



PRESS RELEASE

Preparations intensify for HELCOM Ministers' meeting:

Each Baltic coastal country and EU to consider their share of environmental action

17 June 2013, Helsinki, Finland – Negotiations on a more robust implementation of the [HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan](#) to achieve a healthy marine environment will be the focus of the 2-day HELCOM Meeting started today. The nine coastal countries and the EU are expected to progress on a number of issues associated with eutrophication, hazardous substances, biodiversity and maritime activities, as part of the process leading to the October 2013 [HELCOM Ministerial Meeting](#).

The backbone of HELCOM's efforts to fight eutrophication, the implementation of the nutrient load reduction scheme is a major topic on the agenda. Revised load reduction targets for each country will be presented for consideration, in addition to reviewing national progress in cutting nutrient inputs to the sea. The targets have been prepared following the enhanced scientific advice by the Baltic Nest Institute of Sweden in cooperation with national experts.

The aim of HELCOM is to always build its work on best available data and scientific knowledge. Correct handling of data and transparency are therefore crucial for all activities, and HELCOM continuously works to improve the quality of monitoring, data management and reporting.

Proposals for three new HELCOM Recommendations for measures to protect the Baltic Sea will be discussed by the Heads of Delegation. These measures relate to safeguarding important bird habitats and migration routes from negative effects of energy production at sea; reduction of discharges from aquaculture; and enhanced airborne surveillance for illegal oil spills in the Baltic Sea area.

A large compilation of cost-effective management options to reduce discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances will be discussed at the Meeting, as countries have committed to this activity in their National Implementation Programmes. These management options stem from the most recent scientific research and related projects. Another set of measures deals with reducing phosphorus and nitrogen run-off from agriculture, a key area in efforts for a healthier Baltic Sea. Among the submitted documents is a report about the implementation of [HELCOM Recommendation 17/6](#), including recent information on pollution from fertilizer production facilities. The issue has been dealt with in [several Meetings](#) of HELCOM in 2012 and 2013. Further actions to cope with the sources of pollution will be considered in the 2nd day of the Meeting.

The HELCOM Red List of species in danger of becoming extinct will be presented, indicating that about one out of 25 of the evaluated Baltic Sea species is under a risk of extinction. The Red List is a result of four years of dedicated work by an expert team drawn from a wide range of backgrounds. The revised Monitoring and Assessment Strategy of HELCOM is expected to be among the documents proposed for adoption by the HELCOM Ministers in October. Monitoring and assessment is the basis for most, if not all, HELCOM work, as any improvement or decline in the status of the sea can't be tracked without

these activities. Core indicators for biodiversity and hazardous substances will be presented in the Meeting for agreement and joint use.

Some major Ministerial deliverables related to environmentally friendly shipping are being prepared, including regional procedures for response to pollution incidents on the shore forming an amendment to the Helsinki Convention and a new chapter to the HELCOM Response Manual. To assist the delivery of untreated sewage at ports, soon obligatory for any passenger ship entering the Baltic Sea, a special guidance document has been prepared and will be addressed in the Meeting today. Another guidance expected to be endorsed by the HELCOM members is related to a joint approach of the nations bordering the Baltic Sea and the North Sea in order to comply with the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments.

The 41st Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegations will be chaired by the HELCOM Chair Ms Helle Pilsgaard, Denmark.

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Note for editors:

The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, usually referred to as [HELCOM](#), is an intergovernmental organization of the nine Baltic Sea coastal countries and the European Union. HELCOM has worked since 1974 to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution and to ensure safety of navigation in the region. HELCOM is the governing body of the "Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area," more usually known as the Helsinki Convention.

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[HELCOM Ministerial Meeting](#) will be held on 3 October 2013 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Ministers of the Environment of the nine Baltic coastal states and the EU Environment Commissioner will gather to discuss the status and the future of the Baltic Sea marine environment – reviewing the progress in implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan (2007– 2021), and setting priorities for action. The outcome of the 2013 Meeting is expected to revolve around the still unsatisfactory status of the Baltic Sea; the ecosystem approach as the basis for blue and green growth, the opportunities for more coherent policies and implementation, as well as committing to do more for a healthier Baltic Sea.

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For further information:

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