



HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 29/2

Adopted 5 March 2008
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

MARINE LITTER WITHIN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Paragraph 1 of the Article 24 of the Helsinki Convention 1992, in which the Contracting Parties undertake directly, or when appropriate through competent regional or other international organizations, to co-operate in the fields of science, technology and other research, and to exchange data and other scientific information for the purposes of this Convention,

RECALLING ALSO Paragraph 3 of the Article 24 of the Convention, in which the Contracting Parties undertake to co-operate on the basis of the information and data acquired pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, in developing inter-comparable observation methods,

RECALLING FURTHER the Resolution A/60/L.22-Oceans and the Law of the Sea of 29 November 2005 of General Assembly of UN which notes the lack of information and data on marine litter and urges States to integrate the issue of marine litter within national strategies dealing with waste management, ports and maritime industries,

CONSCIOUS that marine litter is one of the eight contaminant categories of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Sources (GPA) of UNEP as well as one of the key issues of the Regional Seas Programme (RSP) of UNEP,

NOTING the increasing concern of harmful effects of marine litter in the environment of the Baltic Sea,

BEING AWARE that entanglement and ingestion of marine litter are the primary kinds of direct damage to wildlife and that marine litter can also be a source of accumulation of toxic substances, and can cause environmental changes due to transfer and introduction of invasive species,

BEING FURTHER AWARE that marine litter causes economic losses to many activities, including tourism and fisheries, and safety risks to people,

DESIRING to prevent damages to the marine life and people of the Baltic Sea caused by marine litter,

BEING MINDFUL of the need of reliable data on the amounts and types of marine litter on the Baltic wide scale as well as data comparability between marine regions on a global scale, which implies harmonization of monitoring methods for beach litter,

FURTHER BEING MINDFUL that we need such data for evaluation of implementation of the existing regulatory framework concerning marine litter in the Baltic and for identification of needs for additional measures,

RECOGNIZING the activities concerning marine litter of OSPAR in the North Sea,

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention to recognize one unified method of sampling and reporting of marine litter found on beach as provided in the attached Guidelines (Attachment 1) and to call upon different marine litter survey initiatives to use it in order to achieve comparable results,

RECOMMENDS ALSO that all the Baltic Sea States should support beach litter monitoring activities and beach clean-up campaigns and should cooperate with local authorities and NGOs in this matter,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that all the Baltic Sea States, in cooperation with local authorities, raise public awareness on negative effects of marine litter on coastal and sea ecosystems,

WHILE RECALLING the revised HELCOM Recommendation 28E/10 on application of the “no-special-fee” system to ship-generated wastes and marine litter caught in fishing nets in the Baltic Sea Area **RECOMMENDS FURTHER** the Governments of the Contracting Parties to take into account possible incentives to encourage fisherman to transport litter caught in their fishing nets to port reception facilities,

AGREES to keep the issue of marine litter under regular review and take, when appropriate, additional measures to make sure that the quantities and properties of marine litter do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environment,

RECOMMENDS FURTHER to update this Recommendation according to international developments on this issue to ensure harmonized approach on a global scale.

Guidelines on sampling and reporting of marine litter found on beach

1. Monitored area

The selection of areas to be monitored should be done according to the following criteria:

- composed of sand or gravel and exposed to the open sea,
- being subject to onshore wind and onshore drift
- visually and/or frequently littered (large marine litter items),
- accessible for ease of marine litter removal,
- over 1 km in length,
- not located near other input sources of waste, such as rivers.

However, the expert judgment and knowledge about the coastal area and marine litter situation should also be utilized when making the final selection of the reference beaches.

A standard length of 100 m should be used for detailed surveys of marine litter. The monitored section on the beach should be marked and reported using permanent reference points in order to ensure that the same section can be used repeatedly. Where the characteristics of the coast allow, a 1 km long stretch of the same beach can be surveyed for larger marine litter items. Large item is larger than 50 cm in any direction. The 100 m sites should be situated within the 1 km areas. The area should be surveyed from the waterline to the region where terrestrial vegetation clearly begins.

2. Units for amounts

The amount of beach litter should be reported as a number of pieces as a most common way to report the beach litter and if possible, as the weight unit (kg). In case reporting of a number of pieces is neither possible nor applicable, the latter should be used.

3. Indicators

The following items should be used as indicators to show general marine litter trends as their occurrence is the most frequent and in sufficiently large numbers: plastic bottles, caps and lids, and small plastic pieces up to a size of 50 cm. In order to quantify and determine the relative importance of different sources the amount of items of specific material as listed in a Survey Form should be evaluated.

4. Reporting

For documentation a survey form attached to this Recommendation (**Annex 1**) should be used.

SURVEY FORM: LITTER ON BEACHES

Date:		
Surveyor:		
Country:	Name of the beach:	Coordinates (if known):
Background information (1. physical and geographical characteristics of the beach, sand, gravel or rocks, sheltered or exposed to the open sea, nearness to the input sources such as rivers etc. 2. Information on the amount of visitors of the beach if available or general description if close to large city or remote secluded beach):		
Length of survey section :		

Material	Items	Material	Items
Plastic / Polystyrene (European code of waste 20 01 39)			
Plastic bag		Jerry cans	
Plastic bottle		Cleaner bottle	
Caps/lids		Cosmetics (e.g. shampoo, deodorant, sun lotion)	
Foam sponge		Cigarette lighters	
Cups		Gloves	
Toys		Shoes/sandals	
Fishing line		Buckets	
Rope/cord Length: cm		Industrial packaging, plastic sheeting	
Tangled nets/cord Length: cm		Food package	
Nets		Floats/buoys	

Material	Item	Material	Item
Plastic / Polystyrene (European code of waste 20 01 39)			
Plastic/polystyrene pieces < 50 cm		Plastic/polystyrene pieces > 50 cm	
Paper / Cardboard (European code of waste 20 01 01)			
Paper bags		Cigarette packets	
Cartons/Tetrapacks		Cigarette butts	
Cups		Cardboard	
Other paper items (please specify)		Newspapers/Magazines	
Glass (European code of waste 20 01 02)			
Bottles		Light bulbs/tubes	
Other glass items (please specify)			
Wood (machined) (European code of waste 20 01 38)			
Corks		Crates	
Wood piece < 50 cm		Wood piece > 50 cm	
Rubber (European code of waste/textile 20 01 11)			
Balloons		Gloves	
Boots		Tyres and belts	
Rubber bands		Other rubber pieces (please specify)	
Cloth (European code of waste/textile 20 01 11)			
Clothing		Rope/strings	
Sacking		Shoes	
Material	Item	Material	Item
Cloth (European code of waste/textile 20 01 11)			
Other textiles (please specify)			

Metal (European code of waste 20 01 40)			
Drink cans		Bottle caps	
Food cans		Foil wrappers	
Aerosol/Spray cans		Oil drums	
Paint tins		Wire, wire mesh, barbed wire	
Other metal pieces < 50cm		Other metal pieces > 50 cm	
Sanitary and medical waste			
Medical containers/tubes		Syringes	
Cotton bud sticks		Sanitary towels/baby nappies	
Other medical or sanitary items (please specify)		Condoms	
Pottery and ceramics			
Tiles and other construction material		Other ceramic/pottery items (please specify)	
Other			
Observed oil on the beach	Square meters		
Additional information (origin of the litter if recognizable, other relevant information)			