



HELCOM STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE 9 MARCH 2016 • HELSINKI

REPORT OF THE HELCOM STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE ON MARINE LITTER 2016

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REPORT OF THE HELCOM STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE ON MARINE LITTER 2016

Background: Tackling the Challenge of Marine Litter in the Baltic Sea

Pushing into action the thirty agreed regional tasks is the key focus of the [HELCOM Stakeholder Conference](#) organized on 9 March 2016 in Helsinki, Finland. HELCOM invited a wide array of stakeholders to announce - or reiterate - their commitment to combating marine litter in the Baltic Sea, as stated in the recently adopted [HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter](#).

While the battle against litter is already ongoing, the task can be successfully pursued only through active and wide involvement. Therefore HELCOM called for the broadest possible participation representing businesses, governments, industry, non-governmental organizations and private citizens to search for solutions and leadership to tackle the litter problem (**Annex 2** contains the list of participants).

All regions are expected to step up to the challenge. The involvement of G7, United Nations, European Union and HELCOM sister entities such as OSPAR and Mediterranean Action Plan, among others, are indispensable for the success in reducing marine litter. It is very important to understand and focus attention on the severity of the problem and to build ownership for implementing the agreed actions, for a cleaner and safer Baltic Sea

Introduction to the litter problem and solutions in the Baltic Sea

Welcoming words and setting the scene

Mr. Urmas Lips, HELCOM Vice-Chair, welcomed participants to the Conference wishing them a successful meeting.

Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, HELCOM Executive Secretary, addressed the audience encouraging them to a fruitful discussion during the day.

Ms. Heike Imhoff, from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety acting as Moderator of the Conference, also welcomed the participants introducing them to the aims of the event.

Round trip to the four main themes

This section of the Conference guided the audience through the main thematic areas of marine litter in the Baltic Sea selected for the Conference, with specialists handpicked as info points. The selection of themes was based on the public vote of most important topics to be covered: (i) micro particles; (ii) waste delivery in ports and marinas; (iii) waste management on land; and (iv) waste related to fishing and aquaculture.

The audience was divided into four groups which rotated from one info point to another during one hour, in order to get a complete overview of the selected topics.

Micro particles

Mr. Peter Kershaw, Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection – GESAMP/International Maritime Organization, introduced the audience to the casuistic of micro particles: the lack of an ‘official’ definition of microplastics, differentiation between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ microplastics, their role as source of contaminants, potential for rafting of organisms, last advances on modelling floating microplastics enabling geographical assignment of microplastics risk levels. The proposals by the Swedish Chemicals Agency (SCA) on prevention initiatives linked to micro particles were pointed out (for further details see **Presentation 1**).

The casuistic of micro particles are specifically addressed under regional actions for land-based sources (RL) 6¹ and 7².

Waste delivery in ports and marinas

Mr. Hermanni Backer, HELCOM Secretariat, guided the audience on the issue of waste delivery in ports and marinas as well as waste handling on board ships. Starting with an overview of the work within the HELCOM maritime WG to address sea based pollution sources according to the 1992 Helsinki Convention, he described the three shipping related actions in the Baltic Litter Action Plan and requested the participants to come with ideas for their implementation (**Presentation 2**).

Concerning the two actions related to port reception of litter, the revision of the HELCOM “No Special fee” system and incentives for ships to implement the best practices documented in the ISO 21070 standard the participants commented with following ideas for implementation: improve waste statistics on waste carried and delivered to PRF facilities to enable regional reduction targets, improve knowledge on waste reception in fishing ports, develop regional recommendations concerning fee reductions from advanced on-board waste minimisation and handling (ISO 21070).

Concerning actions on waste handling on-board, MARPOL Annex V inspection best practices and ISO 21070 standard the participants commented with following ideas for implementation: gather best practices in cooperation with the shipping industry, develop further green shipping indices/certificates in relation to Annex V waste handling, cooperate on MARPOL Annex V inspection campaigns in the Baltic Sea with Paris MoU.

This theme is specifically addressed under regional action for sea-based sources (RS) 4³

Waste management on land

Mr. Mikhail Durkin, Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB) together with Mr. Peeter Eek, Ministry of the Environment of Estonia, introduced the audience to the topic of waste management on land.

Mr. Mikhail Durkin focused his contribution on the estimated potential to reduce the amount of microplastics entering the marine environment together with ‘well-forgotten’ (simple, cost-efficient and inspiring) solutions to address this stream of litter, as well as the importance of the circular thinking path and communication tools.

