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Background

The document is revised based on recent changes to the events due to COVID-19

HELCOM Secretariat is invited to participate in two international events that have connections to MSP.

The first event is the International Ocean Governance Forum (IOG Forum) to be organised by the European Commission in 22-24 April in Brussels. It is a launch event of a two-year process to support the follow-up and further development of the EU's International Ocean Governance agenda for the future of our oceans. It is highly relevant for HELCOM as a Regional Sea Convention. MSP is one of the topics to be addressed among other governance frameworks. The HELCOM Secretariat is planning to participate the event.

However, due to the COVID-19 this meeting is likely to be postponed, but this has not been announced yet (as of 18 March). We can assume that the event will be organised later as this is a launch of a two year process.

The second event is a proposed workshop „Area-based management tools: What are the options for managing marine biodiversity?“ The workshop will discuss the proposed new global biodiversity conservations targets and measures, especially conservation measures other than marine protected areas. The term that is used in that context is Other Effective Concervation Measures (OECM). This makes it relevant from the MSP perspective. This would be a side event to the 34th meeting of th FAO Committee on Fisheries that will be in 13-17 July in Rome, Italy. As of 18 March the organisers haven't announced new dates of the event, but they have indicated a possible postponing.

The organisers of the latter event approached the HELCOM Secretariat inquiring whether the Secretariat or one of the HELCOM countries could share experience in preparation of the OECMs. The input from the Baltic Sea region could be also a presentation on how MSP as an overall process could help in identification and promotion of the OECMs.

The attachment to this document conains brief description of the events.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note on the information, discuss representation of HELCOM in the events and messages from the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group to be delivered.

EU: International Ocean Governance Forum, 22-24 April, Brussels

The European Commission in association with the European External Action Service is launching a new initiative to establish an EU stakeholder forum dedicated to oceans and seas worldwide - the International Ocean Governance Forum (IOG Forum). The work is supported from a consortium led by Fresh Thoughts, with ACTeon, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies - IASS, TMG – Think Tank for Sustainability and the European Marine Board (EMB).

The IOG Forum will serve as a driver for improving ocean governance by establishing a dialogue among stakeholders and experts across the various countries, sectors and scales. While steered by the EU, the IOG Forum aims to mobilise stakeholders worldwide to tackle common ocean challenges and co-develop new ideas and action-oriented solutions towards global sustainability objectives. In particular, the IOG Forum will provide a dynamic platform to rethink ocean governance and propose fresh ideas for the future of our blue planet.

Based on your experience and knowledge, we would like to invite you to [participate in the IOG Forum](#) (includes registration instructions) and contribute to one of its Thematic Working Group (TWG), namely:

- TWG1 Improving the international ocean governance framework
- TWG2: Reducing pressures on the ocean and seas and creating the conditions for a sustainable blue economy
- TWG3: Strengthening international ocean research, data and knowledge

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FAO: Area-based management tools: What are the options for managing marine biodiversity? 13-17 July, Rome

Given that area-based management tools are central to the discussions surrounding the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity, it is important to emphasize how various types of area-based management tools can be used to strengthen marine biodiversity conservation efforts overall.

This side event calls specific attention to the fact that effective area-based conservation measures (called “OECMs” within the CBD context), where specific human activities are excluded for reasons other than conservation (e.g., fishery closures, navigation corridors, oil and gas fields), have great potential to achieve long-term biodiversity conservation and sustainable use objectives. Understanding the extent to which such areas can contribute positive outcomes for biodiversity is an important issue. In the case of the CBD area-based targets, a lot of work has already been done to define criteria for what types of areas should be reported as countries assess their national contributions. A number of groups, including FAO and IUCN, have started developing and providing guidance on how to identify appropriate area-based management initiatives.

This side event will summarize evidence that area-based management initiatives can confer significant conservation benefits. We will present some lessons learned from the application of area-based management tools in the context of the CBD targets. In addition, we will highlight the experience and potential of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in coordinating area-based management in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The session will end with an open discussion to unearth key issues to consider in the implementation of the CBD’s OECM concept in the high seas. The draft agenda is as follows:

- Introduction to the event – FAO

- Overview of the contribution of area-based management tools to biodiversity conservation on the high seas – University of Washington (Ray Hilborn/Dan Ovedo)
- Lessons learned from the CBD process – CBD Secretariat
- A country perspective on using area-based management to conserve biodiversity – Canada/HELCOM/Japan
- The role of RFMOs in conserving biodiversity through area-based management – General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
- Open discussion– FAO

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