

HELSINKI COMMISSION

Baltic Marine Environment
Protection Commission



HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 24/10

Adopted 25 June 2003,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the 1992 Helsinki Convention

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED MARINE AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA

THE COMMISSION

RECALLING Article 3 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention), in which the Contracting Parties declare to apply the precautionary principle, and Article 15 in which the Contracting Parties agree to individually and jointly take all appropriate measures, with respect to the Baltic Sea Area and its coastal ecosystems influenced by the Baltic Sea, to conserve natural habitats and biological diversity and to protect ecological processes,

RECALLING FURTHER previous HELCOM Recommendations of relevance to Integrated Marine and Coastal Management of human activities or related issues as listed in **Attachment 1**,

NOTING that in this Recommendation the definitions of a) the *coastal areas (=coastal zone)* and *offshore areas*, b) *management*, c) *integrated*, and d) *application of integrated marine and coastal management*, have been given as attached in **Attachment 2**,

BEARING IN MIND that:

- a) the marine and coastal areas are of great environmental, economic, social, cultural and recreational importance for the Baltic Sea area and its inhabitants;
- b) the Baltic Sea marine and coastal areas possess a unique biodiversity and resources which use and protection requires special planning and approaches of management of human activities;
- c) the improper use of the marine and coastal areas may result in irreversible changes or damages that can only slowly recover, thus affecting the lives of future generations and their relations to the Baltic Sea and its coastal areas,

BEING DEEPLY CONCERNED about the increasing pressure on the marine and coastal environment arising from plans and projects in the Baltic Sea region,

BEING AWARE that the integrated marine and coastal management of human activities as such does not necessarily ensure environmentally acceptable results and sustainable use of marine and coastal land and water resources, but it is nonetheless a useful tool,

RECOGNIZING that the lack of free access to spatial information on cover, use and biodiversity currently reduces the possibilities of integrated marine and coastal management to be fully applied in the process of sustainable use of marine and coastal resources of the seabed, land and water areas,

NOTING FURTHER

- a) that this recommendation acknowledges all the previous HELCOM recommendations of relevance for Integrated Marine and Coastal Management of human activities or related issues (**Attachment 1**) and the status of previous recommendations is not affected by this recommendation;
- b) that the nine riparian countries of the Baltic Sea have a national legislation and policies regarding Integrated Marine and Coastal Management of human activities which are different from each other. It is also recognized that national agencies, private parties and NGO's have roles, interests, concerns and obligations regarding the marine and coastal areas that differ from one another as well as between countries,

BEING CONVINCED that the marine and coastal management must be carried out in a way that safeguards the marine and terrestrial biodiversity of the marine and coastal areas, uses resources in an environmentally sustainable way and considering social, economic and cultural aspects of the inhabitants, users or visitors of the marine and coastal areas, in particular the traditional activities and customs,

APPRECIATING that the European Union has adopted its recommendation concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in Europe¹,

APPRECIATING ALSO the European Commission communication to the Council and European Parliament regarding the marine strategy² that provides basis for an integrated approach to the coastal areas and offshore planning and management,

WELCOMING furthermore the activities currently carried out in the Baltic Sea region by VASAB 2010³ and Baltic 21,

ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties, in accordance with the European Union's ICZM recommendation¹ and the forthcoming European Marine Strategy, to develop a national strategy or, where appropriate, several strategies, to implement the principles for integrated management of human activities of the coastal areas and extend these principles to include *marine offshore areas* and also follow the *ecosystem approach* to the management of human activities as defined by HELCOM and OSPAR,

RECOMMENDS to the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention:

- a) to identify laws and regulations of relevance for the use and protection of marine areas and, the authorities responsible for their implementation (governmental, sub-national or municipal sector officials);
- b) to identify stakeholders with interests concerning the marine areas;
- c) to apply the principles laid down in the EU Directive on environmental assessment of plans and programmes⁴ and the EU Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), relevant for introducing human activities in marine and coastal areas⁵;
- d) to identify interacting and/or conflicting interests, obligations and activities of private and public stakeholders. This can for example be carried out following the DPSIR concept;
- e) to organize and implement an offshore management process that brings together the groups defined in "b" and "d";

¹ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe, 2002/413/EC.

² Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Towards a Strategy to Protect and Conserve the Marine Environment, COM 2002 539 final.

³ e.g. the VASAB Recommendation for spatial planning of the coastal zone in the Baltic Sea Region.

⁴ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

⁵ Council Directive 97/11/EC amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

- f) to develop criteria, standards and guidelines that are needed for integrated management of human activities by sector authorities, as well as development of practical and applicable ways to share responsibility for plan management, implementation and enforcement;
- g) to identify the major planning and management issues for human activities in offshore areas;
- h) to identify data gaps and gaps in knowledge that may impede planning and management of human activities in offshore areas, e.g. lack of spatial data on marine and coastal biodiversity (distribution of habitats and species) and natural resources, use of land and water areas, demography, traffic, oil transport, etc., as well as problems connected with access to data;
- i) to set up and carry out a scheme to fill in the identified data and knowledge gaps, e.g. by inventories and mapping of biodiversity (e.g. habitats and species) and resources, analysis of existing data or sharing experiences between authorities and stakeholders;
- j) to improve assessments of the status of biodiversity and of impacts of human activities on the marine and coastal environment;
- k) to develop and implement an overall management plan for human activities for marine areas addressing the tasks in a to j.

