On the National Contingency Plan for Cases of Pollution of Oil, Hazardous or Harmful Substances in the Sea

1. On the basis of Section 53, Paragraph one of the Maritime Administration and Marine Safety Law to approve the National Contingency Plan for Cases of Pollution of Oil, Hazardous or Harmful Substances in the Sea (hereinafter - the Plan).

2. The State Environmental Service shall be responsible for the coordination of implementation of the Plan.

3. The National Armed Forces Naval units shall be responsible for the implementation of the measures provided for in the Plan to eliminate the consequences of pollution of oil, hazardous or harmful substances in the sea.

4. The National Armed Forces naval units, the State Environmental Service, the State Border Guard and the Emergency Medical Service shall, by 1 September 2010, draw up their action plans for cases of pollution of oil, hazardous or harmful substances in the sea. The State Environmental Service, the State Border Guard and the Emergency Medical Service shall submit the action plans to the National Armed Forces Naval units.

5. The State Environmental Service shall, by 15 December 2010, draw up an action plan for animal rescue in case of oil pollution in the sea and ashore. The measures for the informing the State and local government institutions, associations and local inhabitants and involvement thereof in implementation of the plan shall be provided for in the plan.


Acting for the Prime Minister - Minister for Finance E.Repše

Acting for the Minister for Environmental Protection – Minister for Education and Science T.Koče
National Contingency Plan for Cases of Pollution of Oil, Hazardous or Harmful Substances in the Sea

Content

Terms used in the Plan
I. Introduction
II. Measures to be taken to achieve the set objectives and the priority measures.
III. Activity levels
IV. Guidelines for action.
V. Information of the public and mass media relations
VI. Reports on pollution.
VII. Management and control
VIII. Communications
IX. Placement of the collected oil, hazardous or harmful substances.
X. Detection of polluter and collection of information
XI. Operational units
XII. Theoretical and practical training
XIII. Deadlines for the implementation of the measures
XIV. Institutions responsible for the implementation of the measures.
XV. Actions of the institutions involved in the implementation of the measures included in the Plan in accordance with their competence
XVI. Claims for compensations for damages in case of pollution.
XVII. Procedures for the submission and assessment of a report.
XVIII. Report on the state of discharge.
XIX. Financing

Annex 1. Alarm Procedure - Activity Levels
Annex 2. Report on the Observed Pollution with Regard to Polluters and Spillages to be Eliminated
Annex 3. Procedure for Alarm and Reporting
Annex 4. International Cooperation

Terms Used in the Plan

Responsible commander (RC) - an official designated by the National Armed Forces to carry out management of works for elimination of the consequences of emergencies in case of activity level I, II and III;
**Hazardous or harmful substance** - any substance other than oil which, if entering into the marine environment, may create hazards to human health, harm living resources and marine animals and plants, damage recreation area or interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea;

**Action management** - general coordination and control of the national measures.

**Duty official (DO)** - MRCC Riga duty coordinator, who works in MRCC Riga 24 hours a day-and-night;

**Loading equipment for oil, hazardous or harmful substances** - machinery and equipment, which ensures loading of oil, hazardous or harmful substances from floating craft, and unloading therefrom;

**Legal advisor (LA)** - the expert appointed by the Latvian Maritime Administration, who in accordance with his/her competence shall provide recommendations on administrative and legal matters in the measures for elimination of the consequences of an emergency, may also be an expert of the International Maritime Organisation;

**Coast Guard responsibility area** - the geographical area which in accordance with the National Armed Forces Law falls under the supervision of the Naval units and in which the Coast Guard within its competence shall carry out the measures related to elimination of the consequences of emergencies in accordance with this Plan;

**Crisis Management Board** - coordinates civil-military cooperation and the operational measures of the State administration institutions in suppression of the hazard to the State

**Secretariat of the Crisis Management Board** - ensures the work of the Crisis Management Board;

**On-scene commander (OSC)** - a person appointed by the responsible commander who in the international operation for elimination of the consequences of emergencies ensures tactical management in the sea and is directly subordinated to the responsible commander or duty officer. At the place of event the duty of the on-scene commander is to manage and carry out works for the localisation and elimination of discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances in the sea in accordance with this Plan. The on-scene commander shall supervise all the formations that have arrived to the place of incident in the sea, and none of his or her subordinate formations or people have the right to intervene with the work of the on-scene commander, cancel his or her commands and orders in works for localisation and elimination of spillage of oil, hazardous or harmful substances;

**Maritime safety advisor (MSA)** - an official of the Latvian Maritime Administration who according to his or her competence shall provide recommendations on maritime safety issues in the measures of elimination of the consequences of an emergency;

**Latvian waters** - waters under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Latvia, including coastal waters from the coast line to the base line, waters from the base line to the outer border of the territorial waters, and the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Latvia;

**Contracting Party** - a member state of the 1992 Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area;
MRCC Committee - a committee that is set up at MRCC Riga in a case of activity level II and III and acts in accordance with the agenda for the MRCC Committee drawn up by the National Armed Forces;

Head of the MRCC Committee - the responsible commander appointed by the National Armed Forces in case of convening the MRCC Committee;

MRCC Riga - the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Riga under the command of the National Armed Forces Naval Unit Coast Guard;

National on-scene commander (NOSC) - an official appointed by the responsible commander who in the international operation for elimination of the consequences of an emergency in the sea ensures tactical management of the national operational units, and acts under the tactical management of the senior on-scene commander. This position shall be established only in case of international measures;

Oil - oil in any form, including crude oil, fuel, sludge, oil refuse and refined products as well as special products, including Orimulsion;

A case of pollution - a case or a series of cases having the same origin, which results, may result or poses a threat of a discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances that poses a threat to the marine environment or to the coastline, or other interests of Latvia or other Baltic Sea countries, and which requires to immediately perform countermeasures and immediate response;

Incident - an occurrence that has caused or poses a threat of pollution of oil, hazardous or harmful substances in the sea;

Operational unit - a specialist-led group that is able to independently carry out measures for eliminating pollution and its consequences, to collect pollution and temporarily store it. Operational units work under tactical management of the on-scene commander. In international events it works under the management of its national on-scene commander;

Port area - port waters within the port boundaries approved by the Cabinet;

Responsibility area of the port authority - the port boundary approved by the Cabinet, except outer roadstead, where the port authority ensures implementation of measures related to elimination of the consequences of emergencies of discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances in accordance with the action plan of the port in case of unforeseen pollution;

Measure - any measure that prevents, reduces or eliminates pollution or allows to control it. In this context, also the purposeful omission of action shall be regarded as a measure;

Public relations officer (PR) - an official of the National Armed Forces who during the operation for elimination of the consequences of emergencies acts as a contact person between the MRCC Committee and the mass media;

Communications coordinator (CCO) - an official of MRCC Riga who during the operation for elimination of the consequences of emergencies ensures work of the all MRCC Riga communications systems;

Initial report - alarm or report received by MRCC Riga duty official;
**Tactical management** - management and monitoring of execution of specific tasks of operational teams, teams or units within the framework of the measures. It is in the respective areas of responsibility applied by on-scene commanders, national on-scene commanders, senior on-scene commanders, commanders of the coast, heads of operational teams and other teams or units;

**The leading country** - the member state of the 1992 Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, in the reaction zone which an incident in the sea has happened, and which has been entrusted to ensure management of the operation for elimination of the consequences of the emergency;

**Environmental Advisor (BA)** - an official appointed by the State Environmental Service who at activity level II and III coordinates the execution of the necessary environmental protection measures;

**Senior on-scene commander (SOSC)** - a person appointed by the responsible commander of the leading country who has been entrusted to ensure tactical management of the operation for elimination of the consequences of an emergency under the supervision of the responsible commander. Senior on-scene commander shall be appointed only in case of international measures.

