

# BRISK – Sub-regional risk of spill of oil and hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea



Part-financed by  
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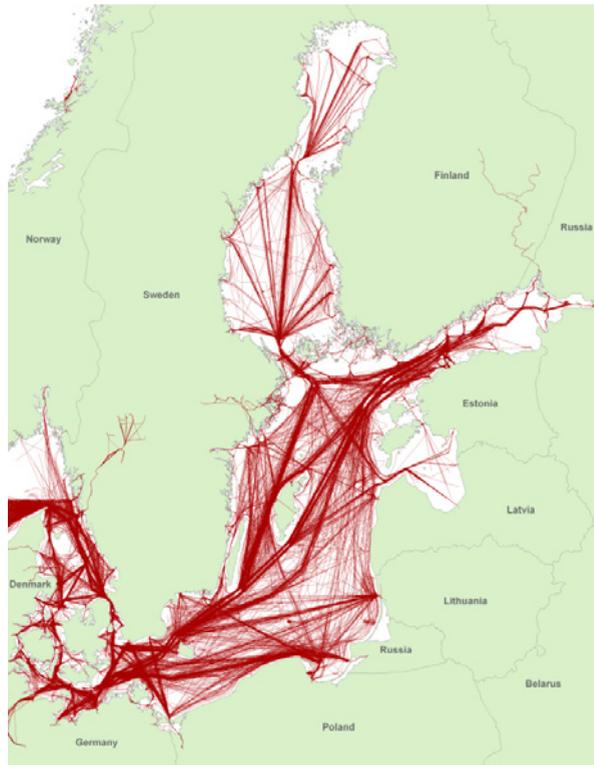
## Maritime traffic in the Baltic

The Baltic Sea today is one of the busiest seas in the world. Both the numbers and the sizes of ships have grown in recent years, especially of oil tankers, and this trend is expected to continue.

The Baltic's narrow straits and shallow waters, many of which are covered by ice for prolonged periods in winter, make navigation very challenging, and increase the risk of shipping accidents.

According to the HELCOM Automatic Identification System (AIS) for monitoring maritime traffic, there are about 2,000 ships in the Baltic marine area at any given moment, and each month around 3,500-5,000 ships ply the waters of the Baltic Sea. In 2007, 57% of these ships were cargo vessels, 17% were tankers and 10% were passenger vessels.

The transportation of oil and other potentially hazardous cargoes is growing steeply and steadily. By 2015, a 40% increase is expected in the amounts of

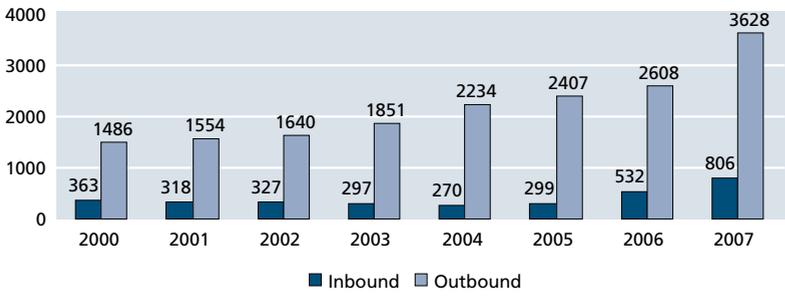


**Maritime traffic in the Baltic Sea based on information from the HELCOM Automatic Identification System (period of one week)**



oil being shipped on the Baltic, which in 2007 reached more than 170 million tonnes. The use of much bigger tankers is also expected to grow – there will be more tankers in the Baltic carrying 100,000-150,000 tonnes of oil.

**Number of laden tankers entering and leaving the Baltic (SHIPPOS)**



**Amount of oil transported via the Great Belt (SHIPPOS)**

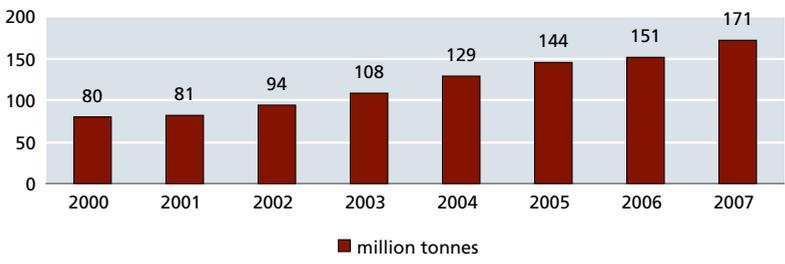




Photo: Elena Buljcheva

## Co-operation in response field in the Baltic Sea

The Baltic Sea coastal countries already have substantial resources to effectively respond to pollution at sea in the region. A high number of emergency tugs and more than 45 sea-going vessels are located around the Baltic. Moreover, several new vessels will be built in coming years.

