



MEDIA RELEASE

First proposal crafted for the Ministerial Meeting outcome

Coastal nations gather for Baltic health check

5 March 2013, Helsinki, Finland (HELCOM Information Services) – The highest decision-making body within [HELCOM](#), the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission started a two-day meeting today as the preparations intensify for the [HELCOM Ministerial Meeting](#) in October 2013. The first proposal for the Ministerial Declaration – master blueprint for additional efforts in the region – will be considered, along with a wide range of topics related to the protection of the Baltic Sea marine environment by the HELCOM members, representing each Baltic Sea state and the EU.

The [agenda](#) of the Annual Meeting focuses on the latest progress and updates on implementing HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), structured under four broad segments: eutrophication, hazardous substances, biodiversity and maritime activities. After six years since the adoption of the Action Plan, a more complete review will be undertaken by the Ministers of Environment in half a year's time, in the October meeting in Copenhagen. Further action will also be considered for reaching a good environmental status for the Baltic Sea.

“The Ministerial outcome will revolve around the ecosystem approach underpinning blue economy and green growth, the still unsatisfactory status of the Baltic, opportunities for more coherent policies and implementation, as well as generally committing to do more for a healthier Baltic Sea,” says Monika Stankiewicz, the Executive Secretary of HELCOM.

Today and tomorrow the HELCOM Contracting Parties will review HELCOM's core work and achievements, and the reports of annual activities of the HELCOM groups, sub-groups and projects will be discussed. These will include, for instance, the ongoing revision of nutrient pollution reduction targets and how to account for the impact of climate change in the region; advancing Maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea; more informed decisions in sustainable agriculture; and the developments for a new regional pollution load database; among others. The outcomes of the two Stakeholder Conferences held yesterday, [HELCOM-BONUS Conference](#) on future research needs, and on [“Baltic Sea – NECA”](#), will be delivered to the Meeting.

The Meeting is expected to adopt the draft revised HELCOM Recommendation 15/1 “Protection of the coastal strip”, and the draft revised HELCOM Recommendation 17/2 “Protection of harbour porpoise in the Baltic Sea Area”.

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Note for editors:

The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, usually referred to as the Helsinki Commission or [HELCOM](#), is an intergovernmental organization of the nine Baltic Sea coastal countries and the European Union working 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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