOM Recommendations on waste water management proposed for amendment to address microlitter

There are four HELCOM Recommendations dealing with waste water management:

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- [HELCOM Recommendation 28E/6](#) on On-site wastewater treatment of single family homes, small businesses and settlements up to 300 person equivalents (P.E.) (2007).

This document identifies sections in the Recommendations which could be updated to integrate provisions aimed at preventing the release of microlitter from waste water treatment plants and urban and other storm waters into the marine environment. Further analysis and review process is needed to develop proposals which are adequate to address the problem, operational and specific enough to guide the real life implementation.

Furthermore, proposals of updates are identified due to the passage of time and work developed by HELCOM (i.a. deletion of reference to Ministerial Meeting 1988) (included as **Annex 1**).

Preamble section

[HELCOM Recommendation 18/4 on Managing wetlands and freshwater ecosystems for retention of nutrients \(1997\)](#)

The role of constructed wetlands as efficient barriers for microplastics in water could be acknowledged.

Recommendation section

[HELCOM Recommendation 18/4 on Managing wetlands and freshwater ecosystems for retention of nutrients \(1997\)](#)

The following amendment could be considered - to add after point (v):

*“(vi) encouragement of application of best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practice (BEP) in relation to the use of **constructed wetlands as barriers for microplastics in water.**”*

[HELCOM Recommendation 23/5 on Reduction of discharges from urban areas by the proper management of storm water systems \(2002\)](#)

The second bullet point on section A 4 could be rephrased as follows:

*“- when possible this water should be treated separately in storm water treatment facilities or in a sewage treatment plant, as appropriate, **including monitoring of microplastics;**”*

[HELCOM Recommendation 28E/5 on Municipal wastewater treatment \(2007\)](#)

Monitor of microplastics in the effluent from municipal wastewaters discharging to the catchment of the Baltic Sea area could be included.

The **application of BAT and BEP** in relation to the minimisation of the presence of microplastics in the effluent from municipal wastewaters discharging to the catchment of the Baltic Sea area could be added.

[HELCOM Recommendation 28E/6 on On-site wastewater treatment of single family homes, small businesses and settlements up to 300 person equivalents \(P.E.\) \(2007\)](#)

The application of BAT and BEP in relation to the minimisation of the presence of microplastics in the effluent from single family homes, small businesses and settlements up to 300 person equivalents (P.E.) could be reflected upon.

Annex 1 Proposals of updates are identified due to the passage of time and work developed by HELCOM

Preamble section

The following table compiles all technical updates to be made in the Preamble section of the Recommendations (blue shading).

Update needed	Rec. 18/4	Rec. 23/5	Rec. 28E/5	Rec. 28E/6
Delete reference to Ministerial Meeting 1988				
Delete reference to Ministerial Meeting 2005				
Add reference to commitments from the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) adopted at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2007 (Krakow) on call for urgent actions to reduce the discharges of nutrients and hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea Area				
Add reference to commitments from Ministerial Meeting 2010: agreement to take further steps to carry out national and coordinated monitoring of marine litter and identify sources of litter				
Add reference to commitments from Ministerial Meeting 2013: 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				
Add reference to action RL 4 ¹ within HELCOM Rec. 36/1 on the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter				
Add reference to action RL 7 ² within HELCOM Rec. 36/1 on the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter				
Substitute or delete reference to Rec. 9/2 (superseded) by Rec. 28E-5				
Substitute reference to Rec. 7/5 (superseded) by Rec. 23-5				
Substitute reference to Rec. 7/3 (superseded) by Rec. 28E-5				
Add reference to the recommendation to re-evaluate the Recommendation and reconsider it in 2015 taking into account new developments on national or international and EU level for Member States				

Recommendation section

HELCOM Recommendation 28E/5 on Municipal wastewater treatment (2007)

There is a need to update the following recommendation: *“RECOMMENDS ALSO that the Contracting Parties re-evaluate the present Recommendation and reconsider it in 2015 taking into account new developments on national or international and EU level for Member States,”*.

HELCOM Recommendation 28E/6 on On-site wastewater treatment of single family homes, small businesses and settlements up to 300 person equivalents (P.E.) (2007)

There is a need to substitute the following reference to the Land-based Pollution Group by PRESSURE Working Group: *“RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Contracting Parties report on the implementation of the Recommendation to the Commission, based on reporting requirements developed by the Land-based Pollution Group.”*

¹ On improvement of stormwater management in order to prevent litter, including microlitter, to enter the marine environment from heavy weather events.

² On compilation of available techniques as well as research and develop additional techniques in waste water treatment plants to prevent micro particles entering the marine environment.

Decision section

HELCOM Recommendation 23/5 on Reduction of discharges from urban areas by the proper management of storm water systems (2002)

There is a need to update the following decision: *“DECIDES that this Recommendation should be reconsidered in 2007.”*

Reporting section

There is a need to consider the adequacy of the current version of the reporting format in the four Recommendations, bearing in mind that only the status of accomplishment of HELCOM Rec. 28E/5 and 28E/6 is to be followed as part of the BSAP follow-up ([Outcome of PRESSURE 2-2015](#), para 2.9 and Annex 3 of [document 2-6-Rev.1](#)).