



HELCOM cooperation on response to spills

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About HELCOM



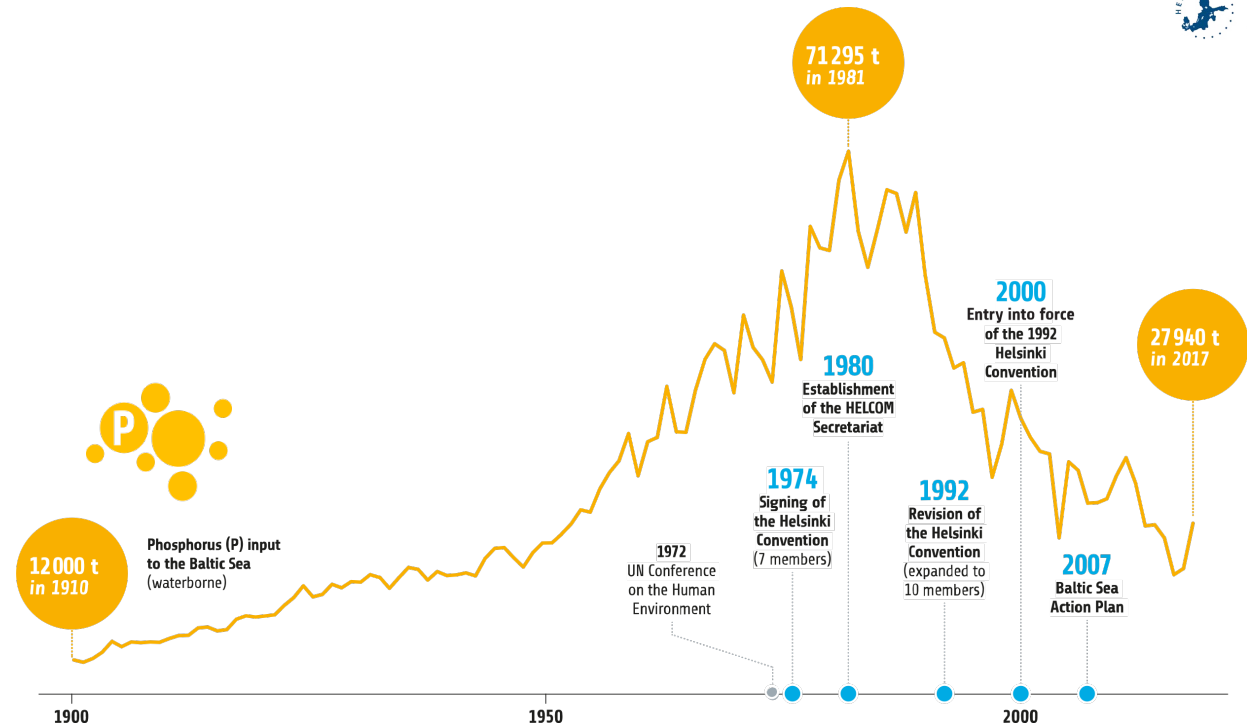
1974: The Helsinki Convention, signed by the then seven Contracting Parties



1980: Establishment of the HELCOM Secretariat



1992: Ten Contracting Parties
EE, EU, DK, DE, FI, LV, LT, PL, SE, RU



▲ Signing of the Helsinki Convention in 1974

HELCOM structure

The Contracting Parties have signed the first Helsinki Convention in 1974 and updated it in 1992. The current Convention was ratified in 2000.

The 10 Contracting Parties (CPs)



Each Contracting Party designates its own Head of Delegation as well as members of the Working Groups and of the Expert Groups and Networks



Helsinki Convention

The set of guiding principles and obligations signed by the Contracting Parties on the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea



HELCOM Secretariat

Coordinates the work and meetings of the Helsinki Commission and ensures CPs meet their obligations under the Helsinki Convention



Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)

HELCOM chairmanship rotates every two years between the Contracting Parties (CPs)



