

Chairlady of the Helsinki Commission



1 July 2012 - 30 June 2014

Ms. Helle Pilsgaard

Overall priorities of the Danish Chairmanship of HELCOM:

- **Effective fulfilment of the Baltic Sea Action Plan**
- **A little extra for a healthy Baltic Sea**
- **A more dynamic and effective HELCOM**

The Baltic Sea provides many services to its surrounding societies, and most of us do only rarely realize or think about all the benefits from the sea we can enjoy. The sea provides food, raw materials, energy and transport routes, as well as is a source of recreational values, cultural heritages, science and education, just to mention the most noticeable ones. Unfortunately, the Baltic Sea is still being impacted by inputs of chemicals, nutrients and human-induced ecosystem changes. The societies living on the shores of the Baltic Sea are depending on its ecosystem services. Therefore, it is crucial that we strike the balance and use the sea in a sustainable way, in order to safeguard a healthy Baltic Sea and prosperous region – not the least for the benefit of future generations.

The coming years will be exciting and busy for HELCOM. Many tasks have to be achieved over a short period of time and the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting in the fall of 2013 will mark an important milestone in the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. As the country holding the HELCOM Chairmanship, Denmark is looking forward to find viable solutions to meet the challenges lying ahead together with the Contracting Parties to HELCOM.

As Chair of HELCOM Denmark will focus on the following headlines:

1. Effective fulfilment of the Baltic Sea Action Plan to achieve good environmental status for the Baltic Sea
2. A little extra for a healthy Baltic Sea
3. A more dynamic and effective HELCOM

1. Effective fulfilment of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

To ensure a healthy and environmentally prosperous Baltic Sea by 2021 is the main idea behind the Baltic Sea Action Plan, BSAP. It marks an important milestone in the endeavours of the Baltic Sea States to achieve a good environmental status for the Baltic Sea. Furthermore, the Action Plan was confirmed and followed-up at the HELCOM 2010 Ministerial Meeting in Moscow.

During the Danish chairmanship the implementation of the BSAP, and its segments on eutrophication, hazardous substances, biodiversity and maritime activities will have the highest priority.

Towards the 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting the Danish Chairmanship will work for the evaluating the progress made so far on the implementation of the BSAP and reaching its ecological objectives, as the basis for the Ministerial Meeting to assess whether further measures may be needed to reach the targets of the BSAP by 2021.

2. A little extra for a healthy Baltic Sea

The Danish Chairmanship will work for promoting and starting initiatives in areas where additional measures are needed in order to reach the goal of good environmental status in the Baltic Sea by 2021. The most recent status from the High-level segment of the Helsinki Commission in 2011 showed that although good progress is being made on the implementation of the BSAP in several areas, no or little progress are seen as regards other activities.

- Firstly, there is still a need to prioritise cleaning of waste water from cities and from scattered housing, as well as to optimise the use of slurry and animal manure. These are important prerequisites for reaching the agreed targets for reducing pollution by nutrients in the BSAP.
- Secondly, the 2013 Ministerial Meeting will re-visit a status and conduct a review of the provisional nutrient reduction targets on the basis of up-dated data and knowledge. The Danish Chairmanship will strive for the adoption of revised nutrient reduction scheme at the 2013 Ministerial Meeting outlining also the revised country-wise nutrient reduction requirements.
- Thirdly, the status from the High-level segment of the Helsinki Commission showed a need for intensified efforts to protect biodiversity, and reduce inputs to the Baltic Sea of hazardous substances, including the use of pesticides, and efforts to reduce the spreading of contaminated harbour materials resulting from dredging operations.

Additionally, the Danish Chairmanship will work for achieving improved knowledge in areas, where there are gaps in our present knowledge. This applies, for instance, to occurrence and sources of marine litter, as well as underwater noise, alien species and acidification of the sea. These elements require knowledge building and need to be taken into account in HELCOM's work towards a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea – elements that are also important in the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. These needs are also highlighted in the Oceans and sea section in the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference.

In this respect, the Danish Chairmanship prioritizes that HELCOM should continue the development of regionally coordinated assessments, compilations of pollution inputs to the environment as well as work on indicators to support assessing the effects of measures taken by the Contracting Parties. The Danish Chairmanship will also work for the further coordination

with ongoing activities under for instance Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea Region 2010, VASAB, the EU BONUS research programme and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, ICES. Extended cooperation may be a key to avoiding double work and to improving efficiency of endeavours. Most importantly, it may be a short cut to achieve a sustainable use of the commodities of the Baltic Sea ecosystem.

3. A more dynamic and effective HELCOM co-operation

The Danish Chairmanship will work for a continued development of HELCOM's role in the Baltic Sea region as the environmental focal point. In this respect, it is important that the development mirrors the needs and visions of the Contracting Parties. Also we must ensure that HELCOM continues to deliver added value in relation to ongoing activities to improve the Baltic Sea environmental status.

Apart from the commonly agreed goal to ensure good environmental status for the Baltic Sea, the Danish Chairmanship will work to maintain and develop HELCOM as an efficient organisation that works effectively and correlates with other obligations of the Contracting Parties.

This may relate to challenges in connection with the HELCOM working structure and practise, as well as specific needs for coordination and synergies arising from the fact that eight out of nine HELCOM countries are also members of the European Union.

Workflows may be streamlined in order to ensure even better outcome of the work within HELCOM. The Danish Chairmanship will in this respect work for avoiding of double work, which can be achieved by for instance optimising the relationship between time and processes in HELCOM on the implementation of the BSAP and work related to the implementation of EU Directives and Regulations.

It is an ambition of the two-year Danish Chairmanship to follow these three priorities, to ensure result-oriented and sufficient implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and a dynamic and efficient HELCOM cooperation, with the ultimate goal of achieving a healthy Baltic Sea to benefit all of us.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Helle Pilsgaard

Deputy Director General at Danish Nature Agency

Experience

Deputy Director General at Danish Nature Agency

2011 - Present (1 year)

(1 year)

Deputy Director General at Danish Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning

October 2007 - December 2010 (3 years 3 months)

(3 years 3 months)

Chairman of the Board at Danmarks Miljøportal (Miljøministeriet, KL og Danske Regioner)

2007 - 2010 (3 years)

(3 years)

Deputy Director General at Danish Environmental Protection Agency

December 2001 - October 2004 (2 years 11 months)

(2 years 11 months)

different tasks at Danish EPA, The Ministry of Environment

1984 - 2004 (20 years)

(20 years)

Education

Københavns Universitet

Master of science, Biochemistry