

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 28E/7

Adopted 15 November 2007
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

MEASURES AIMED AT THE SUBSTITUTION OF POLYPHOSPHATES (PHOSPHORUS) IN DETERGENTS

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 5 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention), in which the Contracting Parties undertake to prevent and eliminate pollution of the Baltic Sea Area caused by harmful substances from all sources, according to the provisions of this Convention and, to this end, to implement the procedures and measures of Annex I,

RECALLING ALSO that Annex I of the 1992 Helsinki Convention defines phosphorus as a harmful substance for the purposes of Article 5 of the Convention,

RECALLING FURTHER the Ministerial Communiqué 1998, calling for implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 19/5 on the HELCOM Objective with regard to Hazardous Substances, which is to prevent pollution of the Convention Area by continuously reducing discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances, with the ultimate aim of concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances, until 2020,

FURTHER RECALLING that based on HELCOM monitoring and assessment work on the state of the Baltic marine environment four strategic goals, reflecting the jointly identified major environmental problems in the Baltic Sea, have been adopted describing the desired state of the marine environment, namely a “Baltic sea unaffected by eutrophication”, “Baltic Sea life undisturbed by hazardous substances”, “Maritime activities carried out in an environmentally friendly way”, all of which will lead to a “Favourable status of Baltic Sea biodiversity”;

RECOGNISING the relative importance of detergents containing phosphates as a source of pollution by phosphorus, and the fact that phosphate-free detergents are available,

RECOGNISING FURTHER that sewage treatment investments are needed in parallel to the reduction of phosphates in detergents due to the need for the reduction of other polluting substances and other sources,

BEING MINDFUL of the pollution caused by discharges of phosphorus resulting from detergents containing phosphates which contribute to eutrophication, and the usefulness of taking adequate action on a flexible basis,

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting States to the Helsinki Convention that:

- a) Polyphosphates as builders in laundry detergents for consumer use should be substituted according to national programmes and measures with a timetable to be presented and decided at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in 2010. In practical terms, a maximum limit for the content of total phosphorus should be applied and a hurdle of 0.2 to 0.5% P weight/weight could be recommended;
- b) possibilities for the substitution of the use of polyphosphates as builders in dishwasher detergents for consumer use be further investigated;
- c) further investigations on alternative builders, especially on their use and environmental effects, be carried out.

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the action taken by Contracting Parties in accordance with this Recommendation should be reported to the Commission annually,

DECIDES ALSO that further considerations on the substitution of the use of polyphosphates as builders in dishwasher detergents for consumer use referred to in paragraph b) should be reconsidered in 2010.