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**Russia is an important actor for the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP). Russia must act now to implement BSAP and show plans for concrete actions**

The problems of eutrophication, biodiversity and integrated coastal development are among the main problems of the Baltic Sea also mentioned at the HELCOM conference «Sustainable Baltic Cities" on 18 May and HELCOM Ministerial Meeting on 20 May in Moscow.

During the two years of Russia's presidency in HELCOM some positive changes have occurred. The volume of treated wastewater has reached 91% of the total amount through the development of treatment facilities and improvement of wastewater treatment at Vodokanal facilities in St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg became the first metropolis in the world who completely abandoned the use of chlorinated drinking water.

In order to preserve biodiversity, a network of specially protected nature areas (SPNAs) are being developed in St. Petersburg and Leningrad region. In St. Petersburg, 12 more SPNAs are planned to be created in the near future. The documents for establishing Ingermanland Nature reserve in the Gulf of Finland are prepared and should be finalized very soon.

At the same time, many issues remain unresolved. These include the lack of sewage treatment in Kaliningrad, towns Metallostroy, Lomonosov, several towns in the Leningrad region, as well as in many small settlements, including dacha cooperatives and collective gardens. Nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) from agriculture and from animal farms leak to the sea. This greatly enhances eutrophication.

The Russian part of the Baltic coast desperately needs a management plan. There is no balance between industrial development and preservation of coastal ecosystems, the industrial development scenario dominates. 200 000 Euro per meter coast line is invested in technological projects in the southern Gulf of Finland. Measures to compensate for the damage to nature from industrial projects are simply non existing.

All this has a negative impact on biodiversity. Less and less coastal areas remain for recreation purposes and for coastal birds and animals. In many existing protected areas, destructive activities are ongoing, such as logging (Kurgalsky reserve) and sand extraction (Lebyazhy reserve). In the Leningrad region, almost all rivers are no longer suitable for spawning fish. Wild populations of the Baltic salmon is endangered, however there are still a few wild salmon left in the Luga river, but there is no plan to safeguard this important salmon.

Today, after 2 years of Russia's presidency in HELCOM, these problems are not addressed. Russia has not presented the National Programme for BSAP implementation at the Ministerial Meeting. Instead the concept of the Programme and its intentions were presented which is unsatisfactory.

Coalition Clean Baltic believes that Russia could and should include in the National Plan for BSAP Implementation effective measures to reduce eutrophication, to maintain and restore biodiversity, to conserve coastal areas, including:

- Commission wastewater treatment plants in all settlements on the Baltic Sea coast without exception. Develop the national plan for introduction of the methods for sewage treatment for individual homes, small businesses and settlements with a population below 300 people, including gardening and dacha areas, including using the technology of "dry toilets" and subsequent composting.
- Develop measures to counteract the pollution of rivers and the Baltic Sea with wastes from animal farms.

- Develop measures to implement the prohibitions and restrictions on the use of fertilizers on agricultural lands. Future investment for agriculture production must meet a requirement of maximum nitrogen surplus of 60 kg N/ha
- Urgently develop measures to replace polyphosphates in detergents with a clear timetable for their implementation, so that the content of total phosphorus does not exceed 0,2-0,5% by weight. To promote “green consumer” choice for supporting phosphate-free production.
- Ensure efficient management and strict adherence to the conservation of protected areas.
- Speed up the establishing of Ingermanland nature reserve in the Gulf of Finland
- Develop plans for the recovery of biodiversity in valuable natural areas, including the plan to protect and restore the population of Baltic salmon in the Luga River.
- Carry out spatial planning of the entire Russian Baltic Sea coast, providing a balanced territorial development and conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems - both at the federal level and at the municipal with broad public participation.

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