

11.1.2016

Gulf of Finland Declaration

## DECLARATION ON CO-OPERATION TO PROTECT THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE GULF OF FINLAND AND ITS COASTAL REGIONS

The Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Estonia

The Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Finland

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation

(hereinafter referred to as the *Participants*);

Noting the international co-operation framework to protect the Baltic Sea, and taking into account the unique characteristics of the Gulf of Finland as its sub-region, the Participants confirm their intentions to promote, together with international, national/federal, regional and local organisations, authorities and other stakeholders involved, the following:

- Implementation of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission's (HELCOM) Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP, Krakow 2007), and the revised nutrient reduction scheme of the HELCOM BSAP as adopted by the Ministerial meeting in 2013 as well as the objective to reach a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea by 2021;
- Goals set forth by the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant goals of sustainable development;
- Implementation of bilateral agreements and programmes between the Participants in the field of resolving environmental issues;
- Marine protection objectives set forth within the framework of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive as well as the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the North-West Russia Development Strategy.

The Participants seek to strengthen their co-operation, in the open gulf and coastal areas, in order to reduce loads, promote sustainable use of natural resources in the Gulf, and to secure the good quality of its marine environment for future generations.

The Participants seek to promote and develop co-operation in the trilateral format for the implementation of national and international obligations to protect the marine environment of the Gulf of Finland and the whole Baltic Sea, and to avoid and diminish various environmental risks;

Additionally, for practical facilitation of the co-operation, the Participants intend to establish a permanent Trilateral Co-ordination Committee led by the ministries responsible for environmental protection.

The Trilateral Co-ordination Committee will adopt a **Co-operation Programme**. The terms of reference for the co-operation are given in a detailed form in **Annex 1**.

The Co-ordination Committee will adopt a joint Monitoring programme of the Gulf of Finland (outlined in Annex 2). The Monitoring programme will seek to ensure:

- data exchange between the three countries;
- that, based on the jointly collected monitoring data, a joint annual report will be issued and results presented to the Trilateral Co-ordination Committee;
- that the inter-calibration of measurement methods is carried out on regular basis.

Furthermore, the Participants intend to promote, together with international, national/federal, regional and local organizations, authorities and other stakeholders involved, the implementation of recommendations based on a trilateral assessment of the state of the Gulf of Finland (**Annex 3, Road Map**). The assessment is based on a comprehensive analysis of the Estonian-Finnish-Russian marine data in the period 1996-2014. The main recommendations address:

1. Eutrophication
2. Biological and geological diversity
3. Pollution and Ecosystem Health
4. Fish and fisheries
5. Maritime safety
6. Maritime spatial planning (MSP)
7. Climate change
8. Monitoring and research
9. Further cooperation

The Road Map is a living document and it will be updated based on the decision of the Co-ordination Committee.

The Co-ordination Committee will, at a later stage, draw up a plan and arrange to organize the third Gulf of Finland Year.

This Declaration and its Annexes do not create any rights or obligations under international law. Nothing in this Declaration nor in its Annexes will affect the rights and obligations of the Participants deriving from any treaties, conventions or regional or international agreements.

Signed in triplicate on January 11, 2016, in the English and Russian languages, all texts having equal validity.



For the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Estonia



For the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Finland



For the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation