

# *Coalition Clean Baltic*

2008-09-30

## **Development of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy**

### **Proposals for components for the Action Plan of the objective “To make the Baltic Sea Region an environmentally sustainable place”**

#### Introduction

CCB comments will focus on the first objective “To make the Baltic Sea Region an environmentally sustainable place”.

The fundamental common environmental concern for the Baltic Sea Region citizens is to reach a healthy Baltic Sea environment.

We will focus on the two main environmental concerns:

- Eutrophication still remains the most pressing problem in the region, as nitrogen and phosphorus inputs are still too high, despite considerable efforts an urgent problem for large sea-bottom areas. Eutrophication gives large areas with dead Baltic sea-bottoms, and remains an urgent problem in most coastal areas.
- Unsustainable exploitation of fish and other living resources of the Baltic Sea. The issue of overexploitation of fish is also considered as a severe problem, mainly due to the overutilisation of fishing quotas, high exploitation rate, use of damaging fishing techniques (e g bottom-trawling) and oversized fleet capacity.

To task for an EU strategy for Baltic Sea is to solve an environmental problem, eutrophication, that other intergovernmental Baltic cooperations, e g HELCOM, so far not have solved within 30 years of cooperation.

#### Role of EC

So far EC has mainly applied a “Wait-and See” policy as a Contracting Party within HELCOM. The main task for EC has been to control that actions developed by Member States of the Baltic Sea Region do not contradict with existing and planned EC guidelines, policies and legislation.

The EC has unfortunately not played a pro-active role for a successful policy actions to reach a Healthy Baltic Sea so far.

A change is needed to use the full power of EU/EC to safeguard a “Good Environmental Status” of the Baltic Sea, a Baltic Sea in ecological balance.

EC must not leave the responsibility for the implementation of a EU Baltic strategy to the Member States of the Baltic Region. A pro-active role from EC is needed, where EC develop proposals for regional changes/adaptation of the EU-policies, e g CAP, to reach the adopted goals.

### Main challenges / obstacles / concerns

To involve economic sector, such as agriculture, fisheries, transport etc., to seriously and willingly take on the adopted goals for a healthy Baltic Sea environment, and safeguard the environmental quality goals set up will be implemented to the same extent as other sector goals (e.g. production goals, transport goals etc.)

To guarantee a coherent EU-policy implementation in the Baltic Sea Region, so economic sectors fully support the environmental quality goals set up for the Baltic Sea.

To reach the goals for the EU-strategy, EC must secure efficient use of all EU-instruments and policies to reach the goals set up.

### Goals to be set up within the EU Strategy for Baltic Sea – to solve the main environmental concerns of the Baltic Sea Region

- To develop EU agricultural practices and agricultural subsidies systems in the Baltic Sea catchment that substantially contribute to the solution of the eutrophication problem of the Baltic Sea
- To develop nutrient-balanced production on all agricultural land in the Baltic Sea catchment area. The application of nutrients in agricultural land shall be limited, based on a balance between the foreseeable nutrient requirements of the crops and the nutrient supply to the crops from the soil and the nutrients with a view to minimise eutrophication.
- To develop goals to safeguard Baltic fish stocks within Safe biological limits
- To safeguard all wild Baltic salmon and sea-trout populations and its genetic variability, as an important natural resource

### Proposals for Actions and Programmes

- To secure a full implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), the BSAP should also be adopted by the highest political level, prime ministers of all the Baltic Sea Region EU Member States, via the European Council. All EU Member States need to make legally binding commitments and guarantee economic resources for its implementation. Such adoption would secure all economic sector to take responsibility for a successful BSAP implementation.

### ***Agriculture sector***

CCB views stresses the importance of the ecological recycling agriculture based on the re-use of plant nutrients for the protection of Baltic marine ecosystems and limiting of eutrophication.

-Assessment to identify EU agricultural policies, guidelines and financing programmes that gives support for agricultural practices that supports ongoing high nutrient run-off from agricultural lands.

-To develop agricultural subsidies system in the Baltic Sea region in a way that all subsidies are coupled to requirements to reduce the harmful environmental nutrient load (the more actions a farmer take to reduce the nutrient run-off the more subsidies he will get)

- To develop programmes to effectively control and minimise the nutrient run-off from intensive rearing of life-stocks (industrial farms) in the Baltic Sea region

*-Changes in the CAP subsidies:*

Many changes would be needed to adapt the current CAP subsidies, to support agricultural practices that would decrease nutrient run-off from agriculture substantially. EC should take initiatives to introduce such changes.

One example of such changes could be -The direct subsidies from the CAP pillar I, should make the beneficiary to control and limit the surplus of nitrogen and phosphorus as much as possible. The extra costs of the farmers due to such measures should be covered.

*Fertilization taxes*

Introduction of taxes for using excess quantities of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer per hectare, tax on mineral fertilizers. In some countries taxes for using mineral fertilizers have been set. The income from such taxes should be used for agro-environmental measures.

*Development of Organic farming subsidies*

-Increase of the subsidies for organic farming and favouring of the farms that produce both plant and meat-products, including nutrient balanced production practices.

-Support to producers groups in processing and marketing of locally produced goods.

