

**GUIDELINES ON GRANTING OBSERVER STATUS TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
TO THE HELSINKI COMMISSION**

1. The following criteria should be followed when considering the granting of observer status to the Helsinki Commission:
 - 1.1 Consideration should be based on the capability of the international organization in question to contribute substantially to the aims and objectives of the Commission. An observer status may be granted to an international organization with specialized technical, scientific or equivalent expertise pertinent to objectives of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area;
 - 1.2 The represented interests of participating international organizations should not be overly duplicated. For economic and practical reasons the numbers of representatives of observers at any given meeting should be kept within reasonable limits;
 - 1.3 Observer status may not be granted to any international organization unless it has an organized administration. An organization shall be deemed to be an international organization for the purposes of the Helsinki Commission only if it has at least three (3) members, component branches or affiliated bodies in the Baltic Sea States, depending on the nature of the interests represented by that organization. It must also be authorized under its constitution to speak for its members through accredited representatives;
 - 1.4 Applicants for observer status shall confirm that they will respect any rules and obligations imposed on them by these guidelines.
2. The selection process should include the following steps:
 - 2.1 An application for observer status should be sent to the Secretariat at least six (6) months before a Commission meeting;
 - 2.2 The Executive Secretary shall immediately distribute the application for observer status to all Contracting Parties for comments;
 - 2.3 At least sixty (60) days before the Commission meeting the Executive Secretary shall circulate the application together with possible statements from the Contracting Parties;
 - 2.4 The Commission shall decide upon the observership at its next meeting.

3. Any international organization accepted as an observer to the Commission shall have a right:
 - 3.1 to attend the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and receive non-restricted material prepared for those meetings;
 - 3.2 to submit in accordance with the rules written statements on items of the agenda of the meeting concerned;
 - 3.3 to give oral statements pertinent to the subject matter at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting concerned but not a right to vote;
 - 3.4 to receive the reports of the meetings attended by such observer and other non-restricted documentation on matters of special interest to the observer concerned.

4. The observer status of any international organization shall impose an obligation:
 - 4.1 to recognize the basic purposes of the Commission as well as its principles governing the participation to the work of the Commission;
 - 4.2 to deliver only such information as is pertinent to the work of the Commission;
 - 4.3 to refrain from using the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies for the purpose of demonstrations;
 - 4.4 to respect any specific requirements agreed to by the Contracting Parties relating to the participation of international organizations at a meeting of the Commission or its subsidiary body.

5. The observer status is subject to reconfirmation after five (5) years. The organizations are invited to report on their activities and participation at HELCOM meetings within that period to the Commission and to reconfirm their wish for prolonged observer status six (6) months before the five-year period expires.

6. Cancellation of observer status
 - 6.1 The observer status will automatically be cancelled if there is no participation at any meetings within the framework of HELCOM during a two-year period; and
 - 6.2 The observer status might be cancelled if the conduct of a representative(s) of any international organization is inconsistent with criteria adopted for granting an observer status for that organization or with the aims and objectives of the Commission.