Mr. Peeter Eek introduced the audience to the problem of uncontrolled dumping sites and landfills pointing out alternative solutions after closure of local landfills to prevent subsequent littering. The requirements to be fulfilled by landfills to minimize littering potential were also detailed as well as the importance of an efficient municipal waste collection system (i.a. the deposit-refund system). Finally, Mr. Peeter Eek drew some conclusions on measures to reduce wild dumping and littering (for further details see **Presentation 3**).

This theme is specifically addressed under regional actions for land-based sources (RL) 1⁴, 2⁵, 3⁶, 4⁷ and 5⁸.

¹ By 2017 an overview on what products and processes contribute to the input of micro plastics to the Baltic Sea, taking into account similar action within OSPAR. By 2018 existing legislation is assessed and necessary measures identified together with relevant stakeholders.

² By 2018 HELCOM has compiled information, and prepared a report on micro particles removal in waste water treatment plants taking into account similar action within OSPAR. If appropriate according to findings of the search and other relevant information, amend HELCOM Recommendation 28E/5 on municipal wastewater treatment.

³ Assess how many ports are operating according to ISO standards and to propose action as appropriate by 2017.

⁴ Prepare and agree on HELCOM guidelines on marine litter references to be included in national and local waste prevention and waste management plans, i.a. an element highlighting the impacts of marine litter. Guidelines by 2017.

⁵ Provide HELCOM guidelines on best practice routines with regard to cleaning and collection systems to prevent litter from land entering the aquatic environment. Guidelines by 2017.

Waste related to fishing and aquaculture

Mr. Mark Bernard Merckx, Waste Free Oceans (WFO), presented the topic of waste related to fishing and aquaculture. He introduced the three types of fishing for litter and the work that WFO conducts to make products from the waste collected streams. The application of the concept of circular economy to waste from fishing and aquaculture was discussed. The key role taken by ports as waste receptors was emphasized (for further details see **Presentation 4**).

This topic is specifically addressed under regional actions for sea-based sources (RS) 5⁹, 6¹⁰, 7¹¹, 8¹² and 9¹³.

The league of experts

With the fresh ideas in mind from the morning round trip, the panel expanded further on the complex issue of marine litter, with particular focus on the four main themes. From their different angles of expertise, the participants shared their own summarized views on the best future-orientated actions against litter. The audience and moderator alike assisted in distilling the thoughts to support dedicated cross-sectoral combat against litter. The experts composing the panel were as follow:

- Ms. Anna Bobo Remijn (European Commission Directorate-General Mobility and Transport - DG MOVE);
- Mr. Peter Kershaw (Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection - GESAMP/International Maritime Organization);
- Ms. Saijariina Toivikko (European Federation of National Associations of Water and Wastewater Services - EurEau); and
- Ms. Stefanie Werner (Federal Environment Agency - UBA, Germany)

Below, summaries of the topics discussed are provided. Views sustained by the expert panelists are indicated together with questions raised by the audience.

⁶ Share best practice on waste management in order to identify and address loopholes that makes waste turn into marine litter, including the issue of landfills, regulations and enforcement. Overview report on good waste management and loopholes, taking into consideration similar action within OSPAR by 2016.

⁷ By 2018 at the latest HELCOM has compiled information to give guidance on improvements of stormwater management on a local level to prevent and reduce stormwater related waste (including micro litter) entering the marine environment, taking into consideration similar action within OSPAR. If appropriate according to findings of the activity and other relevant information, amend HELCOM Recommendation 28E/5 on municipal wastewater treatment.

⁸ Assess how many ports are operating according to ISO standards and to propose action as appropriate by 2017.

⁹ Promote and disseminate best practice in relation to all relevant aspects of waste management within the fishing sector (including e.g. waste management on board, waste management at harbors and operational losses/net cuttings). By 2018, based on the OSPAR outcome, select best practices to be disseminated in the Baltic Sea.

¹⁰ Through a multinational project, such as the MARELITT Baltic project, together with the fishing industry and other stakeholders, develop and promote best practice in relation to ALDFG and derelict fishing gear and their removal. Best Practice developed by 2017, the issues is promoted within HELCOM-EUSBSR cooperation.

¹¹ Compile information and elaborate guidelines on best practices to reduce the input of ALDFG from commercial and recreational fishing to the Baltic Sea taking into account geographical particularities; utilize UNEP RSC report and FAO on ALDFG as a starting point and focus on regional specifics. Guidelines developed by 2017 taking into account geographical particularities.