**I. Introduction**

The elimination of the consequences of oil and hazardous or harmful substances discharged into the sea in the Latvian waters or in the proximity thereof shall be performed in accordance with the 1990 International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (hereinafter – the OPRC Convention), the 2000 Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Harmful Substances (hereinafter - the OPRC-HNS Protocol), the 1992 Convention On the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (hereinafter – the Helsinki Convention), and also in accordance with the National Contingency Plan for Cases of Pollution of Oil, Hazardous or Harmful Substances in the Sea.

The objective of the National Contingency Plan for Cases of Pollution of Oil, Hazardous or Harmful Substances in the Sea (hereinafter - the Plan) is to lay down the procedures in accordance with which State and local government institutions referred to in the Maritime Administration and Marine Safety Law and this Plan shall act in case of unforeseen discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances into the sea. The Plan lays down the procedures for measures for alerting, pollution assessment, situation control, operational management and liquidation of consequences of an emergency in case of unforeseen discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances. The Plan shall apply to any incident in the sea that causes or threatens to cause pollution in the Latvian waters outside the port area.

The Plan has been drawn up in accordance with laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia, and also the Helsinki Convention, the OPRC Convention, the OPRC - HNS Protocol, the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and its 1978 Protocol (MARPOL Convention), the 1969 International Convention Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties.
II. Measures to be Taken to Achieve the Set Objectives and the Priority Measures

1. If an incident has occurred, as a result of which pollution or threat of pollution has been caused to the Latvian waters, coastal waters or any interests related to the waters and coastline, all the institutions involved in the Plan shall immediately take measures in accordance with the Plan.

2. The National Armed Forces Naval units, which ensure coast guard, shall take the measures to eliminate the consequences of emergencies and incidents of floating craft, consequences of oil spillage, hazardous or harmful substances discharged into the sea, and coordinate the works related to liquidation of consequences in the Latvian waters.

3. The Coast Guard shall take the measures in accordance with Chapter IV of this Plan to achieve the set objectives.

4. Elimination of consequences of discharge of oil, or harmful substances shall be based on a specially developed model for attraction of habitat range depending on the following variable factors:
   4.1. place of pollution;
   4.2. the volume of pollution and its significance (activity level I, II or III - according to Chapter III of this Plan);
   4.3. pollution-specific chemical and physical properties;
   4.4. pollution slick drift;
   4.5. current velocity and direction;
   4.6. season;
   4.7. weather conditions;
   4.8. location of material-technical and human resources, and their transportation options;
   4.9. optimal schedule for the operations to be carried out.

5. Priority measures for limiting further expansion of pollution are mechanical collection of products with collectors or skimmers, restricting pollution with booms. When planning the response to discharges of oil, hazardous or harmful substances, the State Environmental Service shall draw up maps of sensitive areas on the basis of the pollution-sensitive Latvian coastal area mapping scheme at the disposal thereof. In order to prevent pollution of particularly sensitive coastal areas, in exceptional cases, upon coordination with the State Environmental Service, the use of chemicals that promote decomposition of oil, hazardous or harmful substances, or of absorbents is permitted.

6. The action plan in case of unforeseen discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances in the Latvian port area shall be available in the respective port authority, and copies of these plans shall be stored at the MRCC Riga and the State Environmental Service. The requirements to be included in the action plan are laid down in Cabinet Regulation No. 82 of 5 February 2008, Standard Requirements for Drawing up the Action Plan for Unforeseen Cases of Pollution in Ports, at Berths, Berth Groups and at Oil or Chemical Substance Terminals”.

7. Operational units of the Coast Guard shall ensure preparedness to start from their bases within 2 hours of the receipt of alarm. The Coast Guard shall draw up list of operational units, equipment at their disposal and location thereof, which shall be submitted to the State Environmental Service in accordance with the time limits laid down in Chapter XIII of this Plan.
III. Activity Levels

8. The first activity level (hereinafter - activity level I) is the preparedness and measures against discharges, the consequences of which may be eliminated with the resources at the disposal of the Naval units.

9. The second activity level (hereinafter - activity level II) is the preparedness and measures against discharges, for the eliminated of the consequences of which in addition to the resources at the disposal of the Naval units, resources at the disposal of other State institutions, local governments or merchants need to be attracted.

10. The third activity level (hereinafter - activity level III) is the preparedness and measures against discharges, for the elimination of the consequences of which in addition to the resources at the disposal of the Naval units, State institutions, local governments or merchants, international assistance needs to be attracted.

11. State of emergency shall be declared in accordance with the National Security Law.

12. Alarm procedures, activity levels I, II and III have been laid down in Annex 1 to this Plan.

IV. Guidelines for Action

13. In case of emergency of the floating craft, the National Armed Forces units shall carry out delimitation of the emergency site and floating craft, by using a floating barrier - booms, after assessing the usefulness of this action at the MRCC Committee.

14. Rescue works of the floating craft, prevention of further discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances, the removal of the floating craft aground, and other matters related to the incident shall be settled by the MRCC Committee by means of negotiation with the master of the ship in distress, the ship's classification and insurance company, taking into account the interests of these organisations.

15. Upon receipt of a report on discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances, the MRCC Riga and the State Environmental Service shall carry out modelling of a slick drift, if necessary by contacting the State Limited Liability Company "Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre". The MRCC Riga shall have at its disposal information regarding the weather conditions and forecast at least for the next 48 hours. Upon initiating measures for the elimination of consequences of an incident by the Coast Guard operational units, the MRCC Riga personnel shall be guided by the results of the modelling of the slick drift obtained, by taking account of the weather forecast.

16. The only work method used by the operational units upon carrying out elimination of the consequences of an incident shall be mechanical collection of pollution. Decision on the exceptional cases, when it is necessary to use a different working method for the elimination of the consequences of an incident, shall be made by the State Environmental Service.

17. In cases where it is not possible to receive an immediate permission of the State Environmental Service, but the delay poses a threat to human life, the need to use a non-mechanical method for the elimination of the consequences of an incident shall be immediately reported to the State Environmental Service, by adding all the information regarding the present situation.
18. All reports on the observed coastal pollution shall be immediately transferred to the State Environmental Service, if the elimination of the consequences in the sea or along the coastline has not been successful or if the pollution of the sea has not been timely noticed.

V. Information of the Public and Mass Media Relations

19. The responsible commander shall appoint a public relations officer who is responsible for informing the public through the mass media.

20. A public relations officer shall also be appointed if the mass media interests are expected to increase to such an extent that it creates a disturbance to MRCC Riga or MRCC Committee to take measures efficiently, especially in the situations of activity level II and III. The public relations officer shall be permanently accessible by the mass media and shall provide information in accordance with an announced schedule in regular press conferences.

