
Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM)

STATEMENT

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For immediate release

Statement by Ms. Anne Christine Brusendorff, HELCOM's Executive Secretary

at the Annual HELCOM Meeting,

9 March 2011, Helsinki

This year has been a busy year; a ministerial meeting last year in May in Moscow, followed-up by a high-level segment during this regular annual HELCOM meeting.

The HELCOM Moscow Ministerial Declaration not only reconfirmed the political willingness to implement the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, it also anchored the co-ordination role of HELCOM in achieving good environmental status in the Baltic Sea as well as established new tasks and means how to achieve these.

And with the just recently finalized high-level segment, we have pointed to the importance of sharing of experience in the implementation process and the ability of technical and financial means to help jump-start such activities.

In this way HELCOM is encompassing both the linkage between the scientific and policy-development aspects but also the sharing of experience on the more general level of implementation.

And with your allowance I would like to high-light a couple of examples:

- the joint advisory board for the co-ordination of the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive in the Baltic Sea, is a regional platform for developing coherent assessment approaches and means to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) in the Baltic, based on jointly operated indicators, targets and methods and using as its basis the on-going work for the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan;

- the fisheries and agricultural authorities fora, both cooperating with environment authorities, have shown to be important groups to discuss and promote sectorial integration for Baltic-specific issues and not least sharing of experience;

- the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group has already accomplished its first deliverables and work is on-going to create a common knowledge basis

and define common elements to be taken into account when drawing up Maritime Spatial Plans, based on an ecosystem approach and promoting sustainable management;

- in the maritime field first meetings of the Experts on Navigational Safety and the Cooperation Platform for Port Reception Facilities for Sewage have taken place. A meeting last week's Friday, in the Port of Gdynia, with additional representatives from the ports of Szczecin-Świnoujście and Copenhagen-Malmö, governmental as well as IFI representatives is yet another excellent example of the search for Baltic-wide solutions to joint issues. And this of course based on the Baltic region initiative to further develop the international regulations to prevent discharge of untreated sewage from passenger ships, and to change the existing legal regime to enable a designation of the Baltic as a special area.

A number of externally financed projects; flagship projects under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region; related to the EU Integrated Maritime Policy; as well as with a specific focus on North-West Russia are of specific importance for the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the HELCOM Moscow Ministerial Declaration.

In several of these projects we see that the outcome is a good blend of increased scientific and technical information and knowledge, which is used to further the implementation of practical solutions. Some of the projects also cover the important aspect of awareness raising.

A Roadmap on the cooperation between HELCOM and ICES, which you will consider later during today, will provide the solid basis for an increased cooperation between our two organisations, for the benefit of science and policy-makers. In this way not only reflecting the need to ensure coherent work of the Baltic Scientific community, whether working for HELCOM or ICES, but also the fact that four out of nine HELCOM countries also are members of the OSPAR community, thus necessitating both the intra-region as well as the inter-region cooperation.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your dedicated work and your support to us and not least I would like to thank all my colleagues in the Secretariat for their persistent work, also in challenging times.

Thank you.

Note to Editors:

The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, usually referred to as the Helsinki Commission, or HELCOM, is an intergovernmental organization of all the nine Baltic Sea countries and the EU which works to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution.

HELCOM is the governing body of the "Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area," known as the Helsinki Convention.

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