



Outcome of the 29th Meeting of the Response Working Group
(RESPONSE 29-2021)

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Outcome of the 29th Meeting of the Response Working Group (RESPONSE 29-2021)

Introduction

- 0.1. The 29th Meeting of the HELCOM Response Working Group (RESPONSE 29-2021) was held online on 28-30 September 2021 in line with HELCOM policy on COVID-19.
- 0.2. The Meeting was attended by all HELCOM Contracting Parties except for Russia, Observers from the Sea Alarm Foundation and WWF and invited guests. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 1**.
- 0.3. The Meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Response Working Group, Bernt Stedt, Sweden.
- 0.4. Markus Helavuori, HELCOM Professional Secretary, and Laura Meski, Associated Professional Secretary, acted as Secretaries of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

- 1.1. The Meeting adopted the agenda as contained in documents 1-1 Rev.1.

Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from HELCOM meetings

- 2.1. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the 42nd Meeting of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM 42-2021) held online on 17-18 March 2021, the 60th Meeting of the Heads of Delegation (HOD 60-2021) held online on 3-4 June 2021, and the Intersessional Meeting of the Heads of Delegation (HOD 60A-2021), held on 8-9 September 2021, and in particular the matters related to the HELCOM Response Working Group (document 2-1). The Meeting took note of the progress on updating the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) and the actions related to the Response Working Group. The 2021 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting is expected to adopt the updated BSAP on 20 October 2021.
- 2.2. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties and observers to provide suggestions for the agenda of the next Baltic Sea Day Forum to be held on 22-23 March 2022 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, as invited by Russia at HOD 60A-2021.
- 2.3. The Meeting noted that outcomes of subsidiary bodies to the Response Working Group will be dealt with under the relevant agenda items below.

Agenda Item 3 Risk assessments and safety of navigation

- 3.1. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the 32nd Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group for Mutual Exchange and Deliveries of AIS & Data (AIS EWG 32-2020), which was held online on 26-27 May 2021 (document 3-2).
- 3.2. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the Twelfth Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Experts on Safety of Navigation (SAFE NAV 12-2021), which was held online on 9 June 2021 (document 3-3).
- 3.3. The Meeting recalled the discussions at RESPONSE 26-2019 and RESPONSE 27-2020 regarding the need for an updated risk analysis for oil and HNS pollution in the Baltic Sea, given that the BRISK results are based on 2007-2008 data and are now outdated. The Meeting took note of the action "*Conduct a feasibility study by 2022 for, and as appropriate, undertake a risk analysis for oil and hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) pollution of the marine environment in the Baltic Sea area by 2025*" in the draft updated BSAP.
- 3.4. The Meeting reiterated that there is a need for an updated risk analysis of oil and HNS spills in the Baltic Sea, especially since the validity of the BRISK risk analysis, which was based on data from 2007-2008, has expired in 2020.

- 3.5. The Meeting considered document 3-1, setting out a proposed way forward for conducting a feasibility study and prepare a full risk analysis for oil and HNS pollution. The Meeting noted that the document had been prepared by a “informal small group” consisting of the Chair of the Response Working Group, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and the Secretariat.
- 3.6. In discussing the way forward to conducting the feasibility study, the Meeting agreed that the work should be led by the “informal group”. The Meeting appreciated the confirmation by Denmark, Finland and Sweden that they are willing to continue lead this work, with support by the Secretariat. The Meeting invited other Contracting Parties to also join the work.
- 3.7. The Meeting agreed one of the aims with the feasibility study should be to determine the scope of the risk analysis by weighing the needs and the funding possibilities. The Meeting further agreed that in preparing the feasibility study, the “informal group” should inter alia also consider the role of Contracting Parties in the project, the need to include drift modelling, Contracting Parties’ response capacities and how the project could support other BSAP actions related to response issues, such as monitoring and pollution risk assessment regarding species and habitats in the Baltic Region.
- 3.8. The Meeting agreed that RESPONSE 30-2022 should be extended by one day and that the first full day of the meeting should be a thematic day for further developing the feasibility study based on a draft to be prepared by the “informal group”. The Meeting recognized that the thematic day will be crucial in planning the way forward.
- 3.9. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to inform the “informal group” about consultant companies or research institutions in their countries, that may be able to undertake the envisaged risk analysis. The Meeting invited the “informal group” to contact those companies with the view of inviting those with the most potential to be able to undertake a risk analysis, to the thematic day at RESPONSE 30-2022.
- 3.10. The Meeting, however, noted that legal advice may be needed before inviting consultants to the thematic day at RESPONSE 30-2022, in order to ensure that involvement of consultants early in the process. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to liaise with legal departments of their organization in this regard.
- 3.11. The Meeting noted that no Contracting Parties are in the position to confirm funding for the risk analysis project. Consequently, the Meeting agreed that external funding should be sourced, e.g. from an appropriate EU funding mechanism.
- 3.12. The Meeting invited the “informal group” to look into the various EU funding mechanism as they are suitable to fund different types of work with different timeframes.
- 3.13. The Meeting noted that there may be possibilities for synergies with risk analysis work being undertaken in other organizations, e.g. Bonn Agreement. The Meeting invited the “informal group” to consider this in their work, taking also into account the Bonn Agreement Strategic Action Plan. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Denmark to keep the “informal group” and the Response Working Group informed of relevant developments in that regard. The Meeting agreed that representatives of Bonn Agreement and other regional agreements could be invited to the thematic day during RESPONSE 30-2022.
- 3.14. The Meeting noted that a dedicated session on risk analysis may also be organized in the context of the Inter-Secretariat Meeting organized by EMSA, likely to be organized in February 2021, and that this would facilitate planning of the thematic workshop before RESPONSE 30-2021.
- 3.15. The Meeting took note of a presentation by invited guest Jon-Arve Royset (Norwegian Coastal Administration, NCA)) (**Presentation 1**) on the [AISyRISK method](#) for automated estimation and presentation of risk in Norwegian waters. The Meeting noted that the method is managed by the NCA with technical support from DNV. The system currently only includes risk assessment for oil spills, not HNS or other products.
- 3.16. The Meeting noted that AISyRISK could be applied also in the Baltic Sea as the system has access to AIS data from the region. However, ice data is not available.