-More efficient informing and training of the chain producer -> salesman -> supermarket -> consumer, in the subject of organic farming.

-Action plans to increase the share of organic farmland to at least 10% of total arable land.

-Lower VAT for organically grown products.

*Fisheries sector*

Fisheries constitute the most important human impact on the marine ecosystem of the Baltic Sea. No other factor, such as nutrients and toxins, has had more far reaching impact. Baltic Sea fisheries kill each year 60 % of the total Baltic cod stocks.

Such facts call for the need of fundamental changes in Baltic Sea fisheries practices.

-EC, via DG Mare and DG Env, to develop Baltic Sea fisheries as a model for an eco-system based fisheries management, including components as a Long-term Multi-species fisheries management plans, Long-term multi-annual plans for the four commercial fish species in the Baltic Sea (Sprat, herring, cod and salmon).

-financial support for development of effective fisheries control system in the Baltic Sea

- minimise discards and by-catch and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fisheries
- Introduction of a set of Baltic open-sea and coastal areas as “No-take zones” and seasonal closures for fisheries
- development of Baltic fisheries for prosperous Baltic coastal communities
- minimise impact on sea-bottom sediment environment from fisheries (e g minimise bottom-trawling)
- develop programmes to safeguard all wild salmon and sea-trout populations in the Baltic Sea (including weak populations) and its genetic variability, as an important natural resource.

***Particular topics to address in an EU Strategy and Action Plan for the Baltic Sea***

- EU assessment of the excess of manure and nutrient from intensive rearing of animals in Baltic Sea Region countries having most of such installations in the region ( with focus on Poland, Germany, Denmark, Lithuania) and proposals for actions to limit such installations to minimise its nutrient run-off to receipt waters.
- EU assessment of the potential to minimise nutrient run-off from agricultural land in Baltic EU Member States, not having all areas for agricultural production appointed as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, in accordance with the Nitrate Directive (with focus on Poland having 38 % of all agricultural land in the Baltic catchment)
- Develop EU regional policies where European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development should , as a priority, give support for development of nutrient balanced agricultural parctices in the Baltic Sea catchment

***-Safeguarding Baltic region coastal areas***

Develop a Baltic programme for sustainable development of Baltic Sea coastal areas (e g incl. Zoning of coastal areas), where environmental and nature conservation values will be safeguarded, as a prerequisite for a prosperous sustainable development of Baltic coastal communities

***-Pressure from Invasive aquatic species via shipping***

Produce a risk assessment for potential threats from alien species via shipping, via mandatory reporting of the place of origin of ballast water, for all ships entering the Baltic Sea via the Danish Sounds or via rivers/canals from the Black/Caspian Seas.  
Introduce mandatory permits for all releases of ballast water in the Baltic Sea.

***Development of EU-cooperation, including activities with EU-financing, within the concept of EU Neighbouring programmes with Ukraine/Belarus***

-A report from HELCOM show that substantial pollution loads of nutrients are transported via transboundary rivers from Ukraine/Belarus to neighbouring EU-countries (Poland, Lithuania,

Latvia) and to the Baltic Sea. Nutrient pollution comes primarily from household wastewater and agriculture nutrient run-off.

Develop EU neighbouring programmes with the purpose to reduce the nutrient pollution load of nutrients from household wastewater (cities, small- and medium-sized municipalities and single family-homes) from Ukraine/Belarus.

- Develop support programmes on activities to protect the wild Baltic salmon in Belarus rivers, to contribute to planned EC Baltic salmon management plan, and biodiversity actions in the HELCOM BSAP.

- Develop EU-programmes to support the Best Environmental Practices at industrial farms in the Baltic catchment area of Belarus, to minimise nutrient run-off to transboundary rivers with EU

*Development of EU-cooperation, including activities with EU-financing, within the concept of the EU-Russia Environmental Dialogue.*

NW Russia and Kaliningrad are important areas of the Baltic Sea Region where EU-Russian cooperation that can contribute to a healthy Baltic Sea environment, should be developed. Within the following identified sub-areas for cooperation develop activities connected to

- Biodiversity & Nature Protection
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Water & Marine Issues

- Develop EU neighbouring programmes with the purpose to reduce the nutrient pollution load of nutrients from household wastewater (small cities, small- and medium-sized municipalities and single family-homes) from Baltic Russia.

- Develop EU-programmes to support the Best Environmental Practices at industrial farms in the Baltic catchment area of Russia, to minimise nutrient run-off to the Baltic Sea /transboundary rivers with EU.

- EU in cooperation with Russia initiate a risk assessment for the Baltic Sea environment of expanded shipping transport of hazardous substances (e.g. import and export of radioactive materials) from the new ports/harbours developed in the Russian Gulf of Finland region, and possible ways to mitigate such risks.

- EU in cooperation with Russia initiate a risk assessment for the Baltic Sea environment of the temporary storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel (4000 tons, incl. up to 20 tons of supertoxic Plutonium) in Sosnovy Bor (Leningrad Nuclear Power Plants), and possible ways to mitigate such risks.

- Develop support programmes on activities to protect the wild Baltic salmon in Russian Gulf of Finland rivers (preferably Luga river), to contribute to the planned EC Baltic salmon management plan, and biodiversity actions in the HELCOM BSAP.