



HELCOM, Response and Risks

Markus Helavuori

OpenRisk II Project Kick-Off Conference
6-7 March 2024, Helsinki



About HELCOM



1974: The Helsinki Convention, signed by the then seven Contracting Parties



1980: Establishment of the HELCOM Secretariat

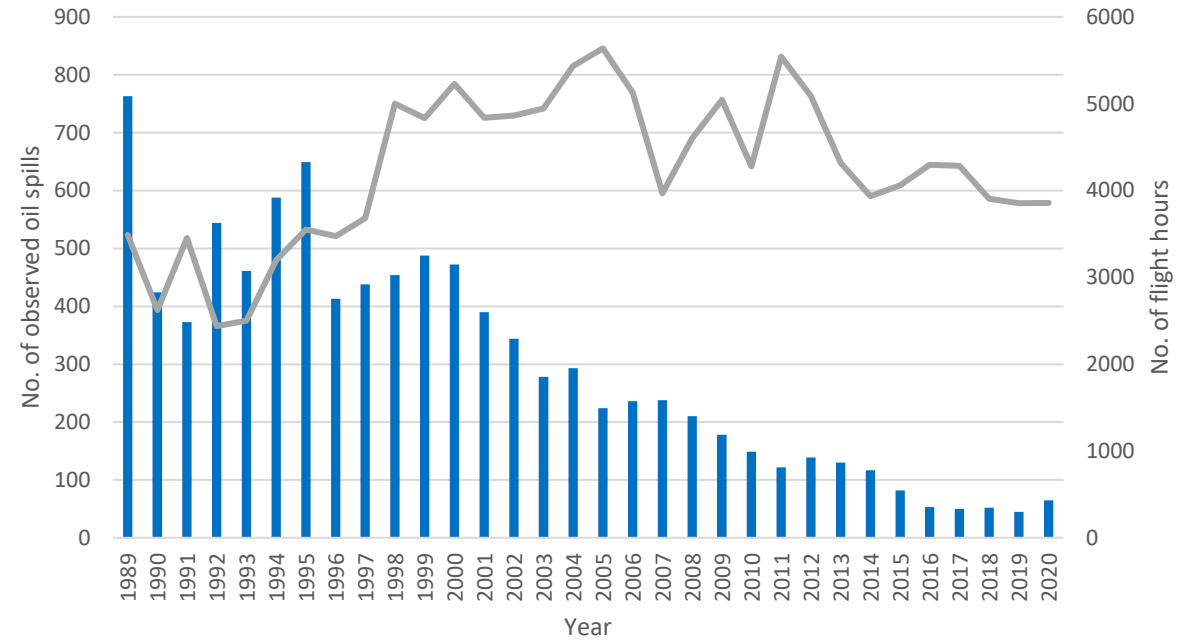


1992: Ten Contracting Parties
EE, EU, DK, DE, FI, LV, LT, PL, SE, RU



2024: 50 years of the Helsinki Convention

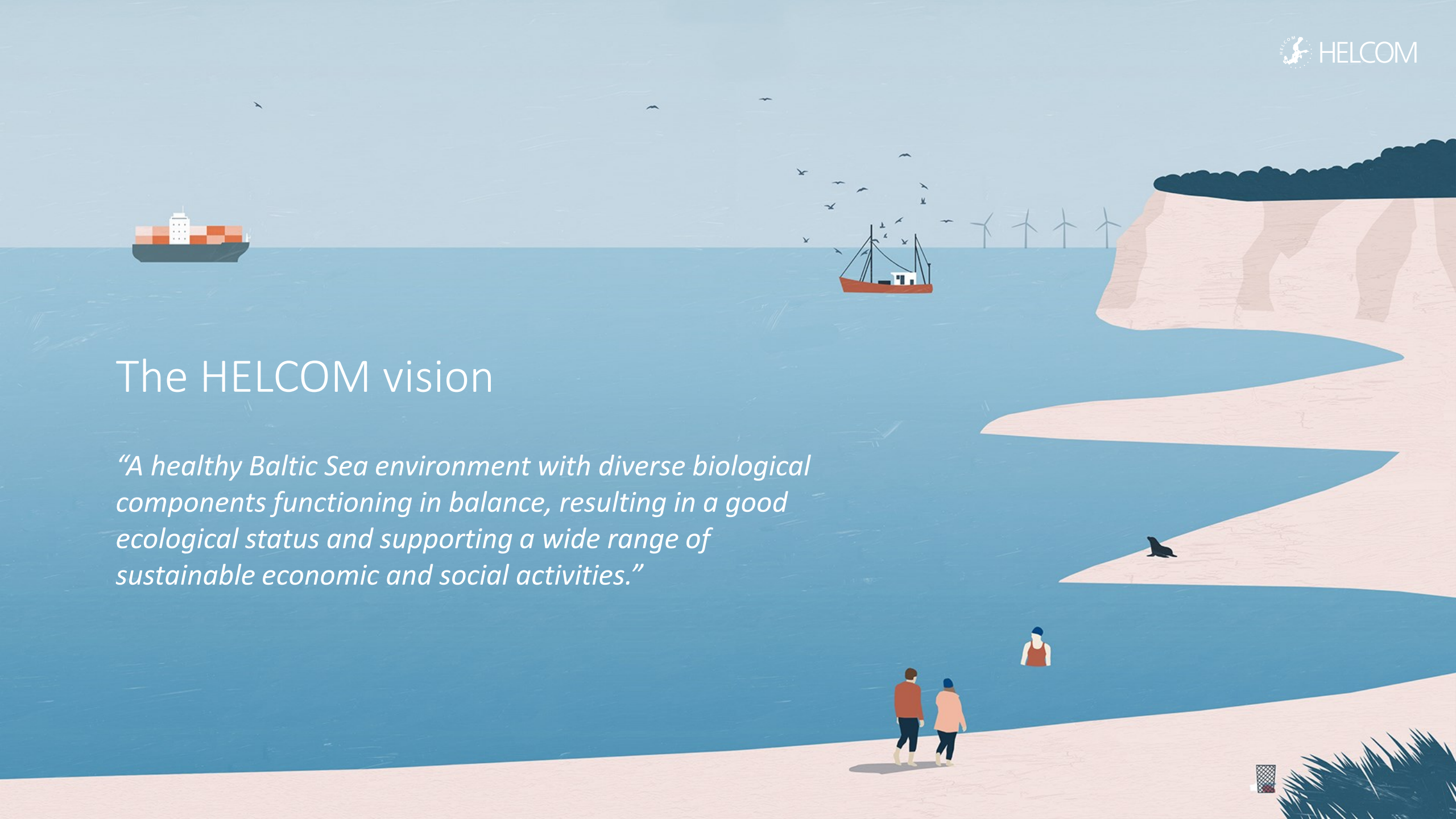
Total number of flight hours and confirmed oil spills in the Baltic Sea during aerial surveillance



▲ Signing of the Helsinki Convention in 1974

The HELCOM vision

“A healthy Baltic Sea environment with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable economic and social activities.”



Political level


Helsinki Commission
(HELCOM)


Heads of Delegation
(HODs)

Policy coordination level

 **WG GEAR**   





Working groups: management / policy level

 WG BioDiv STATE 	 WG Source to sea ACTIVITY, PRESSURE  	 WG Fish ACTIVITY 	 WG Sea-based pressures PRESSURE  	 WG Maritime ACTIVITY 	 WG Response ACTIVITY  	 HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG ACTIVITY 
---	---	---	---	--	--	--

Expert groups and networks: scientific / technical level

EG Benthic EG Birdmove EG Foodweb EG MaMa EG MPA	EG Phyto EG Stur EG Zoo JWG Bird MPA MaNet	EG Eutro EG Haz EG MoRS EG RedCore	EG FishData EG Fish-M	EG DreDS EG Marine Litter EG Noise EG Submerged JEG NIS	CP PRF EG AIS EG Safe Nav Green Team JTG Ballast & Biofouling	EG Shore EG Surveillance EG Wildlife	BSR MSP Data ESG
--	--	---	--------------------------	---	---	--	------------------

BSAP focus:

-  Biodiversity
-  Hazardous substances and litter
-  Sea-based activities
-  Eutrophication

-  Horizontal topics

Full names of the working groups:

- WG GEAR = HELCOM Working Group for the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach
- WG BioDiv = HELCOM Working Group on Biodiversity, Protection and Restoration
- WG Source to sea = HELCOM Working Group on the Source to Sea Management of Nutrients and Hazardous Substances and Sustainable Agricultural Practices
- WG Fish = HELCOM Working Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries
- WG Sea-based pressures = HELCOM Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from Sea-based Sources
- WG Maritime = HELCOM Maritime Working Group
- WG Response = HELCOM Response Working Group
- HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG = Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group

