



HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 37/1

(This Recommendation supersedes HELCOM Recommendation 12/1)

Adopted 10 March 2016,
having regard to Article 20 (1), Paragraph b)
of the Helsinki Convention

CO-OPERATION AND COORDINATION OF RESEARCH VESSEL BASED MONITORING IN OFF-SHORE AREAS AND PROCEDURES FOR GRANTING PERMITS FOR MONITORING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Articles 4 and 24 of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention), concerning the application of the Convention and scientific and technological co-operation,

RECALLING ALSO Article 27 of the Helsinki Convention ensuring that none of provisions of the Convention infringes the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea, as well as Regulations 9 of Annex IV of the Helsinki Convention on Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) for ships in the Baltic Sea,

ACKNOWLEDGING United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Part XIII, Section 3, Article 247 'Marine scientific research projects undertaken by or under the auspices of international organizations' and Article 248 'Duty to provide information to the coastal State',

APPRECIATING the achievements in environmental protection within the framework of the Helsinki Convention as well as successful implementation of coordinated monitoring programmes to provide basis for decision making, such as HELCOM BMP, COMBINE, MORS, PLC, COASTAL FISH and SEALS,

RECALLING FURTHER HELCOM Ministerial Declaration, 2013 paragraph X and chapter on marine knowledge, monitoring and assessment, concerning the intensified efforts to improve data and information quality and availability as well as coordinated monitoring practices,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy, 2013 stating the need for co-operation and coordination of monitoring efforts especially for the open sea areas as well as for joint surveys, cruises and campaigns that enable full cooperation in practice, harmonization of practices, efficient exchange of knowledge and better use of monitoring infrastructure,

TAKING ALSO INTO ACCOUNT the HELCOM Monitoring Manual, urging Contracting Parties to use limited resources as efficiently as possible by carrying out monitoring activities in the HELCOM sub-basins in a coordinated way,

NOTING that HELCOM has developed an on-line platform to share information on planned and completed cruises, real time vessel positions (based on AIS) and technical details of research vessels used for environmental monitoring,

NOTING ALSO the bi-lateral co-operation between Contracting Parties on joint use of research vessels for marine environmental monitoring, e.g. between Finland and Sweden as well as Estonia and Latvia,

CONSIDERING that multinational experiments covering inter-connected marine areas, which might be under jurisdiction of different coastal states, are vital for the scientific understanding of the Baltic Sea ecosystem functioning and pathways of contaminants,

REALIZING the necessity of instant and joint investigations at extreme events of environmental concern and sudden events, which could considerably influence the Baltic Sea environment as a whole, for example, the Major Baltic Inflow in 2014,

CONVINCED that a prerequisite for a successful implementation of coordinated monitoring is the application of smooth national administrative procedures for granting timely cruise permits for exclusive economic zones, fishing zones, continental shelves or territorial waters,

APPRECIATING that certain Contracting Parties have implemented the practice of granting yearly permits for monitoring and scientific research activities in the Baltic Sea area,

REGRETTING that in some cases the present national administrative practices create major problems for the implementation of coordinated monitoring and related scientific research,

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

- a) to support the joint use of existing research vessels for off-shore monitoring activities and co-operation in planning and construction of new regional research vessels for the Baltic Sea environmental monitoring and scientific research,
- b) to use the HELCOM on-line platform to share information on planned and completed cruises, real time vessel positions (based on AIS) and technical details of research vessels used for environmental monitoring that could support timely granting of permits for monitoring and research activities,
- c) to grant one year permits for planned monitoring and research activities in the framework of the HELCOM coordinated monitoring programme in the exclusive economic zones, fishing zones, continental shelves or territorial waters, during which period the coastal state is only to be notified in advance for each individual cruise,
- d) to facilitate granting of permits, to carry out monitoring and research activities in the framework of the HELCOM coordinated monitoring programme in the exclusive economic zones, fishing zones, continental shelves or territorial waters, aiming at within six weeks from the time of the request.