



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature  
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION  
3-2015

Helsinki, Finland, 9-13 November, 2015

---

<b>Document title</b>	Extracts from recent HELCOM meetings of relevance for State and Conservation
<b>Code</b>	2J-2
<b>Category</b>	INF
<b>Agenda Item</b>	2 – Matters arising from other meetings of relevance for the Working Group
<b>Submission date</b>	2.11.2015
<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat

---

### Background

This document contains extracts from relevant HELCOM meetings held since the last meeting of the State and Conservation Working group.

1. [HOD 48-2015](#), 10-11 June 2015, Tallinn, Estonia
2. [Biodiversity tool WS 1-2015](#), 15 June 2015, Gothenburg, Sweden
3. [HOLAS II 3-2015](#), 16-17 June 2015, Gothenburg, Sweden
4. [PRESSURE 3-2015](#), 7-9 October, 2015, Copenhagen, Denmark
5. [GEAR IG PoM workshop 1-2015](#), , 28-29 October 2015, Warsaw, Poland
6. [GEAR 12-2015](#), 29-30 October, 2015, Warsaw, Poland

### Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.

## Extracts from recent HELCOM meetings of relevance for the State and Conservation Group

### 1. HOD 48-2015, 10-11 June 2015, Tallinn, Estonia

#### ***Matters arising from the HELCOM Groups***

##### *Marine litter*

- The Meeting considered and endorsed the proposed Annex with regional actions and voluntary national actions as part of HELCOM Recommendation 36-1 “Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML)” (Attachment 1 of document 3-1) as included in **Annex 2** to this Outcome.
- The Meeting agreed on the reporting formats and definitions to the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (Attachment 2 of document 3-1).
- The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to consider leading additional actions in the Annex and requested nomination of national contact points for different actions.
- The Meeting emphasized the role of information exchange between OSPAR and HELCOM to coordinate activities on RAP ML implementation as well as took note of the information by EU regarding the relevant ongoing activities at the European level, including on microplastics.
- The Meeting noted that PRESSURE 3-2015 is planned to devote part of its meeting to marine litter, among other topics, which will be an opportunity to look into the implementation plan for the RAP ML.

##### ***Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (Fish)***

- The Meeting took note of the outcome of the First Meeting of the Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (doc. 3-11) presented by Mr. Marcin Ruciński, Chair of the Fish group, and noted that discussions have progressed on a few topics such as recreational fisheries, in addition to the main issue of finalizing the Recommendation on aquaculture.
- The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties, if they wish so, to provide further input to the work plan of the Group as well as to contribute to scoping of the work of the task force on migratory fish species, and took note of the suggestion by Sweden for the Fish group to enhance cooperation with OSPAR and ICES.
- The Meeting noted that the next meeting of the Group is planned to focus, among others, on by-catch, follow-up of the ICES Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) advice on fisheries intensity, and recreational fisheries.
- The Meeting approved holding the next meeting of the Group (FISH 3-2015) on 26-27 November 2015 in Warsaw, Poland.

##### ***HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture***

- The Meeting considered the proposed new HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture (document 3-18) and proposals by Denmark to the Recommendation (doc. 3-18-Add.1).
- The Meeting decided to set up a drafting group, consisting of Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden and EU, led by the Chair of the Fish group, to discuss and propose solutions to the open issues.
- The Meeting considered the outcome of the drafting group (doc. 3-18-Rev.1), noted that this final version of the Recommendation represents a compromise and balanced proposal and invited the Contracting Parties to confirm their readiness to adopt it at HELCOM 37-2016. The study reservation by all Contracting Parties should be clarified **by 14 August 2015** by notifying the Secretariat ([dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi](mailto:dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi)). The Chair plead the Contracting Parties to make their utmost to lift the study reservation.

##### ***Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (Gear)***

- The Meeting took note of the outcomes of GEAR 10-2015 and GEAR 11-2015 in general (doc. 3-14).

- The Meeting noted that a workshop led by the Intersessional Group on Programmes of Measures (IG PoM) will be held on 28 October 2015 to finalize a proposal on topics in need of further regional coordination of measures and that the outcome will be included in the ‘Joint HELCOM document on regional coordination of Programmes of Measures’ that will be finalized by the end of this year. HELCOM Working Groups have been asked to provide technical input to the list of proposed topics, and Chairs of Working Groups will be invited to the Workshop.
- The Meeting supported the Gear conclusion regarding future HELCOM work on environmental targets to be focused, as a first step, on joint principles for environmental targets related to damage to seafloor.
- The Meeting approved organizing the IG PoM Workshop on 28 October and GEAR 12-2015 on 29-30 October 2015, in Warsaw, Poland.
- The Meeting welcomed the information on the financing opportunity for the Secretariat to apply for a direct grant from the EU to support HOLAS II and agreed that the Secretariat will develop an application to apply for the grant focusing on those components of HOLAS II that have not sufficient resources yet.

#### ***Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (Pressure)***

- The Meeting noted the willingness of a number of Contracting Parties to support the work on HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable handling of sewage sludge.
- The Meeting approved arranging PRESSURE 4-2016 in the period 18-21 April 2016 (in Sweden).
- The Meeting considered the draft assessment on progress towards fulfilment of CART (doc. 3-15) and thanked DCE Denmark and BNI Sweden as well as the Secretariat for this work.
- The Meeting considered the project proposal to operationalize the MAI-CART follow-up assessments (documents 3-3 and 3-29) and agreed on the future operationalization in principle.
- The Meeting agreed on the next update of MAI and CART to be based on data up to 2014 to be able to benefit from some synergies in work under PLC-6.
- The Meeting considered the proposed work plan on preparing a roadmap to building a knowledge base on underwater noise (doc. 3-6).
- The Meeting took note of the information by Russia regarding consideration of the underwater noise issues by IMO, including adoption by MEPC 66 of non-mandatory voluntary guidelines to reduce noise from commercial shipping and that within IMO setting future targets for underwater sound levels emanating from ships was considered premature and difficult to evaluate at that time. The Meeting also took note of the information by Finland that in their view the Baltic Sea countries could in the future provide input to the IMO work through a joint regional approach.
- The Meeting agreed on the work plan, however, decided that it should be amended so the focus should be given first to the work on monitoring, review of existing knowledge and investigating the significance of difference sources of noise as well as HELCOM indicators, while the work on mitigation options and environmental targets should be started with preparing an overview of measures in IMO, OSPAR and other relevant forums. The Meeting requested the roadmap to be presented to Pressure, Maritime and State&Conservation groups with a view of endorsing it at the HOD 49-2015 meeting in December 2015.

