

Creating Common Solutions to Save the Baltic Sea

HELCOM is:

- Making environmental policies
- Supervising implementation
- Influencing decision makers
- Coordinating plans and strategies
- Linking different countries, organizations, scientists
- Providing information
- Developing recommendations

HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan:

- **provides** the basis for HELCOM work
- **safeguards** the sea's natural ecosystems while allowing the sustainable use of its goods and services
- **improves** the quality of life and prosperity in the entire region
- **sets** specific ecological objectives and measurable targets in line with the ecosystem approach
- **is implemented** through national programmes and regional actions

HELCOM Action Areas:

HELCOM tackles a wide range of sectors and themes

MONITORING & ASSESSMENT

AGRICULTURE

RESPONSE TO SPILLS

FISHERIES

SHIPPING

INDUSTRIAL RELEASES

MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING

NATURE CONSERVATION

WASTEWATER

MARINE LITTER

SPECIES & HABITATS

UNDERWATER NOISE

PHARMACEUTICALS

HELCOM

HELCOM is an intergovernmental organization made up of the nine Baltic Sea coastal countries and the European Union.

HELCOM's vision for the future is a healthy Baltic Sea environment with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological and environmental status and supporting a wide range of sustainable economic and social activities.

Founded in 1974, its primary aims as a governing body are to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution, as well as to ensure safe maritime navigation.

The official name of HELCOM is the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission; it is the governing body of the Helsinki Convention.



European Union Chairmanship of HELCOM

1.7.2016 – 30.6.2018



Priorities:

- I. Healthy Ecosystem in the Baltic Sea
- II. Innovation for a Sustainable Blue Economy
- III. Regional Governance

Priorities of the European Union Chairmanship of HELCOM



photo: MEISAHALLITUS NPS / Linda Jokinen



photo: ISTOCK / David Cummings-Bushell



photo: Saara Keranen

REACHING A HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM IN THE BALTIC SEA BY 2021

Assessing Good Environmental Status with quantitative indicators...

The new holistic assessment, HOLAS II, will reveal if our efforts have led to improvements in the Baltic Sea environmental status, since HOLAS I in 2010. The results will be released by mid-2017 and updated by mid-2018. Pressures and impacts will be further quantified, including via the latest 'Pollution Load Compilation', allowing us to evaluate progress towards the goals of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. Core indicators will be further developed, especially for seafloor integrity, marine litter and underwater noise. This work will also help contracting parties that are EU Member States in fulfilling their obligations under EU marine legislation.

...while responding effectively to key pressures

Response to certain key pressures, such as marine litter and nutrient enrichment leading to eutrophication, should be made stronger through appropriate measures. The implementation of the regional action plan for marine litter will be a priority. In addition to the environmental benefits, this will also demonstrate the strength of Baltic regional cooperation in meeting global commitments. Actions to reduce the nutrient load in the Baltic will include progress on establishing a NOx Emissions Control Area, stimulating the building and maintaining of adequate port reception facilities, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Strategic engagement with other sectors will be encouraged to deliver innovative solutions, for instance for nutrient removal.

INNOVATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY AND HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

Promoting knowledge and innovation in the Baltic Sea...

HELCOM has a unique role in contributing to the further understanding of environmental status of the marine environment in the Baltic and the ecosystem services it provides. This knowledge is essential in ensuring that incentives for investment in promising Blue Growth sectors lead to a healthy ecosystem in the Baltic – the sustainable Blue Economy. This approach will be promoted through the HOLAS II results, follow-up and use of existing or future BONUS¹ projects' results, mapping the ecosystem services and assessing their social and economic value, and fostering the application of the ecosystem-based approach in Maritime Spatial Planning.

¹ Joint Baltic Sea Research and Development Programme (BONUS) www.bonusportal.org/bonus_projects

...including a well-managed network of marine protected areas

Integrating healthy ecosystems and economic growth in one coherent policy, does not only require knowledge and innovation but also that the resources of the sea are well-managed and protected where necessary. Marine protected areas (MPA) are one of the most important tools to achieve that. They help rebuild fish stocks, improve coastal protection and greatly benefit coastal and marine tourism. Monitoring the MPA network and implementing the guidelines on management of seafloor integrity and fisheries in protected areas will be essential. HELCOM will also improve the enforcement and coordination of management measures to minimise pressures and impacts on MPAs, in particular for transnational ones. The effectiveness of such measures will need to be assessed, both for individual sites and at network level.

TACKLING THE CHALLENGE OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Securing cooperation with Regional Fisheries Bodies...

More exchange of information and better cooperation between HELCOM and the relevant Regional Fisheries Bodies will be key to having a biodiverse ecosystem, also sustaining livelihood of fisherman in the Baltic Sea. This is reflected in the objective of the Baltic Sea Action Plan, according to which fisheries management should be implemented based on the ecosystem approach, thus supporting sustainable use of natural marine resources.

...and contributing to international ocean governance

Further synergies with regional or European governance frameworks will be sought, for instance with the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will strengthen ocean governance. Regional Sea Conventions, in particular HELCOM, should play a crucial role in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 on oceans and seas.

