

HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 19/17 *)

Adopted 24 March 1998 having regard to
Article 13, Paragraph b) and Regulation 2 of Annex VI
of the Helsinki Convention

MEASURES IN ORDER TO COMBAT POLLUTION FROM OFFSHORE UNITS

THE COMMISSION,

RECALLING Article 10 of the 1974 Helsinki Convention which stipulates, *inter alia*, that each Contracting Party shall ensure that adequate equipment is at hand to start an immediate abatement of pollution in the Baltic Sea Area,

RECALLING ALSO Article 12 of the 1992 Helsinki Convention which stipulates, *inter alia*, that each Contracting Party shall ensure that adequate preparedness is maintained for immediate response actions against pollution incidents caused by exploration and exploitation of the seabed and its subsoil,

RECALLING further Regulation 7 of Annex VI and Regulation 2 of Annex VII of the 1992 Helsinki Convention concerning contingency planning,

NOTING HELCOM Recommendation 1/8 on Minimization of the Use of Dispersants, Sinking Agents and Absorbents in Oil Combatting Operations in the Baltic Sea and HELCOM Recommendation 11/13 concerning the development of national ability to respond to spillages of oil and other harmful substances and guidelines for applying this Recommendation,

BEING AWARE of other HELCOM activities concerning restriction of discharges and monitoring of exploration and exploitation of the seabed and its subsoil,

BEING ALSO AWARE of the IMO Manual on Oil Pollution - Section II, Appendix 2 "Oil pollution emergency plans for offshore units, seaports and oil handling facilities", which has been developed within IMO under the umbrella of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990,

RECOMMENDS the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the 1974 Helsinki Convention to ensure that each of the offshore units shall be furnished with the Pollution Emergency Plan, developed in accordance with the principles specified below:

- a) Pollution Emergency Plan shall be harmonized with the national contingency plan and approved in accordance with the procedure established by the appropriate national authority, and it shall take into account the risk assessment connected with the operation of the offshore unit;

- b) Pollution Emergency Plans shall be drawn up before the offshore units are taken into use, and also shall be:
 - (i) appropriate to the type of the offshore unit,
 - (ii) relevant to the conditions of the offshore unit's operation,
 - (iii) effective, i.e., friendly to users;
- c) Pollution Emergency Plan shall appoint the exact storage place for the combatting equipment, e.g., the emergency stand-by vessel and/or a land base with due regard to location of the offshore unit;
- d) The equipment should be located so that retaining measures can be taken at a sufficiently early stage with due regard to the environmental sensitivity and geological conditions of the area. The response measures should be taken immediately by the operator of the platform. The other supporting measures within the overall contingency plan should be taken not later than in eight hours after the spillage;
- e) The use of dispersants in oil combatting operations is limited as far as possible and any such use is subject to authorization, in each individual case, by the competent national authorities;
- f) Total capacity of the equipment should correspond with the spill expectancy rate:
 - (i) The quantity of the equipment shall be sufficient to combat spills corresponding to the discharge of oil from a production drilling, a production platform or a pipeline, with due regard to evaporation and emulsification of the oil,
 - (ii) For exploration drilling the quantity of equipment shall be sufficient to combat spills of oil corresponding to the probable discharge with due regard to the geological location of the drilling site, and to evaporation and emulsification of the oil,
- g) The equipment for combatting operations must be able to fulfil the following requirements:
 - (i) Oil recovery systems, booms and transport material shall be designated to be operational under the conditions of wave height and current prevailing in the waters involved, limited to a significant wave height up to 2,0 m and/or a current velocity of up to 1 knot.

Moreover, the equipment shall be able to operate efficiently under prevailing temperature conditions in the actual areas (due to blow-out situations),
 - (ii) Combatting equipment which is liable to be used under ice conditions must be well tested for this purpose;
- h) The equipment for combatting of pollution caused by harmful substances other than oil, if used in significant quantities, must be able to fulfil the following requirements:
 - (i) The quantity and type of equipment shall be dimensioned in order to enable the user to measure and report on the extent and location of the pollution, as well as to reduce the discharge of the substances,

- (ii) Where the pollutants remain floating on the surface of the water and are not easily soluble in water, the user shall be able to encircle, take up and transport the pollutants under the weather conditions specified in Paragraph g) (I),
 - (iii) In such cases the equipment shall be sufficient to allow combatting of the substances present at that time;
- i) The equipment shall be stored and maintained so that combatting measures can be taken immediately,

REQUESTS the Governments of the Contracting Parties to continuously exchange information through the Helsinki Commission on the location and nature of all planned or accomplished offshore activities and on the nature and amounts of discharges as well as on contingency measures that are undertaken, and also to inform:

- a) other Contracting Parties with borders to the sea area where offshore activities take place about the contingency measures taken for combatting pollution of the sea, in due time before the offshore activities are started up;
- b) the Combatting Committee about the approved measures on the conditions required for each separate offshore unit according to Paragraph d) above, as well as on other detailed information, which may be essential for a joint response to pollution incidents,

REQUESTS ALSO the Governments of the Contracting Parties to provide reports on the implementation of this Recommendation in accordance with a procedure established by the Combatting Committee.

*) *This Recommendation supersedes HELCOM Recommendation 10/10.*