- 3.17. The Meeting noted that AISyRISK can also estimate the most likely risks for various scenarios in different areas, which can be used for planning the response capacities needed.
- 3.18. The Meeting noted that inclusion of environmental consequences is being planned in AISyRISK. Furthermore, analysis of emergency towing capacities is also to be included during 2022.
- 3.19. The Meeting noted that AISyRISK could also be useful to consider in the context of the risk analysis project discussed above, e.g. regarding deciding whether automated and ongoing risk analysis should be strived for rather than manual or one off risk analysis. The Meeting noted that the NCA plans to demonstrate AISyRISK to Bonn Agreement in the context of their planning of risk analysis in the North Sea.
- 3.20. The Meeting took note of information regarding the proposal for the OpenRisk-2 project aiming to develop single window software for risk analysis, potentially based on AISyRISK but with incorporation of ice data and other relevant parameters, such as HNS risk, that are currently not available in the system. The lead partner of the project would be the University of Gdansk and involvement is also envisaged by e.g. the University of Helsinki and the NCA.
- 3.21. The Meeting noted that OpenRisk-2 is planning to apply for funding from the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme in early 2022. It was recognized that more partner countries and also involvement by end users such as national administrations, may be needed to qualify for funding. The Meeting noted that end user involvement could be ensured e.g. by the participation and contribution by national authorities to various project workshops and events.
- 3.22. The Meeting invited the “informal group” developing the feasibility study for a risk analysis project to liaise with the NCA and other OpenRisk-2 partners, in order to consider possible links and coordination between the two projects and to avoid overlap.
- 3.23. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to circulate any further information to be provided by the OpenRisk-2 planning team, to Contracting Parties and observers.
- 3.24. The Meeting encouraged Contracting Parties to consider involvement in the project, as partners or otherwise.

Agenda Item 4 Matters related to recent response operations

- 4.1. The Meeting took note of the draft HELCOM report on shipping accidents in the Baltic Sea 2019 (document 4-2-Corr.1) which will be submitted to MARITIME 21-2021 for approval for publication on the HELCOM website. The Meeting noted that Russia had not reported any accidents in 2019, but that Figure 7 in document 4-2 Corr.1 nevertheless depicts two accidents in Russian waters. The Meeting took note of a clarification by the Secretariat that these accidents had been reported by the flag states of the involved ships.
- 4.2. The Meeting took note of the draft HELCOM report on shipping accidents in the Baltic Sea 2020 (document 4-4), which will be submitted to MARITIME 21-2021 for approval for publication on the HELCOM website. The Meeting noted that two groundings of ROPAX vessels in 2020 around the Åland Islands, Finland, are not included in the report although they were widely reported in media. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to look into the matter and make necessary corrections before submission of the draft report to MARTIME 21-2021 for approval.
- 4.3. The Meeting took note of the information on significant response operations in 2020 as reported by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (document 4-1). The Meeting noted that no significant response operations at sea nor on the shore took place in 2020 in Germany. The Meeting further noted that no information had been received prior to the Meeting from Russia.
- 4.4. The Meeting noted an editorial error in the data from Finland (West-Uusimaa instead of East-Uusimaa) and invited the Secretariat to correct the error before submission of the data on significant response operations in 2020 to MARITIME 21-2021 as part of the 2020 accidents report.

4.5. Recalling the discussion at RESPONSE 28-2020 (Outcome paragraph 14.2), the Meeting discussed a template for sharing lessons learned, which was circulated by the Secretariat on 13 September 2021 on behalf of the EU. The Meeting noted that the template is not easy to use, and also that other similar templates are used e.g. in the scope of exercises and the HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP).

4.6. The Meeting discussed whether the template should be used as the format for sharing lessons learned at future meetings. The Meeting agreed that it would be useful to have a common template for sharing lessons learned and supported that work should continue with aim on creating a clear and intuitive template, to be harmonized with the draft template used within the HREP. The Meeting noted that work on the template could continue within the EU Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (CTG MPPR) and proposed that the HEDMOT exercise evaluation template (appendix H of the Practical Guide for HELCOM Response Exercise Projects) should be made available to that group.

