



MEDIA RELEASE

“Baltic Sea – NECA” completed with success

Technology for less nitrogen emissions from ships in the Baltic Sea discussed in HELCOM Conference

5 March 2013, Helsinki Finland – HELCOM Stakeholder Conference [“Baltic Sea – NECA”](#) yesterday shed further light on the implementation of the Baltic Sea NECA - Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) Emission Control Area (ECA) – under Annex VI of the [MARPOL Convention](#). The speakers and participants represented ship owners, operators and ports of the HELCOM member countries, manufacturers of related technology, other stakeholders as well as national representatives.

Key topics in the [Conference agenda](#) included the environmental effects of Baltic NECA; compliance options and technology; as well as estimations and practical experiences of the Baltic NECA and shipping. The technological options highlighted at the event, with the potential to meet the stricter NOx emission limits of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) – so-called Tier III – include catalytic converters (SCR), Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR), and alternative fuels, including Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

Reducing NOx emissions in the Baltic Sea is a way for the shipping industry to join forces with municipal wastewater treatment and other measures on land in reducing nutrient pollution, or eutrophication, of the Baltic Sea. The Conference provided an opportunity to bring different stakeholders together and seek for the best ways forward.

The IMO has already limited NOx emissions from marine traffic under MARPOL Annex VI as part of the “North American ECA”, which came into effect from 1 August 2012. The North American ECA will bring, in 2016, stricter controls on emissions of SOx, NOx and particulate matter for ships trading off the coasts of Canada, the United States and the French overseas collectivity of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. The US Coast Guard representatives provided information on the implementation of the North American ECA to the Conference audience.

In the Baltic Sea the NECA status on NOx would complement the existing SECA on Sulphur Oxides SOx, both regulated under the same Annex VI of the IMO MARPOL Convention. While SOx contributes to acidification on land and has health effects, NOx causes eutrophication – a key issue for the Baltic Sea marine environment. The Baltic NECA would apply only to newer ships (built on or after 2016) and would involve considerably lower costs compared to SECA.

The conference on the Baltic Sea NECA will be followed by, and report to, the main decision-making body of HELCOM, the 34th Annual Meeting on 5 - 6 March 2013 in Helsinki, Finland.

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Note for editors:

The [Helsinki Commission \(HELCOM\)](#) is an intergovernmental organization of the nine Baltic Sea coastal countries, the EU and a number of observer organisations (maritime industry, environmental NGOs, other stakeholders). The organization has a permanent secretariat in Helsinki, Finland.

HELCOM was established in 1980 to oversee the implementation of a regional treaty called the [Helsinki Convention](#) signed by the coastal countries in 1974, ratified in 1980 and revised in 1992. This piece of international law covers explicitly the pollution from ships in the Baltic Sea (Article 8, Annex IV). To implement this part of the Convention, the Contracting Parties cooperate within the targeted HELCOM MARITIME group i.a. to ensure the effective and harmonized implementation of rules adopted by the International Maritime Organization, including MARPOL, in the Baltic Sea region (Helsinki Convention Annex IV, Regulation 1).

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