



INTERNATIONAL
OIL POLLUTION
COMPENSATION
FUND

ASSEMBLY
16th session
Agenda item 4

FUND/A.16/2
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GRANT OF OBSERVER STATUS

Note by the Director

Introduction

1 Article 18.10 of the Fund Convention provides that the Assembly determines which intergovernmental and international non-governmental organisations shall be admitted to take part, without voting rights, in meetings of the Assembly, the Executive Committee and subsidiary bodies. The Assembly adopted at its 2nd session "Guidelines on Relations between the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund and Inter-Governmental Organisations and International Non-Governmental Organisations" (document FUND/A.2/13/1). These guidelines contain the criteria for the granting of observer status to international non-governmental organisations.

2 In addition to the intergovernmental organisations especially mentioned in Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and Executive Committee, the Assembly has granted observer status to eleven non-governmental organisations: ACOPS, BIMCO, CMI, FOEI, INTERTANKO, ICS, the International Group of P & I Clubs, ITOFF, IUCN, CRISTAL and OCIMF.

3 The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission – generally known as the Helsinki Commission – has requested observer status with the IOPC Fund. The organisation has submitted information about its structure and has indicated the areas in which it has common interests with the IOPC Fund.

The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission – Helsinki Commission

4 The Helsinki Commission is the decision-making body of the 1974 Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (the Helsinki Convention), which entered into force in May 1980. The 1974 Convention was revised in 1992, but the revised text has not entered into force. The Commission is an intergovernmental organisation with a permanent international secretariat in Helsinki (Finland). The Helsinki Convention has at present eight Contracting States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden) and one Observer State (Latvia).

5 The objective of the Helsinki Convention is to protect the Baltic marine environment against all forms of pollution. The Convention covers, inter alia, discharges and spills from ships and contains provisions relating to combatting spills of oil and other harmful chemicals. The Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention have agreed to prevent, as far as possible, or at least to reduce substantially, the pollution of the Baltic Sea and to take active measures to protect the marine environment within the Convention Area.

6 The Helsinki Commission has carried out important work in respect of the development of capabilities to combat oil spills and spills of other harmful substances. It has also established procedures for co-operation in combatting spills. Since 1980, twenty Recommendations have been adopted in respect of combatting spills. A "Manual on Co-operation in Combatting Marine Pollution" has been elaborated within the Commission.

7 The Director considers that the Helsinki Commission fulfils the criteria laid down in the above-mentioned guidelines. He is of the opinion that the Commission will be able to contribute to the work of the IOPC Fund.

Action to be Taken by the Assembly

8 The Assembly is invited to take a decision on the Helsinki Commission's application for observer status.
