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Background

In the process of updating the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, NGOs across the Baltic Sea region have together formulated recommendations across all themes of the current BSAP to be considered by the Contracting Parties of HELCOM. The [shadow plan](#) recommendations are to complement actions that are currently missing, still to be addressed or need to be altered to deliver the founding goal of the BSAP to “restore the Baltic marine environment to a good ecological status by 2021.”

We are in the middle of a biodiversity and climate crisis. The coming decade will be decisive for safeguarding biodiversity and our future. A collapsed Baltic cod population is the most alarming indication yet, signaling the very real need to change how we manage the entire ecosystem. Hence, Ecosystem Based Management should be set as the fundamental principle in Article 3 of the Helsinki Convention, being truly implemented and steering the development of any economic activity in the region, be it fishing, infrastructure or shipping.

By implementing the existing nature protection policies and stepping up the political commitments, we can deliver that change – but we must act now.

Two main goals should be set for the updated BSAP:

1. Curtailing biodiversity loss in the catchment and sea in the next 5 years and bending the curve on biodiversity loss by 2030 in the region,
2. Achieving climate neutrality (net zero emissions) in the Baltic Sea Area by 2040.

We call on all the Baltic Sea Area countries to take up their responsibility to immediately and effectively follow up the commitments of the 2007 HELCOM BSAP and further strengthen those by adopting a revised 2021 Action Plan that aims to:

- (1) **lead on the protection and conservation of the marine ecosystems** on which livelihoods and all marine sectors ultimately depend,
- (2) **urge all actors to intensify efforts** to safeguard marine biodiversity and recovery of the Baltic Sea including through management tool of MSP,
- (3) **invite and engage civil society, stakeholders and rights-holders** to work together towards a healthy and sustainably managed Baltic Sea.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the NGO's recommendations provided in the Shadow Plan to the BSAP and utilize these accordingly in developing content for the updated Action Plan.

LINK: [Shadow Plan](#)