#### ***Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri)***

- The Meeting took note of the outcome of the Second Meeting of the Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri) in general (doc. 3-22), and more specifically:
  - noted the considerations by the Group regarding the revision of Part II of Annex III to the Helsinki Convention (paragraph 3.8);
  - approved organizing a workshop on nutrient content in manure on 19-20 November 2015, to be hosted by Finland;
  - approved organizing the next meeting of the Group (AGRI 3-2016) in early April 2016 in Estonia.

#### ***Core indicators***

- Taking note of the study reservations from Denmark and Germany, the Meeting agreed on indicators and GES- boundaries and further development of the set of indicators as contained in **Annex 4** to this Outcome, including their use in HOLAS II assessment according to the recommendation by the Gear

Group (document 3-17), and the publication of agreed core indicator reports at the HELCOM website as they become ready for publishing.

- The Meeting considered and agreed that the further indicator development in HELCOM (doc. 3-13 and 3-21) will be based on a Lead Country approach and appointed national experts and that the development should be taken forward using HELCOM expert groups, projects and networks as a platform for the development of the indicators. The Contracting Parties were invited to inform the Secretariat on their possibility to take on the lead or co-lead in the indicator development and to appoint national experts **by 30 June 2015**, also including any confirmation of the same experts continuation as in CORESET II.
- The Meeting requested HELCOM groups, projects and networks to prioritize their role as platform for development of indicators and providers of support for HELCOM assessments and to make arrangements for the work as necessary. The Meeting noted that to improve communication on a national level, information on the ongoing work and tasks of the groups in HELCOM would be useful.
- The Meeting agreed to establish a new HELCOM expert network on hazardous substances. The Meeting agreed to seek opportunities for cooperation with OSPAR as well as to investigate the possibility for a project related to hazardous substances in cooperation with the EUSBSR PA Hazards.
- The Meeting requested nominations of experts to the hazardous substances network as well as expert contacts on underwater noise and birds and update the list of contacts of HELCOM Groups as indicated in document 3-21.

#### ***Working Group on State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (State and Conservation)***

- The Meeting took note of the outcome of State and Conservation 2-2015 in general (doc. 3-8), and more specifically:
  - noted that the Contracting Parties have been requested to take the lead for developing guidelines for those monitoring programmes that are not covered by existing HELCOM expert groups and projects or leadership;
  - noted the need for developing data arrangements for future updating of core indicators and to support the holistic assessment and supported the steps agreed by State & Conservation to improve data flow in HELCOM;
  - noted that Attachment 4 of the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy will be revised according to the proposed modification of the division of Åland Sea and Western Gotland Basin;
  - noted the progress with establishment of the modernized HELCOM MPA database and encouraged the Contracting Parties to update the information in the database **by 1 September 2015** to cater for the planned analysis of ecological coherence of the MPA network that will be carried out by the end of 2015;
  - agreed that the next meeting of the State and Conservation group will be held on 9-13 November 2015 in Helsinki, Finland.
- The Meeting considered the draft HELCOM Recommendation on conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List (doc. 3-7) that was adopted at HELCOM 36-2015 pending a study reservation by Denmark.
- The Meeting welcomed the offer of the Lead Country Germany to seek a solution together with Denmark and other interested countries and that an amended version of the Recommendation should be presented to State and Conservation 3-2015 with the view of endorsing the Recommendation at HOD 49-2015 for adoption at HELCOM 37-2016.
- The Meeting welcomed the draft HELCOM Recommendation on 'Co-operation and coordination of research vessel based monitoring in off-shore areas and procedures for granting permits for monitoring and research activities' (doc. 3-16).
- The Meeting noted that Denmark and Germany could not provide a national view on the Recommendation at this time and will inform the Secretariat on their position **by 10 July 2015**.
- The Meeting noted that the aim to grant permits to monitoring and research vessels, addressed under paragraph d) of the "Recommends" part, needs further consideration. The Meeting invited the Co-Chair of State and Conservation and the Secretariat to develop paragraph d) with the view of presenting the new proposal at State and Conservation 3-2015 and adoption at HELCOM 37-2016.

### **Maritime Working Group (Maritime)**

- The Meeting endorsed the revisions of the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonized Procedure for BWMC A-4 exemptions (doc. 3-19).
- The Meeting took note of the report of the HELCOM ad hoc Correspondence Group on Ballast Water Management (CG BALLAST) (doc. 3-30). The Meeting took note that the ad hoc Correspondence Group has come to an agreement on the interpretation of the IMO Resolution A.1088(28) and accordingly, no additional measures are needed in the Baltic Sea area before the D-2 regulations will be enforced and there is no need to establish ballast water exchange areas in the Baltic Sea.

### **BSAP follow-up**

- The Meeting considered the follow-up system for HELCOM agreements (doc. 3-27) and noted that actions related to State and Conservation, Pressure and Response Group have already been reviewed and supported by these Working Groups and for other Groups the review has been initiated to be finalized in September 2015.
- The Meeting noted that since it was a late document, the Contracting Parties had not been able to consult the document nationally and it was agreed that comments should be provided to the Secretariat **by 10 September 2015**.
- The Meeting concluded that it would not be possible for the Contracting Parties to accomplish reporting by October 2015 as indicated in the proposed timetable. The Meeting noted that the intention of the proposed timetable has been to use the new follow-up system for producing a status of the implementation of HELCOM commitments for the 'Joint document on regional coordination of Programmes of Measures' and for this purpose it would have to be finalized by March 2016 and would require reporting by the end of 2015 at the latest.
- The Meeting requested the next meeting of the Gear Group to consider the updated proposal based on the comments from Contracting Parties.
- The Meeting stressed the importance of communication of results and noted that the Secretariat will present a proposal for presentation of results to HOD 49-2015.