Operational procedures for joint, international response operations have been put in place within the framework of the Helsinki Commission, and a number of response exercises are held regularly. The most famous one is BALEX DELTA which aims at testing HELCOM's response system, command structure and communication system, as well as the co-operation and co-ordination between the various response units of the Baltic Sea countries.

The system has proved to be efficient to tackle the recent major pollution accidents in the Baltic.

### **Recent major shipping accidents resulting in pollution:**

- 1990 "Volgoneft", 700-800 tonnes of waste oil
  - 5 countries and more than 20 ships involved
  - nearly all oil recovered at sea
- 2001 "Baltic Carrier", 2700 tonnes of oil
  - 3 countries involved
  - around 50% of oil recovered from the water
- 2003 "Fu Shan Hai", 1200 tonnes of fuel oil
  - 3 countries involved
  - around 1100 tonnes of oil recovered at sea

## BRISK

In order to address the increasing risk of accidental pollution from shipping connected to the increasing maritime transportation in the Baltic, a strategic project “Sub-regional risk of spill of oil and hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea” (BRISK) has been launched by the Baltic Sea countries under the HELCOM umbrella, led by the Admiral Danish Fleet HQ.

The overall objective of BRISK is to substantially contribute to the development of an appropriate level of preparedness in the whole Baltic Sea area to tackle major accidental spills.

BRISK will last three years and it is co-financed by the European Union within the Baltic Sea Region Programme (BSRP) 2007-2013. Its total budget amounts to around EUR 3.3 million, with approximately EUR 2.5 million to be allocated from the European Regional Development Fund. BRISK has been chosen as one of the strategic projects within the Baltic Sea Region Programme due to its importance for the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region.

The project is to implement the provisions of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, adopted by all Baltic Sea countries and the European Commission in 2007, concerning step-wise actions to fulfil the requirements of HELCOM Recommendation 28E/12 on strengthening of sub-regional co-operation in response field.

HELCOM applies a three-tier approach to response to pollution at sea, where minor spills are addressed by one country, medium-size spills require assistance from several neighboring countries, and the largest spills are addressed by all coastal states and, if necessary, using external assistance. BRISK will focus on tier II accidents corresponding to the sub-regional level of co-operation.





Photo: Nikolay Vlasov / HELCOM

## BRISK activities

First of all, based on a common methodology, a comprehensive Baltic-wide analysis will be made within BRISK to check whether the existing emergency and response capacities in each sub-region of the Baltic are sufficient to tackle medium-size and large spills. No such overall risk assessment for the Baltic has been done so far.

Based on the risk assessment, the Project will identify missing resources and will help prepare pre-investment plans on how the Baltic Sea countries should jointly fill in the identified gaps.

When building the response capacities, the sub-regional approach, as applied in BRISK, is the most cost-efficient as countries can “share” their resources to build a common pool of response vessels and equipment sufficient for a given sub-region.

Moreover, the Project will facilitate and speed up the process of developing and concluding sub-regional agreements between neighbouring countries for joint response operations.

Through these activities the Project will substantially and in a concrete way contribute to the development of an appropriate level of preparedness in the whole Baltic Sea area.

## BRISK Project Partners

The project area covers all transnational maritime areas in the Baltic, divided into 6 sub-regions. Institutions and organizations from all the Baltic Sea countries participate in BRISK:

- Admiral Danish Fleet HQ – lead partner
- Estonian Board of Border Guard
- Finnish Environment Institute
- Central Command for Maritime Emergencies in Germany
- State Environmental Service, Marine and Inland Waters Administration in Latvia
- Lithuanian Maritime Safety Administration (partner likely to be changed to the Navy due to administrative re-organization in Lithuania)
- Maritime Institute in Poland
- Maritime Office in Gdynia, Poland
- Central Marine Research and Design Institute (CNIIMF) in the Russian Federation
- Swedish Coast Guard HQ
- HELCOM Secretariat

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