



14 June 2019

Update on the activities of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) for the 2019 Report of the SG on oceans and the law of the sea

Ministerial Meeting 2018 and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

The HELCOM Ministerial Meeting held in Brussels in May 2018 agreed to update the [Baltic Sea Action Plan](#) (BSAP) – the concrete roadmap for restoring the ecological balance of the Baltic Sea – by 2021. The updated BSAP will include new measures that are needed to achieve the existing goals: a Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication, a Baltic Sea with life undisturbed by hazardous substances, maritime activities carried out in an environmentally friendly way, and favourable conservation status of the Baltic Sea biodiversity. The objectives of the BSAP haven't yet been reached, but the BSAP has shown promising results towards improving the environmental status of the Baltic Sea. The updated BSAP will take into account latest scientific knowledge about the ecosystems, and use water and ocean related SDGs as a framework. It will also be based on the analysis of the efficiency of current measures. In addition to existing commitments, the updated plan will address new issues such as underwater noise, marine litter, microplastics, pharmaceuticals, and seabed damage and disturbance, and take the foreseen climate change impacts into account.

Sixth Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-6)

Finalised in 2018, the Sixth HELCOM Pollution Load Compilation (PLC-6) aggregates data on nutrients, focusing on annual and periodic assessments of inputs of nutrients and selected hazardous substances. According to the assessment, a significant reduction of nutrient inputs has been achieved for the whole Baltic Sea in 2015. The PLC-6 assessment shows that in 2015, the normalized input of nitrogen was reduced by 12% and phosphorus by 25% since the reference period (1997-2003). The Maximum Allowable Inputs (MAI) of nitrogen in this period were fulfilled in the Kattegat, Danish Straits, Bothnian Bay and Bothnian Sea. MAI for phosphorus input is fulfilled in the Kattegat, Danish Straits and Bothnian Sea.

Nutrient recycling

According to the results of the State of the Baltic Sea report from 2018, 97 % of the Baltic Sea area suffers from eutrophication caused by nutrient loading. Agriculture remains a large source of nitrogen and phosphorus runoff to the sea. In 2018, HELCOM members therefore agreed to elaborate a Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy by 2020. The aim is to reduce nutrient loading to and eutrophication of the Baltic Sea by circulating the nutrients in the food chain.

SuMaNu platform on nutrient management

To address eutrophication and reduce nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea, a new EU co-funded project platform

in which HELCOM participates was launched. The platform will collect information from previous agriculture-related projects and share their best practices. The platform will also support the elaboration of the nutrient recycling strategy and the update of the agriculture part of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

Thematic assessment on fish

In 2018, HELCOM released its [Status of coastal fish communities in the Baltic Sea during 2011-2016 the third thematic assessment](#) report which concludes that only about half of the assessed areas are in a good state in regard to coastal fish. As highlighted in the report,

HOLAS II/State of the Baltic Sea report

HELCOM involvement in UN processes

The HELCOM Secretariat and the HELCOM countries are engaged in the **Second World Ocean Assessment (WOA II)** via providing expertise to the writing teams and pool of