



Outcome of the 16th Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 16-2020)

Introduction

- 0.1 The 16th Meeting of the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR 16-2020) was held as an online meeting on 22 September 2020. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Hugo Nijkamp, Sea Alarm and Chair of EWG OWR.
- 0.2 The Meeting was attended by representatives from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany and Latvia and Observers from Sea Alarm and WWF. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 1**.
- 0.3 Ms. Laura Meski, Assisting Professional Secretary, acted as secretary of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Documents: 1-1

- 1.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda as contained in document 1-1.
- 1.2 The Meeting underlined the importance of having all Contracting Parties attending the meetings for the Group to be able to fulfil its task to strengthen the cooperation between the Contracting Parties in the field of oiled wildlife response (OWR).

Agenda Item 2 Matters arising from other HELCOM activities

Documents: 2-1, 2-2, 2-3

- 2.1 The Meeting took note of the Terms of Reference 2019-2021 for EWG OWR adopted by HOD 58-2020 (document 2-1).
- 2.2 The Meeting took note that HELCOM BALEX DELTA 2020 was held on 26 August 2020 as a response operation exercise at sea hosted by Estonia. The planned observer programme did not take place due to COVID-19. A local shore response exercise (scenario) was organized with Estonian volunteers as part of BALEX DELTA 2020.
- 2.3 The Meeting further noted that BALEX DELTA 2021 will be hosted by Finland in end of August 2021 (week 34). The Main Planning Conference of BALEX DELTA 2021 is planned for January 2021. Kymenlaakso Rescue Department is responsible for planning and conducting the on shore exercise and possible OWR part of the exercise. The Finnish Border Guard is responsible for the exercise at sea.
- 2.4 The Meeting took note of the concern by WWF Finland that the Finnish national OWR plan has still not been formalized, which will have an impact on what can be trained during BALEX DELTA 2021.
- 2.5 Sea Alarm and WWF Finland will look into possibilities to incorporate EUROWA (EUROpean Oiled Wildlife Assistance) in BALEX DELTA 2021.
- 2.6 The Meeting took note of the Outcome of the HELCOM BSAP UP Workshop on maritime activities, including underwater noise, non-indigenous species and response actions (BSAP UP WS-SEA) held

online on 2-4 September 2020 to evaluate the synopses relevant for the Maritime and Response Working Groups (document 2-3).

2.7 The Meeting agreed to propose two additional actions for the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), 1) on converting data on densities of species into a format that is useful from an oil response perspective, which provide a cross linkage between HELCOM groups (biodiversity – oil response) and 2) on how the EUROWA network and its standards will benefit the Baltic Sea and what kind of programme is required for building EUROWA infrastructure into national and regional preparedness.

2.8 The Meeting welcomed the offer by the Chair, WWF Finland and Finland to draft the proposals on new actions using the template for synopsis and to circulate them to EWG OWR for comments at the latest **by 8 October 2020** with the view to have them submitted to RESPONSE 28-2020 by 12 October 2020.

2.9 The Meeting took note of Chapter 7. Co-operation in Oiled Wildlife Response in the revised HELCOM Response Manual (document 2-2), welcomed the offer by the Chair to rewrite the chapter to include mutual assistance arrangements for wildlife response in the Manual and to circulate it to EWG OWR for comments at the latest **by 8 October 2020** after which it will be submitted to RESPONSE 28-2020.

Agenda Item 3 Update and planning/preparedness in Contracting Parties

3.1 The Meeting took note of the following national OWR planning and preparedness activities which have taken place since the last meeting:

- Denmark: A new date has not yet been set for the exercise which was to be held in April 2020 but was cancelled due to COVID-19. These kind of exercises between two Police districts, which are responsible for local accidents, have previously been organized twice a year.

A management plan for marine mammals (in case of emergency including marine mammals) is expected to be ready by end of 2020.

- Estonia: The work on revising the OWR plan will start. The overall response plan is outdated but the new one is still not in force, which is causing some confusion.

An agreement has been prepared (to be signed in October 2020) between the Ministry of Environment and the Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF) for financing activities from 2022 onwards. Funding for ELF in 2021 is secured from other source.

The ongoing Interreg OIL SPILL project (<https://blogit.utu.fi/oilspill/>) has been extended until end of 2021 due to COVID -19. An overview on the status of oil spill response preparedness in the project partner countries will be published shortly. A project conference/seminar will be arranged, possibly virtually, and could involve EWG OWR.

