Thank you Mr. Chairman and good day to you all,

Already during the first regular meetings of HELCOM in 1980, the Baltic Sea coastal countries adopted regional Recommendations targeting sewage from passenger ships, both port reception as well as on-board treatment plants.

From the Baltic perspective, this means that discussions on how to reduce sewage emissions from ships in the region have been ongoing for more than 35 years. These negotiations have included national administrations, the shipping industry, representatives from ports and other relevant stakeholders.

However, despite this long history of dialogue, commitments and good intentions the progress to reduce sewage emissions was slow -and mainly dependant on industry forerunners.

After several years of discussion and voluntary action, HELCOM decided, in 2007, to propose amendments to MARPOL Annex IV on Sewage. The amendments were adopted by this Committee in 2010.

In parallel to the submission on amendments to MARPOL Annex IV, HELCOM initiated a joint initiative with the ports and passenger vessel industry in order to make concrete progress to improve the sewage port reception facilities and their use in the Baltic Sea region.

This “HELCOM PRF Cooperation Platform”, as the cooperation is called, has since 2010 organized a series of meetings to identify, and also resolve, open issues with sewage reception in the region. The work within the cooperation platform has inter alia resulted in the HELCOM document interim guidance on technical aspects of sewage delivery to PRF facilities.

HELCOM has also continuously monitored the progress made and the measures taken to ensure that port reception facilities are available. In order to document overall progress in the region an overview report on the status of PRFs was published by HELCOM in early 2015.

In regards to the risk of insufficient PRFs, this issue was once again discussed at the 37th meeting of the HELCOM Commission that was held 10-12 mars 2016, the highest political body of HELCOM.

After discussion, the meeting underlined the urgency to enhance the work in this regard and continue the efforts to make certain that all relevant concerns are properly addressed and
recognized the need for continuous regional data collection and monitoring of the progress and improvements already made.

The meeting further decided to request the HELCOM Maritime Group to include necessary action items in the existing work plan of the Cooperation Platform on Port Reception Facilities and to prioritize the group’s work accordingly.

The firm political commitment of the coastal countries will be followed-up in concrete terms during the upcoming HELCOM maritime working group meeting in September 2016 and within future regional work in the years to come.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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See e.g. following HELCOM Recommendations adopted 5 May 1980:

Recommendation 1/5 concerning the application by the Baltic Sea states of guidelines for type testing and approval of sewage treatment systems.

Recommendation 1/11 concerning the application by the Baltic Sea states of the MEPC guidelines on the provision of adequate reception facilities in ports

Recommendation 1/12 concerning standard discharge connections