



Baltic Sea Declaration

by

Heads of Governments and High Political
Representatives of the Baltic Sea States, Norway,
the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic

and the Representative of the Commission of the
European Communities

Assembled at Ronneby, Sweden, September 2-3, 1990.

Having exchanged views on increased environmental
cooperation in the Baltic Sea area;

Concerned about the continuing threat to the environment of the Baltic Sea; threatening to irreversibly disrupt the ecological balance in the region and seriously curtail the possibilities for sound development in the area;

Welcoming the new climate of understanding and cooperation between the States in the Baltic Sea area, which will make resources available for the protection of the Baltic Sea environment, inter alia, through the reduced need for armaments expenditures;

Convinced that strengthening of such cooperation among them will contribute to the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the outcome of its follow-up meetings;

Sharing the view of the World Commission on Environment and Development that sustainable development is dependent on future policies in all countries and in all sectors;

Resolved that exploitation of natural resources in the area should be consistent with sustainable development;

Stressing the need for the use and transfer of the best available technology to protect the area and for low-waste and non-waste technologies to be further developed in order to obtain sustainable development;

Aware of the need to take urgent action to protect and preserve for present and future generations the environment of the Baltic Sea area and surrounding land areas, taking into account the particular sensitivity of the marine environment of the area and its importance to adjacent sea areas;

Welcoming the substantial financial support for the protection of the environment of the Baltic Sea area which is already under way or which may be expected from bilateral agreements, the programmes of the EC and the activities of all relevant international financial institutions, in particular

- the World Bank
- the European Investment Bank
- the Nordic Investment Bank

and the new European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, and further welcoming the priority attached to environmental protection in the framework of the programmes of assistance to the process of economic and social reform under way in several countries in the Baltic Sea Area;

Welcoming the conclusions adopted by the Conference of Environment Ministers from the European Community and Eastern and Central European countries held in Dublin on 16 June 1990;

Recalling the valuable work of the UN Economic Commission for Europe in the field of environmental protection;

Recalling the 1973 Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources in the Baltic Sea and the Belts, the 1974 Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea area and the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution;

Recalling the valuable work on environmental protection that has been achieved under the framework provided by the 1974 Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area;

Welcoming the decision of the European Communities to establish an Environment Agency and a European Environment Information and Observation Network, which will be open also to the countries of the Baltic area and other plans to start cooperation centres of importance to the Baltic Sea area states in the field of environmental sciences, such as the Baltic Sea Centre in Finland;

Recalling the 9th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission held at ministerial level in February 1988, and the Declaration on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area that was agreed and signed on that occasion;

Reaffirming the principles adopted on May 16th 1990 in the Bergen Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development in the ECE Region.

DO HEREBY DECLARE THEIR FIRM DETERMINATION TO:

1. Assure the ecological restoration of the Baltic Sea, ensuring the possibility of self-restoration of the marine environment and preservation of its ecological balance;
2. Urgently prepare a joint comprehensive programme for decisive reduction of emissions in order to restore the Baltic Sea to a sound ecological balance. The programme shall be based on concrete national plans provided by the countries concerned;

An ad hoc high level Task Force shall be set up immediately within the Helsinki Commission to coordinate and supplement the analysis for the different parts of the Baltic Sea and to prepare the joint comprehensive programme. The Task Force shall consist of representatives from the Contracting Parties of the Helsinki Convention. The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Kingdom of Norway, the Commission of the European Communities as well as international financial institutions will take part in the work of the Task Force.

The financial institutions participating in the Baltic Sea Conference (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Nordic Investment Bank, World Bank) are jointly invited as members of the Task Force, to analyze financial and other requirements and to identify and prepare investment projects and accompanying measures for the different parts of the Baltic Sea.

The national plans shall contain relevant decisions, programmes and regulations for the reduction of polluting substances (especially inputs from agriculture, industry, sewage treatment plants and waste) taking into consideration the quantities of major direct and indirect inputs. The national plans shall be submitted to the Task Force by 31 January 1991.