4.7. The Meeting took note of the information by Finland on the information on an oil spill at Inkoo harbour on 31 January 2020 (document 4-3).

4.8. The Meeting took note of the presentation by Estonia on oil spill incidents in Estonian harbours Sillamäe, Bekkeri and Dirham in 2021 (**Presentation 2**).

Agenda Item 5 National preparedness at sea and on shore

5.1. The Meeting noted that Estonia, Finland and Germany had reported on national developments regarding response at sea, on shore and for oiled wildlife response using the template provided in document 5-1 (documents 5-1, attachment 4 (Germany), 5-3 (Finland) and 5-3 Add.1 (Estonia)). The Meeting noted that for the other Contracting Parties, previously reported developments were available in attachments 2, 3 and 5-8 of document 5-1.

5.2. The Meeting took note of a presentation by Finland (**Presentation 3**) containing further details about recent developments and future plans. The Meeting noted inter alia that building of two new multi-purpose response vessels is being planned using national funds. For new aerial surveillance aircrafts an application for EU funding is being considered.

5.3. The Meeting noted that Finland intends to present the results of the OILSAREX project at RESPONSE 30-2022.

5.4. No further information on national developments regarding response at sea, on shore and for oiled wildlife response was provided to the Meeting.

5.5. The Meeting considered possible HELCOM involvement in the project "Update and Recalculation of Oil Spill Contingency Plans (UROSCO) (document 5-2), which plans to support the update of national contingency plans.

5.6. The Meeting noted that the draft work plan set out in document 5-2 is very ambitious, but concerns were expressed regarding the feasibility of achieving the goals. Inter alia, it was noted that national contingency plans in many Contracting Parties consist of various instruments under the responsibility of different authorities, and that the HELCOM Response Manual is often the basis for contingency plans.

5.7. The Meeting further noted that that updating risk analyses based on BRISK, as envisaged in the draft work plan, would require significant efforts, expertise and resources. The Meeting stressed that overlap with the risk analysis project discussed under Agenda Item 4 should be avoided, and that the two projects should complement each other rather than compete.

5.8. Following discussion, the Meeting agreed that HELCOM should not become a project partner or associate project partner in the UROSCO project. The Meeting, however, recognized that the project could provide value, and noted that Poland intends to take part in it.

5.9. The Meeting noted a comment by Sea Alarm, welcoming the fact that oiled wildlife response is envisaged as part of the project.

5.10. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to inform the UROSCO project planning team of the outcome of this discussion.

5.11. The Meeting took note of a presentation by Venla Ryymin (Finnish Border Guard) on the OILART project (**Presentation 4**). The Meeting noted that e-learning packages are planned to be developed e.g. for maritime environment response as well as legal aspects. The Meeting invited Finland to inform the next meeting on to the outputs of the project and to provide a demonstration of the Maritime Environment Response Tool when completed.

Agenda Item 6 Sub-regional co-operation

6.1. The Meeting noted that the overview list and map of bi- and trilateral agreements on joint response operations and response plans in response regions in the Baltic Sea are included in Annex 3 of the HELCOM Response Manual. No updates or corrections were provided by the Meeting.

Agenda Item 7 Response on the shore and wildlife response

7.1. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the Fifth Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Coordination Network on Response on the Shore (SHORE Network 5-2021) held as an online meeting on 27 January 2021 (document 7-1).

7.2. The Meeting noted that not all Contracting Parties have attended meetings of SHORE Network and further that some Contracting Parties have not provided updated information on recent national and regional developments of relevance for SHORE Network. The Meeting encouraged all Contracting Parties to attend future meetings of the SHORE Network, to nominate contacts for the group and to provide relevant information using the agreed template as requested in the annotations to SHORE Network Meetings. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to circulate the list of nominated contacts of SHORE Network to the Response HODs of all Contracting Parties. The Meeting further invited HOD 61-2021 to also consider this matter and to encourage all Contracting Parties to attend and contribute to the SHORE Network.

7.3. The Meeting considered and approved the draft Work Plan for 2022-2023 for the SHORE Network as set out in Annex 2 to the Outcome of SHORE Network 5-2021.

7.4. The Meeting took note that an informal online meeting of the SHORE Network is planned to be organized tentatively on 8 November 2021 to plan the future work in accordance with the updated Work Plan and that SHORE Network 6-2022 is planned to be held in early 2022, the exact date to be confirmed at a later stage by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair.

7.5. The Meeting took note that Germany was elected as lead country of SHORE Network and that Jens Rautenberg, Germany, was elected as the Chair for SHORE Network.

7.6. The Meeting took note of the introduction by Sea Alarm to documents 7-2, 7-2 Add.1, 7-3, 7-4 and 7-4 related to oiled wildlife response (**Presentation 5**).

7.7. Specifically, the Meeting took note of the Outcome of 17th Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 17-2021) was held online on 9 February 2021 (document 7-3).

