



UNDER: MODERATOR: CHAIR:
Mariajosé Stefania Maika
Armada Dominguez Fdz

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Topic B: “Addressing Baltic Sea Environmental
Damage”**





Welcoming letter

Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to have you here in the CFMUNX. We are pleased with your participation during the event and fully dedicate ourselves to ensure that your experience in this model is the best.

Throughout the three days of the model, we aim to provide the best educational and social experiences. This includes the opportunity to debate and learn about current global issues, as well as fostering leadership and negotiation skills, including the implementation of diplomatic solutions for these global problems. The General Assembly committee expects your active participation.



We appreciate all your assistance and enthusiasm in participating in our model, and once again, welcome to the CFMUN.

Cordially,

Stefania Domínguez & Maika Fernández



Table of contents

I. Committee Background

II. Introduction to the Topic

III. Evolution of the Topic

IV. Relevant Events

A. Panorama

B. Points of View

V. UN and External Actions

VI. Conclusion

VII. Committee Focus

VIII. Participation List

IX. References



I. Committee Background

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) serves as the primary policymaking organ of the Organization. Comprising all 193 Member States of the UN, this committee provides a unique forum for the multilateral examination of global situations, including peace and security covered by the Charter of the United Nations. The Assembly makes recommendations to states on international issues within its competence. It also takes actions across all pillars of the United Nations, including political, economical, humanitarian, social, and legal matters.

The General Assembly convenes in regular sessions from September to December each year, and thereafter as required. It discusses specific issues through dedicated agenda items or sub-items, leading to the adoption of resolutions (United Nations General Assembly, n.d.).

II. Introduction to the Topic

The Baltic Sea is a semi-enclosed inland sea located in Northern Europe, surrounded by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden, playing a significant role in the economy and history of the regions. Considered an arm of the Atlantic Ocean, it extends northward from southern Denmark to within a few degrees' latitude of the Arctic Circle, separating the Scandinavian Peninsula from continental Europe.

The Baltic is one of the most brackish bodies of water in the world, receiving both ocean and river water. Its ecosystem makes it a favorite of scientists and researchers, because it responds relatively quickly to external influences. Natural occurrences, such as environmental factor fluctuations, and anthropogenic effects, such as fisheries, pollution, or industrialization, impact the sea measurably.

Throughout its existence, the Baltic Sea has served as a habitat for a diverse array of flora and fauna. However, it has endured significant environmental degradation due to exploitation and economic activities. These include the overabundance of nitrogen and phosphorus, pollution stemming from hazardous substances, habitat destruction, the utilization of harmful equipment, and the introduction of non-indigenous species.

III. Evolution of the Topic

The Baltic Sea harbors a unique composition of species and landscapes. In the last decade, the expansion of damage in the Baltic Sea has become a worrying issue, positioning the Baltic Sea as one of the most polluted seas in Europe. The pollution has engendered a loss of biodiversity, imperilment of species, elevated concentrations of contaminants encompassing hazardous substances, and an accumulation of plastic waste. This has precipitated a profound environmental, economic, and social crisis.

The sources of marine pollution are municipal and industrial waste inputs directly into the sea or via rivers, and atmospheric inputs mainly from traffic and agriculture. One of the most serious environmental problems of the Baltic Sea is eutrophication caused by the presence of excess nutrients in the seawater, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, leading to a dense algal growth, some of it poisonous.

Moreover, the pollution by pesticides, heavy metals, industrial wastes, the habitat destruction, the use of harmful fishing equipment and the introduction of invasive species contribute to the environmental damages that the Baltic Sea is currently suffering.

Furthermore, attributable to the climate change, the Baltic Sea no longer completely freezes in winter, a phenomenon that exerts a profound influence on the diminution of marine life, the growth of blue-green algae and the depletion of oxygen at the bottom of the sea.

Presently, the Baltic Sea stands as a cornerstone of economic activity in multiple countries, fostering the advancement of maritime transportation and the evolution of seaports into urban centers.

Some of the busiest shipping routes in the world are to be found in the Baltic Sea, and maritime traffic is increasing at an alarming rate, contributing to the danger of oil discharges. However, the biggest source of pollution from shipping currently comes from illegal oil discharges.

