



Document title	Proposals for scope of the review and updating of part II Annex III (Prevention of pollution from agriculture) of the Helsinki Convention
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Background

HELCOM HOD 47-2015 requested the Agri group to develop a proposal for the review process of part II of Annex III for the consideration by the Heads of Delegation. Once the scope of the review has been decided on by HOD, the revision process could start. The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to consider co-leading the review/revision work.

HELCOM AGRI 2-2015:

- noted the request by HOD 47-2014 to consider a way forward regarding revision of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention and
- took note of the proposals by Coalition Clean Baltic for amendments to part II of Annex III ([document 5-2](#)).
- agreed that for the time being the priority will be given to the themes of nutrient recycling, bookkeeping and manure nutrient content and that the Group will come back to the issue of revising and updating part II of Annex III at a later stage.

The attached document contains further developed proposals by CCB for scope of the review and updating of part II Annex III (Prevention of pollution from agriculture) of the Helsinki Convention (1992).

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the comments by CCB on the need to decide on scope of the review and updating process and proposals on content-wise amendments.



To

HELCOM HOD 48-2015, 10-11 June 2015

Proposals for scope of the review and updating of part II Annex III (Prevention of pollution from agriculture) of the Helsinki Convention

[HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in October 2013](#), decided i.a. on the following:

- **6 (N).** WE DECIDE to investigate measures to reduce nutrient surplus in fertilization practices to reach nutrient balanced fertilization with the objective to come to an agreement on national level by 2018;
- **7 (N).** WE AGREE to promote and advance towards applying by 2018 at the latest annual nutrient accounting at farm level taking into account soil and climate conditions giving the possibility to reach nutrient balanced fertilization and reduce nutrient losses at regional level in the countries, noting the positive examples of mandatory requirements on nutrient bookkeeping in some HELCOM countries and with an aim to apply it region-wide, as a first step, in areas critical to nutrient losses;
- **9 (N).** With a view to fully utilize nutrient content of manure in fertilization practices and to avoid overfertilization WE ALSO AGREE to establish by 2016 national guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure and to develop by 2018 guidelines/recommendation on the use of such standards;
- **10 (N).** WE AGREE to initiate and accomplish by 2016 a review and an updating of part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention, in order to better serve the purposes of reaching good environmental status; Referring to decision 10 (N) and in accordance with the Work Plan of HELCOM AGRI (approved by [HOD 47-2014](#)) this process needs to start up now with review in 2015 and drafting/updating in 2016.

The HODs ([HOD 42-2013](#), 2.41 (LD 42)) have re-confirmed that the current part II of Annex III should be regarded as minimum requirements for the revision process. By its nature as the intergovernmental agreement between both EU and non-EU countries, the Helsinki Convention includes certain provisions, which go beyond the existing EU regulations. As agreed earlier by HELCOM Heads of Delegation ([HOD 44-2013](#), 2.5 (LD 6)) the intention of the review and update of part II Annex III is not to align the provisions with the existing regulations, which would not create any added value.

An appropriate scope for the review and updating process would be to follow the positions from earlier HOD-meetings and not dilute or water down the requirements in existing Annex III, and not align the provisions with existing EU-regulations, e.g. Nitrates Directive. HELCOM has deliberately developed stronger requirements on nutrient run-off from farmland as an important action to mitigate the Baltic Sea eutrophication, the major environmental problem of the region.

Based on the above, the proposed scope for the review should be:

- not deleting any texts in existing [Annex III](#)
- bring in as amendments the agreed actions from [2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting](#) to specify existing requirements for “Applications rates for nutrient” in [Annex III](#), related to nutrient bookkeeping and nutrient-balanced-fertilization practices

Regulation 2: Plant nutrients of [part II Annex III](#) of the Helsinki Convention (1992) adopted as a part of the HELCOM BSAP (2007), has introduced the following legally binding requirements for all HELCOM Contracting Parties regarding:

“...

1. Animal density

To ensure that manure is not produced in excess in comparison to the amount of arable land, there must be a balance between the number of animals on the farm and the amount of land available for spreading manure, expressed as animal density. The maximum number of animals should be determined with consideration taken of the need to balance between the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in manure and the crops' requirements for plant nutrients.

7. Application rates for nutrients

The application of nutrients in agricultural land shall be limited, based on a balance between the foreseeable nutrient requirements of the crops and the nutrient supply to the crops from the soil and the nutrients with a view to minimize eutrophication.

National guidelines should be developed with fertilizing recommendations and they should make reference to:

- soil conditions, soil nutrient content, soil type and slope;
- climatic conditions and irrigation;
- land use and agricultural practices, including crop rotation systems;
- all external potential nutrient sources

The amount of livestock manure applied to the land each year including by the animals themselves should not exceed the amount of manure containing:

- 170 kg/ha nitrogen
- 25 kg/ha phosphorus

with a view to avoiding nutrient surplus, taking soil characteristics, agricultural practices and crop types into account.

...”

The above provisions are aiming to support nutrient balanced fertilization practices as a tool for efficient use of nutrient resources and avoiding of nutrient losses from agriculture.

The 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting agreed on the steps to specify the above requirements and in a more adequate/explicit way express how nutrient-balanced fertilization practices are to be defined and interpreted. These Ministerial provisions are very relevant to include in the updated HELCOM Annex III, part II, Prevention of pollution from agriculture.

Coalition Clean Baltic would like to suggest the following proposals for consideration in the process of reviewing and updating process of Annex III, Part II, Prevention of pollution from agriculture

1. In order to proceed with the review process in time as agreed by 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting it would be advisable that Heads of Delegation consider and decide on the scope of the review, taking into account the outcome of HELCOM AGRI 2-2015 (cf. doc 3-22, para 2.8) as soon as possible to avoid delaying the process.

2. Content-wise, based on the discussions at HELCOM AGRI 2-2015 that the priority will be given to the themes of nutrient recycling, bookkeeping and manure nutrient content, the following proposals are suggested for consideration by experts:

Under point 7 of Regulation 2, adding the following wording:

- introduce annual nutrient accounting/bookkeeping at farm/field level, and calculation of nutrient surplus levels (as kg N / ha, y and kg P / ha, y)
- the full content of nutrients in manure will be forwarded as input to the nutrient accounting at farm/field level
- introduce national tolerable nutrient surplus levels for nitrogen and phosphorus, to reduce nutrient surplus in fertilization practices to reach nutrient balanced fertilization