

Conclusions and recommendations

Eutrophication and overfishing were identified as the main GIWA issues having a severe impact on the state of the Baltic Sea and therefore the causal chain analysis and elaboration of policy options were carried out for these two issues. The other issues, such as pollution of existing freshwater supplies, chemical pollution, oil spills, modification of ecosystems, decreased viability of stock through pollution and diseases, and impact on biological and genetic diversity, having a moderate environmental impact on the state of the Baltic Sea, were not further analysed.

As mentioned in the beginning of the report, the Baltic Sea is almost an internal sea in the European Union. This will affect the environmental policy in the region significantly. The implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive will influence the overall water protection strategy in the region. The purpose of the Directive is to prevent further deterioration of water bodies and to protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems on land and along the coasts, to promote sustainable water use and ensure the progressive reduction of pollution of water bodies.

The EU Water Framework Directive requires that the member states meet the obligations of international agreements, which in the case of the Baltic Sea means continued work under the Helsinki Commission, and that the HELCOM recommendations are followed, which take into account the vulnerability of the Baltic Sea.

The decisions and recommendations of the Helsinki Commission link Russia and the EU together, because compliance by Russia is crucial to the Baltic. The political will of Russia to protect the Baltic Sea environment as well as to improve the living conditions of the population will be needed for the implementation of EU and HELCOM decisions to protect the Baltic Sea and its resources from pollution. The measures implemented in the St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad

regions during the last decade have proved that Russia is serious about the implementation of water protection measures. For example construction of wastewater treatment plants in St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad have reduced the pollution load to the Baltic Sea.

For the management of overfishing, policy options are recommended based on the root causes identified in the causal chain analysis. Concerning causes related to economy and governance, the recommended course of action involves an integration of economic policies with environmental strategies, in order to strengthen sustainable fisheries and to establish more stringent control.

For causes related to educational aspects, creation of appropriate assessment methods leading to the establishment of reliable total allowable catches (TACs) is recommended. As regards legal aspects, support for the construction of an appropriate fishery law that can efficiently manage the new market conditions is emphasised. Here it is also important that fishery legislation incorporates the demands for sustainable development. In addition, when establishing a strategy to come to terms with the above issues, a comprehensive integration of the socio-economic and environmental aspects will be of great importance. By recognising these inter-linked environmental/socio-economic impacts, from data gathering to assessment and further on to settled targets, a more solid ground for managing this issues will hopefully be created. The transboundary issues such as eutrophication and fisheries and how to establish a coordinated approach to ecosystem-based management has been addressed in the "Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme" (JCP), and the governments of the Baltic Sea States should also be involved in the GEF LME Project.

An effective management system includes a coordinated implementation of coastal and open-sea ecosystem-based

management practices, which should be based on coordinated national and international financing. The policy options listed are mainly aimed at cooperation actions in the present and in the decades to come between the Baltic Sea states through the Helsinki Commission, the European Union, and the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission. However, no quick cure can be foreseen. Despite the protection measures in the Baltic Sea, improvement will not be immediate because of the natural slowness of the environment to react and to change. The improvement will start from the coastal zones, moving slowly towards the central parts.

The main suggestions are:

- To integrate environmental policies with agricultural policies by supporting cooperation networks and action programmes.
- To strengthen sustainable fisheries by means of increased cooperation in the field of control and enforcement as well as to integrate fishery policies with economic and environmental strategies.
- To implement the EU Water Framework Directive in all the EU countries situated in the catchment area of the Baltic Sea and to ensure similar actions in Russia.