



B7 Baltic Islands Network

B7 Åland Chairmanship 2006

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B7 POSITION

- **The Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment**
- **The Marine Strategy Directive, the Proposal for a directive establishing a Framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy**

B7 welcomes the proposal for a directive establishing a Framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy. B7 emphasises that swift action must be taken to improve the condition of the European marine environment, especially for the regions that show evidence of deterioration, such as the Baltic Sea.

Pace of implementation – coordination with the water framework directive

In the proposal for the Marine Strategy Directive, the pace of implementation is too slow. It would be logical and appropriate to adjust the timetable of the marine directive to the timetable of the water framework directive (2000/60/EG). The water framework directive, stating that good ecological status in the coastal waters should be achieved at the latest by 2015, has already been implemented in the member states. It's not appropriate to simultaneously propose a less ambitious goal for the partly overlapping and adjacent marine waters and furthermore, it will not be possible to achieve good status in most coastal waters if there is not a corresponding status in the marine waters. A timetable adjusted to the water framework directive is realistic. In the Baltic Sea Region it would be possible with an even faster timetable, due to the work with the Baltic Sea Action Plan under HELCOM. It is not desirable that regions that want a slow pace of implementation, for example due to administrative reasons, dominate the setting up of the timetable. If it's desirable to enable a region to postpone the implementation of the directive, the same provisions that are laid down in the water framework directive should be used, that is that the timetable of good ecological status by 2015 can be delayed due to certain circumstances such as technical and economical reasons.

Quality criteria

The proposal does not lay down any definition on what good ecological status is. B7 emphasizes that it should be clarified in the marine strategy directive that good ecological status must be defined in a clear, consistent and comparable manner, and, above all, the quality criteria must be ambitious enough. It is crucial that the quality objectives are indeed ambitious enough, since they will decide the content of the programmes of measures for at long time into the future.

Programmes of measures

The proposal for a Marine Strategy Directive lies down that the Commission may approve the environment targets and the programmes of measures of the member states. However, it is uncertain what happens if there is no approval. It needs to be clarified what the consequences are if a member state's goals and measures are not met and therefore not approved of by the Commission.

Coordination of definitions

It is important that the concepts and definitions used in the proposal for a Marine Strategy Directive are adjusted to the definitions in the water framework directive to avoid ambiguity and to enable coordination of the two directives.

Coordination of the Marine and the Maritime Strategy

In the Thematic Strategy it's said that the overall governance framework through which the users and uses of oceans and seas can be regulated is to be addressed in the Green Paper on the new European Maritime Policy. It is important to make sure that the environmental questions are considered accurately and sufficiently in the European Maritime Policy and to see to that the overall governance framework is regulated in a satisfactory way. That is, the communication and coordination between different sectors should be sufficient and managed in an efficient way.

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