

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 31E/2

Superseding HELCOM Recommendation 24/2

Adopted 20 May 2010,
having regard to Article 20, Paragraph 1 b)
of the Helsinki Convention

BATTERIES AND ACCUMULATORS AND WASTE BATTERIES AND ACCUMULATORS CONTAINING MERCURY, CADMIUM OR LEAD

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 recognises heavy metals as priority substances for action to reduce pollution in the Convention Area,

RECOGNISING that batteries and accumulators containing mercury, cadmium or lead are still being placed on the market and used in all Contracting Parties of the Helsinki Convention,

RECOGNISING that waste batteries and accumulators containing cadmium or lead may be efficiently recycled in Baltic Sea Region and a disposal at landfill sites or by underground storage as well as incineration is not appropriate way of their treatment,

HAVING IN MIND that the collection, treatment and recycling of waste batteries and accumulators in the European Community is regulated by Directive 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators and repealing Directive 91/157/EEC¹,

REGARDING that only transboundary movement of waste containing mercury, cadmium or lead is 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,

HAVING IN MIND that the proposed instrument for Contracting Parties of the Helsinki Convention should have added value to the European Community instruments to achieve high level of environmental protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area.

REGARDING that heavy metals are included in the list of substances for priority action in the hazardous substances strategy of HELCOM (Recommendation 19/5 and 31E/XX),

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

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Commission to:

¹ OJ L 266, 26.9.2006, p. 1.

1. Take measures to ban placing on the market of:
 - a) all batteries or accumulators containing more than 0.0005 % of mercury by weight with the exception for button cells with a mercury content no more than 2% by weight,
 - b) portable batteries or accumulators containing more than 0.002 % of cadmium by weight with the exception for portable batteries or accumulators intended for use in emergency and alarm systems, including emergency lighting, medical equipment or cordless power tools.
 2. Ensure that legislation concerning batteries and accumulators containing mercury, cadmium or lead should be implemented regulating labeling and collection of waste batteries and accumulators and, labeling requirements should comply with existing European Community or international standards and refer to batteries and accumulators containing:
 - more than 0.0005% mercury by weight;
 - more than 0.002% cadmium by weight;
 - more than 0.004% lead by weight,
 3. Adopt measures to all processes guaranteeing that:
 - Recycling processes shall achieve the following minimum recycling efficiencies:
 - (a) recycling of 65 % by average weight of lead-acid batteries and accumulators, including recycling of the lead content to the highest degree that is technically feasible while avoiding excessive costs,
 - (b) recycling of 75 % by average weight of nickel-cadmium batteries and accumulators, including recycling of the cadmium content to the highest degree that is technically feasible while avoiding excessive costs, and
 - (c) recycling of 50 % by average weight of other waste batteries and accumulators;
 - Batteries and accumulators containing mercury, cadmium or lead should to the extent possible be substituted by less hazardous batteries or accumulators;
 - Recovery or safe disposal of waste batteries and accumulators containing mercury, cadmium or lead should be applied in order to avoid contamination of the environment;
 4. Take measures to ban storage of separately collected batteries and accumulators containing cadmium or lead in landfills or underground storage and no thermal treatment (incineration) before dismantling of waste batteries and accumulators on material parts should be allowed.
 5. Take measures to ensure that all materials and substances recovered from waste batteries and accumulators shall go first under recycling processes in general to the levels stipulated in para 3 above. If the recycling processes are not economically or environmentally feasible for some materials and substances from waste batteries and accumulators, they should be recovered or environmentally sound disposed off.
 6. Contracting Parties can, taking into account the protection of the maritime environment of the Baltic Sea area in case of any accident, substantially limit or ban maritime transportation of waste batteries and accumulators.
 7. Adopt measures for achieving high collection rates at least 25% in 2012 and 45% in 2016 for portable batteries and accumulators, especially by:
 - a) collecting waste batteries and accumulators separately and, hence, minimizing the share of waste batteries and accumulators discarded to other municipal waste and achieving a high level of material recovery;
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- b) enabling end-users to discard waste portable batteries and accumulators at an accessible collection point in their vicinity at no charge, having regard to population density.

For the purpose of this Recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:

- “portable battery or accumulator” means any battery, button cell, battery pack or accumulator that:
 - a) is sealed; and
 - b) can be hand-carried; and
 - c) is neither an industrial battery or accumulator nor an automotive battery or accumulator;
- “industrial battery or accumulator” means any battery or accumulator designed for exclusively industrial or professional uses or used in any type of electric vehicle;
- “automotive battery or accumulator” means any battery or accumulator used for automotive starter, lighting or ignition power.

RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Contracting Parties report on the implementation of this Recommendation to the Commission every three years starting in 2013.