¹² Identify the options to address key waste items from the fishing and aquaculture industry, which could contribute to marine litter, including deposit schemes and extended producer responsibility. Late 2016 assess the use of OSPAR document and in consultation with the Baltic Sea Advisory Council consider and agree on the way forward to address key waste items from the fishing and aquaculture industries.

¹³ Investigate the use and prevalence of dolly ropes (bunches of polyethylene threads used to protect the cod end of demersal trawl nets from abrasions; synthetic fibre) in the areas of the Baltic Sea where they are used and consider the need to act. Consider the outcome of the study on the impact of dolly ropes currently under development by the Netherlands. Baltic Sea Advisory Council is to be invited to be involved in this activity.

Waste from ships and the EU Port Reception Facilities Directive

Ms. Anna Bobo Remijn, European Commission Directorate-General Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) focused her intervention on sea-based sources of marine litter, in particular from ships, and how the Commission aims to reduce the discharges of this type of waste into the sea by means of the revision of the Directive on Port Reception Facilities (the PRF Directive).

The Commission qualified the actions addressing sea-based sources of marine litter included in the Action Plan as highly pertinent.

Microplastics: a view from a scientist

Mr. Peter Kershaw, GESAMP/International Maritime Organization, addressed in his intervention the input of microplastics from both land- and sea-based sources. He suggested a different approach to reduce their input to the environment depending whether they are 'primary' or 'secondary' microplastics, emphasizing the importance of monitoring to help to target interventions and test the effectiveness of reduction measures.

Microplastics: a view from water service

Ms. Saijariina Toivikko, European Federation of National Associations of Water and Wastewater Services (EurEau), addressed microplastics from the perspective of drinking water and waste water service providers. She defended the source control approach *versus* the end-of-pipe treatments, suggesting possible control measures. EurEau welcomed the initiative brought by some Member States in the Environment Council in December 2014 together with the European Commission withdrawal of the eco-label to cosmetics containing microplastics. EurEau also supports stakeholders' and consumers' dialogue and engagement on the topic of microplastics being ready to take action as far as it is clear that wastewater is a significant pathway and sources are addressed by control at source measures. Finally the importance of governance at all levels for different policy areas (waste legislation and water legislation) was mentioned.

Marine litter related to fisheries and aquaculture

Ms. Stefanie Werner, German Federal Environment Agency (UBA), introduced the audience to UBA's scope of work to further continue with the challenge for the marine ecosystems that emanates from the fishing sector in form of Abandoned, Lost and otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG). She pointed out the big amount of species impacted by ALDFG as well as the specific casuistic of ghost-nets and dolly ropes. Moreover, she proposed solutions to address the issue, ranging from legislation to economic incentives, gear marking, provision of collection, deposit, disposal and recycling schemes, introduction of extended producer responsibility and application of alternative materials and new technologies.

Summary messages

The following images aim at compiling the main message that panelists wanted to share with the audience (first slide by Ms. Anna Bobo Remijn; second slide by Mr. Peter Kershaw; third slide by Ms. Saijariina Toivikko; and forth slide by Ms. Stefanie Werner, respectively).



Waste Delivery in Ports

Reducing marine litter from sea-based sources, by:

- (1) Improving the availability of adequate port reception facilities*
- (2) Improving the enforcement of the mandatory delivery of ship generated waste to port reception facilities*

⇒ ***Effective implementation / future revision of Directive 2000/59/EC on port reception facilities***

Dealing with marine microplastics

Main message: prevention

Reduce unnecessary use of microplastics in products

Reduce spillage/loss of plastic pellets by industry

Reduce loss of textile fibres during washing

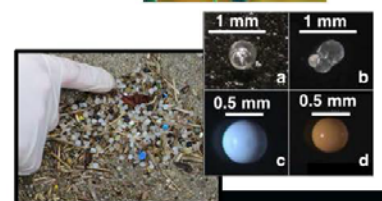
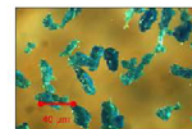
Improve wastewater collection and treatment (stormwater overflows)

Improve design & use of fishing gear to minimise fibre loss

Reduce input of macro-plastics – improved education, solid waste management and intervention measures

Remove macro-plastics from shorelines & other 'hotspots'

Monitor – to target interventions and measure success of measures (cost-effective, different compartments & entry points, preferably automated)



Microplastics: a view from water services



- ~ Microplastics are an emerging source of pollution: more specific information is needed on their **sources** and **impacts** on the environment to design and apply sustainable effective solutions.
- ~ Source control approach is the first step
 - ~ Legislation to ban single use plastic bags
 - ~ Legislation to ban micro-plastics in cosmetics
 - ~ Innovative research for improved technologies
 - ~ Communication and awareness raising
 - ~ Sustainable storm water management

EurEau. Water Matters.