7.8. The Meeting took note that EWG OWR 18-2021, scheduled for 14 September 2021, was cancelled due to only five Contracting Parties having registered to the Meeting. According to the decision by RESPONSE 27-2020, two thirds of the Contracting Parties (6 of 9) are to be registered to attend a EWG OWR meeting for the meeting to be held (c.f. Outcome of RESPONSE 27-2020, paragraph 8.3). A new date for the next meeting of the Group will be decided via correspondence.

7.9. The Meeting expressed concern regarding the low participation in meetings of EWG OWR and encouraged all Contracting Parties to attend future meeting and to nominate contacts for the group if not already done. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to circulate the list of nominated contacts, together with the SHORE Network contacts (c.f. paragraph 7.2 above), to the Response HODs of all Contracting Parties. The

Meeting further invited HOD 61-2021 to also consider this matter and to encourage all Contracting Parties to attend and contribute to the future meetings.

7.10. The Meeting considered and approved the draft Terms of Reference (document 7-2) and Work Plan (document 7-2-Add.1) for 2022-2023 for the renamed HELCOM Wildlife Response Group (WILDLIFE) with the view to their subsequent adoption by HOD 61-2021 (December 2021).

7.11. The Meeting took note of the report of an online seminar on euthanasia organized by Sea Alarm on 20 April 2021 (document 7-4).

7.12. The Meeting took note of information provided on the EUROWA-2 project (document 7-5).

7.13. The Meeting considered the invitation to two EUROWA-2 authority workshops on integrated management for dealing with wildlife challenges during pollution emergencies in January and March 2022. The workshops will familiarize participants with the integrated management aspects of a wildlife incident and will explore which tools and processes can be used to optimise an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to marine wildlife emergency management. The Meeting noted that the workshops support implementation of the action “*Strengthen mutual assistance for oiled wildlife response in the Baltic Region by 2025.*” in the draft updated BSAP. Consequently, the Meeting encouraged Contracting Parties to consider attending the workshops and to register as per the instructions in the invitation.

7.14. The Meeting discussed the need to synchronize efforts regarding the oiled wildlife response exercise guideline with the HELCOM Response Manual and the HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP).

7.15. The Meeting noted that Finland had faced challenges when trying to mobilize European Oiled Wildlife Assistance (EUROWA) in the context of BALEX DELTA 2021, as it is not a module under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The Meeting noted that for this reason, mobilization is done through contacting Sea Alarm directly.

Agenda Item 8 Wrecks and other submerged hazardous objects

8.1. The Meeting considered the draft excerpt on warfare materials in the Baltic Sea, which was developed by interested parties as requested by RESPONSE 28-2020 (document 8-1). The Meeting welcomed the work done, and agreed that rather than approving the excerpt for publication on the HELCOM website, it should be used by Contracting Parties in making preparation for considering and commenting on the full Submerged Assessment under development.

8.2. In this context, the Meeting noted that work has continued on the full Submerged Assessment and it is expected to be finalized for submission for approval to RESPONSE 30-2022.

8.3. The Meeting considered the draft Terms of Reference for 2022-2030 for the HELCOM Expert Network on Environmental Risks of Submerged Objects (EN SUBMERGED) and the comments by Sweden (document 8-3).

8.4. The Meeting approved the draft Terms of Reference for EN SUBMERGED as set out in **Annex 2**, with the view to their subsequent adoption by HOD 61-2021.

8.5. The Meeting noted information provided by Poland, that the Polish Prime Minister has established a task group to deal with submerged hazardous materials. A report is being prepared regarding data and future activities, including information on costs of remediation efforts. The Meeting invited Poland to provide updated information to a future meeting, when available.

8.6. The Meeting took note of document 8-4 and **Presentation 6** informing that the Estonian Police and Border Guard has signed a contract with the Nordic Environmental Finance Corporation (NEFCO) to initiate the project “Environmental risk assessment of potentially hazardous wrecks in Estonian marine area”.

8.7. The Meeting proposed that a meeting of EN SUBMERGED with a focus on wrecks, could potentially be organized back-to-back with either the kick-off conference in 2022 or the final conference of the project referred to in paragraph 8.6 above in 2023.

8.8. The Meeting noted that no progress has been made with volume 2 of the Submerged Assessment regarding wrecks, noting also that the Co-Chair of SUBMERGED for wrecks, Mr. Jorma Rytönen (Finland) has recently retired. Recognizing that plenty of material for this volume is already available, the Meeting invited Contracting Parties to consider funding a consultant to finalize the drafting of volume 2 of the Submerged Assessment.

Agenda Item 9 Remote Sensing

9.1 Aerial surveillance

9.1. The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the Annual Meeting of the Informal Working group on Aerial Surveillance (IWGAS 2021) held online on 8 June 2021 (document 9-3).

9.2. The Meeting took note that IWGAS 2021 had agreed that the Annual reports on discharges observed during aerial surveillance should include a clarification of the amounts and volumes of spills detected from wrecks, although they will continue to be reported as a single spill detection.

9.3. The Meeting took note of the discussion regarding the HELCOM core indicator 'Operational oil spills from ships' and the related Ship Source Pollution Directive and MSFD reporting (paragraphs 3.8 to 3.15 of the Outcome). The Meeting further discussed the relevance of the core indicator and agreed that work should continue on the development of common principles and definitions within the HELCOM and EU context.

