



Outcome

“This is what we need to do for a cleaner sea.”
Sectors have their say

Political seminar by HELCOM at the 7th Strategy Forum of the EUSBSR

Tuesday 8 November 2016 at 09.30 – 10.30

Opening remarks by the Moderator

The need for cross-sectoral action doesn't need further convincing: we are all committed to the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan as well as EU legislation and to achieve a Good Environmental Status for the Baltic Sea. Climate change is with us and already affecting peoples' lives and businesses – another key element identified for the debate as well as the need to reduce nutrient loads to the Baltic Sea. In an increasingly challenging environment, we need to adapt our business activities to improve Baltic Sea ecosystem health and at the same time keep our businesses floating and thriving.

Status and trends of the Baltic Sea by Bo Gustafsson, Baltic Nest Institute

As a background to the panel discussion Mr. Gustafsson presented the status and trends of the nutrient situation of the Baltic Sea: the status is not getting worse, progress is being made, and regionally the sea is already recovering and improvements will come. However, actions need to continue, and the time-scale is very long and the variability large. See Annex II + [link to presentation](#)

Panel debate

According to the representative of the fishing industry, it may be impossible to have a clean Baltic Sea with 90 million people living on the shores. For fishermen quotas, access and the use of space are important. Their targets are set for tomorrow, whereas the environmental targets have a life span of 30-50 years - there is a discrepancy. For fisheries management the targets must be realistic and take the present situation as a starting point instead of an ideal situation which cannot be attained.

CLIA, representing nearly the totality of the world's cruise operators, although being a tiny fragment of the shipping industry, is proud to be a leader in managing challenges such as addressing environmental concerns and investing in environmental improvement such as emission abatement systems, clean fuels and more efficient engines. The Baltic Sea is very important for the industry, as it is the third biggest cruise destination worldwide after the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. The challenges include discharge of sewage from ships - there must be adequate and available reception facilities in ports. CLIA called for action together with other stakeholders, forming partnerships as needed to work on common issues. Getting to accurate and reliable facts and figures is also very important to help policy makers make informed decisions. Quoting an African saying: “If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together.”



EurEAU represents the European drinking water supply and waste water treatment services. The members of EurEAU provide water services to more than 400 million customers in 28 countries. It is important to remember that the sources of nutrients to water are related to production of food and to what happens after the food is consumed. In this sector there have been enormous improvements in the past decades all around the Baltic Sea. We should also keep in mind that nutrients are not the only problem, there are also hazardous substances and litter affecting the sea. The problem of micropollutants must be tackled at the source: the wastewater treatment plants are the last barrier before the treated water is discharged to the Baltic Sea but can never be the only barrier. Banning mercury in dental amalgam is a step towards the right direction. To have a cleaner Baltic sea, it is also necessary with a stricter implementation of the chemicals regulation REACH.

BPO representing Baltic Ports commented that there is a lot of regulation focusing on shipping, so the ports must work together with the shipping industry on sewage. It is also important to work with the local sewage treatment companies at ports to organize efficient transfer of sewage from ships to the local systems. National authorities are to facilitate these processes.

BFFE representing the agricultural sector and two million farmers around the Baltic Sea emphasized that nutrients are precious and essential elements for producing food (biomass). The challenge is how to keep them in the soil so that the crops can use them, and not to lose them into the sea by excess water. Accordingly, the soil must be treated so that it resists erosion. Targeted agricultural practices, especially fertilizing practices by precision farming approach, i.e. plant nutrition after crop needs, are very important. Moreover, hazardous substances from sewage and microplastics are not only harmful to the sea but also for soils and food production.

The representative of aquaculture (FEAP) declared that they are not happy with the work going on in HELCOM, which is blocking any growth of aquaculture. He called for more transparency and political leadership to HELCOM work. The demand for seafood is increasing, and fishfarming is one of the most efficient ways of producing food. This business requires environmental space for operating, and therefore maritime spatial planning is very important.

Latvian Farmers' Parliament reminded that farmers are dependent on the environment and have always cared for it. As the farmers are living in an open world and in the EU single market, observing strict HELCOM targets creates difficulties. The environmental targets must be realistic so that the food production does not move somewhere else. The sector needs strong support from research, feasible practical solutions and economic incentives in order to be able to invest in new and often costly technologies. Education and advisory services are essential.

Commentator round

The National Coordinator for EUSBSR of Finland asked the panelists' comments on marine litter, the next issue after nutrients, and the role they see for the EUSBSR. The panelists commented that microplastics should be banned and there should be stricter legislation to prevent hazardous substances from reaching the sea. Here political help would be needed. A holistic approach was called for, all sectors involved, to tackle the problem of litter. For the agricultural sector, clean soil is equally important in the production of clean food. Real involvement of real business people was requested to get concrete results.