- Finland: National legislation on OWR is still pending and the responsibilities are still unclear between the Borders Guard and the Finnish Environment Institute (Syke) since the organizational changes in the oil response administration in 2018. The OWR plan has not been officially approved but a meeting on the plan will be held later in the autumn 2020.

WWF has held some online trainings for volunteers, but all other trainings have been cancelled due to COVID -19. WWF will likely not get funded in the future by the Finnish Oil Pollution Compensation Fund.

- Germany: The common plan on OWR has been redrafted to make it more understandable/user-friendly during incidents and will be sent to the Federal States for agreement. The common OWR plan will also include prospects of cooperation between NGOs and Authorities
- Latvia: The national OWR plan is ready for adoption by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development by the end of 2020. The plan will list NGOs which will be responsible for volunteers. A new civil protection plan has been adopted.

Poland: WWF Poland is encouraging the voivodeships to specify OWR in their crisis management and civil protection contingency plans concerning for example responsibilities.

Agenda Item 4**EWG OWR activities**

Documents: 4-1-Rev.1, 4-2, 4-3

4.1 The Meeting considered the draft EWG OWR report (document 4-1-Rev.1) and agreed on the following steps for finalizing the report for submission to RESPONSE 28-2020:

- The Chair will write the introduction and conclusions of the report by the end of week 40;
- Denmark, Estonia and Poland will update information from 2017 on OWR activities by end of week 39;
- The Secretariat will resend the request to Lithuania, Russia and Sweden to provide information on the OWR activities according to the agreed template by EWG OWR 9-2017 by end of week 40;
- Finland will assess their current level of preparedness of OWR using the Self-assessment Tool (SAT) version 2 by end of week 39;
- The Secretariat will send a request to Lithuania and Russia to assess their current level of preparedness of OWR using SAT 2.0 by end of week 40
- Sea Alarm will check the correctness of the graphical expressions of the SAT as requested by Germany;

4.2 The Meeting further agreed to have the tables developed by EWG OWR on authority responsibilities, NGO-authority relationships and equipment stockpiles (tables available in the restricted EWG OWR workspace) included in the report with some adjustments discussed by the Meeting.

4.3 The Meeting took note that the Sea Alarm is looking into technical solutions for having the SAT as an online tool. An important aspect will be to ensure that only the correct authority is filling in the information. The online SAT will allow for creating regional averages on OWR preparedness.

4.4 The Meeting took note of the presentation on the EU funded EUROWA (EUROpean Oiled Wildlife Assistance)-2 project activities and other EUROWA Network activities (document 4-2, document 4-3, **Presentation 1**).

Agenda Item 5**Training and information activities to support work of EWG OWR**

5.1 The Meeting took note that a report on the online seminar on early incident response in crossborder wildlife incidents, held on 15 September 2020, will be circulated shortly to EWG OWR. The Meeting requested that the recording from the seminar will be made available as well. The Meeting thanked Germany and Sea Alarm for organizing the very useful seminar and Danish and German representatives for being the players in the incident scenario.

5.2 The Meeting encouraged other Contracting Parties to do similar crossborder table top exercises.

5.3 The Meeting recalled that EWG OWR 15-2020 agreed to arrange a half-day online seminar on euthanasia to discuss challenges and solutions based on scenarios and agreed that the seminar will be held on 19 January 2021.

5.4 The Meeting discussed the programme for the seminar, took note that the draft programme will be circulated shortly by Sea Alarm to EWG OWR for comments and welcomed the offer from Denmark to take care of one presentation at the seminar. Sea Alarm will make arrangements with other speakers, and also consider inviting a speaker from Sweden to the seminar if appropriate, as suggested by Germany.

5.5 The Meeting considered extending the invitation also beyond the Baltic Sea but was of the opinion that the focus should be on the Baltic Sea countries but that the invitations should be extended to veterinarians, animal welfare specialists etc.

5.6 The Meeting recognized that one topic for the seminar could be on who is legalized for conducting euthanasia as it varies between countries. In Denmark it is hunters while in Germany it is a legal requirement to have veterinarians involved.

Agenda Item 6

Any other business

Documents: 6-1-Rev.1

6.1 The Meeting took note of the list of contact persons for EWG OWR (document 6-1-Rev.1) as found in **Annex 2**. Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Secretariat (laura.meski@helcom.fi) on changes to contact persons for EWG OWR.

6.2 The Meeting agreed to discuss at the next meeting the need to include phone numbers and other relevant contact details in the list of contacts for EWG OWR and possibly in the table on authorities for quick access in case of an incident.

Agenda Item 7

Next meeting

7.1 The Meeting decided that the next meeting of the Group, EWG OWR 17-2021, will be held on 9 February 2020 as an online meeting.