The Baltic Sea has been utilized by inhabitants in the region, serving as a resource for fisheries, particularly for cod and herring, as well as facilitating the transportation of goods between disparate coastlines. Now the Baltic Sea has also to meet new demands such as recreation and tourism.

The fish populations of the Baltic Sea are burdened by overfishing, oxygen depletion and high levels of hazardous substances, as well as by natural challenges like cold winter temperatures and varying levels of salinity.

Some of the present fishing practices are not sustainable and are causing high amounts of by-catches of non-commercial fish species, birds, harbor porpoises and seals.

Therefore, the environmental impairments endured by the Baltic Sea have the potential to exert adverse repercussions on both the regional economy and biodiversity, consequently, it is crucial to take action to avoid further repercussions.

IV. Relevant Events

A. PANORAMA

- On October 8, 2023, one of the underwater gas pipelines connecting Finland and Estonia was closed and investigated due to an alleged leak. The gas leak in the area could have caused a significant pollution impact. At the center of the investigation was found a Russian nuclear-powered cargo ship, the “Sevmorput.” Russia has posed a threat to vital undersea cables in the region, particularly since the start of the Ukraine war. The threat has increased since the explosion of the Nord Stream gas pipeline in September 2022, causing environmental risks in the Baltic Sea.

- Originating from pulp manufacturing and paper mills, large quantities of poisonous chlorinated compounds contaminated the coastal waters of Sweden and Finland until the 1980s. Most of this material is still present in the sediments of the central Baltic Sea. To reduce pollution, neighboring countries organized the Helsinki Convention, which came into force in 1980.
- Every year, between 500 and 700 illegal oil discharges are observed in the Baltic Sea Area by aerial surveillance. Each of these constitutes a violation of the global regulations adopted by the International Maritime Organization as well as of the Baltic Strategy adopted by HELCOM, obliging all ships to dispose in Baltic ports of their oily residues.

B. POINTS OF VIEW

- The Russian president (Vladimir Putin) along with The Russian Federation, has taken the Baltic Sea as a weapon against the NATO, this position and actions have directly affected in the Baltic's infrastructure, including the incident on October 8, 2023.
- The delegation of Poland has been one of the most affected countries due to the pollution of the Baltic, in 2010 an unprecedented toxic algae bloom covered almost 377,000 square kilometers, an area larger than all of Germany. According to HELCOM, the development of factory farms of cattle raising in the Baltic Sea area has led to the development of a new segment of pollution point sources there.

- In 2011 Poland was identified as the biggest polluter, as a consequence in 2013, Poland was referred by the European Commission to the European Court of Justice for “failure to comply with the Water Frame Directive in the national legislation”.

V. UN and External Actions

A. UN ACTIONS

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) continues to provide support on the protection of the marine environment through the active engagement of the Regional Seas Programmes (RSP) and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), and through its Global Marine Litter Initiative which has addressed the challenge, by assisting 11 Regional Seas around the world including the Baltic Sea. Additionally, the marine litter project of **HELCOM** was co-funded by UNEP.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment examined the protection of regional seas (including the Baltic Ocean) and assessed environmental impact and subregional cooperation in marine matters.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialized agency of the UN, makes efforts to address the maritime pollution and shipping-related issues globally. Its regulations and initiatives indirectly contribute to the protection of the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission which is also known as the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) is an intergovernmental organization and a regional sea convention in the Baltic Sea area.



The Helsinki Commission was established in 1974 with the overarching goal of safeguarding the marine environment of the Baltic Sea against various sources of pollution through intergovernmental cooperation.

In 1992 the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP) was established. Providing a practical basis for realizing objectives of the Helsinki Convention and establish a framework for sustained cooperation among contracting parties, other governments in the region, international financial institutions and nongovernmental organizations who share a common interest in environmental protection.

B. EXTERNAL ACTIONS

Baltic Sea Action Group (BSAG) is a non-profit foundation that takes effective actions to save the Baltic Sea, with the overarching objective of reinstating a favorable ecological equilibrium in the Baltic Sea amid evolving climatic conditions. The BSAG endeavors to safeguard the Baltic Sea, mitigate biodiversity depletion, and alleviate the impacts of climate change.

The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is the first Macro-regional Strategy in Europe which endeavors to enhance water quality, diminish pollution, foster regional connectivity, and augment prosperity.