Chair of HELCOM Pressure Working Group asked what could be done for HELCOM, working on a regional basis, to get more effective, how to induce more cooperation between sectors. According to the panelists circular economy is a good way to combine sectors. It should be remembered that someone has to pay for the treatment of ships' waters at ports, and the fees should be the same in ports. The use of Maritime Spatial Planning as a process is a way to reach out to stakeholders. Polluter pays principle is a high moral standard but it does not work, according to the view of one panelist. It should be made a common responsibility and free service to avoid dumping of waste at sea.

Director in the Baltic Nest Institute asked how the special status of the Baltic Sea is seen in the European context. According to many, tough regulation already exists. There should be same rules for the whole Europe, not regional differences. Targets should be realistic and implementation of existing rules harmonized in the regions. But the Baltic Sea region is a good example of cooperation between sectors and countries.

State Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment of Sweden, Per Ångqvist, concluded that HELCOM is a great example of science based decision making and upscaling this to the European level and even worldwide. He reminded that investing in the Baltic Sea environment is investing in the economy - our future. The value added of environmental actions can be valued in monetary terms. This is a great opportunity. Maritime Spatial Planning is an important way forward: maps can trigger us to see things we have not seen, make it obvious that we must act and implement the Baltic Sea Action Plan. Not taking action is not an option.

Mr. Ångqvist also mentioned that Sweden and Fiji will host the first implementation conference on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, on Goal 14 on life below water, in June 2017. The Baltic Sea cooperation is strong and this region can lead by example.



Annex I - Participants

Welcome:

Monika Stankiewicz Executive Secretary of HELCOM

Moderator:

Marcin Rucinski Coordinator for Baltic and North Seas, Low Impact Fishers of Europe

Panel:

Michael Andersen Chair of the Demersal Working Group, Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC)

Marco Digioia Director of Government Affairs, Cruise Lines International Association Europe (CLIA)

Maira Dzelzkaleja Vice Chair, Latvian Farmers' Parliament

Anders Finnson Senior Environmental Adviser, European Federation of National Associations of Water (EurEAU)

Bogdan Oldakowski Secretary General, Baltic Ports Organization (BPO)

Liisa Pietola Head of Secretariat, Baltic Farmers Forum on Environment (BFFE)

Brian Thomsen Director, Danish Aquaculture Organisation/Federation Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)

Commentators:

Per Ängquist State Secretary, Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Sweden

Bo Gustafsson Director, Baltic Nest Institute, Sweden

Lars Sonesten Chair of HELCOM Pressure Working Group, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Erja Tikka National Coordinator of the EUSBSR, Baltic Sea Ambassador, Foreign Ministry of Finland