21. In cases of discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances, which lead to an increased interest of the mass media, reports shall be drawn up and distributed at least once a day. Before distribution each report shall be approved by the responsible commander.

22. In case of activity level III the National Armed Forces shall organise press conferences, and the public relations officer shall arrange a press centre in separate premises or building from the MRCC Committee, providing telephone, fax and internet communications.

VI. Reports on Pollution

23. Report evaluation and transfer thereof shall be the responsibility of the MRCC Riga.

24. In cases of pollution of oil, hazardous or harmful substances, which correspond to activity level II and III, and also in situations where the interests of other Baltic Sea countries are threatened, the MRCC Riga official appointed by the MRCC Committee shall send a report on pollution (POLREP) in accordance with the list of international communication centres laid down in Helsinki Commission Manual On Co-operation in Combating Marine Pollution, using the communications system of the MRCC Riga.

25. Following the receipt of the report the MRCC Riga shall:
   25.1. assess the source of the report (for example, rapporteur's experience as to how to accurately report the observed situation may be quite different, which often leads to exaggeration of the severity of the situation);
   25.2. if necessary, contact the rapporteur for further questioning;
   25.3. verify whether a false report has not been received;
   25.4. verify the initial report on the scene and complete the report form laid down in Annex 2 to the Plan;
   25.5. carry out pollution monitoring by:
       25.5.1. active means - sending of a service ship of the Coast Guard to carry out detection, monitoring and determination of concentration of oil, hazardous or harmful substances, using measuring devices;
       25.5.2. passive means - asking the observers of the situation (floating craft, aircraft) to pay attention to the observation area upon passing by.

26. The procedures for reporting a case of pollution have been laid down in Annex 3 to this Plan. The reports shall be divided into primary and updated reports:
26.1. the initial report on pollution submitted by the master of the ship involved in the incident, by a passing floating craft, or any person who detects pollution shall include the following information:
   26.1.1. the source, cause, location, volume of pollution;
   26.1.2. the type of polluting substances;
   26.1.3. whether the discharge has been stopped.
26.2. the updated report on pollution drawn up by the responsible persons (the master of the ship, the National Armed Forces Naval units, or other responsible official of the performer of the operational verification) shall include the following information:
   26.2.1. the place and time of the discharge;
   26.2.2. the pollution source - name of the floating craft, call sign, flag, owner of the means of navigation, port of registration, type and size of the ship, type of other polluters on-board the means of navigation, their total amount and location;
   26.2.3. the data on another source of pollution;
   26.2.4. the type and quantity of the discharged substances;
   26.2.5. whether the discharge has been stopped;
   26.2.6. the weather conditions (wind and current direction and speed);
   26.2.7. the pollution slick movement;
   26.2.8. the measures taken at the scene of the incident;
   26.2.9. what additional help is needed (for example, a doctor, divers).

27. Once the floating craft has been identified as the polluter, the MRCC Riga shall initially collect the following information thereof:
   27.1. the ship's name, nationality and port of registration;
   27.2. number assigned by the International Maritime Organization (IMO);
   27.3. type and size of the ship;
   27.4. damage of the ship;
   27.5. type of cargo, total amount and location;
   27.6. fuel make and type, total quantity and location of other polluting substances on-board the floating craft;
   27.7. quantity of the discharged substance;
   27.8. location of the discharged source on the body of the floating craft, discharge time and conditions (such as the location from which the oil, dangerous or hazardous substance has discharged);
   27.9. assessment of the possibility of further discharge;
   27.10. the current hydro-meteorological conditions in the sea;
   27.11. name of the owner, the insurer and the local agent;
   27.12. communication options, such as frequency, warning signals.

28. The MRCC Riga shall collect information similar to that referred to in Paragraph 26 and 27 of this Plan in case the polluter is not a floating craft.

29. The MRCC Riga on the basis of information received regarding pollution shall evaluate the available information on the physicochemical properties of the given polluter in order to forecast the development of the event and to take action. Particular attention shall be paid to the location and amount of fuel on the floating craft.

30. The MRCC Riga shall carry out forecast for further movement of pollution and determine the areas threatened by pollution.

31. Reports to be sent to foreign countries in case of pollution in order to inform regarding the incident, in case of a request for assistance and on other occasions as instructed by the MRCC
Committee shall be drawn up and sent by the responsible official appointed by the MRCC Committee in accordance with Paragraph 1 and Annex 4 to this Plan.

VII. Management and Control

32. An official appointed by the National Armed Forces - the responsible commander, upon receiving a report on discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances, shall act in accordance with Annex 3 to this Plan, and shall be directly responsible for proper performance of any measure commenced in accordance with the Plan, and thus shall be considered as the head of all operations related to the implementation of the Plan. If necessary, the responsible commander may invite an expert from any institutions involved in the implementation of the Plan.

33. Depending on the situation and the activity level, the MRCC Riga shall supplement the personnel with officials previously appointed by each of the institutions involved in the implementation of the Plan:
   33.1. a communications coordinator (CCO);
   33.2. a legal adviser (LA);
   33.3. a public relations officer (PR);
   33.4. environmental advisor (BA);
   33.5. maritime security advisor (MSA);
   33.6. a legal adviser of the State Chancellery (if objective conditions indicate that there will be a need for recovery of compensation for damage).

34. In case of activity level II the on-scene commander (OSC), the national on-scene commander (NOSC in international events), the senior on-scene commander (SOSC - in case Latvia is the leading country in international events) shall be directly subordinated to the responsible commander.

35. The MRCC Riga shall assess and determine the nature, extent and possible consequences of the pollution and shall ensure operational activities for the liquidation of the consequences in accordance with the work descriptions drawn up by the National Armed Forces Naval units and Annex 2 to this Plan. If interests of another country are affected or threatened, the MRCC Riga shall inform the relevant services of this country in accordance with the list of International Relations Centres laid down in the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) Manual On Co-Operation In Combating Marine Pollution and Annex 4 to this Plan.

36. The MRCC Riga shall operate in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 674 of 2 December 2003, Regulations Regarding Search and Rescue of Persons in Case of Aviation and Maritime Emergencies.

37. The MRCC Committee shall operate in accordance with the agenda for the MRCC Committee developed by the National Armed Forces. The main task thereof is to help the Coast Guard in operational and administrative matters to implement the operation for elimination of the consequences of emergencies in case of activity level II and III. The functions of the head of the MRCC Committee shall be performed by the responsible commander appointed by the National Armed Forces.

38. The MRCC Committee shall involve the responsible officials of the National Armed Forces, the Latvian Maritime Administration, the Maritime Department of the Ministry of Transport, the State Border Guard, the State Environmental Service, the State Fire and Rescue Service,
port authorities of Riga, Liepāja and Ventspils, and also, if necessary, officials from other ports and institutions shall be attracted for ensuring implementation of specific tasks.

