Statement from KIMO, HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, November 2026

Chair, Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Ministerial Meeting on behalf of KIMO, the Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation.

KIMO is a network of more than 75 coastal municipalities from across the Baltic Sea and the North-East Atlantic. Our members share a commitment to protecting the marine environment and work every day with the practical challenges and opportunities of managing and safeguarding our coasts and seas.

We greatly value HELCOM's role in bringing countries together to drive cooperation and action for a healthier Baltic Sea. The Baltic Sea Action Plan provides an important framework for our shared efforts, and KIMO is proud to support its implementation by engaging coastal municipalities and testing practical solutions.

For many years, KIMO has worked closely with HELCOM, particularly on issues related to marine litter. Through this cooperation, KIMO has supported awareness-raising, stakeholder engagement and practical measures that contribute to HELCOM's marine litter objectives.

Examples include our cooperation on addressing the intentional release of microplastics through activities such as balloon and confetti releases, as well as our joint work to reduce the impacts of abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear and promote responsible waste management practices within the fisheries sector.

Most recently, KIMO launched the REDUCE-NET-WASTE project, funded jointly by the Baltic Sea Action Plan Fund and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management. Building on recommendations recently recognised as an OSPAR Best Environmental Practice, the project will work with ports and fishers to test and document the effectiveness of practical measures for preventing net cuttings waste from entering the marine environment.

KIMO also welcomes the adoption of the HELCOM Science Agenda and the new Recommendation on reducing emissions and discharges of hazardous substances from industry. Both initiatives provide important support for future action on issues of significance to coastal communities.

Looking ahead, KIMO remains committed to supporting the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan by connecting regional objectives with local action.

Through continued cooperation, we can ensure that regional commitments are translated into tangible improvements for the Baltic Sea and the communities that depend on it.

Thank you.