## 2. Biodiversity tool WS 1-2015, 15 June 2015, Gothenburg, Sweden

- The aim of the workshop was to support the development of a tool for integrating indicator based status assessments with particular reference to biodiversity as defined by the BSAP and the MSFD.
- The overall aims of the HOLAS II biodiversity assessment were presented and discussed. The requirements of a HOLAS II biodiversity assessment tool in order to meet these aims were evaluated and compared to the capacities of existing tools for biodiversity assessment, focusing on the BEAT, the Marmoni and the developing DEVOTES tools. The workshop noted that the existing tools in the Baltic Sea region have strong potential to support the new tool. It was however also seen that none of the tools could be readily available for the HOLAS II use and that development of a HOLAS II tool is required. The workshop noted that the features of the needed tool could be available but that a programmer would be needed to set the tool into testing and operational use.
- The main conclusions from the workshop were summarised as a list of requirements of the HOLAS II biodiversity assessment tool (see [Workshop outcome](#)).

The outcome of the Workshop has been synthesized into a draft guidance for the work to develop a biodiversity assessment tool for use in HOLAS II, which will be presented for further consideration by HOLAS II 4-2015.

## 3. HOLAS II 3-2015, 16-17 June 2015, Gothenburg, Sweden

### **Matters arising from other meetings of relevance to HOLAS II**

- 
- The Meeting took note of the information on a meeting “Cooperation between EEA, OSPAR, HELCOM, UNEP/MAP and Black Sea Commission for the benefit of Regional and European marine assessments’ held in April 2015 at the European Environment Agency. The meeting had its background in MSFD Article 20.3 b, which states that by 2019 the European Commission should make: “a review of the status of the marine environment in the Community, undertaken in coordination with the European Environment Agency and the relevant regional marine and fisheries organisations and conventions”.
  - The Meeting noted the interest of the Contracting Parties to get more clarity about the scope and purposes of the planned European assessment and about the expectations on the coordination involving HELCOM and its Contracting Parties. To this end, the Meeting expressed the wish to establish a cooperation framework that would ensure that the Contracting Parties are kept informed and actively contributing, e.g. to the further identification of commonalities in the regional assessments that could serve a European assessment. The Meeting noted that EEA has been invited to attend the next Gear meeting to communicate about plans and activities on this topic, and agreed to follow the outcome of that meeting and to keep the issues related to the EEA assessment, as far as relevant for HOLAS II, on the agenda of the core group.
  - The Meeting noted that the comparison of the outlines of the HELCOM, OSPAR and EEA assessments, as presented to WG DIKE to be held 19 June 2015, shows a high level of similarities on a heading-level. The Meeting took note of the comment by the EU that WG DIKE will provide a common outline that will build on the HELCOM and OSPAR outline in order provide a more harmonized approach across the assessments of the member states, and that this may lead to adjustments in the further work. However, the Meeting pointed out that this level of analysis does not compare similarities in the technical content, and substantial differences can already be foreseen between the content of the RSC assessments that has been agreed on by the Contracting Parties to the respective RSCs.
  - The Meeting found it necessary to discuss the contents of the assessments as well and was of the view to focus the future cooperation regarding regional and European assessments on few selected topics, in addition to a wider and overall coordination, for which it could be possible to achieve better coherence to be demonstrated through-out regional and European level. Such selected topics could be, for instance, marine litter and underwater noise, and eutrophication.

#### ***Indicators and indicator-based assessments***

- The Meeting took note of the outcome of the adoption of GES boundaries and indicators and the agreement on further development of indicators as agreed at HOD 48-2015 and documented as Annex 4 of the outcome, including links to the most recent versions of the indicator reports, based on the recommendation by GEAR 11-2015 and STATE & CONSERVATION 2-2015.
- The Meeting took note of the recommendation by Gear, agreed by HOD 48-2015, that a coherence check for GES-boundaries will be made within the HOLAS II framework, noting that the practical arrangements for this task still need to be agreed on, and that a review of the use of indicators will be arranged for after the completion of the HOLAS II project. GEAR 11-2015 considered the following aspects:
  - i. application of proposed indicators and the HOLAS II assessment is a learning process and may result in the need for adjustments. In particular, a coherence check of GES boundaries across indicators will be undertaken as part of the HOLAS assessment. The coherence check should be expert-driven and aim at ensuring compatibility between the indicator assessments in the context of the ecosystem.
  - ii. data may not be available from each Contracting Party for each indicator.
  - iii. after the finalization of the HOLAS II project, and in the light of progress in scientific knowledge, MSFD CIS and other relevant policy implementation processes, review of the GES boundaries should be arranged for.