39. Action of the duty officer:
   39.1. The duty officer of the MRCC Riga shall 24 hours a day accept reports on pollution by oil, hazardous or harmful substances and shall be responsible for immediate transferring of these reports to the responsible commander;
   39.2. the duty officer shall work with all means of communication at the disposal of the MRCC Riga, shall receive and distribute all incoming reports, shall send all outgoing reports on the activities of elimination of the consequences;
   39.3. after receiving a report on pollution and assessment thereof, the duty officer shall immediately:
      39.3.1. send the nearest Coast Guard ship, other possible floating craft or an aircraft to verify this fact;
      39.3.2. report on the situation to the responsible commander or official substituting him or her;
      39.3.3. establish contact with the floating craft in distress or the person who has reported the case of pollution;
      39.3.4. request the updated report from the floating craft or aircraft, which has been sent for the verification of the received report;
      39.3.5. carry out initial assessment of the pollution and the activity level;
      39.3.6. request the Coast Guard, or other source of information to provide updated information on the case of pollution;
      39.3.7. if the information on pollution is confirmed, inform the responsible commander;
      39.3.8. if according to the assessment of the duty officer the pollution shall be classified as a pollution of the second or third activity level, the head of the MRCC Committee shall be summoned and following his or her instructions, also other members of the MRCC Committee;
      39.3.9. the representatives of the institutions involved in the Plan shall be summoned and informed regarding the pollution, and the institutions shall be assigned specific tasks for commencing elimination of the consequences;
      39.3.10. prepare and send a report on pollution (POLREP);
      39.3.11. prepare and send a report on discharge of hazardous or harmful substances;
      39.3.12. organise and coordinate works for the elimination of pollution until the arrival of the responsible commander and takeover of the management;
      39.3.13. upon an order of the responsible commander summon additional personnel of the MRCC Riga.

40. Action of the responsible commander:
   40.1. implement management of the works for elimination of the consequences of an emergency in case of activity level I, II and III;
   40.2. upon receipt of the report of the duty officer on the possible pollution, he or she shall immediately arrive to the MRCC Riga and analyse the incoming information, clarify it and specify the activity level;
   40.3. he or she shall carry out works for the elimination of pollution of activity level I in the sea in accordance with the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) Manual On Co-operation In Combating Marine Pollution, and appoint:
      40.3.1. the on-scene commander (OSC);
      40.3.2. the official responsible for recording all activities and conditions;
      40.3.3. the official responsible for tracking and recording expenses;
40.3.4. the official responsible for drawing up of the report;
40.3.5. the official responsible for informing the public and communicating with
the mass media;
40.3.6. inform the State Fire and Rescue Service on pollution or potential
pollution in the sea coast.

41. In a case of activity level II and III, the MRCC Committee shall be convened, and it shall
be headed by the responsible commander. Until arrival of the responsible commander and
takeover of management, the duty officer shall be responsible for the management of the works
for the elimination of the consequences of activity level II and III.

42. Action of the head of the MRCC Committee - the responsible commander:
42.1. he or she shall be responsible for the proper execution of the Plan, based on the
initial and additional information regarding the incident;
42.2. he or she shall be responsible for senior management of operations of activity level
II and III and general cooperation within the limits of the existing technical capabilities;
42.3. upon receipt of a report from the duty officer on pollution of activity level II or
III, the responsible commander shall immediately arrive to the MRCC Riga and together with
the MRCC Committee analyse the incoming information, clarify and specify the activity level;
42.4. inform the Minister for Defence and the Secretariat of Crisis Management Board
on the need to convene the Crisis Management Board;
42.5. carry out management of pollution elimination works in case of activity level II
and III, based on the Helsinki Commission Manual On Co-operation in Combating Marine
Pollution and appoint:
   42.5.1. the senior on-scene commander (SOSC) for the management of the
       international operation;
   42.5.2. the official responsible for recording of all activities and conditions;
   42.5.3. the official responsible for tracking and recording expenses;
   42.5.4. the official responsible for the drawing up of the report;
   42.5.5. the official responsible for informing the public and communicating with
       the mass media;
   42.5.6. inform the State Fire and Rescue Service on the pollution on the sea
coast;
   42.5.7. if necessary, the public relations officer in accordance with Chapter III;
42.6. the responsible commander shall coordinate with the members of the MRCC
Committee the measures for the elimination of the consequences that have not been previously
included in the Plan.

43. The maritime safety advisor:
43.1. shall be responsible for drawing up proposals on the choice of the type and amount
of equipment for the elimination of consequences needed for the performance of operations;
43.2. shall evaluate all proposals received from other Latvian or foreign State
administration institutions, the private sector or private individuals for assistance through
equipment and labour force;
43.3. shall prepare proposals on how to relieve the polluter or potential polluter from
cargo or fuel;
43.4. shall be responsible for safety during the measures for the elimination of
consequences;
43.5. shall coordinate action, technical and environmental protection advice provided
by the MRCC Committee, and deliver them to the responsible commander.

44. Communications coordinator:
44.1. shall be responsible for the provision of proper and safe communication lines for the needs of the operation in question to the MRCC Riga;  
44.2. ensure compliance with the adopted communication plan or arrange for additional lines for the communication with State administration institutions, if the plans prove to be inadequate for the needs of incident measures;  
44.3. shall be responsible for proper arrangement of the MRCC Riga management premises throughout the course of implementation of the measures.

45. The public relations officer:  
45.1. shall act as a point of contact person between the MRCC Committee and the mass media;  
45.2. shall draw up reports to the mass media in order to maintain a constant state of awareness of the media, and, if necessary, organise press conferences.

46. The on-scene commander:  
46.1. shall implement tactical management of all operations related to the elimination of the consequences of pollution in the sea;  
46.2. shall ensure performance of all orders of the responsible commander or the MRCC Riga and report on a regular basis to the MRCC Riga on the situation, and also continuously assess the usefulness of various measures for the elimination of consequences and, if necessary, propose attraction of other techniques or technical means;  
46.3. in carrying out his or her duties shall follow the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) Manual On Co-operation in Combating Marine Pollution".

VIII. Communications

47. The radio communication circuit between the executive bodies in joint operations for the elimination of the consequences in the Baltic Sea area in accordance with the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) recommendation 17/13 established in the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) manual.

48. Communications at national level:  
48.1. upon initially detecting pollution discharge, the MRCC Riga shall verify the truthfulness of the information and collect the required additional information, using all the available means of communication, frequencies and call signals of the bodies involved;  
48.2. The MRCC Riga, upon providing communications for the implementation of a measure, shall constantly improve and periodically verify the previously planned communication plan, or any part thereof;  
48.3. The MRCC Riga shall be equipped with the means of communication, which ensure communication with the State Fire and Rescue Service structural units;  
48.4. in case of pollution communications at the international level shall be ensured in accordance with Annex 4 to this Plan.

49. The MRCC Riga shall be responsible for the provision of all types of communication at the international level during the elimination of the consequences of pollution. To ensure the communication systems the Contracting Parties shall exchange liaison officers. The decision to appoint and send liaison officers shall be taken by the MRCC Committee.

