

## **Searching for new local actors to protect the Baltic Sea**

Good local practices gained from various water protection programmes are presented to decision-makers in Tallinn

**New actors are searched for protecting the Baltic Sea from Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Belarus. The region's local actors are challenged to review the impact of their actions on the Baltic Sea and to commence programmes that will reduce the nutrient load imposed to the sea. Municipalities, cities and water companies have a central role in implementing locally the national and international goals for protecting the Baltic Sea.**

The event "Local Actors as Forerunners – Concrete Achievements and Links to International Covenants in Baltic Sea Protection" is organised in Tallinn on 16 March and it will present the local achievements in protecting the Baltic Sea, for example in Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Germany and Estonia. In addition, local organisations will be encouraged to make voluntary actions according to the Baltic Sea Action Plan of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission HELCOM besides their statutory actions. Also problems arised and their resolution possibilities will be discussed, pertaining to, among other things, adequacy of financing, decision-making possibilities and setting priorities. Over 130 local actors that are strategic for the Baltic Sea protection are expected to participate. These include water company managers and specialists as well as politicians and civil servants from the municipalities, cities' networks and ministries of the Baltic Sea region. The event is organised by the Cities for a Healthier Sea project, which is coordinated by the City of Helsinki Environment Centre, together with HELCOM, the PURE project (Project on Urban Reduction of Eutrophication) and the Baltic Sea Challenge.

85 million people live in the catchment area of the Baltic Sea. Kajsa Rosqvist from the Cities for a Healthier Sea project stresses that in order to improve the state of the Baltic Sea vast participation of different local actors is required in all coastal states of the Baltic Sea. "In the projects, for example, concrete investments are made in waste water treatment plants, best practices are gathered and published as well as focus is put on increasing knowledge concerning the Baltic Sea. With the help of the material produced in the organising projects, a single coastal state's organisation is also able to evaluate the impact of its actions." There is still a lot to do in the wastewater treatment of the Baltic Sea catchment area. With the political will allowing, also the municipalities have the possibility to do various, even voluntary, water protection actions.

### **Organisers**

The PURE and Cities for a Healthier Sea are international projects funded by the EU (the BSRP and Central Baltic INTERREG IV A programmes) whose partners include, among others, cities and water treatment plants in the coastal states of the Baltic Sea. The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, usually referred to as the Helsinki Commission or HELCOM, is based on the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area and is an intergovernmental organisation between all the nine Baltic Sea coastal states and the European Commission with the aim of improving the state of the Baltic Sea.

The Cities for a Healthier Sea project is also a part of the Baltic Sea Challenge campaign launched by the cities of Helsinki and Turku. With the help of the Baltic Sea Challenge, over 170 municipalities, companies and other organisations interested in protecting the Baltic Sea have been gathered to form a network mainly in Finland during last four years. The challenge encourages actors to such Baltic Sea protective measures that surpass the minimum statutory level.

## Additional information:

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## Seminar programme:

*Local Actors as Forerunners – Concrete Achievements and Links to International Covenants in Baltic Sea Protection*

## Links to the websites of the organisers:

Cities for a Healthier Sea [www.citiesforahealthiersea.net](http://www.citiesforahealthiersea.net)

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission HELCOM [www.helcom.fi](http://www.helcom.fi)

Project on Urban Reduction of Eutrophication [www.purebalticsea.eu](http://www.purebalticsea.eu)

Baltic Sea Challenge [www.balticseachallenge.net](http://www.balticseachallenge.net), [www.itamerihaaste.net](http://www.itamerihaaste.net)

