30 January 2002

Seventh HELCOM PITF Regional Workshop
Lübeck, Germany
29-30 January 2002

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

1. In the light of recent developments HELCOM PITF is reconsidering its focus on activities. The Preparatory Group has been arranging Regional Workshops in most of the Baltic Sea countries during the last two years. A preliminary evaluation of the Workshops has been prepared and the conclusions and positive experiences have been reported to PITF.

   PITF has encouraged the Preparatory Group (PG) to continue arranging Workshops in collaboration with governments and representatives from the local, regional and national level and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). The aim is to finalise the round of Regional Workshops before 1 September 2002.

2. At the invitation of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany the Seventh PITF Regional Workshop was held in Lübeck on 29-30 January 2002.

3. In accordance with the discussions at the HELCOM PITF 18/2001 meeting the Workshop was a joint workshop, where both German and Danish Hot Spots were considered. The Agenda of the Workshop as well as the List of Participants are attached as Annexes 1 and 2, respectively.

4. The Workshop was opened by Ms. Beate Hoffmann, Senator, on the behalf of the City of Lübeck. Ms. Hoffmann welcomed the participants and informed about the background for appointing Lübeck as one of the JCP Hot Spots.

5. The Meeting elected Mr. Göte Svenson, Chairman of HELCOM PITF, as Chairman of the Workshop.

6. The Meeting established a Drafting Group consisting of Mr. Andreas Röpke and Ms. Heike Imhoff for preparing a press release for the press conference after the Workshop Mr. Claus Hagebro from the Secretariat of the Helsinki Commission acted as the Rapporteur and prepared the draft Conclusions of the Workshop to be agreed upon at the end of the Meeting.

German Hot Spots

7. Germany has nine Hot Spots listed under the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP). Of these four Hot Spots (No. 114, 116, 118 and 121) have already been deleted after the implementation of pollution control measures. The remaining Hot spots from the List (No. 115, 117, 119 and 120) were discussed at the Workshop. Also, experiences from the already deleted Hot Spots were provided during the Workshop.

8. No information was presented regarding Hot Spot No. 113 (Odra Lagoon).

9. Information on each of the Hot Spots was provided during the presentations. The history and the recent development and implementation of environmental measures was described. Also, the water charges at the individual plants were presented. The investments have been substantial at most of the presented Hot Spots.

10. The presentations on investments in municipal wastewater treatment plants were encouraging. The activities have lead to possible deletion from the List of Hot Spots within the next one or two years.

11. Mr. Enno Thyen, c/o Entsorgungsbetriebe Lübeck, presented Hot Spot No. 119 (Lübeck). There are three wastewater treatment plants in Lübeck. The two smaller ones, Priwall and Ochsenkopf, have been completed and are functioning well. The third plant (Central Plant) treats about 80% of the wastewater and will have nutrient removal installed during 2003. After the completion a proposal for deletion from the List of Hot Spots will be prepared to PITF.

12. Mr. Thomas Langmaack, Staatliches Umweltsamt Itzehoe, presented useful information about the supervision and control system in Germany. Discharges exceeding the licensed limit values are punished with high fees.

13. Mr. Andreas Röpke, Ministry of the Environment Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, gave a general presentation about wastewater treatment in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. In total 1,370 wastewater projects have been conducted since 1990. Constructions at the three Hot Spots left in the area are near to be completed and would be described in detail later at the Workshop.

14. Mr. Pierre Bütz, Eurawasser (a subsidiary of Ondeo), presented the treatment plant in Rostock (Hot Spot no. 121). The Hot Spot has already been deleted.

15. Mr. Jürgen Ehmke, ehp-Umweltplanung GmbH, presented information about the treatment plants in Greifswald and Stralsund. These Hot Spots (No. 114 and 116) have already been deleted.

16. Ms. Urte Reinsdorf, Neubrandenburger Stadtwerke GmbH, presented the treatment plant in Neubrandenburg (Hot Spot No. 115). The plant has been operating since 1999 and is based on Australian technology (CAST system). The treatment results are good apart from a somewhat high Tot-N value of 10,99 mg/l (spot control). The reduction percentage is high for all parameters. A proposal for deletion from the List of Hot Spots is in preparation.