Heads of Delegation

Permanently represent the CPs and are decision-makers



HELCOM Working Groups

Develop recommendations, policies & strategies



Expert Groups & Networks

Provide scientific and technical underpinnings



Decision making in HELCOM



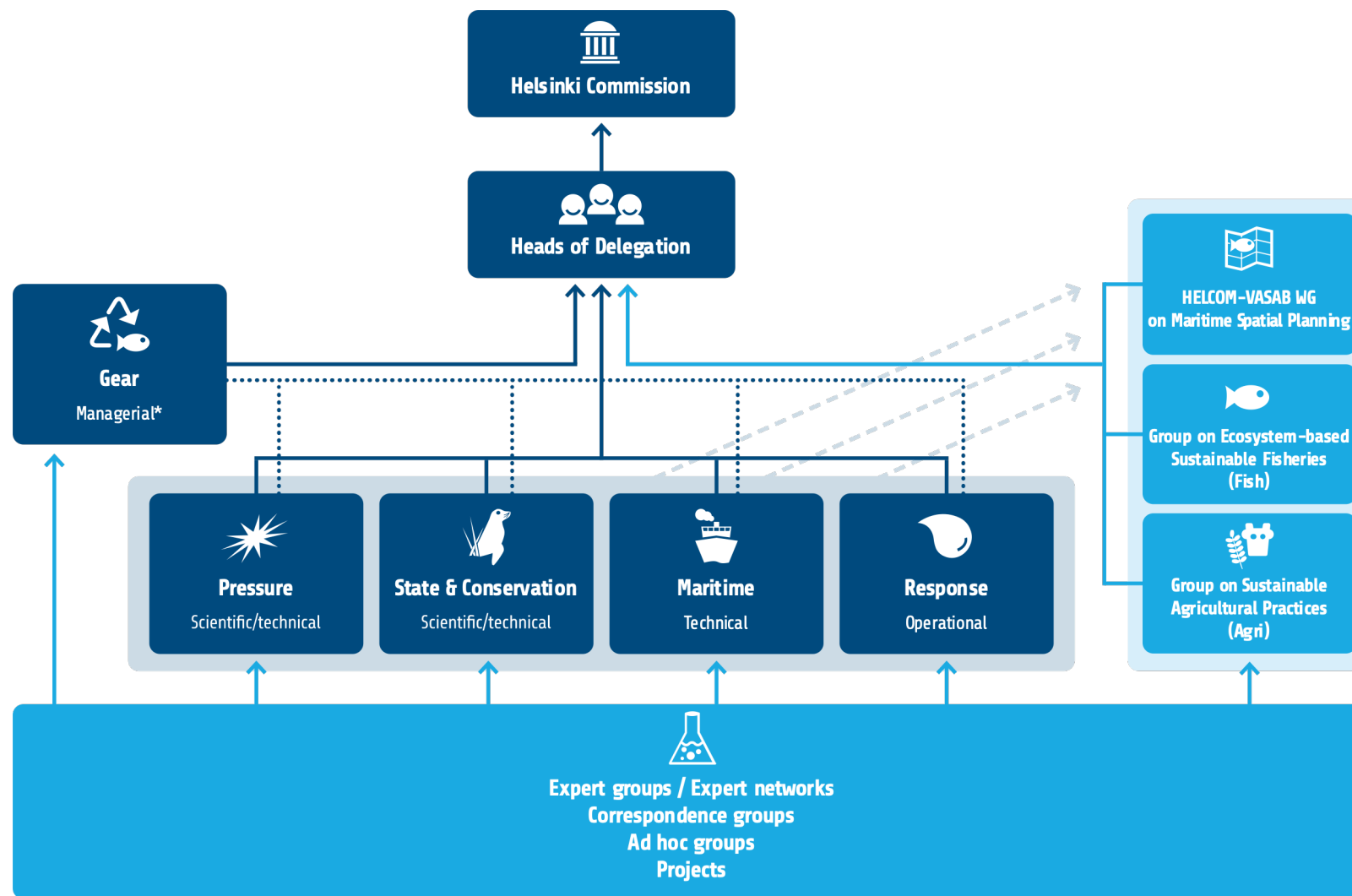
The highest decision-making body in HELCOM is the Ministerial Meeting (the meeting of the HELCOM line ministers of each CP) that takes place every three years.



The Helsinki Commission meets annually (except when a Ministerial Meeting takes place) and is also entitled to make decisions. Its participants are designated by the CPs.



The Heads of Delegation meet twice per year and are also authorised to make decisions on behalf of the CPs.