HELCOM Response cooperation and coordination

- Operational procedures
 - Cooperation, harmonization, administrative procedures, financial arrangements etc. (HELCOM Response Manual)
 - At sea
 - On shore
 - Oiled wildlife response
- Exercises
- Aerial surveillance (incl. satellite images)
- Submerged hazardous objects
- Reports
- Risk assessments
- Projects



HELCOM Response – Regulatory mandate

- **Helsinki Convention Article 14 on Co-operation in combatting marine pollution:** *The Contracting Parties shall individually and jointly take, as set out in Annex VII, all appropriate measures to maintain adequate ability and to respond to pollution incidents in order to eliminate or minimize the consequences of these incidents to the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area.*
- **Annex VII of the Helsinki Convention on Response to Pollution Incidents:** *The HELCOM countries have agreed 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 at sea or on the shore.*
 - **Regulation 10 on Regular Co-operation:** *The Contracting Parties shall on a regular basis arrange joint operational combatting exercises as well as alarm exercises. The Contracting Parties shall also on a regular basis arrange exercises on the shore.*
 - **Regulation 11 on application of the HELCOM Response Manual:** *The Contracting Parties agree to apply, as far as practicable, the principles and rules included in the HELCOM Manual on Co-operation in Response to Marine Pollution, detailing this Annex and adopted by the Commission or by the Group designated by the Commission for this purpose.*

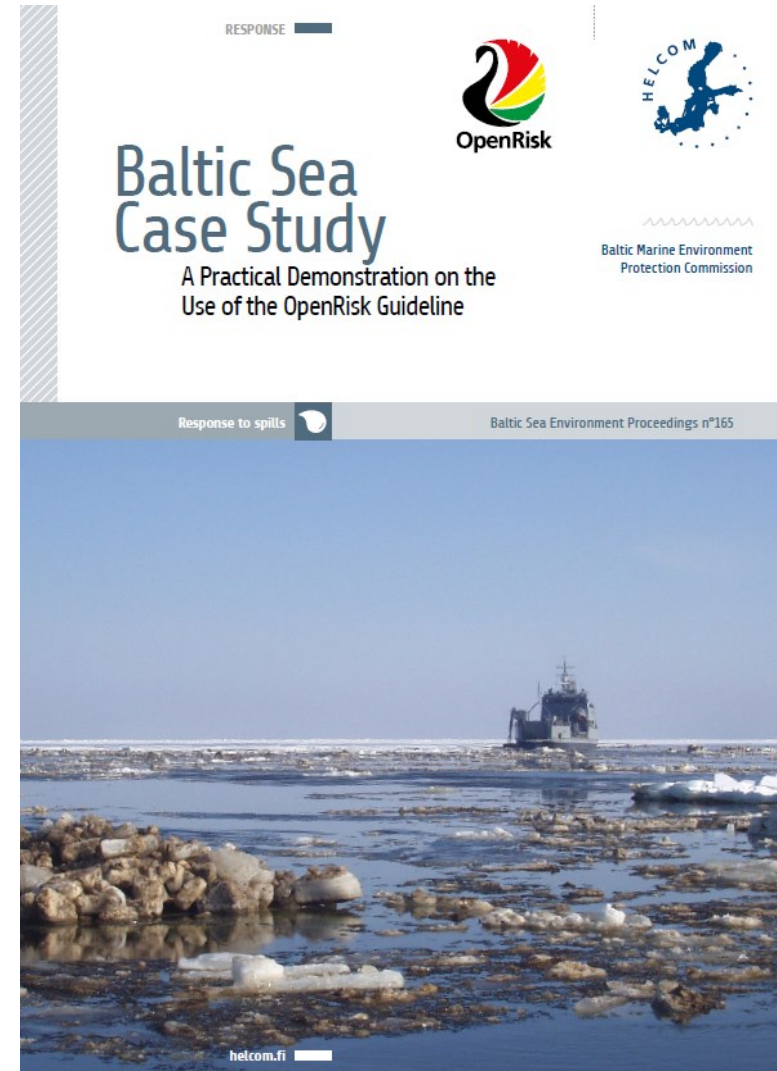
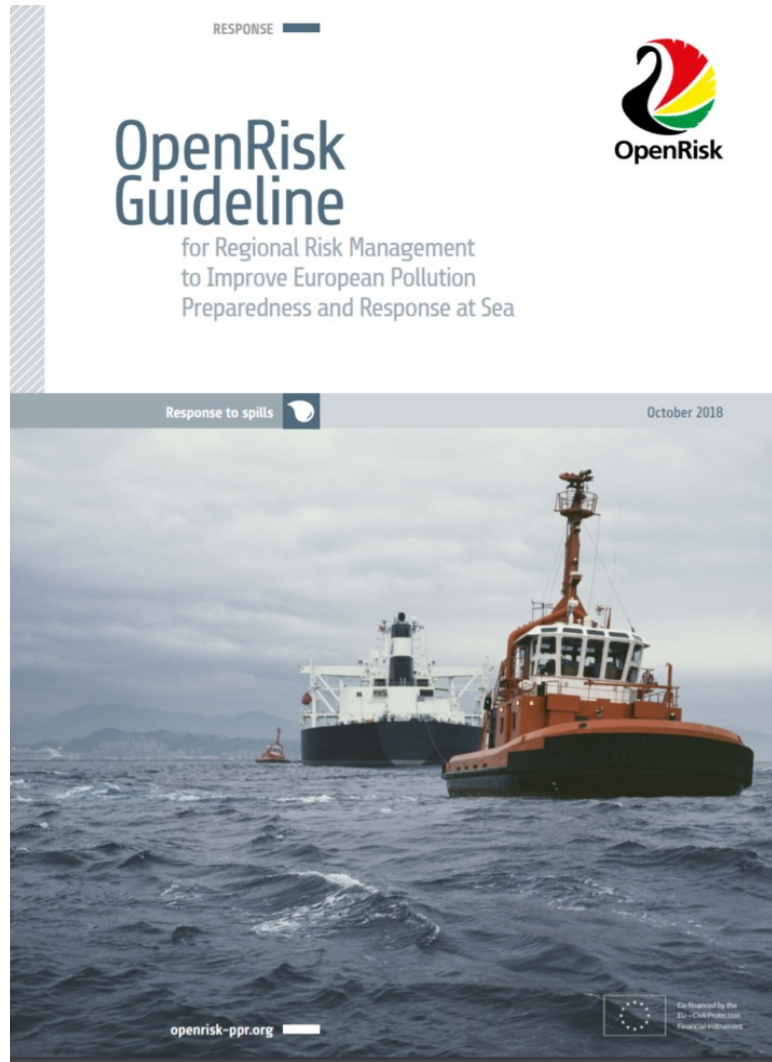


