

Saving the Baltic Sea

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party convening in Vienna, Austria on 5 May 2014:

- The Baltic Sea is in a critical condition, suffering from eutrophication, hazardous compounds and overfishing.
- The Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) was signed in Krakow, Poland, in November 2007, by nine contracting parties to the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM). This commitment was recently reaffirmed at the HELCOM meeting in Copenhagen.
- The BSAP has not been fully implemented, and although there are some positive trends, the state of the Baltic Sea continues to deteriorate.
- The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive requires all Member States to take the necessary measures to achieve or maintain a good marine environmental status by the year 2020 at the latest.
- The wasteful practice of discarding fish of unwanted size is being phased out, only allowing a 5 % discard in the revised EU fisheries policy starting in 2015, aiming for sustainable fishing.

Taking into consideration that:

- Since 1994 phosphorous and nitrogen inputs from all surrounding Baltic Sea countries have decreased by 24 % and 20 % respectively, but as the Baltic Sea continues to deteriorate, further and more extensive actions need to be carried out.
- Today, half of the nutrient load in the Baltic comes from agriculture. While it is important to produce good quality reasonably-priced food, and to maintain a strong economic base in rural areas, reducing the nutrient surplus in agriculture is key to a better Baltic Sea.
- Cooperation over the Baltic Sea has been a pilot for regional cooperation in marine and inland water areas both within the EU and further afield.
- One of the primary objectives of the Baltic Sea Macro Region is to clean up and improve the state of Europe's most polluted sea.

Calls on:

- All levels of government in the Baltic Sea region, together with businesses, agriculture and non-governmental sectors, to increase efforts to lower emissions of hazardous substances and excess nutrients that lead to eutrophication.
- All countries to urgently implement all the agreed actions from the Baltic Sea Action Plan, in accordance with the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive;
- All countries in the Baltic Sea region and all Member States of the EU to create opportunities and develop innovative methods for increasing the withdrawal of nutrients from the Baltic Sea.

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- All Member States to implement the discard ban from 2015 and strive towards a 100% discard ban.

Calls for:

- Increased use of ecosystem-based management which is crucial for the sustainable use of Baltic Sea resources such as fish stocks.