50. International cooperation between the Contracting Parties:  
50.1. a formal report, the task is which is to warn and inform regarding the incident, ask for assistance, provide assistant, to confirm receipt of a report shall be drawn up by the MRCC
Committee. The MRCC Riga shall send such reports on pollution by fax and they shall be transferred through the national action communications centre of each Contracting Party;

50.2. the MRCC Riga shall provisionally verify the authenticity of any official report by sending device callback number, which is printed on the report. When a further verification is needed a callback shall be made or a fax shall be sent to the number of the official communications centre;

50.3. urgent contacts shall be simultaneously ensured by telephone. Any question, request, decision, plan, goal, consideration, available resources and options shall be immediately confirmed with a formal report.

51. Communication between the competent institutions of the Contracting Parties and the operational management:

51.1. the competent institution of the leading country and the competent institution of the assisting country shall communicate with the operational management through any of the means of communication referred to in Paragraph 52 of this Plan, intended for this purpose. All important decisions for assistance shall be approved by the competent institutions of the Contracting Parties in accordance with the above-mentioned procedures;

51.2. the liaison officer of the assisting country shall ensure communication between his or her institution and operational management. Otherwise, the operational management has the duty to provide the necessary information at least once a day.

52. Communication between the assisting country and its operational groups - the assisting country shall liaise with its national on-scene commander and the operational groups through their liaison officers and the operational management, or directly, as long as the location falls in the communications reception area. Communication with naval units shall be ensured by radio in the MF, HF or VHF coast transmitter range, or by the mobile (GSM) or satellite phone.

53. Mutual communication between the operational management, senior on-scene commander and air operations (activity level I: from the coast to the scene):

53.1. operational management shall be ensured by the country in the response region of which the action takes place;

53.2. the MRCC Riga shall be responsible for the provision of this communication. If the Republic of Latvia is the leading country, the MRCC Riga shall have a duty to establish and maintain communication between the operational management, the senior on-scene commander (SOSC) and the aircraft involved in the operation;

53.3. depending on the infrastructure and internal organisation of the leading country, communication shall be maintained:

53.3.1. directly from the operational management with senior on-scene commander, by using telefax, radio, internet, mobile phone or mobile telefax;

53.3.2. from coast radio stations, using telefax or telephone between the operational management and the coastal station, as well as by radio-telephone or internet between the coastal station and the senior on-scene commander;

53.4. radio frequencies between the senior on-scene commander and flight coordinators shall be assigned by the MRCC Riga;

53.5. for direct mutual communication, communication with the floating craft and the MRCC Riga, aircraft shall use marine frequency radio. Computer images captured by remote observation from the air shall be transferred from the aircraft to the operational management and the senior on-scene commander by means of radio telephone or image transmission system. If the aircraft is not equipped with a marine frequency radio, the Air Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) communication system shall be used.
54. Communication between the senior on-scene commander and the national on-scene commander (activity level II: the scene):

54.1. it shall take place through one or several international marine frequency radio channels, which in each particular case shall be determined by the MRCC Riga;

54.2. for this purpose the floating craft from which the senior on-scene commander or the national on-scene commander operates, shall be equipped with two marine frequency stations with channel No. 16 in a standby mode;

54.3. the leading country shall have the duty to obtain the appropriate authorisation from its national State administrative institution for the measures for elimination of the consequences in the sea. Such authorisation shall be issued as a general authorisation to use these frequencies during the measures for elimination of the consequences or during training, or the authorisation shall be issued separately for each operation for elimination of the consequences or verification thereof;

54.4. the first radio communication shall take place in channel No. 16;

54.5. the working language between the senior on-scene commander and the national on-scene commander from other countries shall be English.

IX. Placement of the Collected Oil, Hazardous or Harmful Substances

55. The temporary placement of the collected oil, hazardous or dangerous substances in the sea within the limits of its technical abilities shall be ensured by the Coast Guard.

56. If the geographical location of the measures is far from the shore or the port and storage equipment for temporary placement in the ships for the elimination of the consequences of an emergency are not suitable or they cannot be transported to the place of measures, as the means for temporary placement tankers, barges for transportation of oil products, oil tankers for transportation of asphalt, or other similar equipment shall be hired.

57. Since the oil on the water surface becomes viscous, it is necessary to as far as possible supply the temporary placement containers with heating devices to facilitate future loading on the land transport.

58. Hazardous or harmful substances shall be placed in suitable containers, taking into account the properties of the substance.

59. State Limited Liability Company "Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre" shall organise transportation, disposal or placement of the oil, hazardous or harmful substances collected on the shore.

X. Detection of Polluter and Collection of Information

60. Polluter detection and collection of information shall be ensured by the National Environmental Service in cooperation with the Coast Guard.

61. For the detection of the polluter the State Environmental Service shall:

61.1. record the name, organisation, contact telephone of the rapporteur;

61.2. verify the received report using:

61.2.1. an aircraft;

61.2.2. a floating craft;

61.2.3. other means.

61.3. verify the information regarding the source of pollution:

61.3.1. start identification of the polluter;
61.3.2. determine the type of pollution;
61.3.3. clarify the extent of pollution;
61.3.4. initiate identification of other potential polluters in this area, if the identification of the potential polluter has not given a positive result.

62. The State Environmental Service shall organise the collection of information:
   62.1. record all contacts with polluters, electronically and documentary;
   62.2. organise air observations:
       62.2.1. photograph or capture with a video camera;
       62.2.2. visually observe and complete the report form in Annex 2 to this Plan;
   62.3. take oil product samples;
   62.4. take samples of hazardous or harmful substances;
   62.5. summarise weather forecast for the calculation of the pollution drift;
   62.6. draw up record-keeping documentation.

XI. Operational Units

63. The national communication centre shall be the MRCC Riga.

64. The following operational units and equipment warehouses of the National Armed Forces shall be based in the ports of Riga, Ventspils and Liepāja:
   64.1. the operational unit in the Port of Riga - the region of responsibility: the Gulf of Riga;
   64.2. the operational unit in Ventspils port - the region of responsibility: Kolka -Užava;
   64.3. Port of Liepāja - the region of responsibility: Užava-Nida.

XII. Theoretical and Practical Training

65. Each institution shall ensure training of employees from its own resources, and the institutions financed from the State budget - within the framework of the allocated budget funds.

66. The National Armed Forces shall organise a national-level training once in every three years. The National Armed Forces together with the State Environmental Service shall elaborate a programme for the national level training activities. The MRCC Committee established during the training shall conduct the implementation of the approved programmes, which have been elaborated in accordance with the guidelines of the State Environmental Service.

67. The Coast Guard together with the State Environmental Service shall take part in the annual international training and working group meetings organised within the framework of Helsinki Commission.

68. The MRCC Riga shall draw up and approve the curriculum for the National Armed Forces units in accordance with the procedures laid down by the commander of the National Armed Forces.

69. Masters of ships or heads of operational units who are previously appointed to take part in the organisation of measures, shall be obliged to take care that the employees of the operational units within the limits of their responsibility and competence are trained to a level that ensures effective participation in the measures.
XIII. Deadlines for the Implementation of the Measures

70. Each port authority shall draw up an operational plan for unforeseen cases of pollution, in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 82 of 5 February 2008, Standard Requirements for Drawing up the Action Plan for Unforeseen Cases of Pollution in Ports, at Berths, Berth Groups and at Oil or Chemical Substance Terminals, which shall be approved by the State Environmental Service. Copies of the approved plans shall be submitted by the port authorities to the MRCC Riga and the State Environmental Service. Changes or additions to the port plan shall be submitted to the State Environmental Service by 30 December of each year.

