

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



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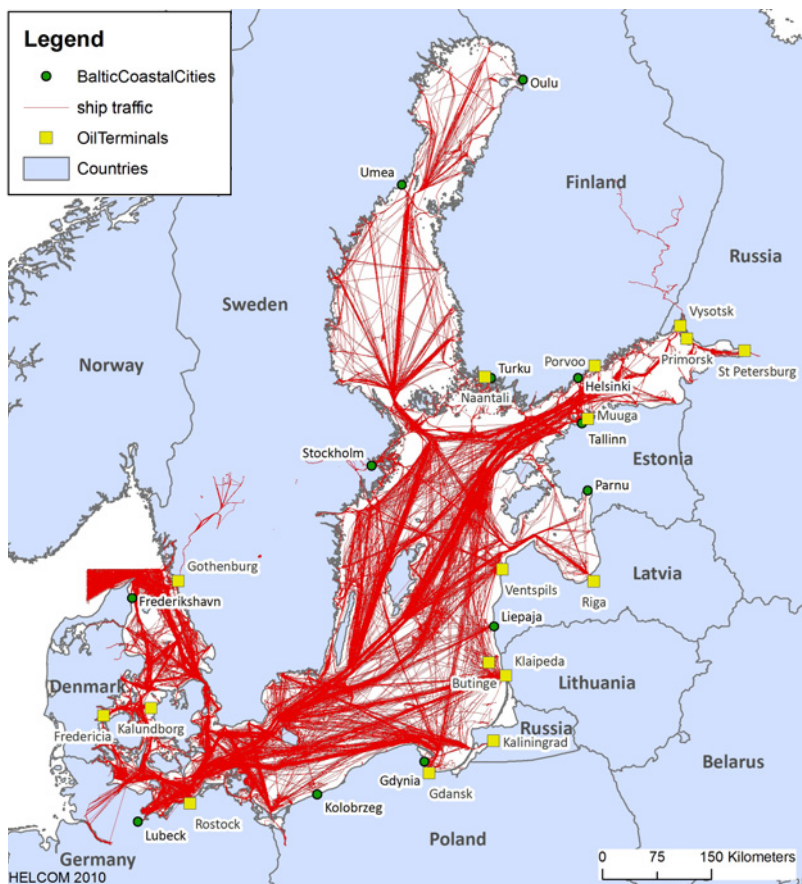


## Maritime traffic in the Baltic

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 Helsinki Commission's (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 2009, 51% of these ships were cargo vessels, 17% were tankers and 11% were passenger vessels.



**Maritime traffic in the Baltic Sea based on information from the HELCOM Automatic Identification System (period of one week in November 2008)**

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 oil being shipped to and from on the Baltic via the Great Belt, which in 2009 reached 166 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. This rise in shipping is due to the economical growth and the increasing oil production and transportation activities. However, it results in increasing risks of major pollution accidents, which could have a devastating impact on the marine environment, especially in the costal waters.

Each year there are around 120-140 shipping accidents in the Baltic Sea area. The number of accidents has risen since 2006, which can be linked to the 20% increase in ship traffic. On average, 7% of these accidents resulted in some kind of pollution.

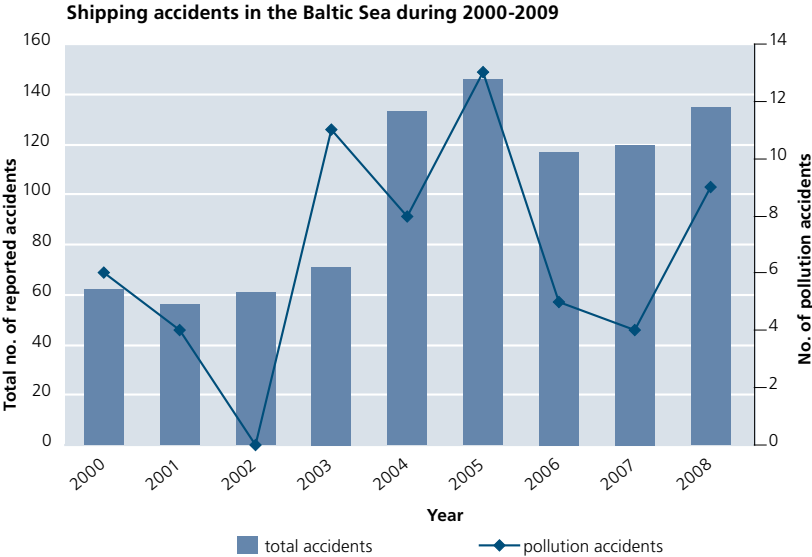
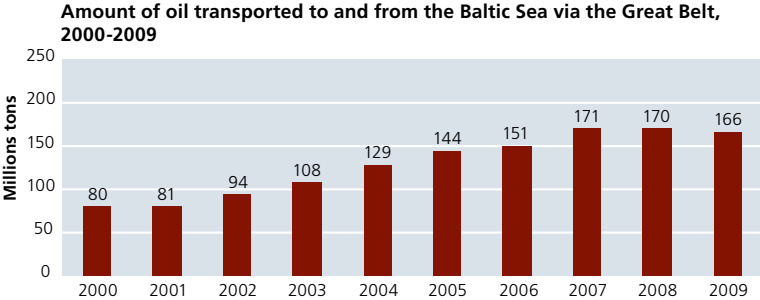




Photo: Nikolay Vlasov/HELCOM

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

The overall aim of the BRISK project is to increase the preparedness of all Baltic Sea countries to respond to major spills of oil and hazardous substances caused by shipping activities. BRISK has been launched under the umbrella of HELCOM. It is led by the Admiral Danish Fleet Headquarters.

The BRISK project covers all transnational maritime areas in the Baltic Sea, divided into six sub-regions. The BRISK project will:

- provide the first overall risk assessment, based on a common methodology, to cover pollution caused by shipping activities throughout the Baltic Sea,
- identify gaps in the resources needed to effectively tackle major spills of oil and hazardous substances,
- plan joint investments to improve response capacities, and
- speed up the development of transnational agreements for joint response operations in areas where such agreements do not exist.

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

The project implements 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 fulfill the requirements of HELCOM Recommendation 28E/12 on strengthening of sub-regional co-operation in response field. The project also contributes to the realization of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as one of its flagship actions.

BRISK will run for three years (2009-2012) and it is co-financed by the European Union within the Baltic Sea Region Programme 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.

## Activities in Russia

The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) has granted EUR 200.000 to carry out activities in the Russian Federation complementary to the BRISK activities in the remaining eight Baltic Sea countries. The NCM project (called BRISK-RU) ensures the participation of the Russian experts in the joint implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. The Central Marine Research & Design Institute Ltd. in St. Petersburg is the Lead Partner of the project, which is coordinated by the Information office of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Kaliningrad.





Photo: Nikolay Vlasov / HELCOM

## 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 48 sea-going vessels, including three vessels chartered by the European Maritime Safety Agency 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 HELCOM, 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 cooperation and co-ordination between the various response units of the Baltic Sea countries.

The BRISK project will build on the existing HELCOM cooperation and will further strengthen the Baltic Sea countries' capabilities to be able to tackle major pollution at sea.

## BRISK and BRISK-RU Project Partners

Institutions and organizations from all 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
- Marine and Inland Waters Administration of the Ministry of Environment in Latvia
- Coastal Research and Planning Institute, Klaipeda University in Lithuania
- Maritime Institute in Gdansk, Poland
- Maritime Office in Gdynia, Poland
- Swedish Coast Guard HQ
- HELCOM
- Central Marine Research and Design Institute (CNIIMF) in the Russian Federation

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