Agenda Item 8

Outcome of the Meeting

8.1 The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of the Meeting via correspondence.

8.2 The final Outcome of the Meeting has been finalized by the Secretariat and made available on the EWG OWR 16-2020 [Meeting Site](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal together with meeting documents and the presentation considered during the Meeting.

Annex 1 List of participants

Representing	Name	Organisation	Email address	Phone number
Chair	Hugo Nijkamp	Sea Alarm Foundation	nijkamp@sea-alarm.org	
Denmark	Caroline Mikkelsen	Ministry of Environment and Food Protection	cvmik@mst.dk	+4521774041
Estonia	Agni Kaldma	Ministry of Environment	agni.kaldma@envir.ee	+3725265815
Finland	Pekka Rusanen	Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)	pekka.rusanen@ymparisto.fi	+358 400 148 691
Germany	Uda Tuent	Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME)	utuent@havariekommando.de	+494931-947-192
Germany	Tobias Zisenis	Schleswig-Holstein Agency for Coastal Defence, National Park and Marine Conservation	tobias.zisenis@lkn.landsh.de	+494317026137
Latvia	Laura Mazmaca	State Environmental Service	laura.mazmaca@vvd.gov.lv	+37129544526
Observer	Saskia Sessions-Puplett	Sea Alarm Foundation	saskia@sea-alarm.org	
Observer	Vanessa Ryan	WWF Finland	vanessa.ryan@wwf.fi	
Observer	Jadwiga Moczarska	WWF Poland	jmoczarska@wwf.pl	+48609708184
Observer	Magdalena Zadrąg	WWF Poland	mzadrag@wwf.pl	
HELCOM	Laura Meski	HELCOM Secretariat	laura.meski@helcom.fi	+358408201725

Annex 2 Contacts of HELCOM Expert Working Group on Oiled Wildlife Response (EWG OWR)

Representing	Name	Organization	E-mail address
Chair	Hugo Nijkamp	Sea Alarm	nijkamp@sea-alarm.org
Denmark	Caroline Mikkelsen	Miljøstyrelsen	cvmik@mst.dk
Estonia	Agni Kaldma	Ministry of the Environment	agni.kaldma@envir.ee
Estonia	Teet Koitjärv	Environmental Board	teet.koitjarv@keskkonnaamet.ee
Finland	Pekka Rusanen	Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)	pekka.rusanen@ymparisto.fi
Germany	Tobias Zisenis	Schleswig-Holstein Agency for Coastal Defence, National Park and Marine Conservation	Tobias.Zisenis@lkn.landsh.de
Germany	Uda Tuente	Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME)	UTuente@havariekommando.de
Latvia	Laura Mazmača	State Environmental Service	laura.mazmaca@vvd.gov.lv
Lithuania	Ignas Kazlauskas	Lithuania see museum	i.kazlauskas@muziejus.lt
Poland	Małgorzata Korczak	General Directorate for Environmental Protection	malgorzata.korczak@gdos.gov.pl
Russia	Ivan Agarevsky	FBI "Marine Rescue Service of Rosmorrechflot" Oil Spill Response Department	agarevskyiv@morspas.com
Russia	Andrey Bryksin	FBI "Marine Rescue Service of Rosmorrechflot"	
Russia	Natalia Kutaeva	FBI "Marine Rescue Service of Rosmorrechflot"	kutaevang@morspas.com
Russia	Nikolay Tarantin	FBI "Marine Rescue Service of Rosmorrechflot" Oil Spill Response Department	tarantina@morspas.com
Russia	Valeriy Rulev	FBI "Marine Rescue Service of Rosmorrechflot" Oil Spill Response Department	rulevvg@morspas.com
Sweden	Nils Mårtenson	Swedish Environment Protection Agency	nils.martenson@naturvardsverket.se
Observer	Saskia Sessions-Puplett	Sea Alarm	saskia@sea-alarm.org
Observer	Vanessa Ryan	WWF Finland	vanessa.ryan@wwf.fi
Observer	Anna Soirinsuo	WWF Finland	anna.soirinsuo@wwf.fi
Observer	Maria Jujka-Radziejewicz (maternity leave)	WWF Poland	mradziejewicz@wwf.pl
Observer	Rafał Jankowski	WWF Poland	rjankowski@wwf.pl
Observer	Jadwiga Moczarska	WWF Poland	jmoczarska@wwf.pl
Observer	Magdalena Zadrąg	WWF Poland	mzadrag@wwf.pl