71. In case of activity level II and III the MRCC Committee shall be placed in the premises of the MRCC Riga immediately after the call of the responsible commander. The MRCC Committee shall operate from the moment it is convened until the execution of the operational part of the incident. The responsible commander shall decide on the completion of the operational part of the incident. Each of the institutions abovementioned in Paragraph 38 of this Plan shall by 1 June 2010 appoint the responsible official and his or her deputy for the representation at the MRCC Committee, and submit the contact information of these persons to the MRCC Riga. The appointed persons shall be reachable 24 hours a day all year round.

72. In order to organise the work of the Committee, the MRCC Riga shall ensure premises with at least seven work stations equipped with computers, audio and video recording equipment, pollution drift calculation software, search and rescue software and the related office equipment.

73. In accordance with the requirements of the laws and regulations and international laws binding on Latvia, the National Armed Forces units, related to the implementation of the national plan, shall ensure continuous operational preparedness by meeting the following criteria:

73.1. preparedness of the first response units to leave their base within two hours after receipt of an emergency signal;
73.2. reach any possible place of discharge in the region under the supervision of the State of Latvia within six hours of the receipt of a signal;
73.3. well-organised, relevant and meaningful performance of response measures at the place of discharge as soon as possible, not exceeding 12 hours;
73.4. within a period of two days eliminate the consequences of pollution in the sea by means of mechanical collection devices. The possible discharge amount shall be determined in accordance with the potential risk of discharge, which once every 5 years shall be determined by the State Environmental Service;
73.5. 24 hours after the receipt of accurate information regarding the amount of discharge ensure adequate and suitable storage facilities for the collected or processed oil, as well as for hazardous and harmful substances.

XIV. Institutions Responsible for the Implementation of the Measures

74. The institutions responsible for the implementation of measures include:

74.1. The Coast Guard - ensures, coordinates and carries out pollution elimination works in the sea;
74.2. The State Environmental Service - coordinates the implementation of the national contingency plan for the cases of pollution of oil, hazardous or harmful substances in the sea.

75. Institutions involved in the implementation of the measures provided for in the Plan: the Coast Guard, the MRCC Riga, the MRCC Committee, the Aviation Rescue and Coordination
Centre (ARCC), the Latvian Maritime Administration, the State Environmental Service, the State Fire and Rescue Service, the State Border Guard, the Emergency Medical Service, the Ventspils Free Port Authority, the Freeport of Riga, the Liepāja Special Economic Zone Authority, the Salacgrīva Port Authority, the Skulte Port Authority, the Lielupe Port Authority, the Engure Port Authority, the Mērsrags Port Authority, the Roja Port Authority, the Pāvilosta Port Authority, the local government of the Latvian coastline.

76. The institutions involved in the execution of the measures provided for in the Plan shall ensure compliance with the requirements of Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) recommendations 11/13 and HELCOM guidelines on development of national ability to respond to spillages of oil and other hazardous or harmful substances.

XV. Action of Institutions Involved in the Implementation of the Measures Included in the Plan According to their Competence

77. In case of action level III the head of the MRCC Committee and the State Fire and Rescue Service may propose to the Minister for Defence or the head of the Secretariat of the Crisis Management Board to convene the Crisis Management Board.

78. The National Armed Forces:
   78.1. Naval units shall coordinate and carry out search and rescue work in the sea, eliminate consequences of emergencies and the pollution, and also participate in ecological monitoring;
   78.2. Naval units shall ensure and coordinate the operation for the elimination of the consequences of pollution in accordance with Chapter IV;
   78.3. the appointed official shall perform the functions of the responsible commander;
   78.4. Naval units shall develop the agenda of the MRCC Committee;
   78.5. The Coast Guard shall eliminate the consequences of accidents of floating craft and emergencies of discharge of oil, hazardous or harmful substances into the sea, and coordinate the works related to the elimination the consequences in the Latvian waters, according to Plan and emergency plans;
   78.6. The MRCC Riga shall establish operational telephones of the State administrative institutions and a list of international communications centres, send it to the relevant State institutions and update it on a regular basis;
   78.7. The Coast Guard upon carrying out elimination of the consequences of emergencies of oil, hazardous substances shall act in accordance with the international and Latvian laws and regulations, work descriptions developed by the MRCC Committee and this Plan;
   78.8. The Coast Guard after collection of oil, dangerous and hazardous substances in the sea shall hand them over to State limited liability company "Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre" in the closest port, which is equipped with loading facilities for oil, hazardous or harmful substances.

79. The State Environmental Service shall:
   79.1. perform pollution survey, determine the amount of pollution, organise pollution monitoring;
   79.2. in cooperation with the Coast Guard develop procedures for marine pollution surveillance from the air, ensure its implementation and perform technical support improvement;
   79.3. maintain the electronic database of the State system for emergency elimination, containing the list of equipment for eliminating the consequences of an emergency at the
disposal of the State, port administrations and terminals, and also links to all the involved State institutions;

79.4. for the elimination of the consequences of pollution, hand over technical means for the elimination of the consequences of an emergency at the disposal thereof to the operational authority of the responsible commander;

79.5. carry out investigation of the case of pollution, collection of evidence, calculation of damaged caused to the environment and, if necessary, preparation of the case for the court;

79.6. in cooperation with the Coast Guard ensure taking of pollution samples and sending to a laboratory:

79.6.1. taking of samples;

79.6.2. if the sample collection lasts longer than a day, taking of samples from the spillage shall be intended for each following day;

79.7. if necessary, allow the responsible commander to use chemical substances (e.g., dispersants) for the elimination of the consequences of pollution;

79.8. approve the operational plans for unforeseen cases of pollution in ports, at berths, berth groups and at oil or chemical substance terminals developed in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 82 of 5 February 2008, Standard Requirements for Drawing up the Action Plan for Unforeseen Cases of Pollution in Ports, at Berths, Berth Groups and at Oil or Chemical Substance Terminals, and monitor implementation thereof in accordance with recommendation 20/5 of Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), Minimum Ability to Respond to Spillages in Oil Terminals.

80. In case of a case of pollution in the sea the Latvian Maritime Administration shall act as an expert and advisor in the matters related to maritime safety, crew of the ship involved in the accident, passenger safety and technical condition assessment, and other matters related to maritime safety. In case of pollution if it is related to the maritime safety, if necessary, the conclusion of the Latvian Maritime Administration on the investigation of the incident shall be used.

81. The State Fire and Rescue Service after receipt of the information regarding coastal pollution in accordance with the activity level shall organise performance of measures in accordance with the relevant civil protection plans.

82. The Aviation Rescue and Coordination Centre (ARCC) shall liaise with the MRCC Riga, and in accordance with the instructions of the responsible commander shall attract aviation technical means and aircraft for the assessment of pollution and elimination of the consequences of pollution.

83. The Emergency Medical Service, if necessary, shall provide emergency medical assistance in case of emergency medical situations and disasters in the sea.

