



Rules of Procedures

Regulations on how to conduct HELCOM business.
Not official. To see official version: helcom.fi

Representation

Contracting Parties
Each Contracting Party of HELCOM is represented by a delegation of:
- Representatives
- Alternate representatives
- Experts
- Advisors
They designate names not later than a week before the meeting.

Observers
Who can be represented in any meeting of the Commission?
- Any State which is not a Contracting Party
- Any international organization
- Any NGO with pertinent expertise
The Commission adopts the criteria and the selection process for granting that status as well as its suspension, rights and obligations.
The Executive Secretary designates observers to meetings of other international organizations after consultation with the Chairman.

Chairman

Every Contracting Party will hold the chairmanship in turn in alphabetical order every two years.

Timeline
That CP designates every two year in alphabetical order six months in advance:
- Chairman: can not serve as representative of own country
- Vice-chairman: takes place of Chairman if he or she is absent
The CP nominates successor if the chairmanship falls vacant.

Duties:
- Convene, declare open and close regular or extraordinary meetings
- Preside all Commission and Head of Delegation meetings
- Observer Rules of Procedure and decide questions of order
- Give guidance to the Executive Secretary to ensure that the business of the Commission is carried out efficiently

Meetings of Commission

Regular meeting
Once a year in Helsinki. Date of next meeting is to be set. Decides budget. Invitation sent 60 days before meeting by Executive Secretariat to CP and Observers.

Extraordinary meeting
90 days after the Executive Secretary receives endorsement. Invitation sent 60 days before meeting but not later than 30 days by Executive Secretariat to CP and Observers.

Ministerial meeting
Once every three years.

Meetings are private
Availability of docs at HELCOM website:
- Before meeting: only Agenda/annotation
- After meeting: other docs

Meetings of HOD

HOD meet twice a year to:
- Supervise implementation of Commission policy
- Propose policy strategies
- Provide guidance and support to Executive Secretary in programme development and management
- Other tasks

Meetings are open to:
- any organization with observers status (max 1 person)
- Chairman of subsidiary body and PITF (Programme Implementation Task Force) upon invitation
- Particular issues like financial, institutional or organizational may be dealt with internally

Documents distributed:
- 30 days before meeting: Agenda, timetable and relevant documents
- Rest of docs are internal

Agenda

Executive Secretary prepares provisional agenda in consultation with Chairman

Documents distributed:
- If regular meeting: 60 days before
- If extraordinary meeting: without delay
Items in agenda are placed on request of:
- Chairman
- HOD
- Any other CP
Provisional agenda contains items proposed for consideration

Submission of docs

22 days before meeting
Last day for Secretariat to receive basic documents and documents that require action or decision by Commission, unless otherwise decided by HOD

21 days before meeting
Last day for Secretariat to send basic documents and documents that require action or decision by Commission, unless otherwise decided by HOD

7 days before meeting
Last day to receive comments to basic documents

Day of meeting

Bulky documents should include abstracts and action requested

Subsidiary bodies and Commission

HOD establishes subsidiary bodies to enable the Commission to perform its functions. HOD determines:
- Objectives
- Time frame
- Reporting requirement
- Guidelines for publications of results

Subsidiary bodies send HOD for approval:
- annual work programmes
- annual reports

Subsidiary bodies and PITF (Programme Implementation Task Force) receive technical support from Secretariat

Observers can be represented in subsidiary bodies

Subsidiary bodies elect Chairman and Vice-chairman. The Chairman has right to vote on behalf of their delegation. The election of Chairman and Vice-chairman is reported to HOD through Secretariat

Rules of Procedure apply mutatis mutandi (making necessary alterations while not affecting the main point at issue) to subsidiary bodies on their subgroups/projects.

Voting

Each CP has one vote.
EU has right to 9 votes (number of EU member states in Commission).
If one EU member state votes, the EU does not vote.
If EU votes the member states do not vote.

Decision are taken unanimously

Between meeting of Commission a written vote may be taken

Any amendment to a proposal before the Commission shall be voted before the proposal

Executive Secretary and Secretariat

Executive Secretary: Chief administrative appointed by Commission which determines his or her duties, terms and conditions of service. All communications from Commission or HOD is sent to Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary sends all communications to Commissions or HOD. Tasks:

Policy
Implement policies, strategies and programmes approved by the Commission or HOD
Advise the Commission or HOD on policy formation

Communication
Ensure effective communication and coordination between subsidiary bodies and within the Secretariat
Ensure, together with Chairman proper representation of Commission in international fora and public awareness

Budget
Responsible for execution of budget and other tasks according to Financial Rules
Responsible for receipt and disbursement of all monies

Other
Ensure the effective functioning of Commission alarm and warning system
Perform other duties entrusted by Commission or HOD

Secretariat (it shall be in Helsinki)
Appoint general staff and, in consultation with HOD, professional staff
Assign duties to provide technical and admin support to Commission, HOD and subsidiary bodies
Ensure training, development and annual assessment of staff
Promote team culture, mutual assistance and readiness to accept new tasks

Language of the Commission

The working language of the Commission shall be English

Records and reports

At the end of each meeting the Commission or HOD adopt a list of decisions.
The Executive Secretary, in consultation with Chairman, will submit minutes including list of decisions to any invited participant

The subsidiary bodies report to the Commission or HOD
The Executive Secretary prepare an annual report and submit to Commission for approval
No report is considered official until approved by Commission or HOD

Amendments to the rule of procedure

These Rules of Procedure may be amended by the Commission by unanimous decision