9.4. The Meeting took note of the agreed changes to the future operational needs for satellite surveillance coverage in the Baltic Sea (paragraph 5.4 and Annex 2 of the Outcome).

9.5. The Meeting took note that Ms. Heli Haapasaari, Finland, was elected as the Chair for IWGAS 2022-2023 and that IWGAS 2022 will be held on 29-30 March 2022 in Helsinki, Finland.

9.6. The Meeting approved the draft HELCOM Annual report on discharges observed during aerial surveillance in the Baltic Sea in 2020 for publication on the HELCOM webpage (document 9-1).

9.7. The Meeting noted that Finland is planning a mini-CEPCO together with Estonia and Sweden during 2022.

9.8. The Meeting noted that Sweden is considering a super CEPCO in May 2023.

9.9. The Meeting took note of the presentation by Andrea Tonini (EMSA) on Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems Services (RPAS) activities in the Baltic Sea area (**Presentation 7**).

9.10. The Meeting noted that tethered RPAS systems are currently not available through EMSA primarily due to safety considerations, but they could be considered in the future. The Meeting noted that data from the RPAS is streamed to a ground control station and onwards to the RPAS data center hosted at EMSA, where authorities can get access to the data and real time videos as well as a communication channel with the RPAS pilots.

9.11. The Meeting noted that the EMSA RPAS are not operated or owned by EMSA, and that aviation permits are handled by the operator/owner.

9.12. The Meeting noted that Lithuania has successfully made use of EMSA's RPAS services in 2021, providing also EMSA with valuable experiences and lessons learned, which were later utilized in real operations.

9.2 Use of satellites for detecting illegal discharges

9.13. The Meeting took note of the presentation by Sandra Sá (EMSA) on EMSA CleanSeaNet Statistics within the HELCOM region in 2020 (document 9-2, **Presentation 8**).

9.14. The Meeting noted that Class A detections should be prioritized although the report in document 9-2 includes also Class B in all statistics. The Meeting noted that EMSA will consider the matter further when compiling the CleanSeaNet statistics for the 2021 report.

9.15. The Meeting noted that detections of “other substances” refers to inter alia chemical oil, vegetable oil, fish oil, sewage and garbage. The Meeting agreed that more details about statistics of such detections would be useful to include in future reports this provides information e.g. about MARPOL violations.

9.3 STW/AIS/SAT model

9.16. The Meeting took note of the information by Sweden on recent developments with regard to the SeaTrack Web (STW) (**Presentation 9**).

9.17. The Meeting recalled the action “Further develop regional preparedness and response related services by e.g. investigating options for upgrading SeaTrack Web to include live data feed in order to improve oil spill trajectory prognoses no later than by 2027. Investigate options to prepare SeaTrack Web for integration with the Clean Sea Net satellite detection service.” in the draft updated BSAP. The Meeting noted that around 15.000€ would be needed in total for updating STW in order to implement the draft BSAP action. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to consider funding this development.

9.18. The Meeting noted that Bonn Agreement is planning a project that may be relevant in the future consideration of implementation of the action.

9.2 Investigation and prosecution of offenders of anti-pollution regulations

9.19. The Meeting noted that information may be shared with RESPONSE 30-2022 regarding a workshop to be organized by Bonn Agreement on this topic.

Agenda Item 10 Other developments in response strategies and equipment

10.1 HNS response

10.1. No comments were made regarding HNS response.

10.2 Response to oil in ice

10.2. No comments were made regarding response to oil in ice.

10.3 Places of Refuge

10.3. The Meeting took note of document 10-1 by Finland regarding granting place of refuge in Finland.

10.4. The Meeting noted that in Sweden the static part of the places of refuge are ready but work is still continuing on the dynamic part.

10.5. The Meeting noted that Denmark was supposed to host a table-top exercise on places of refuge together with Sweden and EMSA in October 2021. The exercise has been postponed and new arrangements are currently being considered.