17. Ms. Petra Tertel, Wasserbehandlung Mekcklenburgische Schweiz GmbH, presented the treatment plant in Stavenhagen-Malchin (Hot Spot No. 117). The plant receives wastewater from a population of 31,000 persons but has a design capacity of 260,000 p.e. due to the connection of several large industries. The plant has had P-removal since 1992 and has been completed with N-removal in 2001. It is now in the testing phase. The reduction percentages are good, but the discharges of nitrogen are still higher than prescribed in the HELCOM Recommendation. This problem is expected to be solved by April 2002, when the plant is fully operating.

18. Mr. Uwe Volkgenannt, UBA, presented the status of the agricultural Hot Spot No. 118 (Arkona Basin). It was a Hot Spot due to the high number of livestock in the Rügen area. The numbers have been reduced substantially and the Hot spot was deleted two years ago.

19. Mr. Hans Boeck, Hansestadt Wismar Entsorgungs- und Verkehrsbetrieb, presented the treatment plant in Wismar. The installation of full nutrient removal will be finished during 2002. After testing an application for deletion can be expected.

Danish Hot Spots

20. Denmark has four Hot Spots under the JCP. One of these Hot Spots (No. 123 - the municipal sewage treatment plant in Copenhagen) has been deleted. The remaining Hot Spots (No. 122, 124 and 129) are agricultural Hot Spots.

21. Ms. Sophie Winther, Forest and Nature Agency of the Danish Ministry of Environment, presented the Danish Nitrate Policy and had provided a document on this issue before the Workshop. Another document presented the Danish nutrient loads and reductions achieved.

22. Danish agriculture is very intensive and is dominated by livestock production. One of the main problems is loss of nitrogen through nitrate leaching into the aquatic environment. Four Action Plans - the first adopted in 1985 and the latest in 1998 - aim to implement the EU Nitrate Directive. When the action plans from 1991 and 1998 are fully implemented (by 2003) a 50% reduction of the loss of nitrate from agriculture is expected.

23. The Danish Code of Good Agricultural Practise consists of the measures also contained in the action programme and it is implemented in present legislation. Farmers are informed and codes promoted through detailed guideline material sent annually to the farmers and through the local advisory service centres.

24. Good Agricultural Practise reflects the minimum requirements at the environmental level. It means observing the common Danish rules on environment, hygiene and animal welfare laid down in other legislation. The legislation encompasses several Statutory Orders and Acts.

25. Ms. Winther gave a detailed presentation of the regulations, from which can be mentioned the use of nitrogen quotas on farm level, nitrogen norms for crops and fertilizer accounts. Excess application of nitrogen on farm level is notified or fined according to fixed schemes.

26. Statistics for the period 1997/98, based on 43,847 fertilizer accounts, reveal that the average norm including both livestock holdings and holdings with no livestock is 149 kg N/ha. Assuming that livestock manure is utilised according to the minimum demands, the average application of nitrogen per hectare is 130 kg.

27. The paper on nutrient loads and reductions (cf. para 21) was not presented. One overall conclusion is that during the period between the late 1980s and 1995 a 32% reduction of nitrogen discharge and a 13% reduction of phosphorus discharge from agriculture to the environment has been achieved.

Final evaluation

The Workshop Participants took note of the information given and the assessment of the present state of the Hot Spots. It was the impression that the Workshop provided more balanced and reflective information than the JCP Annual Reports normally provide.

The Workshop reflected progress in the development of the Hot Spots in Germany. Major results have been achieved and the development is encouraging.

One important outcome of the Workshop was that several German Hot Spots may soon be ready for deletion from the List of Hot Spots. HELCOM looks forward to the German decisions and presentation to the next meeting of the PITF.

At the moment it is difficult to assess if the agreed and comprehensive measures to reduce the nitrogen pollution from agriculture in Denmark are sufficient.

During the final discussion the following observations were made:

- The EU Water Framework Directive is expected to play a major role for the future environmental investments.

- The Workshop expressed the wish that the organizers of the Workshop in cooperation with the HELCOM Secretariat and the PG, should compile a Thematic Report with an assessment of the Hot Spots as well as a presentation of the findings at the Workshop.