

Speed up of finalizing the HELCOM re-survey plan with EU co-financing

Background

In Moscow, 20 May 2010, the HELCOM Ministerial Declaration on the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan was agreed upon. Agreements, quoted from the Ministerial Declaration, regarding hydrographic surveys in the Baltic Sea are as follows:

- to extend the scope of the 2001 HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration to cover all routes and other areas used for navigation according to the revised Baltic re-survey scheme to be developed based on the 2009 Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission Vision for the re-survey as contained in Annex 2;
- to present their national re-survey plans preferably by 2013, but not later than 2015, including time schedule estimations;
- to undertake necessary measures to ensure that sufficient funding, including external funding, will be available for re-surveys;

BSHC, and in practice the Monitoring Working Group, is monitoring the progress of the HELCOM re-survey plan and the national Hydrographic Offices have contributed to the work according to the plan and are carrying out re-surveying of the specified HELCOM areas. “Speed up re-surveying of major shipping routes and ports”, as agreed in HELCOM, is a flagship project within EU’s Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and aims at ensuring that safety of navigation is not endangered by inadequate source information.

Concrete actions are taken to cooperate and speed up the re-surveying of the HELCOM shipping routes in the Baltic Sea. Currently, the Motorways of the Sea project MONALISA is contributing with re-surveying of extensive areas of importance for maritime transport, in Swedish and Finnish waters. The re-surveying within MONALISA amounts to more than 16 million Euro and is co-funded with 50% from EU’s budget for Trans-European Transport Network and the Motorways of the Sea program. The on-going MONALISA project will be finalized in the end of 2013.

Problem description and Analysis

The actions taken by the Baltic Sea Countries and financially partly also by the European Union are of utmost importance in order to improve safety of navigation and reduce the risk of accidents and environmental accidents. Based on that assumption, the re-surveying of the HELCOM shipping routes in the Baltic Sea, mainly the HELCOM Category I and II areas should be speeded up. This task is supported by the HELCOM Ministerial Declaration and by EU’s Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The political support for this important work is thus very strong. All Baltic Sea Countries should make their utmost in order to finalize the re-surveying as soon as possible.

According to the Ministerial Declaration we should next year present our national re-survey plans and also include time schedule estimations. Sweden, with approximately 50% of the areas defined

within the HELCOM re-survey plan, see that external funding is essential if surveys should be performed within a reasonable time limit. It is also mentioned in the Moscow Declaration that we should undertake necessary measures to ensure that sufficient funding, including external funding, will be available for re-surveys.

EU's legal framework for the Trans-European Transport Network has been subject to a revision during 2011 and 2012. This revision is still not finalized, but Motorways of the Sea and horizontal actions like hydrographic surveys are strongly supported in the draft legal document. Sweden and Finland have good experiences from the work with the Trans-European Transport Network, from which MONALISA is co-financed.

The next financial perspective for EU – 2014-2020 provides the Baltic Sea EU Member States with now an open window for raising EU-funding for speeding up of HELCOM re-surveying.

The first call for project proposals under the new financial perspective is estimated to open in 2014, or early 2015. A joint application for co-financing from the Trans-European Transport Network by the Baltic EU Member States for a program aiming at finalizing the re-surveying of the HELCOM Cat. I and II areas until year 2020 should have good possibilities to be positively evaluated. The level of EU co-financing amounts to 20-30%.

Recommendations

BSHC member states are recommended to cooperate on a strategic and operational level in the re-surveying of major shipping routes in the Baltic Sea Region and jointly apply for EU co-financing for the finalization of the HELCOM Cat I and II shipping routes with the aim of improving safety of navigation.