Eutrophication: Progress and goals

Bo Gustafsson

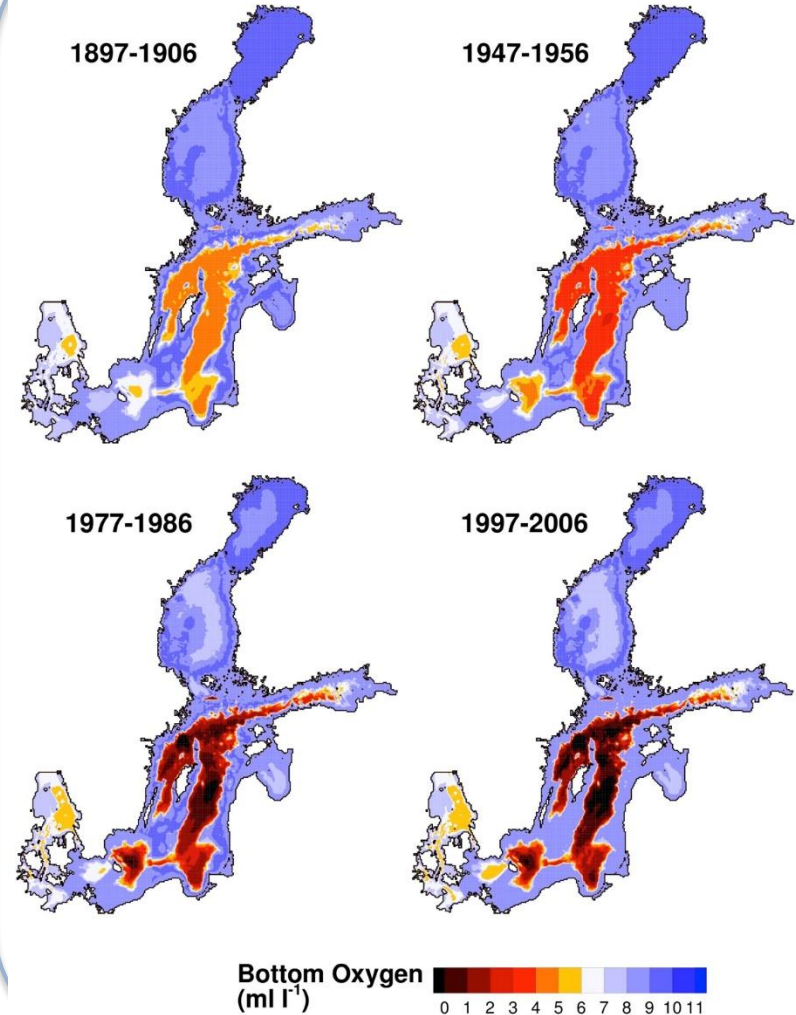
bo.gustafsson@su.se
www.balticnest.org

20th Century development of the Baltic Sea

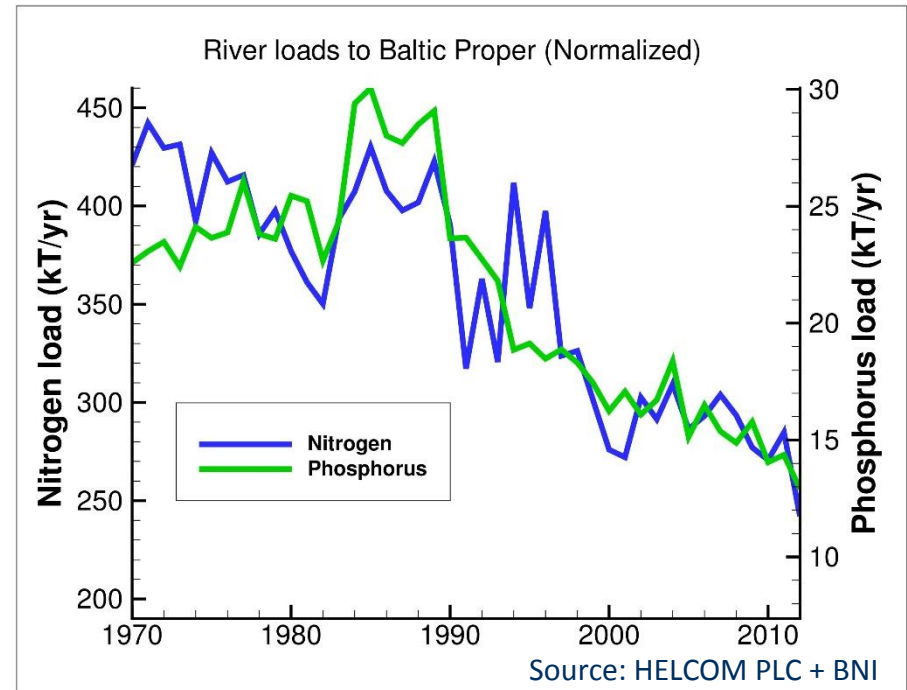
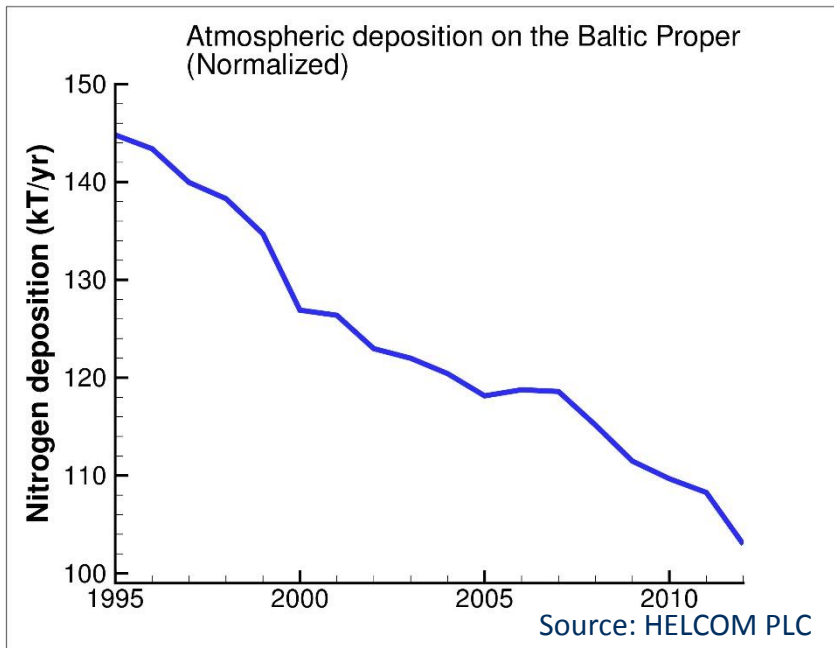