- The Meeting was of the general opinion that the current set of core and pre-core indicators will provide a good basis for the HOLAS II assessment.
- The Meeting was of the view that the further development of indicators should prioritize the development of GES-boundaries for the core indicators currently lacking boundaries and additionally pre-core indicators in those elements and descriptors that lack core indicators with GES boundaries at this time, so that at least one core indicator is available for each element or descriptor, i.e. developing the pre-core indicators for seafloor integrity, noise and litter to a stage of core indicator. Also, the pre-core indicators on phytoplankton could be prioritized to be developed to the level of core within the planned resources.
- The Meeting agreed on the need to prioritise work on the indicators related to the status of benthic biotopes and seafloor integrity, and furthermore noted that the assessments should be coordinated with other relevant assessments.
- The Meeting noted that there are no core indicators proposed for MSFD descriptor 7, and agreed that Contracting Parties will compile information on the national approaches of the 2012 reporting by **15 September 2015** to [lena.bergstrom@helcom.fi](mailto:lana.bergstrom@helcom.fi). The Meeting furthermore noted the views that expertise on the theme is available in Contracting Parties, and that information on man-made constructions and effects on hydromorphology could be included in the report, however noting the general view that the aim is not to strive for any great detail for this theme at this time.
- The Meeting discussed the potential use of indicators in addition to the HELCOM core indicators in the holistic assessment, and was of the general opinion that including national indicators may be problematic and that the HELCOM core indicators are the major basis that the HOLAS II assessment is to be built on, and agreed on the following:
  - i. if national indicators are included they are to complement the set of core indicators and not be conceptually redundant,
  - ii. development of assessment tools will not be carried out with the aim of enabling the use of national indicators,
  - iii. indicators shared by several countries around one sub-basin could be used, currently such indicators have not yet been identified and this issue could be taken forward through bilateral discussions.
- The Meeting agreed to come back to the discussion on including information from national indicators in the next meeting and to continue considering whether national indicator information will be included in the HOLAS II assessment or in the national reports.
- The Meeting was of the opinion that it is important that information on national indicators is transparent and considered whether English fact sheets on national indicators should be developed, invited Sweden to share their national fact sheet as an example and agreed to further consider the use of the fact sheet approach for national indicators in the next meeting.

#### – **Assessment of the Kattegat and the Sound**

- The Meeting took note of the further elaborated proposal by Sweden, supported by Denmark, on the assessment of the Sound and the Kattegat in the Integrated Assessment of OSPAR (document 3-5) as presented by Karl Norling, Sweden (Presentation 4). The two sub-basins are part of the HELCOM area but in the context of the MSFD belong to the Greater North Sea sub-region.
- The Meeting noted the proposal that the Kattegat and Sound assessments would be fully integrated in the North Sea Region assessment of the OSPAR 2017 Intermediate Assessment, but that this assessment should be prepared in such a way that the assessment of these areas can be referred to in the HELCOM HOLAS II assessment.
- The Meeting noted the intention of Denmark and Sweden to use the Kattegat and Sound area as an opportunity of making the OSPAR and HELCOM assessments comparable, and their view that

applying the HELCOM integrative assessment tools in this area will not be appropriate, however it would be possible to complement the common assessment with HELCOM indicators in national assessments.

### **Assessment of pressures**

- The Meeting took note of a first overview of data sets on pressures and human activities available e.g. at the HELCOM map and data service and potential development of new data layers as contained in Table 1 of document 4-1 (**Presentation 6**).
- The Meeting supported that the HELCOM working groups should be involved in preparing pressure layers and that pressure data should be used from verified data sources as far as possible. In the case new data layers need to be compiled, it was proposed that this is done in a structured way, with the use a common reporting format.
- The Meeting tasked the Secretariat to update the table on human activities and pressures, as far as known, with information indicating if the data layer is existing or otherwise planned to be compiled, or if a separate attempt would have to be made for data collection, to guide further prioritization by the Contracting Parties.

#### **– Further development of the HELCOM pressure and impact indices**

- The Meeting took note of the presentation by Ms. Lena Bergström, on the further development of the Baltic Sea pressure and impact indices in HOLAS II (document 4-2, **Presentation 7**).
- The Meeting noted points that could be improved in the impact index compared to the approach used in HOLAS I, including the aspects of the sensitivity scoring, the displayed resolution in relation to point-sources and the selection and integration of the ecosystem components.
- The Meeting agreed that the preferred approach to take the development of pressure- and impact indices further is to organize for support of a group of dedicated experts to take active part.
- The Meeting considered and agreed on the proposed activities in the HOLAS II roadmap (**Annex 3**), including a workshop to support the development of the pressure and impact indices, perform test runs based on available data layers and provide detailed guidance and draft descriptions of the assessments to be carried out preferably in the fourth quarter of 2015.

#### **Further planning of the social and economic component**

- The Meeting noted that a planning meeting for the social and economic component of HOLAS II was held at the HELCOM Secretariat on 13 May 2015 to outline a more detailed plan for the further work, and the proposal that this should focus on developing a conceptual framework for socio-economic analyses, as presented by Ms. Lena Bergström (**Presentation 8**).
- The Meeting took note of the presentation on the more detailed outline of the social and economic work of HOLAS II including the proposed hybrid model that would combine the water accounting approach with the ecosystem services approach within the DPSIR framework, as presented by Ms. Soile Oinonen, Finland (document 5-1, also **Presentation 8**).
- The Meeting agreed to convene a workshop to develop a conceptual framework for carrying out economic analyses, around **30 September - 1 October 2015** (tentatively in Helsinki), and that this workshop should be open to experts on economic analyses and also to experts on status and pressure assessments as well as the HOLAS II core group, and encouraged all Contracting Parties to participate. The outcome of the workshop is to be used in a section in the planned HOLAS II report.
- The Meeting noted that carrying out the assessment using data would require additional work, possibly through an additional workshop.

#### **Update of the roadmap**

- The Meeting considered the Roadmap for the HOLAS II project (document 6-1), and amended it as contained on **Annex 3**.
- The Meeting noted that developing the conceptual issues for hazardous substance assessment has been planned to be initiated in late 2015, and that this issue needs to be considered at the next Core team meeting and invited Contracting Parties to provide input on further development of the CHASE tool **by mid-September 2015**.

#### ***Any other business***

- The Meeting agreed to convene the next meeting of HOLAS II on **24-25 November 2015**, and thanked Germany for the invitation to hold the meeting in Berlin.

#### 4. Pressure 3-2015, 7-9 October 2015, Copenhagen, Denmark

- The Meeting agreed on the need to review and possibly revise the existing HELCOM Recommendation 31E/1 'Implementing HELCOM's objective for hazardous substances', namely the list of priority substances and substances of concern. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Finland to propose some changes to the Recommendation, in particular the List of Priority Hazardous Substances and the List of substances of possible concern in Attachment 2 to the Recommendation by the next Pressure WG meeting.

