

Regional Baltic Sea plan for harmonized ratification and implementation for the 2004 IMO Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC)

Recalling that the 2004 International Convention for Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) will enter into force in 8 September 2017, and to ensure its coherent implementation, **the HELCOM member states AGREE:**

To encourage Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland to ratify the BWM Convention as soon as possible and at the latest before the entry into force of the BWM Convention to ensure the equal treatment of the ships (i.e. the granting of exemptions) throughout the Baltic Sea (HELCOM area).

To continue the work within the HELCOM-OSPAR TG BALLAST, including:

- Continuing working on the Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Harmonised Procedure for the Contracting Parties of OSPAR and HELCOM on the granting of exemptions under BWM Convention (JHP) and further developing the online decision support tool.
- Further studying the new concept of the "same risk area" - which is currently being discussed at IMO - in relation to the JHP, avoiding pre-empting any decisions at IMO MEPC or PPR.
- Examining if the database on port survey results can be coupled with or linked to the data obtained from the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) monitoring for Descriptor 2 in order to improve the current limitation of data availability on non-indigenous species (NIS).

To nominate a national focal point to the new expert group to continuously update the target species list (TSL) for the JHP risk assessments.

To develop and have in place by 2018 a system to quickly disseminate information on outbreaks of ballast water mediated invasive species which, for example, could lead to the withdrawal of A-4 exemption or requirements on contingency measures or require notification to ship owners and administration to avoid ballast water operations where such events occur (early warning system).

To provide, and inform on availability, of reception facilities for sediments in ports and terminals where cleaning and repair of ballast tanks occurs based on IMO Guidelines G1 by 2018.

To investigate if ports as hotspots should be included as a regular part of the HELCOM Monitoring programs on NIS keeping in mind the obligations from the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the other EU Directives for the EU member states.

To generate a list of surveyed ports by 2018; the list will be permanently updated.

To support and exchange experiences on compliance control and enforcement of the BWMC.

To work towards further harmonization of implementing regulations of the BWM Convention.