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Solutions for marine litter originating from the fishing sector

Clarify on the reasons for the loss or abandonment of fishing gear, e.g. gear conflicts, overcapacities or economic reasons

Ensure that litter arising from fishing operations is covered by existing legislation

Develop or improve options to address key waste items from the fishing sector (e.g. gear marking; provision of collection, deposit, disposal and recycling schemes; introduction of extended producer responsibility; application of alternative materials and new technologies)

Identify and disseminate best practice in relation to all relevant aspects of waste management within the fishing sector and in relation to ALDFG and their removal

Remove ghost nets in accumulation areas in an environmental sound way



@ Morten Ekker

Umwelt
Bundesamt

Questions raised by the audience

In this section the topics raised by the audience to the panel are summarized:

- **Which is the optimal level of recycling?** it was concluded that in the EU there is room for improvement to implement the waste hierarchy but it is driven by local circumstances. Also, PET bottles were mentioned as an example of a product that has only a small reuse rate that could be improved. The case of Japan was mentioned, since they have managed to improve the reuse rate by using only neutral bottles. Additionally, plastic additives can prevent from recycling and this issue is to be tackled by the industry. There was a comment from the audience indicating that PET bottles can be recycled up to 100 % but to do so, there is a need to start collecting waste in the view of recycling and not in the view of incineration;
- **Are microplastics from car tyres a big issue for the Baltic Sea?** the answer to this question is currently unknown since this issue has come up only recently as a possible major source of microplastics. There is a need to gather expertise around this field. The audience was reminded about an ongoing activity in OSPAR regarding this issue;
- **Shall we focus on consumers as well or only on the waste issue to sort out the litter problem?** the importance of applying the six R's concept was emphasized: redesign, reduce, reuse, remove, recover and recycle. If enough people want a change companies will act. Thus, there is a need to continue working on education and outreach, where the role of NGOs is crucial.

The Baltic Sea region steps in to tackle the litter challenge

Lifting up the litter challenge to higher levels

The participants representing different sectors and backgrounds elaborated on how to raise the marine litter issue higher in national, regional and European agendas. The speakers were invited to announce how individual organizations and initiatives can better join the combat against litter. What are the bottlenecks? How to seize the best incentives? The speakers and the audience were encouraged to explore the issue and comment each other. Below, the experts view participating in the panel are summarized together with the main questions raised by the audience.

Ms. Erja Tikka, Baltic Sea Ambassador, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Ms. Erja Tikka introduced the audience to the Hazards policy area (PA) of the EUSBSR which contains an action to promote (i) research on the environmental impact of chemicals and hazardous substances including marine litter, their sources, as well as (ii) innovative management options to reduce the use, release and effects of these substances in an efficient and cost-effective way on a macro-regional level. Two new projects within the EUSBSR PA Hazards were introduced: BLASTIC, financed by the Interreg Central Baltic Programme, aiming at mapping the sources of marine litter and following its routes to the sea especially in urban surroundings and along rivers. And MARELITT Baltic, recently accepted for financing by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme, aiming at developing cost efficient, safe and environmentally sound cleaning methods for derelict fishing gear through demonstration actions.

Steps taken at national level in Finland were exposed, i.e waste legislation and management and the newly adopted Plan for Maritime Protection of the Finnish Government. The Plan includes a comprehensive research project on the origins of maritime litter, its amounts in different regions and an evaluation of the potential to reduce it which will enable the proposal of a national goal on the reduction of marine litter together with the adoption of implementation measures.

Mr. Matjaz Malgaj, European Commission Directorate-General Environment (DG ENV)

Mr. Matjaz Malgaj started his intervention summarizing the EU policy addressing marine litter as well as EU-funded projects and studies on the topic.

Future plans at EU level were pointed out:

- full implementation of the amendments of the waste legislation;
- consideration of microplastics as part of the Strategy for plastics planned for 2017;
- the possible amendment of the Port Reception Facilities Directive;
- a closer look into waste from fishing and aquaculture based on a recent study highlighting it as a potentially important source;
- further integration of litter monitoring and measures in the Water Framework Directive;
- as part of the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework directive (MSFD) in 2016:
 - o assessment of the monitoring programmes submitted by EU Member States;
 - o programmes of measures are expected by the end of March and a better picture of what ongoing measures can be expected to deliver in terms of marine litter reduction will be available;
 - o possible revision of the Decision concerning Good Environmental Status, i.a. development of reference values for determining GES for marine litter, which will also enable assessment of progress towards achievement of targets.