10.4 Response operations at night/in bad visibility

10.6. No comments were made regarding response operations at night/in bad visibility.

10.2 Emergency towing

10.7. No comments were made regarding emergency towing.

10.3 Use of dispersants

10.8. No comments were made regarding use of dispersants.

10.4 Non-traditional fuel types

10.9. No comments were made regarding non-traditional fuel types.

Agenda Item 11 Exercises

11.1 BALEX

- 11.1. The Meeting took note of the current schedule of HELCOM BALEX exercises up to 2026, as agreed by RESPONSE 23-2017 (2022 Germany, 2023 Latvia, 2024 Lithuania, 2025 Poland and 2026 Russia). The Meeting recalled the decision by RESPONSE 20-2015 that starting from BALEX DELTA 2017, the exercises are to be held during the last week of August each year.
- 11.2. The Meeting took note of the HELCOM BALEX 2021 Lead Country report (document 11-3), noting, however, that the shore response part has not yet been included. The BALEX 2021 exercise was held on 24-25 August 2021 near the city of Kotka in the Eastern Gulf of Finland.
- 11.3. The Meeting noted that operating response equipment in the rough weather conditions proved to be a challenge that needs to be considered also in order to cope with real incidents in rough weather. The Meeting also noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic certain elements and events of the exercise had to be cancelled or reduced.
- 11.4. The Meeting took note of the report by WWF Finland on the involvement of volunteer organizations in the oiled wildlife response exercise, which was part of the national shoreline response exercise of BALEX 2021 (document 11-3, **Presentation 10**).
- 11.5. The Meeting thanked Finland for the successful and well organized BALEX 2021 exercise.
- 11.6. The Meeting noted that EMSA has also contributed with feedback on the BALEX 2021 exercise, that EMSA appreciates the broad range of EMSA capabilities considered and deployed, and that EMSA will follow-up on the HEDMOT report in due course.
- 11.7. The Meeting took note of the information by Germany on preparations for HELCOM BALEX 2022 to be held in the last week of August in the Mecklenburg Bay, Germany (document 11-2). It was noted that the exercise will be scenario based and consist of three main elements: 1) oil response at sea, 2) oil response in shallow water and on shore, and 3) HNS response at sea.
- 11.8. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to provide comments to Germany by the end of December 2021 regarding the tentative dates for planning conferences etc. as set out in document 11-2.
- 11.9. The Meeting welcomed that Sweden and EMSA confirmed their willingness to take part in the planning of BALEX 2022.
- 11.10. The Meeting invited Latvia to inform RESPONSE 30-2022 regarding initial plans for HELCOM BALEX 2023.

11.2 National exercises

- 11.11. No information was presented to the Meeting.

11.3 HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP)

- 11.12. The Meeting considered the implementation and continued development of the HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP) (document 11-1).
- 11.13. The Meeting noted that the HEDMOT report (c.f. Agenda Item 11.4 below) will provide valuable information for the continued development of the HREP. The Meeting agreed that the matter should be revisited by RESPONSE 30-2022 once the HEDMOT report and recommendations are available.
- 11.14. The Meeting invited Sweden to submit a proposal to RESPONSE 30-2022 on the future development and update of the HREP including the Practical Guide for Response Exercises, taking into consideration the HEDMOT report and recommendations.

11.4 HELCOM Response Exercise Development and Monitoring Team (HEDMOT)

11.15. The Meeting recalled that RESPONSE 28-2021 established the HELCOM Response Exercise Development and Monitoring Team (HEDMOT) to support a long-term approach to exercises under the HELCOM response framework.

11.16. The HEDMOT of HELCOM BALEX 2021, consisted of Estonia, Finland, Germany and Latvia supported by Sweden. The Meeting noted preliminary observations by the HEDMOT (**Presentation 11**) and that the full HEDMOT report will be finalized by the end of October 2021.

Agenda Item 12 HELCOM Recommendations and Response Manuals

12.1. The Meeting recalled that HELCOM 42-2021 had adopted the revised HELCOM Response Manual and the Multi-regional Marine HNS Response Manual (Bonn Agreement, HELCOM, REMPEC).

12.2. The Meeting urged Contracting Parties to check national contact information and web links included in Chapter 1 of the Response Manual (at sea, on shore, oiled wildlife and aerial surveillance), and to inform the Secretariat (markus.helavuori@helcom.fi and laura.meski@helcom.fi) of any updates as changes have an influence on providing and requesting assistance and exchanging information.

12.3. The Meeting considered the list of oil response vessels and equipment listed in the Excel attachment to document 12-3 extracted from the EU Common Emergency Communication and Information System Marine Pollution (CECIS MP). The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to provide any updates or corrections, as may be needed, directly to CECIS MP and to also inform the Secretariat (laura.meski@helcom.fi).

12.4. The Meeting decided that the list on the HELCOM website, which is also linked in the HELCOM Response Manual, should be updated annually. Requests to verify the information should be submitted to every other meeting of the Response Working Group.

12.5. The Meeting discussed a possible joint submission of the Multi-regional Marine HNS Response Manual by HELCOM, Bonn Agreement and REMPEC to IMO PPR 9 (4-8 April 2021) for the purposes of developing an operational guide on the response to spills of HNS in the framework of the PPR.

12.6. The Meeting agreed that the most appropriate way forward would be for REMPEC to submit the document to PPR, and that HELCOM Contracting Parties should contact the relevant national authorities in charge of IMO PPR matters, in order to recommend that they support the document by REMPEC at PPR 9 in April 2022.

12.7. The Meeting recalled that RESPONSE 28-2021 had not been able to conclude on the proposal by Finland to revise HELCOM Recommendation 12/7 on special cooperation in case of a chemical tanker accident in the Baltic Sea. The Meeting reconsidered the proposal and, following discussion, the Meeting agreed to the draft revised Recommendation 12/7 as set out in **Annex 3**, for approval by HOD 61-2021 and adoption by HELCOM 43-2022.

12.8. The Meeting recalled that RESPONSE 28-2020 had invited Russia to provide information on comparing the requirements of the national legislation with HELCOM Recommendation 20/5 on *Minimum ability to respond to oil spillages in oil terminals* to RESPONSE 29-2021 in order to make a future decision on the continued need for the Recommendation based on the provided information.

