



POLSKI KLUB EKOLOGICZNY

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To **Mr Olivier Baudelet**

European Commission

Dear Sir;

To your kindly concern, as representative of Polish environmental organization, Polish Ecological Club and the member of Coalition Clean Baltic I dare to present the problem which was not seen at Gdansk roundtable – namely Sustainable Sanitation.

Sanitation as foundation of human health, dignity and development calls attention especially in CEE countries (incl. Baltic Sea catchment), where about 20 mln EU citizens are left behind sanitation programs and will remain without proper sanitation systems after 2015.

Relatively high proportion of CEE inhabitants lives in rural areas compared to the countries of Western Europe: 91,4% settlements have less than 2000 inhabitants, accounting for 20% of CEE population.

With the main focus of European Union legislation focused on solving the wastewater problems on agglomerations with more than 2000 inhabitants by 2015, it seems that villages with less than 2000 inhabitants are being ignored by decision makers and water managers.

The usual system of pit latrines are the cause of groundwater pollution in many villages which depend on wells for drinking water. The health effects are numerous, including regular outbreaks of hepatitis, blue bay syndrome and diarrhea. Children and women are often most effected.

Poor sanitation is also responsible for eutrophication processes both on local and global levels.

Despite more than 336 billion Euro in Cohesion Funds going to new member states, hardly any funds address the needs of the poorest living in small rural communities, for households with a monthly income of 100 – 200 Euro.

These communities would not meet income standards for self-financing "convencional sanitation" systems, which require construction of long collecting channels and centralized WWTP.

"Sustainable sanitation" approach offer environmentally and economically sound solutions for rural areas, based on the material-flow-oriented recycling principle and key objective to use the waste as a resource. In some European countries (Germany, Sweden) these 'sustainable sanitation systems', basing on natural treatment methods have already been developed and introduced.

I want to put Your attention on the problem of poor sanitation in scope of EU Strategy for BSR and the urgent need for shifting the financing priorities into decentralized, on-site treatment systems, basing on natural, affordable methods. It would be an important step into more sustainable, "mankind" future for significant number of EU citizens.

Sincerely

Anna Smolka CCB Water Officer/ PKE project coordinator