Specifically for the Baltic, the recently updated EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region, structural funding and the BONUS project were mentioned.

The importance of a joint effort of the civil society, industry, and the scientific and technological research to reduce and remove marine litter was also stressed.

Mr. Matjaz Malgaj concluded on the EU to support the implementation of the Action Plan, from within, in collaboration with EU MS under the MSFD and through implementation of relevant EU policies and projects, at HELCOM level during EU presidency, and internationally considering Baltic specificities in EU international positions and negotiations.

Ms. Sally Clink, Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC)

Ms. Sally Clink introduced the audience to the role of the BSAC to mitigate litter in the Baltic Sea linked to fisheries management, providing advice and recommendations, and supporting initiatives to reduce the negative impact of derelict fishing gears, such as the Marelitt project, which the BSAC supported in its application phase. Specifically the following actions were detailed:

- stakeholders raising awareness on the ghost net problem (i.a. reporting, marking and retrieval of lost nets);
- increasing the understanding the preventive, mitigating and remedial measures and actions that should be taken to solve the ghost net problem;
- stressing the importance and benefits of regional cooperation to address the problem;
- obtaining political commitment from stakeholders.

The importance of tackling the problem of marine litter at its source through prevention and education was raised. Additionally, regulatory instruments (bans on dumping waste at sea), direct investments in waste management infrastructures (port reception facilities to collect the fishing gears retrieved from the sea), awareness-based instruments (e.g. information campaigns) and market-based instruments (charging for plastic bags) were suggested for consideration.

The following points were identified as shortcomings for the implementation of the Action Plan:

- involvement of a wide national, regional and international target group;
- national ghost net policy;
- ghost nets is a diffuse and undefined topic making dialogue between the fishing sector and authorities difficult;

- lack of methodologies to detect and prioritize hot areas for ghost nets, and to identify and retrieve derelict fishing gears from different substrates;
- need of multiannual plans and operational coordination when addressing large scale and international waters;
- adequacy of port reception facilities in conjunction with environmentally friendly (recycling) and/or economically smart (reuse) waste treatment schemes;
- promotion of international actions and collaboration, involving all key stakeholders;
- fishermen should not be punished for losing their nets. Port reception facilities should take the nets free of charge.

Ms. Kaisa Kononen, Baltic Organisations' Network for Funding Science EEIG (BONUS)

Ms. Kaisa Kononen started her intervention emphasizing the need of increase knowledge on:

- sources and pathways of different types of marine litter;
- amounts and distribution of marine litter in different parts of the Baltic Sea, in particular, sea surface, water column and seabed;
- fragmentation and decomposition of marine litter, plastics in particular, at sea;
- effects of different types of marine litter on various ecosystem components and services;
- cost-benefit analysis of marine litter reduction and clean-up approaches to establish mitigation actions;
- monitoring and assessment methodologies;
- new innovation and technological solutions.

She continued acknowledging that the HELCOM's Marine Litter Action Plan is an important step towards managing the problem of marine litter.

Coming back to the research needs, she stressed the importance of applying a multidisciplinary approach and definition of cross-sectoral solutions, encouraging an intensification of these activities in the Baltic Sea.

She informed the audience that the BONUS call 2015: Blue Baltic (outcome of the call to be known in June) was contains a specific subtheme on the 'development of new methods for improved wastewater treatment efficiency for persistent micro- and nanoparticles'. Finally, she encouraged participants to the Conference to respond to a consultation on the strategic research and innovation agenda for the BONUS programme's second phase (planned for 2018-2024) to take place within the coming two years.

Ms. Anja Nysten, Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO)

Ms. Anja Nysten shared with the audience the role of NEFCO as financial institution on generating tangible, positive environmental impacts in the Nordic region – and in particular the Baltic Sea – through investment in neighboring Central and Eastern European countries. NEFCO has several financing instruments for environmental projects as loans, export credits and grants. She pointed out four NEFCO's areas of investment:

- Industrial solutions: NEFCO provides financial support to companies (i) producing environmental equipment related (e.g. in waste recycling), (ii) aiming at improve resource efficiency, (iii) minimising waste through reuse of raw materials used in the production process and closed loop systems.
- Waste management: NEFCO aims at minimising the amount of waste and improve treatment practices by, for example, lending support to sorting, recycling and re-using solid waste. Recycling of paper, plastics, chemicals, metals and textiles, solvents and e-waste are a priority area for NEFCO.
- Information centres: to play a role in common awareness raising regarding marine litter (e.g. the information centre at Vodokanal in St. Petersburg).