The comprehensive programme should be finalized by the Task Force by the end of 1991 and be subsequently decided upon at ministerial level in the framework of the Helsinki Commission. In the countries concerned, the key elements of the comprehensive programme shall be under implementation by 1993;

3. Undertake and support intensified efforts to reduce as soon as possible the emissions of harmful substances (toxic, persistent and bioaccumulating substances, heavy metals and nutrients) to levels that are in accordance with a restored ecological balance, implementing as a first step the existing commitments by the contracting parties to the Helsinki Convention to reduce such emissions in the order of 50% in the period 1987-1995;
4. Accept the principle of safeguarding the marine ecosystems in the Baltic Sea by substantially reducing the above-mentioned emissions, by the use of the best available technology and other appropriate measures and furthermore to assure sustainable utilization of natural resources and development and use of cleaner technologies, including low-waste and non-waste processes and environmentally non-hazardous products;
5. Promote the reduction of nutrients and other harmful substances entering the Baltic Sea from diffuse sources by the use of the best environmental practice;
6. Require the best available technology for all important industries (e.g. chemical, fertilizer and pulp and paper industries) and promote the installation and improvement of municipal sewage treatment plants, which should include biological treatment and nutrient removal to the level set up within the Helsinki Commission as far as possible and not later than the year 2000;

7. (a) Strengthen the legal and institutional regime, inter alia the Helsinki Convention and its Commission, in the field of prevention and control of pollution entering the Baltic Sea, with a view to accelerating the implementation of existing commitments and bringing the Convention with Annexes in line with the development since its adoption in 1974;
(b) Promote closer cooperation between the Helsinki and the Gdansk Commissions;
8. Promote further co-operation within the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution with a view to achieving broader implementation of the Helsinki and Sofia protocols and to reaching agreements in appropriate international fora on further reductions of the emissions of air pollutants from motor vehicles, ships, industries etc.;
9. Intensify cooperation in the field of environmental sciences, inter alia, in order to strengthen the foundation for designing adequate measures to reduce the most harmful pollution;
10. Promote additionally, through supportive measures, increased transfer of knowledge regarding the environment;
11. Promote further co-operation in the field of transfer of environmentally sound technology, inter alia, through multilateral, bilateral and commercial mechanisms, with the aim to protect the Baltic Sea.

12. Apply the precautionary principle, i. e. to take effective action to avoid potentially damaging impacts of substances that are persistent, toxic and liable to bioaccumulate even where there is lack of full scientific certainty to prove a causal link between emissions and effects. This applies especially when there is reason to assume that certain damage or harmful effects on the marine ecosystems are likely to be caused by such substances;
13. Extend and strengthen the programme of monitoring in order to improve the assessment of the present and future state of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea area and encourage the cooperation between statistical agencies to improve demographic and other statistics relevant to the protection of the Baltic Sea;
14. Develop a comprehensive programme in nature conservation, inter alia, through the establishment of protected areas representing the various Baltic ecosystems and their flora and fauna.
15. Encourage a strengthening of cooperation and facilitation of human contacts in the region to improve the environment of the Baltic Sea, including inter alia participation of local and regional governments, governmental and private institutions, industries and non-governmental organizations in the fields of economy, trade, science, culture, information, etc.;

16 (a) Cooperate within appropriate international fora in improving legal instruments and technical regulations for transport systems aiming at the prevention of adverse environmental impacts on the Baltic Sea area, inter alia, pollution arising from maritime casualties, and to this end:

- prepare within the Helsinki Commission a joint initiative for strong support of the work within the IMO on a world-wide agreement on new requirements on constructional arrangements for tankers (e.g. double-hull, double-side, double bottom-ships, tank size limitation) to prevent or reduce oil spills resulting from collisions or groundings, and
- support their best efforts to encourage, by economic incentives, e.g. lower fees, the use of tankers with improved construction to minimize the effects of accidents;

(b) Encourage considerably intensified cooperation regarding airborne surveillance between the respective competent authorities;

17. Undertake to integrate environmental considerations into the procedures for planning future development in all economic and social processes;
18. Encourage further commercial and financial cooperation, multilaterally and bilaterally, in order to implement the necessary reduction of emissions, including supportive financial arrangements when appropriate;

19. Recommend that meetings of the Helsinki Commission will continue to be held at the ministerial level at appropriate intervals, in order to examine the implementation of the decisions and recommendations for the protection of the Baltic Sea by the Commission, to follow closely the development of the environmental quality in the Area and agree on further concerted action of effective improvements concerning the Baltic Sea.