Document title	Keep the Baltic free from carbon dumping- SAY NO to CO2 storage in our sea
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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

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) may sound like a climate solution, but it´s a dangerous distraction. Instead of cutting emissions, it risks turning the already sensitive and fragile Baltic Sea ecosystem into a carbon dump. That´s why CCS is currently banned under the Helsinki Convention.

Why CCS should not happen in the Baltic Sea?

CCS involves the capturing of CO2 from the air or large industrial sources and long-term storage in underground, geological formations. Given the potential to reduce CO2 emissions, CCS has been adopted as a key climate mitigation strategy across Europe, within for example the Net-Zero Industry Act. While the OSPAR convention and London Protocol no longer form legal barriers to offshore carbon storage in other areas, the Helsinki Convention still presents a legal barrier to carbon storage in the Baltic Sea.

Driven by the governments' eagerness to utilise the CO2 storage opportunities in the Baltic Sea, this legal barrier is now also being challenged. An independent review is to be conducted on the legality of CCS in the Baltic Sea under the Helsinki Convention, as well as an assessment of the environmental impacts and technical feasibility of CCS in the Baltic Sea. In reality, CCS does more harm than good when it comes to CO2 emissions and will have negative environmental impacts in the Baltic Sea (see graphic visual in attachment).

From start to finish, CCS activities place pressures on the Baltic Sea. These activities include (1) identification of potential carbon storage sites and constructing of infrastructure, (2) carbon capture and compression for transport, (3) carbon transport through pipes and ships, to (4) CCS storage or (5) utilisation. These activities have a wide range of impacts on the marine environment. For example, pile driving and seismic surveys involved in the exploration of CCS sites produce underwater noise that can lead to behavioural changes and injury in marine animals. Carbon transport and storage carry the risk of CO2 leakage, which can cause asphyxiation in humans and put sensitive marine organisms at risk. Even just the shipping and additional infrastructure involved would assert pressures, such as the introduction and spread of invasive species. Many of these pressures can have cascading effects on the wider marine environment, for example on food chains or benthic community structures. Furthermore, the use of captured CO2 to harvest more oil and gas (i.e. Enhanced Oil Recovery) or CO2 incorporation into products ultimately leads to more CO2 in the atmosphere, rather than climate change mitigation. The Baltic Sea is already under stress and this would only be exacerbated by conducting CCS. (see graphic visual in attachment).

CCB does not support ccs activities in the Baltic Sea, given that:

- *CCS does not reduce emissions*

  CCS is counter-productive as a climate mitigation strategy. The majority of CCS projects have failed or underperformed, and where they have succeeded, the captured CO2 has been used in the natural gas processing sector and for enhanced oil recovery. Hence, CCS actually impairs decarbonisation and fossil

fuel phase-out. Given these 'hidden' emissions, the current CCS activities are net CO2 positive, rather than reducing GHG emissions. Pursuing CCS in the Baltic Sea does more harm than good and actively goes against HELCOM's efforts to align climate mitigation policies with the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

- *CCS poses a risk to Baltic Sea marine life*

  The Baltic Sea is under many different human pressures, which threaten both its species and habitats. CCS activities would contribute to noise pollution in the Baltic Sea and involve various risks, from CO2 leakage, to displacement of toxic brine deposits, or earthquakes - posing a further threat to marine life in the Baltic Sea. Moreover, one promising site for CCS in Swedish waters is a Natura 2000 protected area for the critically endangered Baltic harbour porpoise. Pursuing CCS in the Baltic Sea exposes an already sensitive and fragile ecosystem to further environmental stress.