12.9. As such information had not been provided, the Meeting invited Russia to provide such information to RESPONSE 30-2022, in order for that meeting to decide on the continued need for the Recommendation based on the information provided.

Agenda Item 13 Activities within other organizations and initiatives

13.1. The Meeting welcomed the information on new possibility for EU Member States to request funding from the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) for the transportation of international assistance

during marine pollution incidents (equipment and vessels). The Meeting also took note of the requirements linked to such funding.

13.2. The Meeting took note of the information provided by Casto Lopez Benitez, DG MOVE, on the Revision of the EU Ship-Source Pollution Directive. Information was also provided regarding a study for which contributions will be requested from EU Member States soon.

13.3. The Meeting noted that reporting under the revised directive will be synchronized with other reporting procedures and be based on the annual reporting format of spills observed by aerial surveillance, used by HELCOM and Bonn Agreement, in order to reduce administrative burden. It was, however, also noted that reporting under the Ship-Source Pollution Directive is in some Contracting Parties done by maritime authorities and that the response authorities will in such cases have to share aerial surveillance data to those authorities for reporting.

13.4. The Meeting further took note of the presentation by EMSA on Marine Pollution Response Services, an update of the HNS information services (MAR-ICE, MAR-CIS and BE-CHEM tool) and current work of the CTG MPPR (**Presentation 12**).

13.5. The Meeting noted a clarification that EMSA's planned near-shore response resources will be in connection with Equipment Assistant Service (EAS) stockpiles. The Meeting noted that information on tenders for EMSA's Stand-by response vessels contracts including technical requirements and budget ceilings are publicly available, and that costs for chartering the vessels are available for Member States.

Agenda Item 14 Any other business

14.1 The Meeting checked and updated the list of contact addresses and observers of the Response Working Group (document 14-1-Rev.3).

Agenda Item 15 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

15.1. The Meeting elected Torben Iversen, Denmark, as the Chair of the Response Working Group for the next two-year period (2022-2023).

15.2. The Meeting elected Johan Genestig, Sweden, as the Vice-chair of the Response Working Group for the next two-year period (2022-2023).

15.3. The Meeting thanked Bernt Stedt, Sweden, for acting as the Chair of the Response Working Group in 2021.

Agenda Item 16 Future work and meetings

16.1. The Meeting took note and considered the preliminary list of upcoming HELCOM and other meetings (document 16-1) and invited Contracting Parties and observers to keep the Secretariat informed of any meetings related to pollution response issues, in order to avoid overlaps.

16.2. The Meeting agreed that RESPONSE 30-2022 will be organized on 28 February to 3 March 2022, hosted by the Secretariat in Helsinki, Finland. The Meeting agreed that RESPONSE 30-2022 could be organized as an online meeting, if the COVID-19 situation so requires.

16.3. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Estonia to consider organizing RESPONSE 31-2022 tentatively in October or early November 2022.

Agenda Item 17 Outcome of the Meeting

17.1. The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of the Meeting as contained in document 17-1.

17.2. The final Outcome of the Meeting has been finalized by the Secretariat and made available on the HELCOM Meeting Portal together with the documents and presentations given during the Meeting.

Annex 1 List of Participants

*) Head of Delegation

Representing	Name	Organization	Email address	Telephone number
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Invited guest	Teresa Cunha	European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)	teresa.cunha@emsa.europa.eu	
Invited guest	Valtteri Laine	EUSBSR PA Safe representative	valtteri.laine@traficom.fi	
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Annex 2 Draft Terms of Reference of the HELCOM Expert Network on Environmental Risks of Submerged Objects (EN SUBMERGED) 2022-2030

Rationale

Within the framework of the work of the previous HELCOM Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (SUBMERGED), considerable progress was made in the subject area of submerged munitions and other submerged hazardous objects. This is reflected not least in the work on developing a HELCOM Thematic Assessment on Hazardous Submerged Objects in the Baltic Sea (Submerged Assessment).

At the same time, it became clear during the work that further efforts and cooperation are necessary in order to continue to work together especially on the data situation in the Baltic Sea region and thus to consolidate the common operational picture of munitions and other submerged hazardous objects in the Baltic Sea. The measures for dealing with the potential challenges posed by dumped munitions and other submerged hazardous objects are not yet coordinated and harmonized. A coordinated approach is crucial for a healthy Baltic Sea. At the same time, suggestions can be derived for other marine regions.

Overall aims and tasks

The overall aim of EN SUBEMERGED is to contribute to the development of an action plan and regionally coordinated actions on submerged munitions and explosives of concern as well as other submerged hazardous objects, aiming, in the long-term, at addressing potential adverse effects of such objects and their constituents on the marine environment of the Baltic Sea. The Network shall on one hand act as a knowledge hub for all Contracting Parties to provide the recent information on munitions and other submerged hazardous objects in the Baltic Sea. On the other hand, the Network should also accompany the coordination of regional activities that addresses the potential challenges posed by munitions and other submerged hazardous objects. Finally, the Network appears helpful to achieve the tasks of the updated HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), referring to munitions and other submerged hazardous objects in the Baltic Sea.