VI. Conclusion

The imperative to safeguard the Baltic Sea is unequivocal and underscored by multifaceted considerations. Preserving the ecological integrity of this vital maritime environment is essential not only for the sustenance of diverse marine life but also for the well-being of the human populations dependent on its resources.

Addressing the environmental crisis requires an international cooperation in which the causes, repercussions and preventions are addressed and taken into account in order to ensure the environmental safety of marine species, improve water conditions and avoid any type of major environmental and humanitarian effects.

VII. Committee Focus

Delegates must address the environmental challenges and associated with contamination of the Baltic Sea, emphasizing the eutrophication, industrial discharges, climate change and shipping activities.

Delegates will collaborate to develop strategies and regulations to enhance the prevailing conditions of the Baltic Sea and mitigate both extant and prospective environmental harm.

When considering the possible solutions to the committee's topic, the following points must be considered:

- In what manner can the mitigation of prospective environmental contamination in the Baltic Sea be effectively addressed?

- How does the committee intend to address the pollution crisis in consideration of the economic and commercial resources that the Baltic Sea provides to nations?
- Is your delegation's country situated in proximity to the Baltic Sea? If affirmative, what measures are undertaken to mitigate pollution in the region?
- In which economic activities within the Baltic Sea region is your delegation involved?
- How do the delegations intend to secure the comprehensive prevention of potential leaks, considering the existing infrastructure vulnerabilities associated with oil and gas activities in the Baltic Sea region?
- Consider the measures taken in other rivers or water masses to avoid, address or prevent pollution.
- How will the committee prevent environmental contamination caused by current infrastructure damages?

VIII. Participation List

1. Arab Republic of Egypt
2. Democratic People's Republic of North Korea
(observer)
3. Dominion of Canada
4. Federal Republic of Germany
5. French Republic
6. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
7. Islamic Republic of Pakistan
8. Japan
9. People's Republic of China
10. Republic of Estonia
11. Republic of Finland
12. Republic of India
13. Republic of Iraq
14. Republic of Korea
15. Republic of Latvia
16. Republic of Lithuania
17. Republic of Poland
18. Russian Federation
19. State of Palestine (observer)
20. The Kingdom of Denmark

21. The Kingdom of Norway
22. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
23. The Kingdom of Sweden
24. The State of Israel
25. Ukraine
26. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
27. United States of America

IX. References

HELCOM. (n.d.). HELCOM. Retrieved November 27, 2023, from

<https://helcom.fi/about-us/>

Baltic Sea organizations — Our Baltic Sea. (n.d.). Our Baltic Sea. Retrieved November 27, 2023, from <https://ourbalticsea.com/organisations-involved>

General Assembly | United Nations. (n.d.). the United Nations. Retrieved November 27, 2023, from

<https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/general-assembly>

Jarath, M. (2022, October 2). UNESCO Baltic Sea Project. . -. Retrieved November 27, 2023, from

<https://www.b-s-p.org/about>

TANNER, J. (2023, October 8). A Baltic Sea gas pipeline between Finland and Estonia is shut down over a suspected leak. AP News.

<https://apnews.com/article/finland-estonia-gas-pipeline-b223c6926f06c3a08f402de133699a3f>

Owen, V. (2023, November 12). Ukrainian Military Officer Accused of Attack on Nord Stream Gas Pipeline. VOA News.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/ukrainian-military-officer-accused-of-attack-on-nord-stream-gas-pipeline/7352410.html>

Page, M. (2023, October 31). Russia, a Chinese cargo ship and the sabotage of subsea cables in the Baltic Sea | The Strategist. ASPI Strategist.

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/russia-a-chinese-cargo-ship-and-the-sabotage-of-subsea-cables-in-the-baltic-sea/>

Shwatt, P. O. (n.d.). Climate change affects the Baltic Sea – Marinefinland.fi. The Baltic Sea.

https://www.marinefinland.fi/en-US/Nature_and_how_it_changes/Climate_change

Start. (2021, October 20). BalticSea2020.

Retrieved November 27, 2023, from

<https://www.balticsea2020.org/english/>

Watt, R. (2022, January 8). UK military chief warns of Russian threat to vital undersea cables. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jan/08/uk-military-chief-warns-of-russian-threat-to-vital-undersea-cables>