- BSAP Fund: the aim of the Baltic Sea Action Plan Fund is to help restore the ecological status of the Baltic Sea. The fund provides grants and financing for projects from both public and private entities operating in the agricultural and wastewater treatment sectors, as well as those working to reduce hazardous waste in the Baltic Sea catchment area. A key purpose of the fund is to facilitate and speed up the preparation of projects certain to bring a profit. BSAP Fund is an option when the technology needs demonstration.

Questions raised by the Moderator and the audience

The Moderator invited a Conference participant, Ms. Olga Rublevskaya, from the waste water treatment sector in Russia (from Vodokanal, St. Petersburg), to briefly comment on the Russian involvement in environmental cooperation. Ms. Olga Rublevskaya referred to the long record by St. Petersburg, being a large city, to minimize negative impacts on the Baltic marine environment. Technical solution to reach HELCOM requirements have been developed and now due to the technical developments it is possible to say that they have been reached. Figures have changed since 1997 when huge amounts of wastewater were discharged into the Neva River and the Baltic. Currently, 98.5% of these waters are treated. In this regard, the international expert support received to improve the waste water treatment was acknowledged. Recent activities conducted were enumerated, such as (i) the construction of the Northern channel collector which has enabled better treatment and closing of a large number of direct discharge points; (ii) the improvement of waste water treatment, which has led to achieve enhanced nutrient removal for nitrogen and phosphorous; and (iii) the construction of a Northern waste water treatment plant, where the financing received from NEFCO was mentioned. Finally, the research made together with HELCOM on micro plastics in waste water was pointed out to conclude that new actions and financing are still needed to minimize this problem.

Convincing others to follow

Since there already are many promising initiatives on marine litter, one can proudly present some of the success stories and best practices. Further engagement can be encouraged by selected examples from municipalities, projects and the private sector. Below a summary of these case studies are provided.

Local actions of land-based marine litter prevention: The case of the City of St. Petersburg

Ms. Yulia Menshova, St. Petersburg Environmental Committee, presented the activities annually conducted by the Environmental Committee to address the marine litter issue: litter collection during treatment of waterbodies, monitoring, ecological control campaigns for internal waters, public awareness campaigns, collection of floating litter, cleaning of internal waters bed sediments, timely collection of litter and bulk waste at the city's hydraulic engineering facilities, control and monitoring of illegal dumps and landfills in coastal zones. Finally, she emphasized the key attention to ecological culture and ecological education the Committee devotes (for further details see **Presentation 5**).

European microplastics research cooperation as a basis for global action

Mr. John Hanus, JPI Oceans, focused his presentation on the research cooperation on microplastics in the marine environment between European Member States conducted under the framework of JPI Oceans. In particular, four transnational research projects have been funded to develop a common understanding of the scope of the problem as well as to improve the knowledge of the effects of plastic particles on marine organisms, ecosystems and, ultimately, human health. He added that this intergovernmental research cooperation will serve to inform European and regional policy processes to implement measures to tackle marine litter and has, furthermore, given impetus for broader global cooperation on the issue (for further details see **Presentation 6**).

Reducing the impact of marine litter on the Baltic Sea environment from Derelict Fishing Gear – in cooperation with fishermen

Ms. Marta Kalinowska, WWF Poland, presented the results of the project Marelitt Baltic- Reducing the impact of marine litter in the form of Derelict Fishing Gear (DFG) on the Baltic Sea environment. The experience of previous national project lead by WWF Poland in cooperation with Kołobrzeg Fish Producers Group and fishermen from the entire Polish coast were presented as well as its relation to the further activities in the Baltic Sea Region aiming at searching for DFG systemic solution. The presentation showed different components of the project, related to methodology development and dragging operations at sea as well as utilization and delivering project results and guidelines to the policy level (for further details see **Presentation 7**).

Nordic plastics action in reducing marine litter - What has been done, what is going on and what more could be done?

Mr. Vesa Kärhä, PlasticsEurope/Finnish Plastics Industries Federation, started his presentation pointing out that industry believes their people and products are part of the solution for the HELCOM-area and globally. He stated that for the past ten years European plastics industry together with the whole product chain has been actively supporting efforts to keep waters safe and clear from debris. The key role of effective holistic waste disposal processes and management was underlined.