#### *Emission and deposition of heavy metals and organic pollutants – inputs and measures*

- The Meeting took note of the information presented by Mr. Alexey Gusev (Presentation 2) on EMEP atmospheric supply of lead, cadmium, mercury and PCB-153 to the Baltic Sea in the period from 1990 to 2013 (doc 3-3, att 1, att 2, att 3, att 4, att 5, att 6, att 7, att 8).
- The Meeting noted that emissions of Cd, Pb, Hg and PCB-153 have declined in the HELCOM area during the considered time period, and that emissions are spatially variable, with stationary combustion (i.e. residential combustion), industry and public power being the largest contribution categories. Furthermore the Meeting noted the future aim of EMEP to provide data on emission and deposition with finer spatial resolution 0.1x0.1° instead of the current 50 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The Meeting noted that data on PCDD/Fs, PAHs and PCBs are regularly assessed by EMEP, while PBDEs, HBCDD and PFOS are under consideration for inclusion in the CLTRP Protocol on POPs and currently some data are available for pilot studies, further noting that for HBCDD and PFOS further cooperation with national experts to estimate total emissions is needed to allow for modelling.
- The Meeting noted that several of the reported substances are also included in the HELCOM status core indicators that will be used for HOLAS II with data up till 2015 and noted that the data processing requires 2 years and thus EMEP data from 2015 will be available in 2017. The Meeting furthermore noted that 'near real time' deposition estimates are made in EMEP based on meteorological data and the assumption that recent annual emissions do not vary substantially, based on these data it could be possible to provide some more recent data for HOLAS II.
- The Meeting proposed the following rotating reporting schedule for EMEP: in 2016 EMEP will report on Hg, Cd, PAH and a pilot report on PBDE using 2014 data, and preliminarily in 2017 EMEP will report on Hg, Cd, Pb and a pilot report on PFOS if EMEP receives further input from the Contracting Parties on total emissions to using 2015 data, and agreed on a two-week written procedure to endorse the rotation and substance list by informing the Secretariat ([dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi](mailto:dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi) by 23 October 2015).

*Pharmaceuticals - "Status report on pharmaceuticals in the Baltic Sea region" state of play*

- The Meeting took note of the information presented by Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky on the preparation of the status report on pharmaceuticals (doc. 3-1, Presentation 4) and noted that the Pressure WG can access all reported data through the [dedicated HELCOM workspace](#).
- The Meeting noted that data processing, supported by UNESCO-Sida project, will be completed by November 2015, progress report will be submitted to UNESCO by December 2015 and circulated to the Pressure Group contacts. The final report will be prepared by mid-February 2016.
- The Meeting noted that PA Hazards will organize a stakeholder meeting on 15 December 2015 in Copenhagen to disseminate the results, receive comments from experts and initiate future work.
- The Meeting invited all Contracting Parties to provide existing information about pharmaceutical in the environment, their pathways and sources.

**Sewage sludge handling**

- The Meeting took note of the information presented by Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky on the Draft HELCOM Recommendation on sewage sludge handling (doc. 4-1) and the outcome of the two commenting rounds.
- The Meeting discussed and elaborated on a compromise solution of the main part of the Recommendation and Annex 1 "Guidance for sustainable sewage sludge handling in the Baltic Sea region". Due to the question regarding applicability of Annex 2 "Tentative limit values" for variable requirements of national legislation of the Contracting Parties, the Meeting decided on the need of further expert consultations with the view to consider the issue at PRESSURE 4-2016.
- The Meeting decided that the Secretariat will circulate the elaborated compromise version of the main part of the draft Recommendation and Annex 1 with integrated consolidated comments by Germany by 23 October 2015.

**Implementation of the RAP on Marine Litter**

- The Meeting took note of the information that the Secretariat has established [HELCOM marine litter workspace](#) on the HELCOM website to serve as a working tool for sharing information and progress of work on the ML RAP. The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties as well as Observers to use the workspace, following an example of Sweden who already uploaded their information to the workspace (doc. 5-9).
- The Meeting took note of the information by Sweden on two measures that are planned nationally related to RL1 on the inclusion of marine litter references in national and local waste prevention and waste management plans. The Meeting was also informed about a Swedish and an OSPAR report on best available techniques to reduce and prevent sewage and storm-water related waste entering the marine environment, including micro particles, as well as reports on best practices for waste management within the fishing sector, both to be ready during 2016, which could then be considered regarding the applicability in the Baltic Sea for actions RL7 and RS5 (doc. 5-10).
- The Meeting welcomed the offer by Estonia to lead actions RL 11 on deposit refund systems and RL 14 on landfills or dumpsites and noted that a first possible step to start up these actions could be a survey to the Contracting Parties to be initiated by Estonia in cooperation with the HELCOM Secretariat.
- The Meeting took note of the following further information on specific actions within the RAP on Marine Litter:
  - Finland is offering to co-lead microliter indicator development,
  - Sweden is willing to contribute to RL1 and RL4 if a lead country for those actions could be identified.

