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## Background

*Note that this document was submitted after the established deadline. It will be decided by the Session whether the document can be discussed or is postponed to the next meeting.*

## Background

In July 2025, alarming news emerged about the plans to exploit an oil and gas deposit located 6 km offshore Świnoujście, Poland. The site lies in the transboundary waters of the Oder Estuary and the Pomeranian Bay – NATURA 2000 protected areas, and vital for nature, climate and local communities.

Oil and gas extraction in the Baltic Sea poses severe threats to its fragile ecosystems, especially in shallow waters and underground reserves. Porpoises, seabirds such as the long-tailed duck, fish like Baltic herring and sprat are highly vulnerable to degraded water quality caused by chemicals used, leaks and potential accidents, as well as to underwater noise pollution from pile driving, ship traffic, and pipelines used for offshore rigs. Already under huge pressure, these species and habitats would face even greater harm.

The prospected oil and gas deposits extend across the German-Polish border, with plans for up to eight drilling rigs. Despite the high risks, no valid and comprehensive environmental impact assessments have been carried out so far.

Such projects contradict the purpose of EU NATURA 2000 protected areas and would breach several EU and international commitments, including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Birds Directive, the Habitats Directive, the Helsinki Convention and its Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) as well as climate goals.

Indeed, scientists warn that no new deposits should be developed if we are to keep global warming below 1.5°C. By moving forward, Poland could become dependent on fossil fuels with serious financial and climate consequences, undermining EU climate targets and international obligations.

Therefore, **we, the environmental NGOs from the Baltic Sea Region, representing at least 1.5 million residents of the region, call** respectively on Ministry of Climate and Environment of Poland, the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), the European Commission, and the Secretariat of the Espoo Convention **to** undertake urgent actions to:

- **Stop the plans for oil and gas extraction in the Oder Estuary and the Pomeranian Bay**, violating climate, environmental regulations and goals;
- **Ban any new oil and gas extraction across the Baltic Sea**, preventing deterioration and ensuring protection of Baltic marine ecosystem<sup>2</sup>;
- **Ensure strong cross-border cooperation and communication amongst all involved states**, including sharing of environmental impact assessments and timely notifications of planned consultations or other measures.

## Action requested

The Session is invited to take note of the position of the Coalition Clean Baltic and its members and call for compliance with the Helsinki and Espoo Conventions, as well as HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan when it comes to implementing any new large scale offshore infrastructure projects.