

Press release
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Riga Water Ltd improves its phosphorus removal from waste waters to HELCOM recommendation level

Riga Water Ltd (SIA Rīgas ūdens) hosts currently a PURE (Project on Urban Reduction of Eutrophication) workshop to review technical audits for improving project partners' waste water and sludge treatment. The workshop includes a study visit to the Daugavgrīva waste water treatment plant of Riga Water, where upgrading of the processes will take place.

- Over the course of the next year, a substantial reconstruction of the Biological Treatment Plant (BTP) Daugavgrīva will be undertaken which is expected to significantly reduce the volume of nitrogen and phosphorus released into the Gulf of Riga, says treatment plant director Maris Zviedris. - Thanks to funding raised from Baltic Sea Region Programme, Riga Water was able to start the investment.

Riga Water is the pilot investor in PURE project, and improves phosphorus removal from its waste waters. The company is targeting to HELCOM recommendation level for the Baltic Sea, which is stricter than EU regulations for waste water treatment. The investment in Riga consists of chemical dosing and flow measuring equipment for phosphorus removal and a centrifuge for better sludge management. Reaching the HELCOM target in Riga will reduce the annual discharge of phosphorus to the Baltic Sea by approximately 100 tons.

- The existing technological systems of biological treatment plant of Daugavgrīva are not designed to achieve the HELCOM recommendation level of treatment, which means that new solutions and an investment for reconstruction are needed, explains Zviedris.

Riga Water Ltd and a number of other European organizations are jointly participating in the implementation of the PURE project, which has enabled them to raise funds for bringing about specific technological solutions. Thus, about EUR 300,000 will be invested in reducing the discharge of phosphorus compounds at Daugavgrīva plant, of which 85 per cent comes from EU co-financing as part of PURE.

Only when the organizations in countries located around the Baltic Sea cooperate it will be possible to achieve a recovery of the sea and ensure clean water for future generations. This can be achieved ecologically and economically most efficiently and fastest by implementing advanced phosphorus removal and proper sludge management in wastewater treatment of municipalities as PURE demonstrates. HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan aims to radically reduce pollution to the sea and restore the good ecological status of the marine environment by 2021. Thus phosphorus inputs to the Baltic must be further cut by about 15,000 tonnes. PURE aims at annual reduction of at least 300-500 tonnes of phosphorus from the Baltic via investments in Riga, Jurmala and Brest water utilities and operational improvements in Gdansk, Kohtla-Järve and Szczecin.

Riga Water Ltd is responsible for waste water treatment in the city of Riga, the Latvian capital. The Daugavgrīva's designed to handle waste waters of 1 million people. and the purified wastewaters are discharged directly to the Gulf of Riga. The design of BTP Daugavgrīva was developed by the Mosvodokanalniiproekt Institute in 1979. Yet the facility, was constructed only in 1991. Some 10 years later, a reconstruction was carried out with the purpose of refurbishing various technological components and bringing improvements to the operation of the BTP.

At the same time as the treatment facility was built, the European Union directive concerning urban waste water treatment was passed, specifying requirements for the reduction of significant pollution



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parameters such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Several years after the reconstruction, Latvia enforced the European Union standards for the treated waste water in cities with a population of 100,000 or more.

PURE (Project on urban reduction of eutrophication) tackles eutrophication of the Baltic Sea by enhancing phosphorus removal in selected municipal waste water treatment plants in the Baltic Sea Region. The lead partner Union of the Baltic Cities Commission on Environment and partner organizations John Nurminen Foundation and HELCOM form the steering group of the project.

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