



26 August 2014

To: Heads of Delegation to the Helsinki Commission; HELCOM Observers; HELCOM Marine Litter Network; HELCOM MONAS; HELCOM LAND; HELCOM MARITIME; FISH-ENV Forum; Expert organizations and institutes;

Re. Invitation to the 2nd HELCOM Workshop for the development of a Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, Stralsund, Germany 22-23 October 2014

Dear Colleagues,

The HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration includes a commitment to develop a **Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter** (RAP ML) by **2015** at the latest with the aim of achieving a significant quantitative reduction of marine litter by 2025, compared to 2015, and to prevent harm to the coastal and marine environment. In addition, it specifies that such a plan ought to enable inter alia concrete measures for the prevention and reduction of marine litter from its main sources, develop common indicators and associated targets related to quantities, composition, sources and pathways of marine litter and to identify the socio-economic and biological impacts of marine litter.

During the last HELCOM meeting ([HELCOM 35/2014](#)) it was decided to address the development of such a plan through the following approach:

- to conduct a **first regional workshop in May 2014**;
- to prepare a **first draft version of the RAP ML** based on the outcome of the first workshop;
- to conduct a **second regional workshop in October 2014**;
- to prepare a **version of the RAP ML for national consultation by Contracting Parties**.

HELCOM is working to achieve this ambitious objective through an intercessional correspondence activity, in the form of an **expert network**, led by Germany as agreed in [HELCOM MONAS 19/2013](#). The network compiled information on marine litter projects in different HELCOM countries as well as on existing and planned monitoring activities. Additionally an overview on the state of the art with regards to the availability of data on sources of marine litter, monitoring approaches, possible common indicators as well as first lines of thinking on measures was produced. This material served as a basis for a **thematic session on marine litter** that took place at [HELCOM MONAS 20/2014](#) (9 April 2014). There, it was concluded that sufficient knowledge on predominant sources of marine litter in the Baltic Sea is available to start developing a RAP ML. Indicators and harmonized protocols for monitoring of marine litter will be further developed as part of the HELCOM CORESET II project. Thus, the [First HELCOM Workshop on Marine Litter](#) focused on the possible structure that the RAP ML may take as well as on measures to combat marine litter in the Baltic Sea, e.g. as identified at the ["International Conference on Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in European Seas in 2013"](#) and/or currently applied national wise to consider for their inclusion in the RAP ML. Based on the outcome of the workshop a 0 Draft of the RAP ML was prepared and submitted for comments to Contracting Parties.

Thus, together with the host country Germany, and in accordance with the decisions of HELCOM 35/2014 (paragraph 4.34 of the Outcome of the meeting) to arrange the HELCOM work on Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter, I have the pleasure to invite you to the **2nd HELCOM Workshop on Marine Litter**, which will be held on **22-23 October 2014** at the premises of the Ozeanuem/Meeresmuseum (Hafenstraße 11 – visitor entrance at the harbour side, 18439) in **Stralsund**, Germany.

Due to the high specific nature of the meeting, Contracting Parties are kindly requested to invite up to four people from national administrations, NGOs with expertise on marine litter, as well as stakeholders from e.g. the waste management and wastewater treatment sectors, the shipping and fishing industries and the fields of product design and education. Contracting Parties will be provided with a list of contacts to support the invitation process. Please be aware that due to space restrictions, observer organizations are kindly invited to select one participant to represent them. Additionally, on-line participation may be available in case a wider representation is considered required.

The Meeting will start on **Wednesday, 22 October 2014 at 10:00 am** and is expected to terminate by **15:30 pm on Thursday 23 October 2014**.

The purpose of this Meeting will be:

- to inform about the state of work with regard to marine litter in other Regional Seas Conventions areas (North-East Atlantic, Mediterranean and Black Sea) and identify first fields of action for work at inter-regional level;
- to further develop the HELCOM RAP ML based on draft 0 (including comments received by Contracting Parties) and the feedback received from the 46th Meeting of the Heads of Delegation with a focus on identification of the measures required to combat marine litter in the Baltic Sea, underpinned with the definition of operational targets and lead countries;
- to scope further work to finalize and implement the HELCOM RAP ML.

Please find enclosed the Provisional Agenda for the Meeting (document 1/1) together with practical information. The 0 Draft of the Action Plan amended with the comments as provided by Contracting Parties will follow in order to be further discussed at the workshop.

Submission of and access to documents, registration

The documents for the meeting will be made available in the new [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#). Please find here [instructions](#) for signing up as a *first time user* of the new Meeting Portal. The participants are kindly invited to sign up to the new Meeting Portal at their earliest convenience. Once you have signed up to the Meeting Portal, the Secretariat will need to grant you separate permission to access the restricted meeting document library on the [MARINE LITTER 2-2014 Meeting Site](#). After sign up, the participants are kindly requested to sign in and register to the Meeting by answering the [Participation Survey](#) not later than **15 October 2014**.

As the HELCOM Secretariat is in a transition phase with taking into use the new Meeting Portal, we appreciate your patience with possible bugs and challenges in the system and welcome any feedback and comments you might have. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Marta Ruiz (marta.ruiz@helcom.fi) or the HELCOM Data Administrator (joni.kaitaranta@helcom.fi).

Meeting documents for HELCOM MARINE LITTER 2-2014 will be submitted by the Secretariat via the HELCOM Meeting Portal.

The Secretariat kindly requests the Contracting Parties and Observers to observe the deadlines for submission of documents to a HELCOM meeting. The basic documents and documents requiring action or a decision to the Meeting should be submitted in electronic form to Professional Secretary, Mr. Dmitry Frank Kamenetsky (Dmitry.Frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi) by **1 October 2014**. Bulky documents should include abstracts embodying the essence of the proposals and action requested from the meeting. Documents containing comments to the basic documents as well as information documents should be provided to the Secretariat by **15 October 2014**.



Sincerely,

Monika Stankiewicz
Executive Secretary