- The Meeting took note of the information on the ‘Blastic project – plastic pathways from land to sea’, funded by the Central Baltic Programme, which will run 2016-2018, as presented by Keep Sweden Tidy. The project has the potential to contribute to actions of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter RL1, RL4, RL6, RL2, RL3 and RL8 (doc. 5-12, Presentation 5).
- The Meeting took note of and considered the state of play of the ‘Removal of derelict fishing gear, lost or discarded by fishermen in the Baltic Sea’ project presented by WWF Poland, co-lead for actions RS6 and RS7 from RAP ML (doc. 5-11, Presentation 6) and welcomed the information that there is a plan to continue the activities with involvement of a larger number of the countries within a new project.
- The Meeting took note of the outcome the informal meeting on cooperation between Regional Seas Conventions in Europe regarding implementation of the activities related to marine litter of common interest, held on 18 September 2015 in Paris, attended by the HELCOM Secretariat and Germany (doc. 5-5). The Meeting invited Sweden and Denmark, being members to both HELCOM and OSPAR, to join the initiative. The Meeting noted that the next meeting of the initiative is planned for May 2016, to be possibly hosted by Spain and agreed that the Contracting Parties will be approached by the Secretariat with a request to contribute to the updating of the overview of the activities on marine litter in RSCs (table 2 of doc. 5-5) prior to the meeting.
- The Meeting took note of the information by ICES on the ongoing OSPAR work that could provide points of collaboration for HELCOM work to develop standardized monitoring and assessment protocols for marine litter. Particularly, ICES highlighted the ICES advice to OSPAR on the development of a common monitoring protocol for plastic particles in fish stomach and selected shellfish on the basis of existing fish disease surveys, ICES advice:
- Furthermore, ICES informed the Meeting of an upcoming OSPAR marine litter data call (contacts: Thomas Maes and John Mouat), “OSPAR Data call: Seabed litter data collected during fisheries trawl surveys from 2012 until 2014 for the OSPAR area”. ICES will manage the data via existing database systems, i.e. DATRAS. There will be no changes to DATRAS, but litter data collected during a trawl survey will be stored and connected to the DATRAS database. The DATRAS Unique key information will be used to link litter data to the DATRAS haul data to ensure a streamlined reporting process. The data will by default be available through the ICES Data Portal on the ICES website <http://ecosystemdata.ices.dk/>.
- The Meeting considered (doc. 5-4) and agreed on the revised Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Network on Marine Litter (Annex 2 to the Outcome). The Meeting agreed that the Terms of Reference may be amended in the future as work progresses, and noted it will be presented to the next meeting of the State and Conservation WG.
- The Meeting discussed the aims and desired outcomes of the Marine Litter Stakeholder Conference to take place on 9 March 2016 in Helsinki, back-to-back with the 37th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission (10-11 March 2016) (doc. 5-6). The Meeting invited the Secretariat to develop further the contents and programme of the Conference, taking into account feedback and suggestions provided during the Meeting.

### **Underwater noise**

- The Meeting considered the draft Regional Baltic Underwater Noise Roadmap (doc. 6-6) and developed it further according to the discussions in the Meeting (doc. 6-6-Rev.1). The Meeting noted that the draft roadmap will be presented to the 1st Workshop of the HELCOM Intersessional Group for Programmes of Measures (28 October 2015, Warsaw) and further considered at STATE&CONSERVATION 3-2015 (9-13 November 2015). These meetings present an opportunity to provide further feedback the Contracting Parties and Observers may have. According to the work plan, the final draft roadmap will be submitted to HOD 49-2015 (10-11 December 2015) for approval decision.

### *Ambient noise*

- The Meeting took note of the progress within BIAS project (Baltic Sea Information on the Acoustic Soundscape) and considered the proposed next steps in the development of the pre-core indicator

'Continuous low frequency anthropogenic sound' presented by the lead countries for the indicator, Sweden and Finland (doc. 6-7, Presentation 7).

- The Meeting agreed on the following next steps to take the indicator work forward:
  - present the monitoring guidelines developed in BIAS to State&Conservation 3-2015 for consideration by the Contracting Parties to conclude if this could be a HELCOM common monitoring guideline, as well as to discuss the network of monitoring stations from a regional perspective;
  - develop the assessment protocol of the indicator based on the monitoring data (measurements and models) of the BIAS project,
  - prepare a plan for establishing GES-boundary.
- The Meeting agreed that it is realistic to aim at presenting the further developed indicator for agreement as a core indicator by HELCOM HOD at the end of December 2016. However, the Meeting noted that, due to the fact that data is only available for a short time, the GES-boundary might at this time only be presented on a conceptual level.

#### *Impulsive noise*

- The Meeting noted the information about the OSPAR and ICES work on 'Establishing a register of the occurrence of impulsive sound – OSPAR experiences' (doc. 4-4).
- The Meeting noted the guidance provided by State&Conservation 2-2015 that the continued development of the candidate core indicator 'Distribution in time and place of loud low- and mid-frequency impulsive sound' is to be taken forward closely linked to further development of a regional registry and that developing such a regional registry was considered important.
- The Meeting noted that the development of the assessment protocol of the candidate indicator will be tied to the parameters defined in the registry, and agreed that parameters as recommended by TG Noise to be the basis for the OSPAR register at ICES should form the basis for the indicator assessment protocol.
- The Meeting invited Germany to consider leading the continued development of the candidate indicator linked to the regional registry. Germany confirmed that they can take up the leading role and would welcome the contribution from Sweden.
- The Meeting agreed that HELCOM should join the regional registry of impulsive noise developed by OSPAR and ICES, keeping in mind that technical details need to be solved during 2016.
- The Meeting agreed that the Contracting Parties provide an initial indication of when data could be made available to the registry and to also provide information on the expected time delay in reporting data. The Meeting welcomed the offer by ICES to organize a virtual meeting with EN-Noise experts and ICES technical staff, where it could be possible to jointly formulate a joint data call and agreed to come back to the timing tentatively scheduled for the second half of November.

#### *Marine sediment extraction and dredging and depositing*

- The Meeting took note of the information presented by the Secretariat on HELCOM Recommendation 19/1 on marine sediment extraction in the Baltic Sea area (doc. 7-2).
- The Meeting noted that the reporting frequency of three years as defined in Recommendation 19/1 has not yielded any reporting, and furthermore that the reporting format does not contain specifications for appropriate GIS information. Further, the Meeting was not certain about a possible overlap of this Recommendation with the requirements for reporting on dredging activities.
- The Meeting decided to come back to the issue of a possible revision of Recommendation 19/1 and improvements to the reporting format at the next meeting, noting that the reporting of the data is very important for the second holistic assessment to allow for inclusion of the data in the assessments and needs to be addressed first.

