



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2009/2230(INI)

7.4.2010

OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Regional Development

on The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea and the role of macro-
regions in the future cohesion policy
(2009/2230(INI))

Rapporteur: Anna Rosbach

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Emphasises the need for the EU and its Member States surrounding the Baltic Sea Region, urgently to address the serious environmental problems affecting the Region, principal among which are eutrophication, the impact of hazardous substances deposited on the seabed and threats to aquatic biodiversity, with particular regard to endangered fish populations; recalls that the Baltic Sea is one of the most polluted sea areas in the world;
2. Emphasises the need to identify the size and location of the toxic military gases dumped during World War II, together with plans for their disposal, and to assess the risk from projects on the Baltic seabed;
3. Emphasises the need to introduce a method common to all Member States for drawing up an inventory of sources of pollution and a plan for their gradual elimination;
4. Welcomes the inclusion of environmental sustainability as a central pillar in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the accompanying Action Plan;
5. Considers however, that despite the Strategy's focus on the marine environment, projects under the Action Plan should also tackle and properly prioritise environmental issues affecting inland areas of the Region; calls, therefore, for centuries-old coastal communities engaged in traditional maritime activities to be protected and supported and for the coastal landscape and natural assets to be respected by, inter alia, introducing sustainable land-use plans and preventing excessive exploitation for tourism purposes;
6. Notes that nutrient loads from agriculture account to a great extent for the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea; insists therefore that as part of the Action Plan the Commission and Member States introduce measures that go beyond the rules currently contained in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in order significantly to reduce nutrient loads;
7. Considers that one of the most serious obstacles to realising the objectives of the Baltic Sea Strategy is the lack of consistency with other policy areas within the EU such as the CAP which exacerbates eutrophication, and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) which is not environmentally sustainable; considers that reforms to the CAP and the CFP must be made in such a way that they contribute to achieving the objective of an environmentally sustainable Baltic Sea area;
8. Emphasises that that the construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline is the most strategically significant project in the Region at present and will have far-reaching effects on its environment; thus regrets that the above-mentioned Strategy and Action Plan fail to deal specifically with the construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline and other similar projects and their environmental consequences;
9. Highlights the need for close cooperation among the countries of the Baltic Sea region, in

accordance with the Espoo Convention, the Helsinki Convention and the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) guidelines, in connection with projects which may have a radical impact on the quality of the region's environment;

10. Calls therefore, on the Commission and Member States urgently to take steps, in line with Parliament's position set out in its resolution of 8 July 2008 on the environmental impact of the planned gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea to link up Russia and Germany¹, to ensure that projects under the Action Plan properly assess and mitigate the negative environmental effects of the gas pipeline scheme; also considers that Nord Stream itself must be responsible for financing the measures needed to ensure that the Baltic Sea environment is not harmed as a result of the construction of the gas pipeline; calls, at the same time, for projects which are unnecessary because they can be carried out on land to be avoided in future;
11. Considers that a ban on phosphates from detergents should be introduced as soon as possible throughout the EU; notes that such a measure could bring clear environmental benefits to the Baltic Sea and other areas;
12. Stresses that environmental issues must be fully considered and incorporated into any similar approach or Strategy which is applied and developed in future in other macro-regions of the EU - such as the Danube, Alpine or Mediterranean;
13. Calls on the Commission to ensure effective cooperation and coordination with HELCOM and the Member States of the Baltic Sea Region, in order to secure a clear delineation of tasks and responsibilities as regards the implementation of the 2007 HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the above-mentioned EU Strategy and Action Plan, and thus to ensure an effective overall strategy for the Region;
14. Considers that Baltic Sea Region Cooperation should be prioritised and should take place at the highest political level of Heads of State and Government, since it is crucial in driving forward cooperation between the Baltic Sea countries and ensuring that political ambitions are realised; looks to see regular meetings between the Heads of State and Government in the Baltic Sea region seeking to achieve this;
15. Welcomes the creation of a separate budget line for the Baltic Sea Strategy in the EU budget; also welcomes the EUR 20 million earmarked for the Strategy in the 2010 budget; calls, however, for longer-term funding of the Strategy within the framework of the EU budget so as to finance measures which are not covered by the Structural Funds;
16. Notes that implementation of the Baltic Sea Strategy has as yet been very slow; considers that the appropriations earmarked in the 2010 EU budget may be used to improve implementation; regrets, therefore, that these appropriations have still not been disbursed and reminds the Commission of the importance of this money being allocated as soon as possible for purposes in line with the targets of the Baltic Sea Strategy.

¹ OJ C 294E, 3.12.2009, p. 3.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	7.4.2010
Result of final vote	+: 54 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	János Áder, Elena Oana Antonescu, Kriton Arsenis, Pilar Ayuso, Paolo Bartolozzi, Sergio Berlato, Milan Cabrnock, Martin Callanan, Nessa Childers, Chris Davies, Esther de Lange, Anne Delvaux, Bas Eickhout, Edite Estrela, Jill Evans, Elisabetta Gardini, Julie Girling, Françoise Grossetête, Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines, Satu Hassi, Jolanta Emilia Hibner, Dan Jørgensen, Christa Kläß, Jo Leinen, Peter Liese, Kartika Tamara Liotard, Linda McAvan, Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė, Miroslav Ouzký, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Gilles Pargneaux, Antonyia Parvanova, Andres Perello Rodriguez, Mario Pirillo, Pavel Poc, Frédérique Ries, Anna Rosbach, Oreste Rossi, Horst Schnellhardt, Richard Seeber, Theodoros Skylakakis, Bogusław Sonik, Catherine Soullie, Salvatore Tatarella, Anja Weisgerber, Glenis Willmott, Sabine Wils
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Bill Newton Dunn, Justas Vincas Paleckis, Alojz Peterle, Bart Staes, Michail Tremopoulos, Thomas Ulmer, Marita Ulvskog