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## **The capacity of the European Union to address Baltic Sea eutrophication**

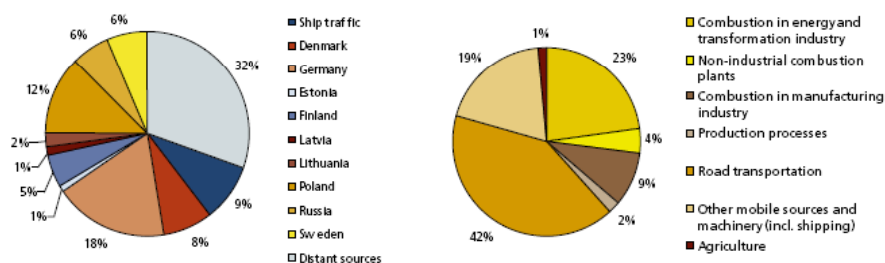
Presentation of preliminary research results

Bonus Annual Conference 2010,  
19-21 January in  
2010 in Vilnius

### **Is the EU the appropriate level to address Baltic Sea eutrophication?**

- covers most of the states that suffer from and/or cause eutrophication
- potential to even engage non-member states (Russia, Belarus)
- strong institutions
- Competences across all relevant sectors

### Contribution of different emission sources to the atmospheric deposition of nitrogen



**Figure 3.6** Contribution of different emission sources to the atmospheric deposition of nitrogen. Left diagram: percentage of total emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from different sectors in the HELCOM Contracting Parties in 2005 (HELCOM 2007a). Right diagram: Proportion of contribution by source to the atmospheric deposition of nitrogen entering the Baltic Sea basin in 2005; over 30% of the total nitrogen load originates from sources outside the HELCOM area (HELCOM 2007a).

Source: Helcom, 2009, Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 115B

### Relevant sectors of European policy

- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- water pollution control policy
- air pollution control policy
- maritime policy
- Baltic Sea Strategy

## Adapting the CAP to environmental needs

- Inclusion of environmental concerns started only in the 1980ies
  - First through conflict model: improving water quality through imposed regulation
- New integrative approach since 1990ies and Luxembourg Conclusions (2003)
  - Incentives for environmental friendly farming

## Weaknesses of CAP-reforms

- CAP reforms were triggered not mainly by environmental concerns but by challenges like
  - overproduction
  - budget problems
  - idea of market orientation
  - global trade considerations
- The extent to which CAP-reforms actually lead to environmental improvements depends on the way how they are being implemented

## Water pollution control policy

- *Urban Waste Water Directive*(1991)
- *Nitrates Directive* (1991)
- *Water Framework Directive* (2000)
- *Groundwater Directive* (1979, 2006)

## Integrated Maritime policy

- New policy sector, only established in 2007  
→ Primarily aiming to develop maritime economy
- *Marine Strategy Framework Directive* (2008)  
should function as the environmental pillar  
→ to achieve good environmental status for marine environments in 2020

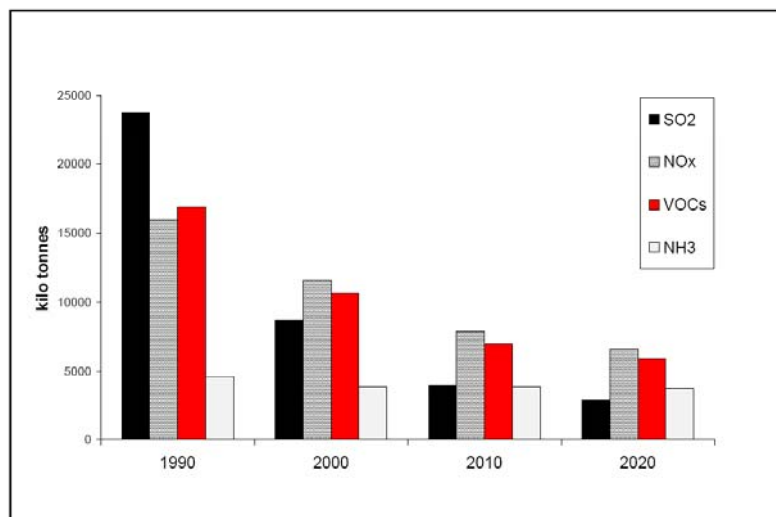
## Weaknesses of the Marine Strategy

- Many exemptions possible
- Main efforts are delegated to member states
- No binding inclusion of regional seas conventions/Helcom
- Does not directly address the CAP
- Does not directly address ship emissions

## Air pollution control policy

- *Directive on Large Combustion Plants* (1988)
  - *National Emission Ceilings Directive* (2001)
  - Thematic Strategy on air pollution (2005)
- Primary concerns are acidification, ground-level-ozone, climate change
- ⇒ Eutrophication not a strong driving force

### EU-25 land-based emissions of NECD pollutants



Thematic Strategy on air pollution, [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005\\_0446en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0446en01.pdf)

## General obstacles in EU-politics

- There is no specific European anti-eutrophication policy
  - Any progress depends on how eutrophication is related to other, more urgent issues
- Tendency to develop uniform policies without taking regional situations into account
- Weak institutional position of environmental protection
- Separation of policy fields and in particular isolation of CAP decision making structures
  - prevents integrative approaches

## Structural advantages in EU-politics

- European Parliament has in many cases proved to give priority to environmental protection
  - Could be a great chance as EP has achieved co-decision power in CAP with Lisbon Treaty
- European Court of Justice likewise has often decided in favour of environmental protection
- Overall tendency towards integrated approaches in EU-politics

## The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea

- Has the potential to compensate for some of the weaknesses of the EU's political system by
  - improving cross-sectoral policy coordination and implementation
  - promoting the macroregional level and committing the EU to Helcom objectives
  - Encouraging member states to jointly influence Council decisions in the interest of Baltic Sea protection