#### **Nutrient input assessment**

- The Meeting took note of the information by Chair of RedCore DG on the following (Presentation 9):
  - procedures on elaboration of the PLC products will be finalized and submitted to PRESSURE 4-2016;
  - PLC 6 final report will be concentrated on source apportionment, evaluation of measures, CART and MAI assessment and riverine input of heavy metals. The final report will be finalized by the first part of 2017 while the data will be available for HOLAS II by October-November 2016;
  - PLC Guidelines were finalized just before the last summer and will be uploaded to the HELCOM website in two weeks;
  - PLUS project is in progress, in particular, database was finalised and the transfer of data from old to new database was successfully completed except some specific data which are not critical for the assessment, QA 1 and 2 have been completed and put into operation, the procedures work automatically at the moment and are available for the Contracting Parties to use while reporting through the reporting template;
- The Meeting was informed that the detailed working plan of RedCore DG has been elaborated. The main points of the plan are: to finalize revised Recommendations on monitoring of water- and airborne input of pollutants, further elaboration of the PLC procedures, uploading and assure quality of the data 2014, further work with PLC 6 and PLUS, to kick off new project on operationalization of nutrient input assessment.
- The Meeting decided that the RedCore DG will further elaborate suggestions for visualization of the follow-up implementation of nutrient reduction scheme and present the suggestion to PRESSURE 4-2016 and invited the Contracting Parties to provide the suggestions regarding data visualization to the Secretariat ([dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi](mailto:dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi)).

#### Future work and meetings

- The Meeting welcomed the invitation by Sweden to host the PRESSURE 4-2016 meeting in Gothenburg on 19 - 21 April 2016.
- The Meeting suggested to arrange PRESSURE 5-2016 on 24-28 October 2016. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to consider the opportunity to host the meeting.

#### 5. Memo from the First Workshop of the HELCOM Intersessional Group for Programmes of Measures (GEAR IG PoM WS 1-2015), 28-29 October, 2015, Warsaw Poland

The First Workshop of the HELCOM Intersessional Group on Programmes of Measures ([GEAR IG PoM WS 1-2015](#)) was held on 28 October 2015 in Warsaw, Poland, at the premises of National Water Management Authority office.

The aim of the Workshop is detailed in its [Terms of Reference for the Workshop](#), and could be summarised as finalizing the proposal on topics for future regional coordination (“Actions still needed”) in the [Joint document on programmes of measures](#) (the Joint document). Proposals for forward-looking actions should build on already agreed plans and proposals and aim at their specification and substantiation.

The Meeting split into two break-out groups which met in parallel, and dealt with the following topics of Chapter 4 of the Joint document:

**Break-out group 1:** Inputs of nutrients and organic matter, Inputs of synthetic and non-synthetic contaminants and systematic and/or intentional releases of substances, Accidental pollution from maritime activities, Introduction of non-indigenous species, Input of litter, Inputs of energy including underwater noise.

**Break-out group 2:** Spatial protection measures, Conservation, restoration and reintroduction of species, Physical loss and damage to the seafloor, Selective extraction and incidental by-catch of species.

## Plenary session

The Meeting took note of the reports from the break-out groups as introduced by lead countries, discussed and agreed to submit the version of the “Actions still needed” as updated at the IG PoM meeting and as contained in **Annex 4** for consideration by GEAR 12-2015. The Meeting noted that the action ‘*Activities to support implementation of draft HELCOM Recommendation [X/X] on Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List*’ is a planned follow-up to the Recommendation on which Denmark has a study reservation.

The Meeting noted the proposal from break-out group 2 that the development of Baltic wide management plan for eel may be considered as a new activity in HELCOM in the light of inclusion of eel in annex 2 of the Convention on migratory species. Workshop participants were of the view that this issue is a separate track of work and would need to be further explored through appropriate working groups in HELCOM.

## Next steps

The following consideration by HELCOM Working Groups will take place:

- State and Conservation 3-2015 to consider the updated proposals for new actions originating from the working group (9-13 November).
- Poland will submit proposed new actions related to by-catch to the Fish Group to be considered at their upcoming meeting 25-26 November. Fish Group will be invited to provide feed-back to HOD 49-2015.
- The Secretariat to make a template of the proposal ‘Developing a regional risk assessment model, for use by all Contracting Parties and to allow for more frequent, flexible and less-resource intensive assessment of risks of accidents (possibly in cooperation with other Regional Seas Conventions)’ to be submitted to MARITIME 15-2015 (23-25 November) and simultaneously submit it to HOD 49-2015. Maritime will be invited to provide feed-back to HOD 49-2015.

## 6. GEAR 12-2015, 29-30 October 2015, Warsaw, Poland

### Programmes of Measures – Joint session with IG PoM

- The Meeting took note of the information on progress on regional coordination of measures as well as of the outcome of the Workshop of the HELCOM Intersessional Group for Programmes of Measures (GEAR IG PoM WS 1-2015) as informed by the Chair of IG PoM (**document 3-3** and **document 3-4, Presentation 1**).
- The Meeting noted that 15 ‘actions still needed’ were proposed as the result of the coordination efforts relating to national PoMs and the contribution from HELCOM Working Groups and the IG PoM workshop.
- The Meeting recognized that the proposed ‘actions still needed’ are in many cases already reflected in the existing work plans of HELCOM Working Groups and that the intensified coordinating process that has taken place in the past year, under the Gear Group and with the contribution from HELCOM Working Groups, has made it possible to detail needed activities and propose how they could be taken forward in HELCOM. The ‘Joint documentation on regional coordination of Programmes of Measures’ is reflecting this process.
- The Meeting agreed on the following recommendation to HOD 49-2015 regarding the Joint documentation:

- To recognise the coordination undertaken by the Contracting Parties in relation to their Programmes of Measures and note that this process is reflected in the draft “Joint documentation of the regional coordination of the Programme of Measures”,
- To consider a proposal for four initiatives which have emerged from the Gear coordination effort and are not yet reflected in HELCOM work as contained in Outcome of the IG PoM WS 1-2015 (document 3-4) and decide as appropriate,
- To endorse the “Joint documentation of the regional coordination of the Programme of Measures” bearing in mind that Contracting Parties being EU Member States are invited to agree to make use of it when reporting their national Programme of Measures under Art. 13 of MSFD in order to communicate regional coordination efforts,
- To request the Gear working group to follow up finalization of national PoMs with a view to updating of the Joint documentation as may be needed by 28 February 2016 at the latest.

