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Coalition Clean Baltic

ENVIRONMENTAL NGO (COALITION CLEAN BALTIC AND WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE) STATEMENT FOR HELCOM MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE HELCOM BALTIC SEA ACTION PLAN
MOSCOW, RUSSIA
20 MAY 2010

FINAL

On behalf of the environmental NGOs, Coalition Clean Baltic and WWF, would like to share our views on the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP). We welcomed HELCOM's initiative to launch the ambitious BSAP process, as a first important step. In practice, however, this ambition appears to have been lost.

The purpose of this meeting was to assess the implementation of BSAP and to evaluate the National Implementation Plans (NIPs). It has not been possible to make such an assessment, as the NIPs were either incomplete, e.g. lack of Biodiversity and Maritime segments, or not delivered.

SPECIFIC SECTORS TO ADDRESS

Agriculture sector

Regarding agriculture, the legally binding Annex III to the Helsinki Convention has so far not been implemented by CPs. Taking the implementation seriously requires transposition into national law.

We would like to see a new instrument, with strict figures on maximum allowable nutrient surplus on farmland. To apply the nutrient-balanced practices, all future investments for agricultural production should meet a requirement of maximum Nitrogen-surplus of 60 kg N/ha.

HELCOM countries have failed to establish a Hot Spots list identifying existing installations for the intensive rearing of animals not fulfilling requirements in Annex III. Many countries have referred

to that national permits, in accordance with the EU IPPC-directive, would guarantee fulfilment of Annex III requirements.

This is not the case, as IPPC requirements are weaker than provisions of Annex III.

To conclude - it is unacceptable to have one sector, agriculture, that is allowed to discharge harmful nutrients without strict rules. Other polluting sectors have had permits with strict pollution limits for decades. The VIP – status for the agriculture sector must be changed.

Biodiversity – Fisheries sector

The actions to safeguard Baltic Biodiversity connected to fisheries, including salmon, have been poorly developed or not delivered to reach the BSAP objective of ‘viable populations of species’. Stronger implementation is needed, especially to steer the fisheries in a more sustainable direction.

We welcome that HELCOM countries have designated Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) covering 10 % of the HELCOM marine area, but the protected areas are not properly managed, particularly for fisheries.

- HELCOM countries must prioritize implementation of fisheries related management plans in MPAs. We need strict spatial, temporal or permanent closures for fishing efforts and management controlling fishing gear used.

Marine Spatial Planning

We are worried by the attempts to weaken the ambitions on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). We believe Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is an essential first step towards establishing ‘integrated sea use management’ (ISUM), to secure the sustainable use of marine resources by reducing user conflicts and adverse impacts of human activities.

FINAL WORDS

There has been big expectations for the BSAP. A poor implementation of the BSAP will put at risk implementation of EU Strategies and Policies and will endanger the credibility of Baltic governments.

Unfortunately the level of ambition from most of the Baltic countries is already declining.

This shows a lack of real leadership, political will and ambition to restore the Baltic Sea environment.

We still have great expectations for the BSAP, but this can only be fulfilled if all sectors act responsibly and apply an integrated approach. We therefore acknowledge you, Baltic Ministers of Environment and EC DG Environment, our most important partners to save the Baltic Sea environment, and urge You to act together with your Prime Ministers/Presidents, to learn from the failings of this process. We will give you our full support for a proper implementation of the BSAP.