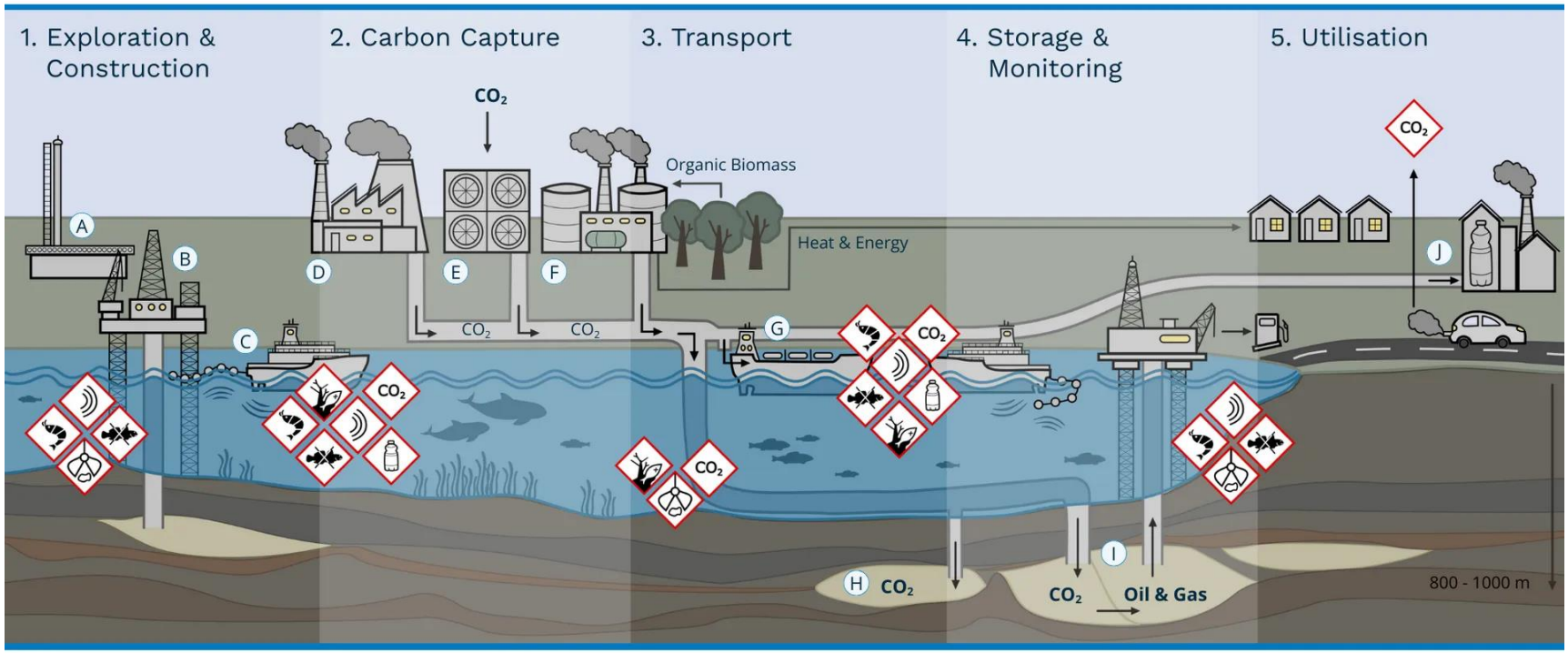
- *CCS is prohibited in the Baltic Sea*

  The Helsinki Convention is the primary legal framework governing environmental protection in the Baltic Sea. Under this convention, CCS is considered "deliberate disposal at sea or into the seabed of wastes […]" , and is prohibited. The extent of environmental impacts that CCS would have in the Baltic Sea are still unclear, but there are clear indications that CCS activities could harm marine habitats and species. Hence, the Helsinki Convention's "precautionary principle" needs to be applied and guide further discussions about CCS in the Baltic Sea region.

Action requested

The Session is invited to take note of the position of the Coalition Clean Baltic and its members and call to the Contracting Parties 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.

Environmental impacts of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) on the Baltic Sea ecosystem



Pressures

Underwater Noise Pollution
e.g. from drilling, shipping, or seismic activity, harming / disturbing marine life

Ecological Impacts
e.g. changes to benthic community structures and trophic cascades

Habitat Loss, Seabed Disturbance
e.g. from pile driving activities and infrastructure installation, increasing turbidity and sedimentation

Hazardous Substances
e.g. oil spills and leakage of CO_2 or anti-fouling chemicals from ships

Risk of releasing CO_2
e.g. leakage or emission of CO_2, fueling climate change and ocean acidifation

Marine Litter
e.g. loss of equipment at sea or dropping litter overboard

Invasive Species
can be introduced by ships and spread by growing on infrastructures at sea

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- (A) geological exploration and drilling equipment, *e.g.* Riksriggen in Sweden
- (B) offshore drilling platform used for seafloor exploration
- (C) research vessel using seismic surveys to explore the sub-surface seafloor
- (D) classic CCS where CO_2 is captured from a point-source facility (*e.g.* cement factory or power station)
- (E) a Direct Air Capture (DAC / DACCS) facility, capturing CO_2 from the air
- (F) combustion of organic material to produce heat, energy, & CO_2, *i.e.* Bioenergy CCS (BECCS)
- (G) transport of compressed / liquid CO_2 via pipelines or ships
- (H) long-term storage of CO_2 in porous geological formations (*e.g.* deep saline aquifers, empty oil / gas fields)
- (I) 80-90% of captured CO_2 is used for Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)
- (J) short-term storage of CO_2 in products, *i.e.* Carbon Capture, Usage & Storage (CCUS)

Infographic created by Paula Benders for CCB