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## Tribute to HELCOM from the Stockholm University Baltic Sea centre at HELCOM 50 years jubilee, April 25<sup>th</sup> 2024

We congratulate HELCOM on fifty successful years and many more to come.

We, the Stockholm University Baltic Sea Centre, would like to congratulate you on your significant contribution to improving the environmental status of the Baltic Sea.

My name is Gun Rudquist and I work as Head of Policy at the Stockholm University Baltic Sea Centre. I speak on behalf of my colleagues, the researchers, who have been and would like to continue to be, deeply involved in HELCOM work.

The Baltic Nest Institute, BNI, is worth highlighting here. In 2007, HELCOM adopted the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) - a strategic programme of measures and actions to achieve good environmental status in the sea, initially by 2021. At the time of the development of the BSAP, the Swedish MARE project, led by Fredrik Wulff at Stockholm University, had the necessary tools to support a sophisticated assessment of the maximum nutrient input that could be allowed into the Baltic Sea in order to achieve the eutrophication targets. The concept and quantification of the Maximum Allowable Inputs (MAI), and the resulting necessary reductions in inputs, were incorporated into the BSAP. This successful work led to the institutionalisation of scientific decision support as the Baltic Nest Institute (BNI). After 17 years, BNI continues to provide independent scientific advice to HELCOM from its base at Stockholm University's Baltic Sea Centre.

" With BSAP 2007, it was really ground breaking to quantify, on a scientific basis, how much nutrient inputs needs to be reduced and how much each country should contribute with reductions," says Bo Gustafsson, who has been part of the scientific process from the beginning and is now the head of BNI. "To do this, we had to develop new models and collect data from all countries on the basis of including 'the whole Baltic Sea and the whole catchment area'. This cooperation, this dialogue, improves the important cooperation between the countries."

Associate professor Bo Gustafsson, Director of BNI, says "Without the successful cooperation within HELCOM, the Baltic Sea would probably be in a much worse state today."

HELCOM's contribution has not been limited to environmental progress –although that would have been enough - but HELCOM has also played an important role in improving cooperation

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between all the countries. By agreeing on actions, the ground has been prepared for legislation at EU level.

Another strength of the HELCOM approach, was its ability to bring together different stakeholders in society. Being open and organising stakeholder meetings has been an important component in bridging the gap between research and the rest of society, especially policy makers.

So, with that – we salute the HELCOM and wish it many more successful years.

On behalf of The Stockholm University Baltic Sea Centre,

Gun Rudquist

Head of Policy