The network will in the period of 2022 – 2030:

- Finalize the HELCOM Thematic Assessment on Hazardous Submerged Objects in the Baltic Sea (Submerged Assessment) for publication.
- Act as platform for discussions about further needed actions tackling the potential challenges posed by dumped munitions and other submerged hazardous objects.
- Contribute to a common operational picture about the distribution of munitions and explosives of concern in the whole Baltic Sea region.
- Based on the picture and a common understanding of distribution processes of munition constituents it will support Contracting Parties to identifying hot spot areas, perform site-specific risk assessments and discuss a possible prioritization of affected areas for further coordinated actions in addition to existing national ambitions for comprehensive risk managements.
- Seek cooperation with OSPAR relating to such objects close to the HELCOM area which could affect the convention area, especially in the Skagerrak.
- Continuously assess, support and consult with specific research or scientific projects to keep previously issued recommendations up to date or to add recommendations as deemed necessary
- Acting as specific stakeholder and actively convey time-sensitive information on recent findings

- Develop and maintain, as well as monitor, application of a HELCOM toolbox for assessment of site-specific environmental risks related to potential abandonment, relocation and intended recovery or clean-up of dumped munitions and contaminated wrecks;
- Update previously issued guidelines or develop new guidelines for all potentially affected groups, as deemed necessary, taking into account existing national guidelines and contingency plans;
- Develop and maintain procedures for training of crews of response vessels that can be engaged in emergency response actions involving dumped munitions;
- Develop and maintain a knowledge collection of best available technologies on dealing with dumped munitions and other submerged hazardous objects.

Participants

The EN SUBMERGED will consist of experts nominated by the Contracting Parties and will be open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. Additional experts and representatives of organizations can be invited to the meetings. The network will cater for cross-sectorial expertise to carry out the tasks as needed.

Working procedures

The EN SUBMERGED works under the supervision of, reports to and receives guidance by the HELCOM Response Working Group according to its mandate. Additionally, the Network will provide consultations and support to other HELCOM working groups as the potential challenges posed by dumped munitions and other submerged hazardous objects are of cross-sectional concerns.

The mode of work for the Network will be mainly via correspondence and online meetings, with physical meetings being organized as needed. Co-Chairs for the Network will be elected at the first meeting after approval of the Terms of Reference. The products will be handled at HELCOM Meeting Portal workspaces dedicated to this use. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the Network. Prolongation of the mandate for the Network should be considered at the end of the working period based on identified needs.

Annex 3 Draft revised HELCOM Recommendation 12/7

Adopted 20 February 1991,
having regard to Article 13, Paragraph b)
of the Helsinki Convention

SPECIAL COOPERATION IN CASE OF A CHEMICAL TANKER ACCIDENT IN THE BALTIC SEA

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 14 and Annex VII of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992, (Helsinki Convention), concerning cooperation in combatting marine pollution which also covers cooperation in combatting hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) spillages,

RECALLING ALSO the provision of Regulation 10.1 of Annex VII to the Convention, which establishes an information network between the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties,

RECALLING FURTHER that HELCOM Recommendation 31/1 concerning the development of national ability to respond to spillages of oil and other harmful substances establishes common requirements for national ability to combat HNS spillages,

RECOGNIZING that in combatting HNS spillages, special expertise on several fields is needed, and all necessary experts may not be available in each of the Contracting Parties, especially if the accident occurs off the coast of a Contracting Party where the chemical concerned is not used on a large scale,

RECOGNIZING ALSO that disposal of HNS wastes originated from the combatting operation may cause overwhelming difficulties to the third Parties not using that chemical,

RECOGNIZING ALSO need for HNS specific training and exercises on a regular basis. Basic information of HNS behaviour and response possibilities should cover organisations' personnel in required level. HNS knowledge on deeper level should be part of the training for those participating on response operations. These capabilities should be trained and tested both on national and transnational level.

RECOMMENDS that the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention:

- a) develop operational guidelines based on the Marine HNS Response Manual and exercise these procedures regularly on international exercises;
- b) urge relevant national organisations to familiarise and implement the Marine HNS Response Manual content on required level to national guidelines and procedures;
- c) nominate a contact point through which competent authorities of other Contracting Parties can, in emergency situations, without delay get information on the chemicals carried by a tanker from or to a harbour of a Party concerned;
- d) by national measures create as soon as possible but not later than by the end of 1992 an information system which would, in case of a chemical spillage, facilitate access by the competent authorities to data concerning the chemicals carried by the tankers;

e) provide, in accordance with Regulation 8 of Annex VII to the Convention, and within their ability, other Parties with special assistance like experts to respond to chemical spillages, special protective clothing and equipment for combatting personnel, and special instruments for chemical analyses,

RECOMMENDS ALSO that the Governments of the Contracting Parties inform each other of their national facilities where HNS wastes emanating from combatting operations can be treated and disposed of and make all efforts to provide necessary waste treatment possibilities after an accident has occurred off the coast of another Contracting Party,

URGES FURTHER that action taken by the Contracting Parties to implement this Recommendation should be reported to the Commission and its Response Working Group for the first time before 30 May 1993.