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Background

The HELCOM Working Groups were tasked to consider tentative needs for rephrasing of existing HELCOM actions from the Baltic Sea Action Plan and Ministerial Declarations 2010 and 2013 that are not likely implemented by 2021. In accordance with the Strategic Plan for the BSAP update, these actions will be transferred to the updated BSAP as they are, or they will be rephrased as found needed by the Working Groups i.e. to update target years, to ensure that they are up to date with current HELCOM work, or to clarify the actions.

The Agri group has discussed the rephrasing of actions in AGRI 7-2019, AGRI 8-2019 and AGRI 9-2020. AGRI 9-2020 agreed on the tentative formulations for some of the actions to be included in the updated BSAP and invited the lead countries to submit new proposals for the rephrasing of the actions that had not yet been agreed on.

New proposals were submitted by lead countries Germany and Sweden. Comments on the new proposals were received from Denmark, Estonia and BFFE.

The Intersessional Meeting of the Pressure Working Group (PRESSURE 12a-2020) on 14 May will also consider the action related to mitigation of atmospheric nitrogen emissions. Comments by Denmark, Estonia and BFFE will be submitted to PRESSURE 12a-2020.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to agree on the tentative rephrasing of actions for inclusion in the updated BSAP.

Rephrasing of actions

Original action	Proposal for rephrased action	Comments
<p>Make use of appropriate policy and economic instruments as well as economic levies and incentives, in order to minimize nutrient losses in agriculture and thus contribute to keeping the nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea below the Maximum Allowable Inputs</p> <p>Origin: MD 2013</p>	<p>Lead country: Germany</p> <p>Implement mineral fertiliser taxes/charges and/or nitrogen surplus taxes/charges and/or payments for agri-environment measures, building on the experiences available in various countries, when revising policy and economic instruments in order to minimize nutrient losses in agriculture and thus contribute to keeping the nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea below the Maximum Allowable Inputs.</p>	<p>EE: Implement Study* mineral fertiliser taxes/charges and/or nitrogen surplus taxes/charges and/or payments for agri-environment measures, and building on the experiences available in various countries, when revising policy and economic instruments in order to minimize nutrient losses in agriculture and thus contribute to keeping the nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea below the Maximum Allowable Inputs.</p> <p>*„study“ could be as well „make an inventory of“. It would mean that we study which tax-related techniques exist in the Baltic Sea countries or wherever they exist, make a proper inventory and publish it.</p> <p>Explanations: At present, the implementation of the tax at national level is very unlikely and there is no overview of other practices on which this approach could be built at all. First we need to do background work and then we can talk about the next possible steps.</p> <p>BFFE: When it comes to the first action we would like to make a rephrasing proposal to use word “Study” instead of “Implement”. And regarding taxes/charges of mineral fertilizers and/or nitrogen surplus we see the need for an overview of the best practices of other countries. In the BSR experiences of fertilizer tax only exists in Sweden who used from 1983 until 2010 and then removed it, because lack of efficiency for the Baltic Sea and for causing damage to farmers competitiveness. So it is unclear on who else's experience this approach should be built on. Also implementation of mineral fertilizer tax or nitrogen surplus tax <i>at national level</i> is rather unlikely. Therefore we feel that before talking about implementation the preliminary work should be done, i.e. gather knowledge on existing practices and thorough impact assessment of implementation of the taxes/charges (incl socio-economic assessment).</p> <p>So the proposal would read: “Implement Study mineral fertiliser taxes/charges and/or nitrogen surplus taxes/charges and/or payments for agri-environment measures, and building on the experiences available in various countries, when revising policy and economic instruments in order to minimize nutrient losses in agriculture and thus contribute to keeping the nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea below the Maximum Allowable Inputs.”</p> <p><i>*Here the word “study” could also be replaced with “make an inventory of” (like inventory of best practices).</i></p>

<p>Address the need for additional measures within transportation, combustion and agriculture (as the three major sources of atmospheric emissions of nitrogen these sectors) with the aim to ensure a Baltic-wide application of uniform standards</p> <p>Origin: MD 2010</p>	<p>Lead countries: Germany and Sweden</p> <p>HELCOM Contracting Parties will reduce the deposition of atmospheric nitrogen on the Baltic Sea through the implementation of the national nitrogen reduction commitments of the Gothenburg Protocol and the EU NEC-Directive 2016/2284 for those HELCOM CPs that are also EU Member States. In the implementation, HELCOM CPs will ensure that measures taken in transportation, combustion and agriculture are tailored to have the maximum effect concerning the reduction of the nitrogen deposition onto the Baltic Sea.</p> <p>The HELCOM Recommendation 24/3 on “Measures aimed at the reduction of emissions and discharges from agriculture” is currently undergoing revision to ensure that ammonia emissions from agriculture are reduced.</p>	<p><i>The action is also considered by PRESSURE 12a-2020 on 14 May.</i></p> <p>DK: <i>In the implementation, HELCOM CPs will ensure that measures taken in transportation, combustion and agriculture are tailored to also contributing to have the maximum effect concerning the reduction of the nitrogen deposition onto the Baltic Sea. (or something similar)</i></p> <p>The reasoning behind the proposed change is that basically all “air pollution mitigation measures” first of all aim at mitigating harmful effects on human health, so that we cannot agree that all measures in “transportation, combustion and agriculture” are maximized with respect to reducing N deposition to the sea, disregarding the focus on human health benefits. We do believe however that is possible to tailor measures in a way, so that both beneficiary effects (on human health and for the Baltic Sea) are considered and can hence serve multiple purposes.</p> <p>EE: <i>HELCOM Contracting Parties will <u>continue to</u> reduce the deposition of atmospheric nitrogen onto the Baltic Sea <u>region</u> through the implementation of the national nitrogen reduction commitments of the Gothenburg Protocol and the EU NEC-Directive 2016/2284 for those HELCOM CPs that are also EU Member States. In the implementation, HELCOM CPs will ensure that measures taken in transportation, combustion and agriculture are tailored to have the maximum effect concerning the <u>for the</u> reduction of the nitrogen deposition onto the Baltic Sea <u>region</u>.</i></p> <p>Explanations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) “continue to ” means that we parties already have taken actions under Gothenburg Protocol and NEC Directive and are continuing with them 2) We would like to add that while referring to atmospheric precipitation then we talk about the whole region, not just the sea?! Nitrogen falls from the air to both the sea and the earth, so we would specify it with the word 'region'. 3) In addition, we would delete 'in the implementation' at the beginning of the second sentence because it is not clear what the implementation is referring to, apparently the NEC directive and protocol but it remains somewhat confusing. The sentence works without it. 4) In the second sentence we would delete 'to have the maximum effect', because no one knows or can actually define what this maximum effect is and whether it is also the best solution. The maximum effect on the reduction of precipitated nitrogen is that the amount of precipitated nitrogen is zero, ie that nothing precipitates. That's not what we mean. But since the idea remains the same without it, we don't think it's necessary. <p>BFFE: Regarding the second action. Farmers in all countries in the Baltic Sea region also have the National Air Pollution Control Programmes (under NEC directive), which covers the agricultural NH3 emissions. But when we talk about deposition of atmospheric nitrogen then we refer to whole region not just precipitation to the sea (nitrogen is deposited to both land and sea), it should be taken into account. And in the second sentence there is wording “to have maximum effect concerning the” here we would propose to remove that, as the maximum effect can not be defined (maximum effect should mean that the effect of reduction measures lead to zero nitrogen precipitation), also it wouldn't change the meaning of the sentence.</p>
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