84. The Port Authority shall control the protection against pollution, ensure elimination of the consequences of pollution in the area of responsibility of the Port Authority, and participate in the elimination of the consequences of pollution in the sea. In case of activity level II and III, upon request of the responsible commander, it shall transfer to the authority of the responsible commander the floating craft and equipment for elimination of the consequences of pollution and support personnel at its disposal, provide other forms of technical support in accordance with this Plan, including acceptance of the collected oil from the operating units, and also organise attraction of port merchants in the elimination of pollution of oil, hazardous and harmful substances.
85. In case of activity level II or III, the local governments at the Latvian coastline upon request of the responsible commander shall participate in the elimination of the consequences of pollution.

XVI. Claims for Compensation for Damages in Case of Pollution

86. Compensation for damages caused by oil pollution shall be carried out in accordance with Chapter XVII, Liability for Pollution Caused by Oil of the Maritime Code, the 1992 International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, and the 1992 International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage (hereinafter - the Fund Convention). A claim for the compensation of damage made by oil pollution to the International Fund (hereinafter - the IOPC Fund), shall be drawn up in accordance with the Fund Convention Manual.

87. The State Environmental Service shall, if necessary, provide methodological support to persons who submit a claim to the court for the compensation of damages caused by a floating craft causing pollution or another object.

88. A claim for the damage caused to the Republic of Latvia within the meaning of this Plan shall be submitted to the State Chancellery in accordance with Cabinet Order No. 146 of 5 March 2004, On the Concept "On the Establishment of the Mechanism for the Representation of National Interests in Connection with Legal Proceedings".

89. During elimination of the consequences of pollution the head of the MRCC Committee shall request documentary confirmation of the master of the ship, the owner of the ship or the operator of the ship regarding financial guarantees to cover all the costs related to elimination of the consequences of the emergency, including port charges and services, and also damage caused to the port, the environment and third parties.

90. After receipt of the legal and financial guarantees abovementioned in Paragraph 89 from the owner or operator of the ship, the MRCC Committee shall, together with the legal advisor and other members of the MRCC Committee, assess the adequacy and feasibility of these guarantees.

91. Financial guarantees may be accepted from the owner or operator of the ship either by means of a bank transfer - by way of deposit, or as a guarantee of the insurance company or bank. Bank details and current account of the recipient shall be laid down by the head of the MRCC Committee.

XVII. Procedures for the Submission and Assessment of a Report

92. The implementation of the plan shall be assessed in accordance with the criteria laid down in the laws and regulations, as well as in accordance with the criteria laid down in international laws and regulations (Helsinki Convention, OPRC Convention, OPRC - HNS Protocol), assessing the results of annual local and international training, and the efficiency of the actual operations for elimination of the consequences of emergency discharges.

93. The following criteria shall be used for the assessment of the implementation of the plan: the ratio between the actually discharged product volume and the volume collected as a result of elimination of the consequences, harm made by oil, dangerous and hazardous substances discharged into the environment and not collected, the ratio of the above-mentioned indicators
theoretically calculated in the training, linking them to the deadlines for the implementation of the measures referred to in Chapter XIII of this Plan.

**XVIII. Report on the State of Discharge**

94. The MRCC Riga shall draw up a full report on the incident, taking into account all the activities of staff members, the on-scene commander, the reports drawn up by the masters of the ships for each of the measures taken in relation to their specific functions.

95. Reports shall be submitted to the MRCC Riga after the performance of the assigned duties or upon request of the MRCC Riga, and also to the Cabinet upon request thereof.

**XIX. Financing**

96. The implementation of the Plan shall be ensured by the State administrative institution within the framework of the allocated State budget funding.

97. Implementation of Paragraphs 59 and 78 of the Plan by the State limited liability company "Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre" shall be financed from the State budget funding for unforeseen cases.

Acting for the Minister for Environmental Protection –
Minister for Education and Science

T.Koče
Annex 1
National Contingency Plan for Cases of Pollution of Oil, Hazardous or Harmful Substances in the Sea

Alarm Procedure - Activity Levels

1. Activity level I

- Incoming report to the MRCC Riga

- The MRCC Riga duty official shall assess and verify the report

- If it is not a false report or an insignificant report, the duty official shall assign the Naval units to carry out an operation for elimination of the consequences of the emergency and inform the responsible commander of the measures taken. If the responsible commander considers necessary, he or she shall send the duty helicopter to verify the incoming information on pollution, to arrive to the MRCC Riga and take over the management and propose to convene the MRCC Committee to raise the activity level
2. Activity level II and III

Acting for the Minister for Environmental Protection – Minister for Education and Science

T. Koče
Annex 2
National Contingency Plan for Cases of Pollution of Oil, Hazardous or Harmful Substances in the Sea

Report on the Observed Pollution with Regard to Polluters and Spillages to be Eliminated

1. State
2. Service
3. Date
4. Observation time (UTC)
5. Pollution:
   5.1. Oil, hazardous or harmful substance
   5.2. Geographical coordinates
   5.3. Brought from
   5.4. Length (km)
   5.5. Width (km)
6. Type of the hazardous or harmful substance (volatile, sinking, soluble, floating)
7. Area covered with oil products (km²)
8. Colour of oil products (% of slick area)
   1) silver, 2) grey 3) iridescent,
   4) blue, 5) blue/brown, 6) brown 7) black
9. Estimated volume of pollution (m³)
10. Discovered: with remote surveillance devices/visually:
11. Need to eliminate consequences (yes/no)
12. Weather conditions:
   12.1. Wind direction:
   12.2. Wind speed (knots):
   12.3. Wave height (meters):
   12.4. Current direction:
13. Possible polluter:
   13.1. Dumping has been observed (yes/no):
   13.2. Type of ship, platform etc.:
   13.4. Name:
   13.5. Nationality:
   13.6. Home port:
   13.7. Body colour:
   13.8. Flue marking:
13.9. Draught: ____________________________
13.10. Location: ____________________________
13.11. Movement direction: ____________________________
13.12. Speed: ____________________________
14. Photographs taken (yes/no) ____________________________
15. Radio communication with the potential polluter (results) ____________________________
16. Arrival port: ____________________________
17. Other ships in the vicinity (names): ____________________________
18. Samples taken (yes/no): ____________________________
19. Comments, further details: ____________________________
20. Observer's name: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

Acting for the Minister for Environmental Protection –
Minister for Education and Science ____________________________

T.Koče
Annex 3
National Contingency Plan for Cases of Pollution of Oil, Hazardous or Harmful Substances in the Sea

Alarm and Notification Procedures

Incoming report to the MRCC Riga

The MRCC Riga duty official shall assess and verify the report

If it is not a false report or an insignificant report, the duty official shall inform the responsible commander thereof

The responsible commander shall decide on the next steps to be started by the duty official

On behalf of the responsible commander the duty official shall inform other national or international communication centres. On behalf of the public relations officer the responsible commander shall inform the media regarding the situation

Based on the additional information, the responsible commander shall decide on the level of activity of the Plan - activity level I, II or III

The duty official shall initiate registration of the action

The duty official shall raise alarm in order to start monitoring or other measures as considered needed by the responsible commander

The duty official shall raise alert to the relevant authorities, Contracting Parties or persons in accordance with the selected activity level of the Plan

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Action Scheme in Case of Marine Pollution

1. Notification
2. Evaluation of the report
   - False report
     - No action needed
   - Not a false or questionable report
     - Limited mobilisation of resources according to the plan
     - Verification through activity or through passive means
     - Evaluation of verification
       - False report
         - No action needed
         - Not a false alarm, causes a potential hazard
           - Follow the progress and provide evidence
           - Not a false alarm, causes inevitable threat
             - Initiate further action and provide evidence
             - Activity level I or II
               - Report regularly on the progress until usefulness of further measures becomes questionable
               - End of the event
                 - Work is completed, notify all involved parties thereof

Revision of the plan, taking into account the experience gained

Acting for the Minister for Environmental Protection –
Minister for Education and Science

T.Koče
International Co-operation


This Convention and recommendations thereof lay down international cooperation rules and procedures for oil discharge measures in the Baltic Sea as contained in the Helsinki Commission Manual On Co-operation in Combating Marine Pollution (Volume I) and Manual on Co-operation in Response to Marine Pollution (Volume II).