BRISK (Sub-regional Risk Of Spill Of Oil and Hazardous Substances in the Baltic Sea)

- Oil and HNS
- Risks and environmental damage assessed for each sub-region
- Sensitivity mapping
- Based on 2009-2012 data
- Validity ended in 2020
- Separate BRISK-RU project for Russia (funded by Nordic Council of Ministers)

[BRISK project](#)







- BSAP action S31 *“Conduct a feasibility study by 2022 for, and as appropriate, undertake a risk analysis for oil and HNS pollution of the marine environment in the Baltic Sea area by 2025” and that the Feasibility study regarding a Long-term risk analysis for oil and HNS pollution of the Baltic Sea”*

- Feasibility study completed. Approved by WG Response in autumn 2022.

→ New long-term risk analysis necessary!

- Only risks from oil and HNS spills resulting from shipping related accidents are to be included.
- Foundation for calculating the effect of activities to minimize the likelihood or consequences through preventive measures or increase of response effectiveness during the next 10-15 years (tbd).
- Drift modelling and seasonal variation.
- Environmental data (sensitivity mapping of species and habitats) c.f. BSAP action S38.

HELCOM and OpenRisk II

- WG Response has noted that the HELCOM strategic long-term risk analysis and OpenRisk II do not intend to fulfil the same purpose.
- There is interest inter alia in the adapting of the Norwegian AISyRisk tool for the Baltic Sea (including a module for ice navigation).
- OpenRisk II could aid a HELCOM long-term risk analysis by providing tools needed e.g. during response operations and be used for monitoring trends in between long-term risk analyses.
- Sensitivity mapping envisaged in OpenRisk II and the HELCOM long-term risk analysis...synergies?



Thank you!

