

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 15/1

Adopted 8 March 1994, having regard to Article 13, Paragraph b) of the Helsinki Convention

PROTECTION OF THE COASTAL STRIP

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 15 of the 1992 Helsinki Convention,

BEARING IN MIND the Baltic Sea Declaration (paragraph 14) given in Ronneby 1990 in which the Heads of Governments and High Political Representatives of the Baltic Sea States declared their firm determination to develop a comprehensive programme in Nature Conservation, inter alia, through the establishment of protected areas representing the various Baltic ecosystems and their flora and fauna and the emphasis given to Nature Conservation by the 14th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission and its request to speed up the work (HELCOM 14, paragraph 5.38),

Recalling also the Convention on Biological Diversity of the United Nations and its Programme of Work on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, including relevant tools and guidelines developed in this context, such as the voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments in marine and coastal areas.

RECALLING the Recommendations by the International Seminar on the Protection of Sensitive Areas, Malmö, Sweden, 25-28 September 1990, the International Seminar on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity in the Baltic Sea Region, Runö, Sweden, May 1991, the decisions taken at the UNCED conference in Rio de Janeiro 1993, particularly the convention concerning the conservation of biological diversity, signed by all Contracting Parties of the Helsinki Convention, and the Recommendations in "Agenda 21" for coastal nations,

RECALLING HELCOM Recommendation 24/10 on the implementation of integrated marine and coastal management of human activities in the Baltic Sea Area and to promote integrated management of human activities having impacts on the marine environment and HELCOM Recommendation 28E/9 on Development of Broad-Scale Marine Spatial Planning Principles in the Baltic sea Area,

RECALLING FURTHER legislation of the European Union in the field of environment and coastal protection, including Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC), Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2002/413/EC), Floods Directive (2007/60/EC), as well as INSPIRE Directive (2007/2/EC),

RECALLING ALSO the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation to the year 2020 and the Green Paper on a Future Maritime Policy for the European Union (Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European vision for the oceans and seas),

BEING AWARE that natural coastal areas where land and sea meet are in a constant dynamic relation to each other and

- are systems of great biological richness, variety and productivity;
- form the habitats of highly specialized and often endangered species of wild fauna and flora as well as large populations of breeding and migratory birds;
- are landscapes of great natural beauty;
- are highly important for public recreation;
- are a natural resource which is becoming more and more scarce,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Recommendations of the Baltic Sea Regional Seminar in Nyköping, Sweden, 7-11 June 1993, concerning special legislation for the general protection of the coastal strip,

TAKING ALSO INTO ACCOUNT that in some Baltic countries a great part of the coast has remained practically untouched during the last 50 years and thus represents enormous ecological and aesthetic values,

BEING DEEPLY CONCERNED about the increasing pressure for commercial exploitation of the remaining natural coast, particularly in countries with no or weak legislation for the protection of the coast, and about the consequences this might have for the coastal environment and the biological diversity of the whole Baltic area,

APPRECIATING the measures already been taken by several Baltic Sea States in order to protect the coastal strip,

BEING CONSCIOUS that urgent measures are required to stop further degradation of the natural coasts particularly in countries with no or weak protective legislation,

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention:

a) that the Contracting Parties take all appropriate measures to ensure the protection of the coastal strip;

b) that a generally protected coastal strip therefore be established outside urban areas and existing settlements, the width of which shall be determined by the nature and landscape values of the coast, extending at least 100 to 300 meters from the mean water line landwards and seawards;

c) that in this protected coastal strip:

- activities which would permanently change the nature and landscape such as extraction of soil and minerals, construction of buildings (except for buildings necessary for existing farming or fishing and saunas in connection with existing buildings), marinas, roads, camping grounds etc. not be allowed except when proved overwhelmingly in the public interest and when it is proved that no less sensitive site can be found;
- intensive forestry and intensive farming including drainage be restricted;

d) that exceptions can be made from the provisions in points b) and c) on the basis of a land use plan which has been a subject to environmental impact assessment, approved and sanctioned by an appropriate authority;

e) that a zone of at least 3 kilometers landwards from the mean water line be established as a coastal planning zone where major building development and other major permanent changes in nature and landscape be preceded by an appropriate land use plan, including environmental impact assessment, approved at least on regional level,

RECOMMENDS ALSO that actions be taken by the Contracting Parties as soon as possible and be reported to the Commission in 1996 and thereafter every 3 years,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the working group HELCOM HABITAT stays in contact with the Contracting Parties for information and cooperation in this matter.