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Mission Baltic Sea

11 theses on the Protection of the Baltic Sea

Background of the theses

Theses

- Summary of the emerging understanding of the challenges of protecting the Baltic Sea gleaned from a two-year seminar series, discussion and research
- **Content**: Value basis; political analysis; sectoral policy analysis, (7 pages long paper)

Authors

– Wish to push forward research, discussion and policies by presenting ideas for open debate

Goal

– To promote the protection of the Baltic Sea at all levels

1. The Baltic Sea is a valuable source for human wellbeing

- **Message**: the Baltic Sea is the historical, political and cultural source of wellbeing for all people in costal states

- An appreciative attitude towards of the Baltic Sea is required; protection depends on it

Political analysis

2. Pollution of the Baltic Sea is predominantly a social problem

- **Message**: The social nature and roots of the environmental problems in the Baltic Sea are not properly understood

- **The role of hydrography of the Baltic Sea**:
  - Stratification of water, hypoxia, the vicious cycle of the Baltic Sea and *transfer of nutrients*
  - There is a great threat that euthrophication problems emerge

- **The role of social institutions**
  - The Baltic Sea is a **common property resource: c**oastal states have no supranational obligatory body: countries are free to pollute and none can legally prevent them from doing so

2. Pollution… a social problem

Hydrographic features create an **asymmetry**: the loads of polluters (Poland, Russia) transfer to other countries (Finland, Sweden),

- polluters do not find (**perceive**) euthrophication a big problem
- polluters profit from purifying less

The **non-simultaneous nature of social development** strengthens asymmetry: polluting countries are poor, while the countries suffering damage are well-off

Inversely for policy: hydrography and non-simultaneous social development mean that the poor countries carry the costs of reducing nutrients, while the rich countries reap the benefits

3. A binding international agreement for the protection of the Baltic Sea is needed

Message: We need a truly binding agreement instead of mere policy recommendations

Binding agreement: must be fair and cost-efficient

- **Fairness**: if costs and benefits are unevenly distributed, a **mechanism** is needed to compensate those who must pay more than others.
  - transfer of money, international nutrient trading or nutrient tax
- **Cost-efficiency**: joint costs must be minimized to obtain the desired environmental quality

Baltic Sea Action Plan: obtainment good, but the plan is expensive and unfair

- Role of Helcom, role of the EU, activities of coastal states

Theses 4, 5 and 6 elaborate the content of theses 2 and 3

4. In absence of true political willingness, national environmental policies have been ineffective

Water policy: The goals, activities and foci can be severely criticized; especially nitrogen policy in Finland and Sweden

Politics: true supporters of protection are too few; politicians fear loosing voters

5. As a heritage of the socialist system, the Baltic Sea receives annually almost 5000 tons of unpurified phosphorus

- A historical datum, which has to be overcome

- **Investments in WWTPs**: quickest, cheapest and best results in water quality

Theses 3, 4, 5 and 6 elaborate the content of thesis 2

6. Protection of the Baltic Sea requires publicity, democracy and civilian initiatives

Message: long run problem and thread of Baltic Sea protection in transitional economies is

- Lack of publicity, deficit of democracy and negative attitude to environmental movement

They prevent the increase of environmental consciousness of citizens, which is required to improve national environmental policies

Sectoral analysis

7. One must find more effective means of reducing agricultural runoff

- CAP increases more loads than provides means to reduce them
- Basic problem of current agri-environmental instruments: they do not allocate actions to the most erosion sensitive fields

8. Risks and loads of marine traffic at the Baltic Sea must be brought under control

– We must do more to reduce oil accident risks and to improve our capacity to handle accidents

9. Preservation of biodiversity of the Baltic Sea requires new and creative solutions

- Biodiversity encounters resistance at first but reveals its beneficial impacts later on; Designs of proactive policies?

10. Climate change will modify the ecosystem of the Baltic Sea

What consequences for the Baltic Sea, marine policy, and policy in the drainage basin? Designs of proactive policies?

11. Effective and integrated administration practices must be established for protection of the Baltic Sea

- coordination of all sectors impacting the Baltic Sea

-88 ministerial declaration and BSAP

	1988 Recom.	1988 Reduct. %	BSAP Recom.	BSAP Reduct. %
Latvia	69190	50%	2560	6%
Lithuania	**18695**	50%	**11750**	**13%**
Poland	**60193**	50%	**62400**	**20%**
Sweden	**59307**	50%	**20780**	28%
Germany	**7200**	50%	**5620**	12%
Finland	**36135**	50%	**1200**	3%
Denmark	41717	50%	17210	39%
Russia	53307	50%	6970	8%
Estonia	10566	50%	900	2%