



## HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 25/1 \*)

Adopted 2 March 2004  
having regard to Article 20 (1), b)  
of the Helsinki Convention 1992

### ELIMINATION OF PCBs<sup>1</sup> AND PCTs

#### THE COMMISSION,

**RECALLING** Article 5 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention), in which the Contracting Parties undertake to prevent and eliminate pollution of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea caused by harmful substances,

**RECALLING ALSO** Article 5 and Annex I of the 1992 Helsinki Convention which prohibit all the uses of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and polychlorinated terphenyls (PCTs), except in existing closed system equipment until the end of service life or for research, development and analytical purposes,

**REGARDING** that PCBs and PCTs as waste are under the Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal (1989) subject to notification procedure and other measures in all Contracting Parties of the Helsinki Convention,

**REGARDING** that the PCBs and PCTs are included in the list of substances for priority action in the hazardous substances strategy of HELCOM (Recommendation 19/5),

**DESIRING** to attain and implement the target set by the Kalmar Communique of the CBSS, 1996 with regard to hazardous substances,

**NOTING** the actions initiated by the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention in accordance with HELCOM Recommendation 6/1 regarding the elimination of the use of PCBs and PCTs,

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\*) Supersedes HELCOM Recommendation 6/1.

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<sup>1</sup>PCBs means

-polychlorinated biphenyls,  
-polychlorinated terphenyls,  
-monomethyl-tetrachlorodiphenyl methane, Monomethyl-dichloro-diphenyl methane, Monomethyl-dibromo-diphenyl methane,  
-any mixture containing any of the abovementioned substances in a total of more than 0,005% by weight

**NOTING ALSO** that there is no new use or production of PCBs or PCTs in the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention, but that the safe phase out of the use of old PCB – containing articles has not yet been totally completed,

**RECOMMENDS** to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention that:

- a) PCBs or PCTs or equipment/articles containing these substances should not be produced or marketed in the Baltic Sea states;
- b) domestic or transfrontier shipment and storage of any equipment or other articles or waste containing PCBs or PCTs should be carried out only for destruction of the PCBs or PCTs in an environmentally sound manner;
- c) the new use of substitutes for PCBs and PCTs considered as being equally or more hazardous should be banned and those already in use should be substituted as soon as possible with less hazardous or non hazardous substances;
- d) for the elimination of any identifiable PCBs and PCTs, Contracting Parties shall make determined efforts designed to lead to
  - i. the elimination **of the use** of identifiable PCBs and PCTs in equipment containing substances in volumes greater than 5 dm<sup>3</sup> and having a concentration of 500 ppm PCBs or PCTs or greater, as soon as possible, but no later than 31 December 2010, or 31 December 2015 for countries in transition economy,
  - ii. the **destruction** in an environmentally sound manner of all PCBs and PCTs referred to in paragraph i) and other PCBs and PCTs in concentration of more than 50 ppm, as soon as possible, but no later than 31 December 2015, or 31 December 2020 for countries in transition economy;
  - iii. the decontamination of PCBs/PCTs containing equipment, the destruction of equipment and the disposal of PCBs/PCTs in an environmentally sound manner,

**RECOMMENDS ALSO** that the established national programmes for identifying, labelling, collection, interim storage, disposal and destruction should be continued taking into account the proposals published by HELCOM (2001)<sup>2</sup>,

**RECOMMENDS ALSO** that exceptions to the paragraphs a), b) and d) above could, however, be granted for research, development and analytical purposes,

**RECOMMENDS FURTHER** that the Contracting Parties undertake all possible measures to avoid fires, accidents and abnormal operation conditions at sites where PCB containing equipment with a weight more than 1 kg is still in use or stored, as well as leakage and spillage from PCB containing equipment still in use or stored,

**RECOMMENDS FURTHER** that repair and decommissioning of PCB-containing equipment should be carried out with appropriate equipment, precautions to avoid accidents and spillage and by specialised personnel,

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<sup>2</sup> HELCOM (2001): Polychlorinated Biphenyls - PCB: A compilation of information, derived from HELCOM Recommendations, EU-Directives, UN-ECE-LRTAP, UNEP and OSPAR, and analysis of appropriate measures aiming at safe handling and reduction of releases of PCB from PCB-containing equipment in use.

**RECOMMENDS FURTHER** that the Contracting Parties prohibit the separation of PCBs from other substances for the purpose of reusing the PCBs and the topping-up of already contaminated or even non-contaminated transformers with PCB-containing fluids and to avoid the re-introduction of PCBs via recycling of contaminated equipment and material,

**RECOMMENDS FURTHER** that the Contracting Parties take appropriate measures to cease emissions from “uncontrolled applications” e.g. controlled collection, handling and disposal which are for instance, products with a low (less than 0,005%) concentration of PCBs (e.g. mineral oil contaminated with PCB), which have been marketed in large quantities, and products with a small volume of pure PCBs (e.g. capacitors in strip light fittings, small capacitors in household appliances) and thus amount to high total quantities,

**RECOMMENDS FURTHER** that if it is suspected or proved during renovation or demolition of any building that its components<sup>3</sup> contain PCBs or PCTs, they should be treated as if they contain PCBs or PCTs and should be disposed off in an environmentally sound manner,

**RECOMMENDS FURTHER** that the measures taken according to this Recommendation should be reported to the Commission every 3 years starting from 2006.

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<sup>3</sup> like sealants, filling material for joints of concrete structures, flame-retardant coatings on sealing boards or tiles, fluorescent light ballasts, coatings on furnishings, surface treatments for textiles, adhesives for waterproof wall coatings, paints, insulating materials, sealant putties, large and small capacitors in appliances and electrical devices, double glazed window units