Mr. Vesa Kärhä defined plastics cleantech as being efficient and functional implementation of sensible technology to make the world a better place for all of us, and noted that landfills should be closed to plastics. Finnish plastics industry has invented, for example, smart deep collection systems and pipe collection systems that do not litter around. Also using tight cross-wrapped bales as well as compactor containers when transporting waste to treatment will effectively eliminate debris spread (for further details see **Presentation 8**).

Local solutions to a global problem - urban runoff of marine litter challenging coastal cities

Mr. Esa Nikunen, City of Helsinki, showed in his presentation the challenges faced by the city of Helsinki imposed by urban runoff of marine litter. The city is currently working to manage several land based sources of marine litter to reduce littering, such as dumping of snow in the sea and managing storm waters. Subsequently, he detailed the local solutions implemented in the city as part of the Baltic Sea Challenge network operating since 2007 (for further details see **Presentation 9**).

Wrapping up the Conference

Ms. Marta Ruiz, HELCOM Secretariat, announced the winner of the quiz who is to receive a present, Mr. Matjaz Malgaj.

Mr. Urmas Lips, HELCOM vice-Chair, summarized the discussions of the day by concluding that marine litter is a real issue in the Baltic Sea and that the problem is very diverse both in terms of sources of litter, pathways of litter to the sea and impacts of marine litter in the marine environment. Such a diverse problem needs to be tackled by specific measures that target specific parts of the complex issue, and measures need to be very concrete in order to improve the situation. Examples presented during the Conference to highlight the problem were often from other regions, not the Baltic Sea, which shows that there are still regional knowledge gaps on the issue and on the possible solutions to reducing the amount of marine litter in the Baltic Sea region. Funding instruments for further research are in place, and further research needs to be done through stakeholder involvement by, for example, the industry in order to tackle the marine litter issue at source. Public awareness and education is essential as citizens have to be onboard if the community is to succeed in tackling the marine litter problem. Therefore, implementing the HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter needs to be linked and harmonized with the processes and actions on the global-, EU- and national scale and other ongoing initiatives.

Ms. Heike Imhoff, from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety acting as Moderator of the Conference, also thanked the audience for their dedicated contribution during the day and closed the event.

The feedback received on 'Conclusions of the Conference' is included in **Annex 3**.

Annex 1 Exhibition activities

The Conference had a dedicated area to exhibition activities that attendees to the event were able to visit. The organizations represented at the Exhibition were:

- City of Helsinki, Environment Centre;
- Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB);
- Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Marine Research Centre;
- Keep Sweden Tidy;
- Keep the Archipelago Tidy, Finland;
- Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation (KIMO International);
- Waste Free Oceans (WFO)

Pictures taken from the exhibition area are provided to give an idea of the material exposed [to be included].

Annex 2

List of Participants

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Keep Sweden Tidy		
Keep the Archipelago Tidy		
KIMO International		
Waste Free Oceans		

Annex 3 'Conclusions of the Conference'

This annex compiles the contributions to the 'Conclusions of the Chair' in action against marine litter as provided by participants to the HELCOM Marine Litter Stakeholder Conference 2016. Please note that the submission of this information was optional, and there was a limit suggested of 200 words.

Sylvia Bretschneider, BSPC (Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) – not participating

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Schwerin, 23 February 2016

Dear Chair,

Dear participants of the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference on Marine Litter,

I deeply regret that I am not able to attend this important event due to my parliamentary duties. Tackling the challenge of marine litter in the Baltic Sea is a major concern for me in my work and personally.

Now I would like to share this short **contribution to the Chair** with you concerning this theme from my point of view as a politician and as Observer of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) to HELCOM. The environmental status of the Baltic Sea is part of my daily work as President of the Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and as Chair of the BSPC Working Group on Sustainable Tourism as well as because of my commitment to the important work of HELCOM. Within these functions I stand up for the improvement of the environmental status of the Baltic Sea, since a good ecological status is very important for our life and also for our economy around the Baltic Sea.

A clean and healthy Baltic Sea is even a basic condition for the economic development of the entire Baltic Sea Region. After operating against the invisible pollution caused by harmful substances for decades, HELCOM has developed an Action Plan on Marine litter. Reducing the marine litter in the Baltic Sea is an important issue for the BSPC and I explicitly support this approach.

The key solution for this challenge is "cooperation". Stakeholders from all fields – policy, science, economy and society – need to tackle together against the current litter pollution and for the prevention of further marine litter.

The topic that I especially support is sustainable tourism. At our last annual Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference a new Working Group on Sustainable Tourism was established with the goal of a comprehensive concept for the entire Baltic Sea Region. We strive for a strategic priority with regard to knowledge- and competence building, including curricula.

