

# HELSINKI COMMISSION

Baltic Marine Environment  
Protection Commission

21 October 2013



Mr. Paul Connolly  
ICES President

Dear Mr. Paul Connolly,

I would like to thank you for sharing the ICES Strategic Plan, 2014-2018, and giving HELCOM an opportunity to provide its comments. I would like to complement ICES on the accomplishment of the strategic plan and offer some feedback on future plans of HELCOM to cooperate with ICES. I hope this feedback, while being quite specific, could also serve further consideration in relation to the Strategic Plan.

Indeed, the marine policy landscape and the related research needs have been changing rapidly during recent years and in response to this, HELCOM is seeking closer cooperation with its partner organizations such as ICES in order to gain from synergies and building on each other's expertise and strengths.

The recently adopted HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration "Taking Further Action to Implement the Baltic Sea Action Plan – Reaching Good Environmental Status for a healthy Baltic Sea" highlights ICES expertise on a number of issues, and here I would like to quote especially one provision agreed by the HELCOM Ministers:

*"WE REQUEST the Contracting Parties to further strengthen co-operation with ICES in responding to the scientific needs arising from the implementation of the BSAP and relevant global, European and national requirements, including integration of environmental and fisheries surveys, and as the first step for the purposes of co-operation towards automatized data aggregation and further enhanced quality assurance for the assessments".*

We will have an opportunity to take concrete steps towards integration of environmental and fisheries surveys within the just launched project "Baltic Sea Pilot Project: Testing new concepts for integrated environmental monitoring of the Baltic Sea (BALSAM)" (2013-2015), in which it is planned to involve ICES in WP 2 "Promoting and communicating resource-efficiency in national monitoring strategies" based on the ICES proposed standard work package.

Another concrete joint undertaking is to make the production of regional assessments of eutrophication of the Baltic Sea operational. The aim is to create a process for semi-automatic updating of HELCOM core indicators on eutrophication leading to an assessment, utilizing HELCOM COMBINE database hosted by ICES and in cooperation with ICES. This specific project, called EUTRO-OPER will start in January 2014 and will serve as a pilot for a new cost-efficient approach to produce a regional assessment linked to a larger European data architecture currently under development as part of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive implementation, e.g. with a possibility for HELCOM countries being EU member states to make full use of it in the next cycle of assessment under MSFD.

While there are other issues of common interest and collaboration areas, especially these two projects, if realized successfully, will demonstrate a full potential of our organizations to pool resources and to timely and pro-actively respond to the emerging needs and support policy-makers and marine managers with high-quality advice and products they need.

I hope you find this feedback useful despite a slight delay in my response.

I'm looking forward to our further cooperation,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Monika Stankiewicz". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Monika" and last name "Stankiewicz" clearly legible.

Monika Stankiewicz

Executive Secretary