

## **BSAC statement on the non-deterioration obligation in the light of the targeted revision of EU water legislation**

The Baltic Sea is a severely degraded ecosystem facing major challenges such as eutrophication, oxygen depletion, warming waters and decreasing levels of salinity. The economic, environmental and social consequences of its current poor state are wide-ranging and affect all the eight surrounding EU nations and their 80 million citizens.

Our Baltic is a unique brackish water inland Sea with irregular inflows of oxygenated water and with the difference between outflow and inflow coming almost entirely from fresh water running from the surrounding waterways. The quality of inflowing water is therefore essential to restoring the Baltic Sea ecosystem and the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is the tool with which to guarantee this undertaking.

Of special importance for the Baltic Sea's water quality is the "non-deterioration" obligation (article 4, (5)) for users of water, a cornerstone of the WFD. Removing or allowing exemptions for certain sectors from the non-deterioration obligation would have directly negative consequences for the long-term health of the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Sea Advisory Council states that the Water Framework Directives strength lies in its integrated, cross-sectoral approach, and that allowing for exemptions for certain sectors is not a way forward. It is essential that all Baltic Sea nations and sectors contribute to improving the state of Baltic waters. Coastal communities and fisheries regulation alone cannot solve the ongoing crisis within the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Sea Advisory Council is strongly of the opinion that the Water Framework Directive is an essential tool in restoring the Baltic Sea to good health and should be maintained in its current form.