*) integration and coherence



Full names of the permanent working groups

Gear = Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach
 State & Conservation = Working Group on the State of the Environment and nature Conservation
 Pressure = Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area
 Maritime = Maritime Working group
 Response = Response Working Group

HELCOM Response – Regulatory mandate



Helsinki Convention Article 14 on Co-operation in combatting marine pollution: *“The Contracting Parties shall individually and jointly take, as set out in Annex VII, all appropriate measures to maintain adequate ability and to respond to pollution incidents in order to eliminate or minimize the consequences of these incidents to the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area.”*



Annex VII of the Helsinki Convention on Response to Pollution

Incidents: The HELCOM countries have agreed *“to maintain the ability to respond to pollution incidents threatening the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area. This ability shall include adequate equipment, ships and manpower prepared for operations at sea or on the shore.”*

- **Regulation 10 on Regular Co-operation:** *“The Contracting Parties shall on a regular basis arrange joint operational combatting exercises as well as alarm exercises. The Contracting Parties shall also on a regular basis arrange exercises on the shore.”*
- **Regulation 11 on application of the HELCOM Response Manual:** *“The Contracting Parties agree to apply, as far as practicable, the principles and rules included in the HELCOM Manual on Co-operation in Response to Marine Pollution, detailing this Annex and adopted by the Commission or by the Group designated by the Commission for this purpose.”*

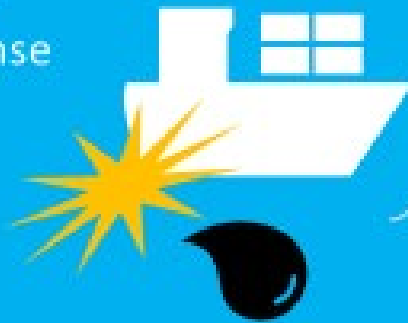


Expert groups under the Response Working Group



Aerial surveillance (IWGAS)

At sea
response



Shore response (SHORE network)



Oiled wildlife
response
(EWG OWR)

Submerged hazardous objects
and wrecks (SUBMERGED)

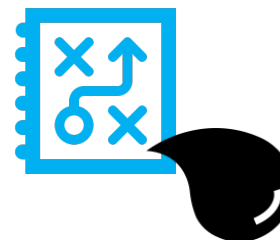


Major recent activities within HELCOM Response



Renewal of HELCOM Response manuals

- HELCOM Response Manual vol. 1 (oil and general cooperation outline) and vol. 3 (on-shore response) combined into revised HELCOM Response Manual adopted by HELCOM 42-2021
- HELCOM Response Manual vol. 2 (HNS) renewed through the WestMoPoCo project. The Joint-Inter Regional Marine HNS Response Manual (HELCOM, REMPEC, Bonn Agreement) adopted by HELCOM 42-2021 to replace the old vol. 2.



HELCOM Response Exercise Plan (HREP)

- A new concept for exercise framework, methodology and planning
- Approved by RESPONSE 28-2020 in November 2020





