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Background

An initial draft of the overarching preamble for the updated BSAP presented to the DG BSAP 3-2020 did not contain any reference to MSP, which is mentioned in the respective paragraph of the document 3-10. This addition to the document 8-10 contains an updated version of the draft overarching preamble containing a proposal to integrate reference to MSP.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the proposal and comment on the way how MSP is reflected in the document bearing in mind general character of the preamble and that the role of MSP in the achieving of the BSAP goals is described in the introductory part to the MSP section.

Draft Overarching Preamble for updated BSAP

1. We, the Ministers of the Environment of the Baltic Sea coastal states and the Commissioner for the Environment of the European Commission, assembled in Lübeck, Germany, on XY October 2021, on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting of the Helsinki Commission:
2. **RECALL** the provisions of the 1992 Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention);
3. **REITERATE** the commitment of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention to restoring a thriving and resilient Baltic Sea ecosystem, as expressed in the HELCOM vision of “a healthy Baltic Sea environment, with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in good environmental status and supporting a wide range of sustainable human economic and social activities”;
4. **ACKNOWLEDGE** that the work of HELCOM has led to significant environmental improvements in many areas and specifically that progress in implementing the 2007 Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) has contributed to preventing further deterioration of the environment of the Baltic Sea;
5. **NOTE** with great concern, however, that the goals of the 2007 BSAP were not achieved by 2021 as envisioned, and that the Baltic Sea area is still heavily affected by multiple pressures caused by human activities;
6. **NOTE**, in particular, that: (a) eutrophication, which results from a variety of factors and is partly due to the time lag between measures and effects, continues to heavily impact on the Baltic Sea; (b) levels of hazardous substances are still elevated and a cause for concern; (c) invasive alien species are still being introduced into the Baltic Sea; (d) marine litter is a pressure of special concern; (e) around half of the seabed is potentially disturbed by human activity ; (f) other pressures such as underwater noise disturb marine life; (g) overall the unfavourable conservation status of Baltic marine biodiversity is widespread as a result of human activities, with several species still in danger of becoming extinct, a poor status of most of the assessed habitats and various biotopes and habitats at risk of disappearing, as well as food webs showing signs of deterioration;
7. **UNDERScore** that we must continue to strive for good environmental status since the current state of the Baltic Sea marine environment remains unsatisfactory as a result of pressures from land- and sea-based human activities and that recovery is not yet sufficient to achieve the goals of the BSAP;
8. **RECALL** the decision by the 2018 Brussels Ministerial Meeting to update the BSAP by 2021 at the latest, with the aim of elaborating a robust action plan that will retain at least the level of ambition of the 2007 plan and will address new issues in addition to the existing commitments to be fulfilled by 2021 and will be aimed at achieving the agreed HELCOM vision of a healthy Baltic Sea marine environment;
9. **RECALL** also the Declaration adopted by the Ministers of the Environment, Maritime Economy, Agriculture and Fisheries of EU Baltic Sea Member States and of the Commissioner for ‘Environment, Oceans and Fisheries’ on September 28, 2020 committing to jointly boosting efforts to bring the Baltic to a good environmental status;
10. **AFFIRM** that, in order to address all relevant aspects of the ecosystem and the emerging challenges of marine management, the strategic goals underpinning the updated BSAP are a “Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication”, a “Baltic Sea unaffected by hazardous substances and litter”, “environmentally-sustainable sea-based activities”, all of which will lead to a “healthy and resilient Baltic Sea ecosystem”;
11. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the significant cost implications of not taking action against the varied threats to the Baltic Sea ecosystem and **NOTE**, for example, that according to the most recent “State of the Baltic Sea” report losses in recreational values alone due to the deterioration of the marine environment are estimated to be 1-2 billion euros annually and that a reduction of the high level of eutrophication,

- if reduced, is estimated to result in annual economic benefits in the order of 4 billion Euros across all relevant sectors of the economy;
12. **STRESS** that the achievement of good environmental status for the Baltic Sea will require major efforts and transformational change in all relevant sectors of the economy, including agriculture, fisheries, tourism, logistics, transportation and manufacturing, and necessitates among other things an increase in efficiency in the use of resources and a transition to a clean and sustainable circular economy;
 13. **UNDERScore** the need to integrate environmental objectives with economic and socio-economic goals in order to advance sustainable development and **STRESS the need for coherent spatial planning of human activities at sea across the region, applying the ecosystem-based approach;**
 14. **STRESS** the continued need for strong regional and cross-sectoral cooperation in working towards achieving good environmental status, involving relevant international and national organizations, financing institutions, scientific and research institutions, civil society and the private sector;
 15. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the positive contributions made by intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations towards preserving and protecting the Baltic Sea Area and ensuring a prudent utilisation of its marine goods and services and **NOTE** with gratification that the updated BSAP was developed in a participatory and transparent way at the regional and local levels, including all appropriate stakeholders, is based on the ecosystem approach, the precautionary principle, and relevant scientific research, enables knowledge sharing between science and policy across all levels, and gives due consideration to economic and social impacts of the measures to be taken to meet its objectives;
 16. **REITERATE** the determination of HELCOM Contracting Parties to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework adopted under the Convention on Biodiversity and to engage with other relevant regional and global processes and **STRESS** the role of HELCOM in leading the regional efforts to this effect and as an important and recognized contributor in the context of international ocean governance;
 17. **REITERATE** the need to coordinate and harmonize the work in the context of the HELCOM BSAP with various ongoing initiatives at the international, European, regional and national levels, including in particular the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the European Green Deal, as well as all other pertinent EU legislation and programmes and all pertinent legislation and policies of the Russian Federation, including the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation;
 18. **AGREE** that the effectiveness of action taken shall continue to be evaluated by using appropriate indicators to measure the progress towards the targets, allowing for the adjustments needed to ensure that the objectives are achieved;
 19. **ACKNOWLEDGE** that the environmental targets in the various segments of the present plan are based on best available knowledge at the time of its elaboration and that, in line with the principles of adaptive management, the targets should be periodically reviewed and revised using a harmonised approach and the most up-to-date information;
 20. **AGREE** to realize all actions and commitments in the updated BSAP by the dates specified in the plan, with a view to finalizing implementation of the BSAP as a whole by 2030 at the latest;
 21. **WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO**, and seeking synergies with, national legislation, international agreements and the legislation of the European Union, as well as the legislation of the Russian Federation;

 22. **ADOPT THE FOLLOWING UPDATED BALTIC SEA ACTION PLAN, AIMED AT ACHIEVING GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS IN THE BALTIC SEA**