R/V "Aranda" among cyanobacteria

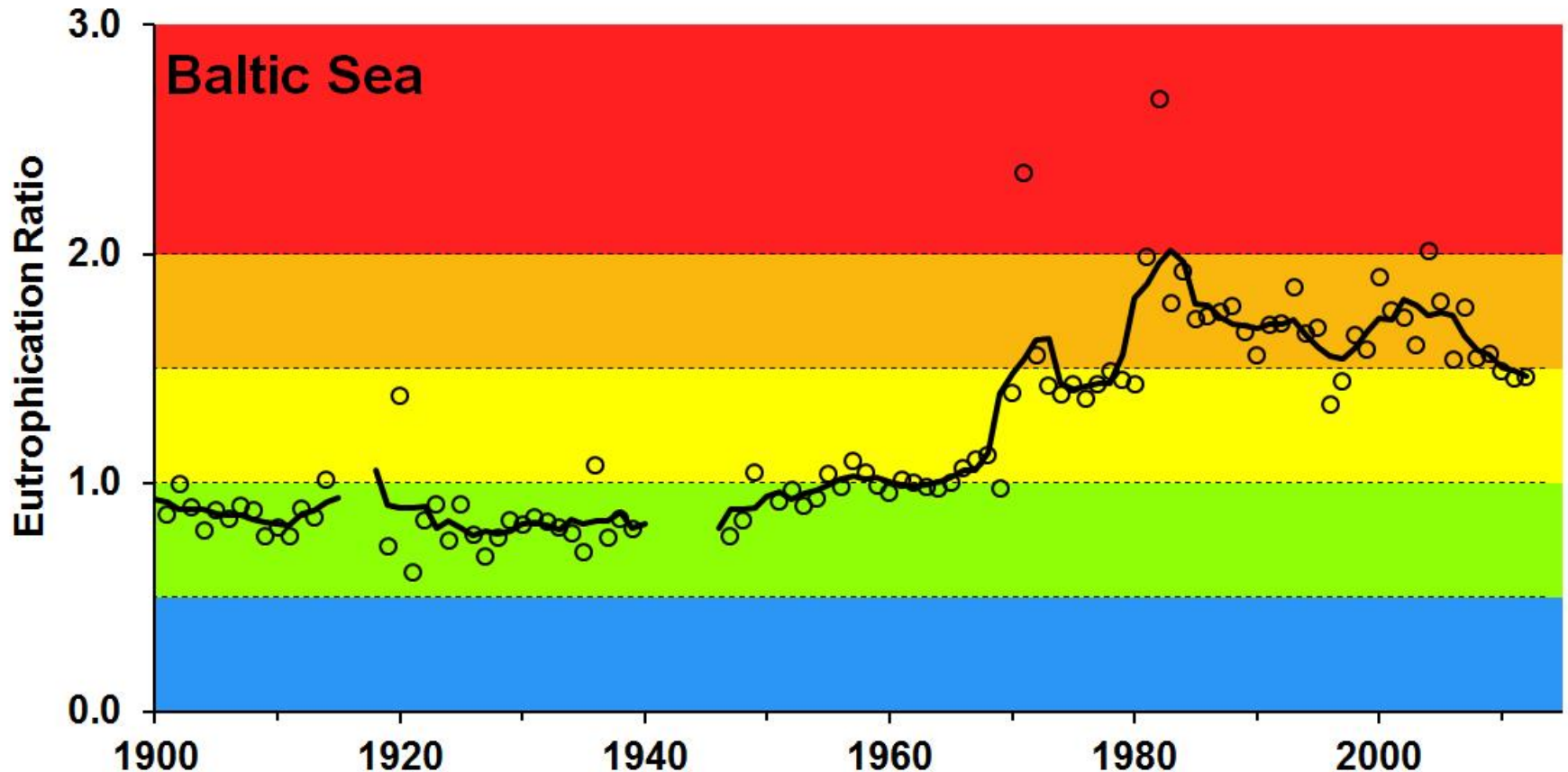
Development of oxygen depletion



Loads are decreasing!