#### ***Follow-up system for HELCOM agreements***

- The Meeting recalled that GEAR 8-2014 considered the proposed revision of the BSAP follow-up system and endorsed the further development by the Secretariat of the system. The structure and substance of the follow-up system for HELCOM agreements have been reviewed by HELCOM Working Groups during 2015 (for Maritime group planned in their upcoming meeting) and was subsequently considered by HOD 48-2015. HOD 48-2015 requested the next meeting of the Gear Group to consider the proposal and stressed the importance of communication of results.
- The Meeting took note of the presentation of the further developed follow-up system for HELCOM agreements made by the Secretariat (**document 3-1, Presentation 2**). The system is to cover agreements under the Baltic Sea Action Plan and 2010 and 2013 Ministerial Declarations as well as HELCOM Recommendations adopted since the BSAP. The aim is to create an implementation database with web-based presentation of results.
- The Meeting discussed the presented evaluation system for follow-up of HELCOM agreements noting that the resulting presentation of results will provide a useful communication tool for the implementation of agreed actions. The Meeting was of the view that a more in depth assessment of effectiveness of measures as the next step of the follow up system, previously presented to GEAR 8-2015 and HOD 47-2014, is desired in principle.
- The Meeting noted that through the BalticBOOST project resources are available for the further development of the system by March 2016 and supported the further development of the system.
- The Meeting considered the timetable for finalizing the next assessment of HELCOM agreements and concluded that several Contracting Parties were not able to commit to reporting national implementation of actions by mid-February 2016 as proposed by the Secretariat.
- Gear recommended the following regarding the follow-up system:
  - the Secretariat will test the follow-up system for regional level actions and prepare a test case of national level actions based on data already reported, e.g. to the HELCOM MPA database, for presentation for HOD 49-2015;
  - Contracting Parties are invited to provide feedback at HOD 49-2015 regarding the suitability of the follow-up system to serve different purposes in the short- and long-term perspective (e.g. HOLAS II) and including national expectations on its primary use, considering e.g. internal HELCOM management purposes, transparency towards the general public, as a communication tool;
  - for deciding on a timetable for reporting of national actions a step wise approach having national resources in mind can be considered:
    - I. BSAP and Ministerial Declarations agreements implemented at:
      - regional level

- national level

## II. HELCOM Recommendations.

### Activities of relevant HELCOM projects and processes

- The Meeting took note of the progress of the EUTRO-OPER project (**document 4.3**) and congratulated EUTRO-OPER team for the work conducted, in particular the data flow arrangement and development of the eutrophication manual. The Meeting appreciated that the eutrophication manual will be published separately from the planned reporting of test assessments carried out in the EUTRO-OPER project.
- The Meeting regretted that the calculation of the oxygen debt indicator developed in the TARGREV project is not compatible with the data flow arrangement for eutrophication assessments. The Meeting encouraged the Secretariat to find a solution for the long-term use of the oxygen debt indicator in HELCOM assessments.
- The Meeting took note of the progress in preparation of the 2nd HELCOM holistic assessment of the ecosystem health of the Baltic Sea as presented by the Project coordinator (**document 4.1** and **Presentation 5**).
- The Meeting took note of the ongoing development of the ESA framework in HOLAS II and that its development is a precondition for addressing social and economic consequences in the 2nd HELCOM holistic assessment. The Meeting noted that the extent of the ESA component in the holistic assessment report is still to be decided, noting that the HOLAS II core team has proposed that the presentation of status of and pressures on the Baltic Sea should be the major components of the assessment report. The Meeting recognized the importance to increasingly cover ESA in HELCOM assessments.
- The Meeting acknowledged that the HELCOM Baltic Sea Impact Index (BSII) is not currently directly linked to the assessment of GES and core indicators, although the classifications of elements in both assessments can likely be aligned, e.g. based on MSFD CIS guidance documents.
- The Meeting discussed the proposed time plan for preparing the first version of the 2<sup>nd</sup> holistic assessment by mid-2017 and the necessary time required for national consultation of the report (Annex 2 of document 4-1).
- The Meeting noted that the preparation of the first version of the assessment report by mid-2017 seems to suit the national time-tables, but also raised concern that due to the length of national consultation periods and national decision making processes it may be difficult to finalize the assessment report in time for the required MSFD reporting by October 2018.
- The Meeting recognized the need to agree as soon as possible on the content and extent of the first version of the holistic assessment and to clarify the national consultation processes. The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat will circulate a questionnaire to the Contracting Parties requesting information e.g. on the length of national consultation process including the time expected for consideration of national comments, the legal requirement for national consultations, proposals on what should/needs to be included in the first version of the assessment report that goes for national consultation, and the national view on a potential role of a regional consultation process. Based on the received information, further consideration can be given to the need and options for adjusting national procedures and, if appropriate, to consider options for regional consultation. The Meeting underlined the importance of all Contracting Parties providing their national responses to the questionnaire and agreed to consider the issue at the next meeting of Gear.

### Upcoming and emerging issues

- The Meeting took note of the presentation of ongoing work of the European Environment Agency by Ms. Trine Christiansen (**Presentation 6**) and specifically the plans for a European marine assessment under MSFD Article 20.3 b (document 5-1).

- The Meeting discussed the scope and purposes of the EEA in 2019 in view of the requirement of Article 20.3 b and national obligations and RSCS “roof reports” under Art. 8. The Meeting took note that the intention of the EEA is to document where marine regions are regarding achieving GES.
- The Meeting noted that EEA has compiled a list of indicators in marine regions with the view of using the list as a basis for selecting indicators for the European marine assessment. The drafting of the European assessment is planned to begin in 2017, a final draft to be prepared by 2018, and an update of the assessment will be made in 2019 as possible based on the Article 8 reporting.
- The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide their views on the European marine assessment as presented to the meeting and how the cooperation between EEA and HELCOM can be structured, taking into account the tentative resources needed for such cooperation.

#### **Future work and any other business**

- The Meeting agreed to organize the next meeting of the GEAR group on 10-11 February 2016, and invited offers for hosting the meeting.