- In accordance with Regulation 1 of Annex VII to the 1992 Helsinki Convention, the Contracting Parties undertake to maintain the ability to respond to pollution incidents threatening the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area. This ability shall include adequate equipment, ships and manpower prepared for operations in coastal waters as well as on the high sea.

- In accordance with Regulation 4 of Annex VII to the 1992 Helsinki Convention, the Contracting Parties shall as soon as possible agree bilaterally or multilaterally on those regions of the Baltic Sea Area in which they shall conduct surveillance activities and take action to respond whenever a significant pollution incident has occurred or is likely to occur.

- In accordance with Regulation 7 of Annex VII to the 1992 Helsinki Convention, the Contracting Parties shall, when a pollution incident occurs in its response region, make the necessary assessments of the situation and take adequate response action in order to avoid or minimize subsequent pollution effects. When such a spillage is drifting or is likely to drift into a response region of another Contracting Party, that Party shall without delay be informed of the situation and the actions that have been taken.

- In accordance with Regulation 8 of Annex VII to the 1992 Helsinki Convention, a Contracting Party is entitled to call for assistance by other Contracting Parties when responding to a pollution incident at sea. Contracting Parties shall use their best endeavours to bring such assistance. They shall facilitate the transport and movement into, through and out of its territory of ships, aircraft, personnel, cargoes, materials and equipment involved in oil discharge measures.

The general action management responsible official is the head of the MRCC Committee. He or she shall be assisted by liaison officers of the assisting countries and a representative of the national or regional cooperation institution who acts as an advisor.

Under the supervision of the responsible commander action management and command bodies a tactical on-scene management shall be established (usually in the sea in case of joint operations) over the senior on-scene commander (SOSC) from the leading country. Contingent of the operational groups of the leading country and assisting countries shall work under the supervision of the national on-scene commander (NOSC) of each country. The national on-
scene commander (NOSC) shall work under the supervision of the senior on-scene commander (SOSC).

Managers of special single functions and individual units shall work under direct supervision of the responsible commander and senior on-scene commander (SOSC). For example, reconnaissance or transport flights shall be coordinated by an operational management or a special flight coordinator.

**Guidelines for Action**

Latvia as the leading country shall ensure:
- administrative, operational and strategic support to foreign assisting units;
- clearly defined tasks for each unit; organisation of practical cooperation between units from different countries;
- a good awareness of all units regarding the overall situation;
- a strong link with command structures of the assisting countries in order to ensure the option if necessary to transfer the assisting units to the national command body.

Operationally independent foreign assisting units, as much as possible, shall be each assigned its own tasks in certain geographical areas. Execution of the tasks shall be commanded by the national on-scene commander (NOSC), who shall constantly maintain close radio communication with the senior on-scene commander (SOSC) from the leading country.

According to the situation different operational units may be temporarily transferred to the disposal and supervision of other national on-scene commanders (NOSC).

If assistance is provided in the form of equipment or action, non-independent unit, the operational management and tactical team of the leading country shall be responsible for the integration of this unit or equipment in the measures for elimination of the consequences.

If the pollution crosses the border of the response region of a neighbouring country the operational management and control (i.e., the functions of the leading country) shall be handed over to the country in the response region of which the basic mass of pollution is located.

The time schedule for handing over the operational management shall be discussed in negotiations between the two countries, taking into account the general picture and all its development trends.

The countries concerned shall decide upon the number of units and the amount of equipment to be handed over at the disposal of the new leading country, and how the measures for the elimination of the consequences shall be continued.

Emergency preparedness organisations of the Contracting Parties shall continuously inform each other regarding cases of pollution, its size and location alongside with the information on the measures taken and effectiveness thereof.

As regards activities in the border areas of neighbouring countries, they shall consult each other, taking into account the priorities and adequacy of resources.

There is a possibility that the use of chemical agents will affect the interests of neighbouring countries, therefore decision on the use of such chemical substances shall be made only when the opinion of neighbouring countries on their use has been taken into account.
Latvia as the leading country shall initiate the investigation of discharge in its response region and report on the results of this reconnaissance to other Contracting Parties the response region of which borders with the response region of Latvia. If the slick spreads across two or more response regions, the emergency organisations of the Contracting Parties the response regions of which are affected by the pollution shall agree upon coordinated investigation of the discharge area, in order to avoid reconnaissance duplication.

The Coast Guard, if necessary, shall contact experts from other countries in the web-site "MAR-ICE Network" established by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) for responding to collection and transportation of hazardous or harmful substances, through which information may be operationally obtained from the chemical industry experts on response to chemical pollution in the waters of the European Union.

Guidelines for Communications

In case of elimination of the consequences when two or more Contracting Parties are involved, these Contracting Parties shall be entitled to appoint not more than two liaison officers to the respective national centres responsible for the measures for the liquidation of the consequences.

Exchange of liaison officers is not dependent on whether the operations for the elimination of the consequences are carried out only by national resources, or involving loaned equipment and human resources of other Contracting Parties.

Liaison officers shall have the right to participate in meetings and conferences regarding elimination of the consequences, as long as they do not concern strictly internal national interests.

Liaison officers, when the question concerns directly the territory of their country, at meetings shall make recommendations and statements on matters directly concerning elimination of the consequences and resource allocation, etc.

The same discretionary obligations shall apply to the liaison officers as apply to the centre's personnel; however, they do not have any restrictions as to the content of the report to own national State administrative institutions.

Liaison officers shall not have any administrative liabilities against the hosting country with the exception of those the hosting country has set for the functioning of the exchange. Thus a liaison officer shall take care for accommodation, meals, etc. A liaison officer to the extent possible shall be provided with access to telephone and fax. The functions of a liaison officer are bilateral, for the country he/she represents to be able to communicate their opinion and wishes through the liaison officer. In special cases requiring joint action or loaned equipment, this dual-channel function is of invaluable importance.

Liaison officers shall coordinate reconnaissance activities involving aircraft and helicopters with their national State administration institutions, eliminating overlapping of the functions.

If two countries which are affected by the same pollution, decide not to use liaison officers, they shall exchange daily reports.
The senior on-scene commander (SOSC) and the national on-scene commander (NOSC) shall communicate with each other as needed.

Acting for the Minister for Environmental Protection –
Minister for Education and Science

T. Koķe