I would like to use this opportunity to offer you to bring your proposes for measures against marine litter in the field of tourism to our Working Group. So please send me your ideas so that I can forward them to the Working Group.

Thank you for your attention.

With kind regards



Sylvia Bretschneider

Ellen Bruno, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

I wrote a report (in Swedish) with many actions in it in 2014 - please have a look there for ideas:
http://www.naturskyddsforeningen.se/sites/default/files/dokument-media/rapporter/marint_skrap_rapport.pdf.

Summary in English: http://www.naturskyddsforeningen.se/sites/default/files/dokument-media/summary_marine_litter.pdf

Cosmetics Europe – not participating



COSMETICS EUROPE RECOMMENDATION ON SOLID PLASTIC PARTICLES (PLASTIC MICRO PARTICLES)

Introduction:

The occurrence and persistence of plastic debris in the marine environment and waterways is an issue of increasing public debate and concern.

Different sources of such debris have been identified and estimated. The vast majority of small plastic particles in the seas come from the breakdown of bigger materials and the abrasion of car tyres. Other sources, such as pellet loss from plastic manufacturing, abrasion of paint, textile fibres, or particles used in personal care products are much smaller contributors.

The use of plastic micro particles in personal care products, although often highlighted in the context of marine litter, actually accounts for a very small fraction of the plastic debris found in the marine environment.

Recommendation:

In view of the public concerns expressed over plastic debris in the marine environment, and given the availability of alternative materials, Cosmetics Europe recommends its membership to discontinue, in wash-off cosmetic products placed on the market as of 2020 : The use of synthetic, solid plastic particles used for exfoliating and cleansing that are non-biodegradable in the marine environment.

Marta Kalinowska, WWF Poland

Presentation on the assumptions of the INTERREG project MARELITT Baltic as well as WWF Poland experience in derelict fishing gear search and retrieval in the Baltic Sea.

Nina Lesikhina, Greenpeace Russia

Adoption of a clean production framework, requiring the reduction and ultimate elimination of hazardous chemicals in production processes and products, and their replacement with clean substitutes, is the only option to provide protection of Baltic Sea ecosystem.

Bernard Merckx, Waste Free Oceans Foundation

Whereas we see the marine litter topic having reached high political attention (G7, EU, USA) to which WFO has actively contributed, we see in reality only too slow progress in implementation, enforcement and lack of clear decision making both on EU level and in the RAPs. The focus is still too much on data collection and

research. Real operational action plans, like ours, are not being (financially) supported in the way they should be. The CEP presented by the EU Commission in December 2015 still lacks vital issues such as implementing real extended producer responsibility schemes (in a trias politica way), major change of waste management systems not aiming at quantity collection suitable for incineration and /or landfill but focusing on high quality collection at source of specific streams in combination with high quality sorting aimed at mechanical recycling and safeguarding resources, lack of enforcement and penalties by not achieving the set goals etc. We are far away from circularity with the present proposals, whereas today's technologies also in the plastics recycling industry allow since years for high quality closed loops for most of the mono materials put on the market (and certainly the top 20 most littered plastics items).

Ryan Metcalfe, KIMO International

KIMO International encourages the implementation of passive Fishing for Litter schemes and will share knowledge, experience and expertise from existing initiatives with actors interested in developing such activities and increasing the number of vessels involved. KIMO supports research and development projects focusing on best practices and techniques to reduce micro particles from entering the environment. Our organization believes that we need to be proactive and persistent in educating all sectors about litter and its effects on the marine environment. From our experience with beach surveys, we believe that society needs to address single use plastic items, to create more environmentally friendly alternatives, develop deposit schemes and focus on less packaging. All sectors need to be involved in the fight against marine litter and it is important to develop strong partnerships with industry. Effective waste management needs to be addressed from both land based and sea based sources. Fishing and marine transport sectors as well as tourist organizations should be involved in raising awareness about correct waste management through their member organizations and with the general public.

Harita Natarajan, Clariant Produkte (Deutschland) GmbH

Clariant Functional Minerals provides a sustainable sediment management solution INVOQUE which is a mineral based technology for conditioning and dewatering fine sediments across the fresh to salt water spectrum.

INVOQUE offers the following program benefits:

- Enhanced water quality
- No additional environmental burden
- Reduced regulatory pressure
- Improved operating costs
- Lower capital expenditures
- Broadband applicability
- Boosts operating performance
- Reduced disposal and logistics costs

For more details contact: Ms. Harita Natarajan, Phone: +49876182787.