The implementation of this Recommendation should be evaluated at regular intervals, at least every three years.

Further considerations and suggested actions related to HELCOM activities are given in **Attachment 3**.

**Previous HELCOM Recommendations of particular* concern
for Integrated Marine and Coastal Management**

Recommendations:

- 9/1 (Protection of seals in the Baltic Sea area)
- 15/1 Protection of the coastal strip)
- 15/5 System of coastal and marine Baltic Sea Protected Areas)
- 16/3 (Preservation of natural coastal dynamics)
- 17/2 (The protection of Harbour Porpoise in the Baltic Sea area)
- 17/3 (Information and consultation with regard to construction of new installations affecting the Baltic Sea)
- 19/1 (Marine sediment extraction in the Baltic Sea Area)
- 19/17 (Measures in order to combat pollution from offshore units)
- 21/3 (Sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism in the coastal zones of the Baltic Sea),
- 21/4 (Protection of heavily endangered or immediately threatened marine and coastal biotopes in the Baltic Sea)

* most of the existing HELCOM Recommendations are somehow related to Integrated Marine and Coastal Management, but those Recommendations listed here are of particular interest.

Definition of terms

- a) *the coastal area(s) (same as coastal zone)* is defined as a zone following the Baltic Sea coastline, extending 3 km landwards (as this zone is described in HELCOM Recommendation 15/1) from the mainland coast to the adjacent marine offshore areas. The *offshore areas* extend from the outer border of the coastal areas as far offshore as it in each case is relevant for the sustainability of marine and coastal biodiversity and geodiversity (see “e” below), in particular if these areas are used or intended to be used in a way that conflict or may conflict with the aims of Article 3 of the Helsinki Convention. These zones thus cover Baltic Sea waters, the underlying seabed and coastal terrestrial areas including the biota as well as abiotic resources;
- b) *management* is defined as an acknowledged, thoughtful and planned way to manage human activities with regard to the use of land, seabed, water and living resources considering the effects of these activities on adjacent and other ecosystems;
- c) *integrated* is defined as a joint effort of several parties and/or the incorporation of different data sources as well as plans and information about several aspects of uses and protection of resources;
- d) the integrated marine and coastal management of human activities should be applied to the areas defined in “a”;
- e) *geodiversity* is the diversity of the geomorphology and geology;
- f) *VASAB 2010* = Visions and Strategies Around the Baltic 2010;
- g) *Baltic 21* = Baltic Agenda 21 (see also Convention on Biological Diversity 1992);
- h) *DPSIR* = *driving forces* (changes in the environment, e.g. industry and agriculture), *pressures* on the environment (e.g. emissions and discharges), *state* (the quality of the environment), *impacts* (e.g. biodiversity loss and impacts on the economy), and *responses* (actions).

Further considerations and suggested actions related to HELCOM activities

- a) The HELCOM Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA) should be of particular concern as well as areas where the local biodiversity is severely threatened or where the use of resources or the number of inhabitants or visitors is particularly high.
- b) The possibilities for cooperation between neighbouring HELCOM Contracting Parties, VASAB and Baltic 21 regarding Integrated Coastal and Marine Management of human activities should be assessed and encouraged. Cooperation between neighbouring countries, VASAB 2010 and Baltic 21 is particularly important in the vicinity of border areas or when national actions or actions taken by neighbouring countries may affect the living processes in the coastal areas.
- c) A national meta-data base should preferably be formed in an early stage of implementation in order to facilitate the use of spatial data required, e.g. data on biodiversity, geodiversity, demography, infrastructure, and the development of land and water areas. The national database can be a part of the existing information structure, e.g. it may consist of a set of links to sub-national databases. The possibility to link up the national ICZM and offshore area management databases to an impending international HELCOM meta-data base should be anticipated.
- d) Identification of the existing successful ways to carry out integrated marine and coastal areas management of human activities in the Baltic Sea. In particular bottom-up initiatives, where local or sub-national policies, programmes, projects or other initiatives that address both the coastal, marine and terrestrial areas and that have worked out successfully should be addressed. The experiences from these “success stories” should be taken into consideration by HELCOM who, together with the HELCOM Contracting Parties, should find ways to encourage such initiatives e.g. through funding of projects. In a similar way should the knowledge about well working instruments (technical solutions, methods) and potential new ways to apply the Integrated Marine and Coastal Management of human activities be made available to the public through workshops arranged by HELCOM.
- e) Identification of threats towards the marine and coastal areas that are of particular interest in the Baltic Sea region and that should be acknowledged simultaneously by several pertinent HELCOM groups.

Link, where appropriate, the implementation of integrated marine and coastal management of human activities with water resources management and landuse planning in the catchment area of the Baltic Sea