Regional exercises

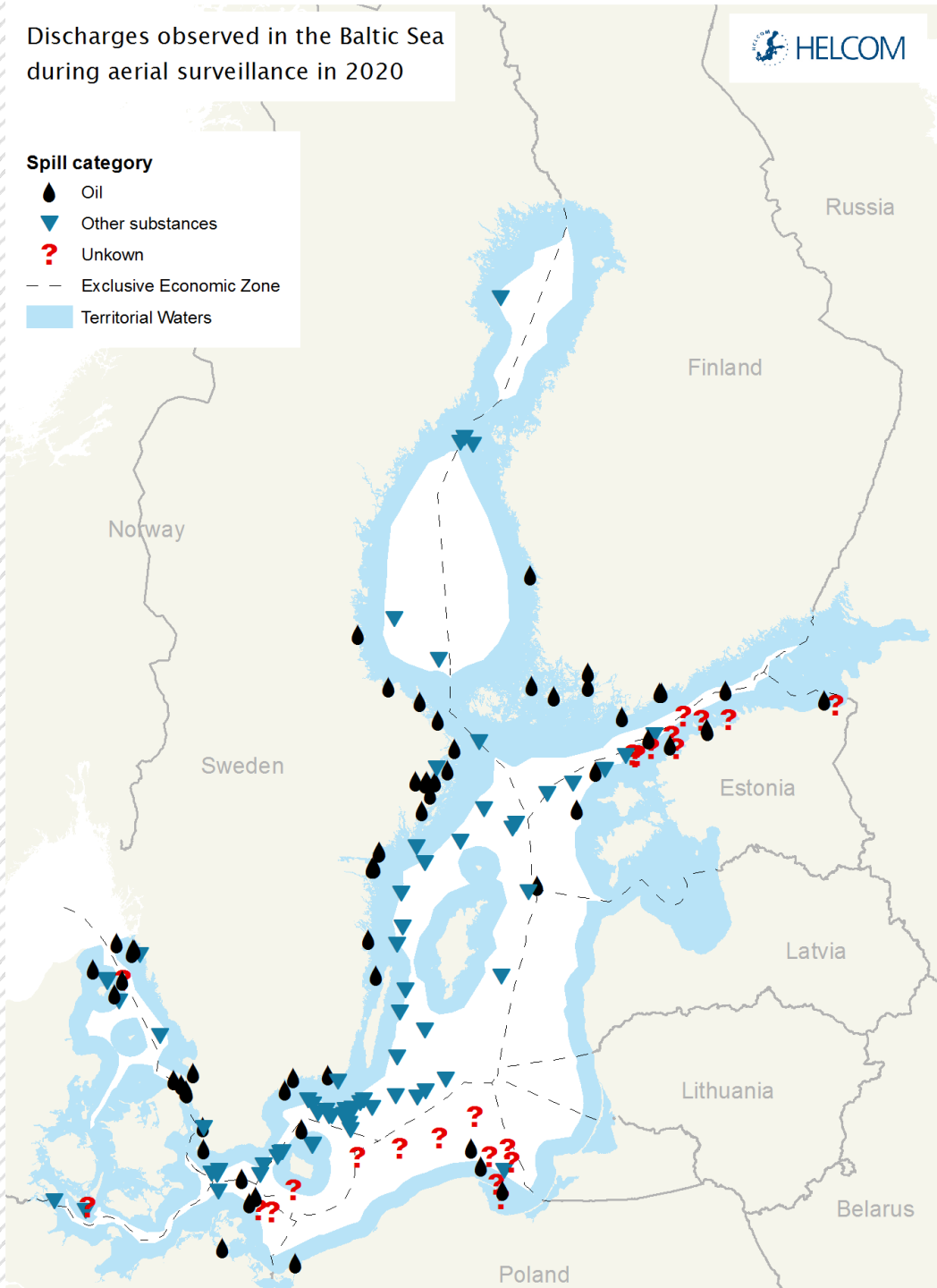
Annual BALEX DELTA have been organized since 1989

- HELCOM BALEX DELTA 2020 was organized by Estonia in August off the coast of Tallinn. Arrangements effected by COVID-19.
- HELCOM BALEX 2021 hosted by Finland near Kotka during the last week of August. A full-scale oil and chemical recovery exercise also including on-shore and oiled wildlife response.
- HELCOM BALEX 2022 will be hosted by Germany.



Spill category

- Oil
- Other substances
- Unknown
- Exclusive Economic Zone
- Territorial Waters



Surveillance, detection and monitoring operations - Annual reports

- 2020 Aerial Surveillance report to be approved by RESPONSE 29-2021 (28-30 September 2021).
- 41% of detected spills were confirmed as mineral oil
- 59% were identified as other substances (e.g. fish oil, vegetable oil, greywater), garbage, litter, floating objects or unknown observations
- Methodology for identifying hazardous substances in aerial surveillance is not yet fully in place
- Responding to spills of novel fuel types and products is also a challenge


Total number of flight hours and confirmed oil spills in the Baltic Sea during aerial surveillance, 1989-2020




Vision and goals for the updated BSAP






Vision

-  a healthy Baltic Sea environment with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable economic and social activities.

Goal

-  Baltic Sea **ecosystem** is healthy and resilient

Goals

-  Baltic Sea unaffected by **hazardous substances and litter**
-  Environmentally sustainable **sea-based activities**
-  Baltic Sea unaffected by **eutrophication**

Proposed new response related actions

...under negotiation (adoption expected by 2021 Ministerial Meeting)



Further develop regional preparedness and response related services.



Addressing threats posed by munitions, wrecks and other hazardous submerged objects.



Risk analysis for oil and HNS pollution.



Holistic/integrated management of marine pollution incidents to enable coordinated response operation at sea and on shore.



Monitoring and pollution risk assessment regarding species and habitats.



Strengthening mutual assistance for oiled wildlife response in the Baltic Region.

