

CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE
ENVIRONMENT OF THE BALTIC SEA AREA

HELSINKI COMMISSION - Baltic Marine
Environment Protection Commission

HELCOM 22/2001
Minutes of the Meeting

22nd Meeting
Helsinki, 20-22 March 2001

Annex 4

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 22/2

(This Recommendation supersedes HELCOM Recommendation 1/8)

Adopted 21 March 2001
having regard to Article 20(1), b)
of the 1992 Helsinki Convention

**RESTRICTED USE OF CHEMICAL AGENTS AND OTHER NON-MECHANICAL MEANS IN OIL
COMBATTING OPERATIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA**

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Regulation 7 of Annex VII of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 stipulating that mechanical means are the preferred response measures, and that chemical agents may only be used in exceptional cases, after authorization has been granted in each individual case,

RECALLING ALSO the IMO Guidelines on Oil Spill Dispersant Application and the Technical Information Paper No. 4 of the International Tank Owners' Pollution Federation,

BEARING IN MIND that new response means, such as bioremediation, fertilization techniques and biosorbents as well as their effective and regular use in oil spill response, are still at development stage,

RECOGNIZING that the in-situ burning of oil could be a response option, especially under ice conditions,

RECOMMENDS that when in individual cases authorizing the use of chemical agents the appropriate national authority should ensure the use of chemical agents with optimised efficiency and acceptable affects to the marine environment (net environmental benefit),

RECOMMENDS ALSO that when the national authority considers whether to authorize the use of chemical agents at open sea it should make careful use of the IMO Guidelines on Oil Spill Dispersant Application taking into account the following:

- potential damage to the marine environment, sea birds, and other marine resources, if no other response method can be successfully applied;
- quantity, type of oil and its natural dispersibility enhanced by higher sea-state and wind forces;
- new products have a widened range of application, e.g., in heavy fuel oil (HFO) spills or if the viscosity has already increased up to 10.000 centistokes (cst);

- use in shallow waters should be authorized only in exceptional cases, for instance if this is the only option to avoid serious losses of sea birds within endangered breeding colonies, and must be restricted to minor oil spills,

RECOMMENDS FURTHERMORE that the Governments of the Contracting Parties ensure that

- sinking agents are not used at all; and
- absorbents are used only when sufficient recovery devices ensure the timely removal of the absorbed oil from the sea surface,

REQUESTS the Governments of the Contracting Parties to report on the implementation of this Recommendation, to the Sea-based Pollution Group, in accordance with Article 16, Paragraph 1 of the Helsinki Convention.