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MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
COMMITTEE
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Agenda item 4

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PREVENTION OF AIR POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

A need to further address SO_x emissions from shipping

Submitted by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland,
the Russian Federation and Sweden

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document provides information on implementation of the requirements of regulation 14(4) of MARPOL Annex VI in the Baltic Sea SO _x Emission Control Area
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	7.1 and 7.3
<i>High-level action:</i>	7.1.1 and 7.3.1
<i>Planned output:</i>	7.3.1.1
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 10
<i>Related document:</i>	MEPC 57/4

Summary

1 With this document the Coastal States of the Baltic Sea want to provide relevant information concerning implementation of the requirements of regulations 14(4) of MARPOL Annex VI in the Baltic Sea SO_x Emission Control Area as an input to the current discussion on further reduction of SO_x emissions from ships.

2 The Baltic Sea coastal countries discussed under the umbrella of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, also known as HELCOM, possible actions with regard to further reduction of the sulphur content limit of fuel oil used by ships in the Baltic Sea as well as globally.

3 MARPOL Annex VI entered into force on 19 May 2005 with the Baltic Sea area as an SO_x Emission Control Area (SECA). Regulation 14(4) concerning the limit of sulphur content of fuel oil used on board ships in the Baltic Sea came in full effect on 19 May 2006.

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4 Before the regulation came into force there were several concerns regarding availability of low sulphur fuel oil and possible consequences for the enforcement of the regulations and economic impacts. However, the experience gained with the implementation and enforcement of relevant regulations in the HELCOM area has been mostly positive. The information gathered to assess the enforcement of the regulation shows that the countries did not face any major difficulties in implementing MARPOL Annex VI as far as fuel oil quality was concerned.

5 Fuel oil with a maximum content of sulphur of 1.5% was available in the Baltic Sea ports as well as in European ports outside the Baltic. The availability of the fuel seemed to diminish with the distance from the Baltic Sea SECA where the requirements were less stringent on fuel oil quality. However, the Baltic Sea countries have expected this to change due to the North Sea becoming an SOx Emission Control Area and the entry into force of the relevant EU regulations.

6 From 17 May 2006 until 31 December 2006, as many as 1,879 ships were inspected in the Baltic Sea ports for compliance with the fuel oil requirements of MARPOL Annex VI. The percentage of ships inspected out of the total number of ships calling into the Baltic Sea ports during the reported period ranged from 33% to less than 2%.

7 Only in 28 cases non-compliance with the requirements of regulation 18 – “Fuel oil quality” of Annex VI were detected, which is 1.5% of the all ships inspected. This indicates the successful implementation of the relevant requirements in the Baltic Sea SECA.

8 The collection of information regarding the implementation of MARPOL Annex VI in the Baltic Sea area will be continued to give more detailed information.

9 From the encouraging experience gained so far it can be concluded that even more ambitious aims concerning fuel oil quality are achievable globally as well as regionally within the next years.

Action required of the Committee

10 The Committee is invited to take note of the information provided and take action as deemed appropriate.