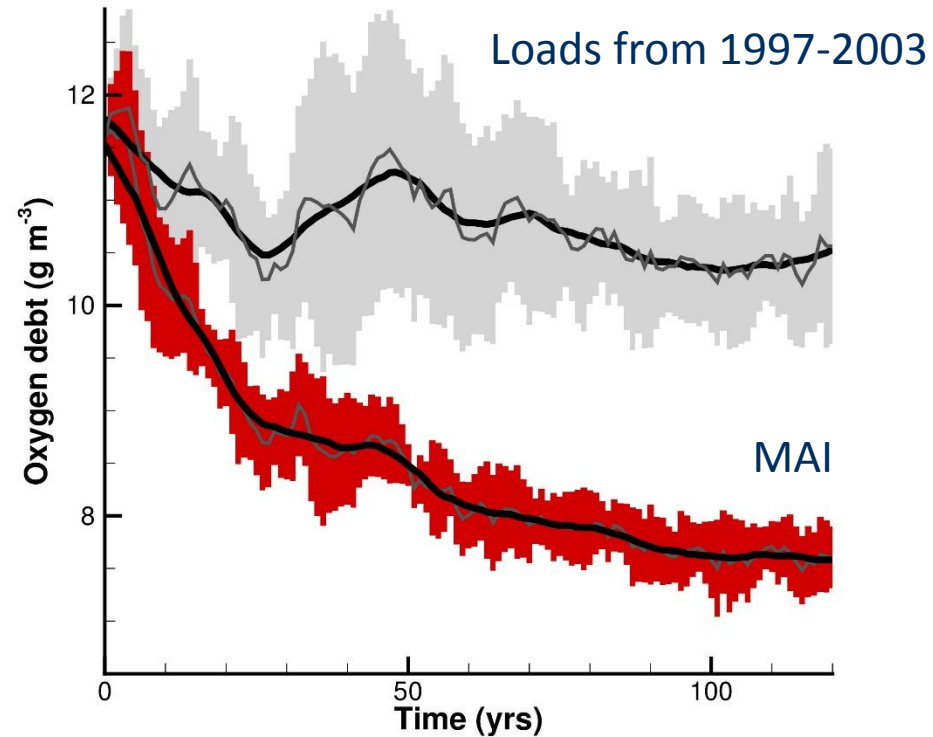
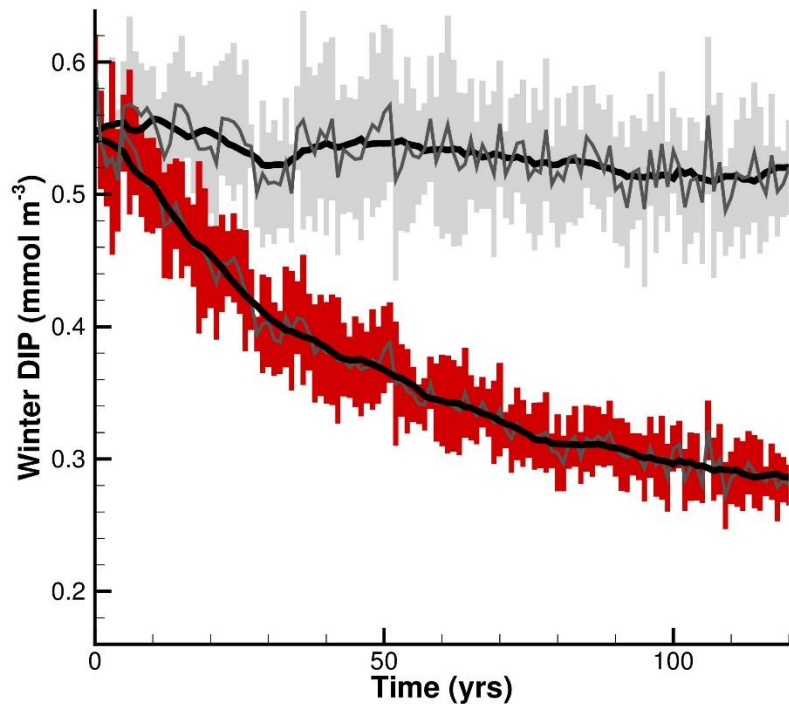


Deterioration has stopped and signs of recovery is seen locally



Internal pools (load) delays recovery

50% of DIP target achieved within about 20 years
Oxygen conditions at target at about 30-50 years



Gray and red shades indicate natural variability

Conclusions

- Progress is made in reducing nutrient inputs and loads are continuously decreasing
- The sea recovers regionally
- Actions need to continue
- Time-scales are relatively long and natural variability large, but reductions will result in improvement