



Implementation of HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan in Latvia



MINISTRY OF THE
ENVIRONMENT

Status report

The objective of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (hereafter – the BSAP) adopted by the environmental ministers of the Baltic Sea countries and the European Commission in HELCOM Ministerial Meeting on 15 November 2007, is to achieve good environmental status in the Baltic Sea by 2021. This ultimate objective consists of four interrelated objectives: the Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication, Baltic marine life unaffected by hazardous substances, favourable conservation status for the biodiversity of the Baltic Sea and environmentally friendly shipping in the Baltic Sea.

The BSAP details around 150 activities and consists of four main segments and four supplementary sections. The issues addressed by the main segments are eutrophication, hazardous substances, biodiversity and fisheries and maritime activities (shipping, accidents, emergency response etc.). The other four sections address the development of assessment instruments and methodologies, awareness raising and capacity building, financing, as well as the implementation and review of the plan.

This document is the summary - status report May 20, 2010 - of the national implementation of the Eutrophication and Hazardous substances segments of the BSAP in Latvia.

The Latvian Cabinet of Ministers adopted the BSAP by the decision No.64, 58§ of November 13, 2007 and delegated the Ministry of the Environment to integrate the objectives and actions of the BSAP into the National Environmental Policy Strategy for 2009 – 2015 (*hereafter – the Strategy*). The other ministries concerned shall take the BSAP into account when drawing up sectoral policy planning documents and legal acts.

Inter-ministerial / inter-institutional working group has been established by the order Nr. 170 of 9 June 2008 by the Minister of the Environment for coordinated implementation of the BSAP in Latvia. The following ministries and institutions are represented in the working group: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments, Ministry of Transport, State Environmental Service, Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre, Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, Latvian Maritime Administration, as well as from Ventspils Port Authority representing Latvian ports.

The work on the BSAP has been shared out in accordance with the responsibilities of participating institutions which are therefore responsible for the measures taken in their particular areas of activity. Working group is meeting regularly to share information on implementation of the BSAP, including reporting to HELCOM, and to agree on further measures needed.

The translation of the BSAP into Latvian is available on homepage of the Ministry of the Environment: http://www.vidm.gov.lv/lat/darbibas_veidi/udens_aizsardziba/.

According to the BSAP, the Baltic Sea countries are required to elaborate National Implementation Plans for Eutrophication and Hazardous substances segments by 2010 to be presented to the HELCOM Ministerial meeting in Moscow, Russian Federation. Approach prescribed by the BSAP leaves enough flexibility for the countries to choose the most appropriate and cost-effective measures to reach the reduction targets. However, policy

development planning system in Latvia does not foresee such a kind of cross-sectoral policy planning document as implementation programme. Due to this reason, according to the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers No.64, 58§ of 13 November 2007, Ministry of the Environment of Latvia has included the objectives and actions of the BSAP into the Environmental Policy Strategy for 2009 – 2015, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 31.07.2009, Order No.517. Ministry of the Environment in cooperation and consultation within the inter-ministerial/ inter- institutional working group has elaborated the Informative Report on the implementation of the BSAP since its adoption and outlining the course forward. The Informative Report has been submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for adoption in May 2010.

The Latvian position on the draft Moscow Ministerial Declaration has been coordinated and agreed upon with the Ministries and institutions represented in the inter-ministerial / inter-institutional working group.

Implementation of the environmental policy is related not only to the achievement of the objectives set by the Strategy, but also to the policy planning documents and legal acts developed by other sectors, where environmental policy aims have been integrated and concrete objectives and measures have been set. Thereby objectives and actions set by other policy planning documents are not duplicated by the Strategy.

The scope of the Strategy includes the following related policy planning documents, *inter alia*, National Development Plan 2007 – 2013, National Strategic Reference Framework 2007 – 2013, Sustainable Development Strategy for Latvia, Land Policy Strategy 2008 - 2014, National Programme on Biodiversity, Waste Management Strategy 2006 – 2012, Climate Change Reduction Programme 2007 -2011, Transport Development Strategy 2007–2013, etc. BSAP objectives and actions have been taken into account also in the Spatial planning development concept, as well as in the draft Strategy on Spatial Development of Coastal area for 2011 – 2017, elaborated by the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments.

The Strategy does not duplicate the objectives and actions to be undertaken as set forth in the Environmental Monitoring Programme Strategy 2009–2012, National Programme on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks 2008–2015, Action Programme for Pollution Reduction and Quality Improvement of Priority Fish Waters and Bathing Waters, Action Programme for Reduction of Surface Water Pollution Caused by Urban Waste Water and Hazardous Substances, Action Programme for Vulnerable Zones subject to Special Requirements for Protection of Water and Soil against Pollution Caused by Nitrates from Agricultural Sources and Latvian Rural Development National Strategy Plan 2007–2013

The Strategy document is structured in five main chapters: Air, Water (including a subchapter of Marine), Land (including hazardous substances and chemicals), Nature and Climate, as well as a chapter on financing and procedures for evaluation and review. Each of five main chapters contains: 1) characteristics of the current status, 2) identified problems calling for a concrete action at governmental level, 3) policy objectives, 4) policy results, results of activities, associated indicators for review of implementation; 5) further actions.

The **overall objective** of the environmental policy is to provide the public with the opportunity to live in a clean and well-arranged environment through sustainable

development, preservation of environmental quality and biological diversity, sustainable use of natural resources, as well as participation of the public in the decision-making and its awareness of the environmental situation.

Environmental status of the marine waters of Latvia

The sea coastline of Latvia is nearly 500 km long, and the waters under the jurisdiction of Latvia include territorial waters extending 12 nautical miles in breadth and an exclusive economic zone and a continental shelf with the surface area of 28,000 km². However, no national borders exist in respect to the environmental quality in the Baltic Sea, and all countries of the region share the responsibility for protection of the marine environment. Being an inland sea, the Baltic Sea is characterised by a relatively slow salt water exchange with the North Sea, while a large inflow of nutrients from the rivers significantly affects the process of eutrophication. During the last decades saltwater exchange between the Baltic Sea and the North Sea is decreasing which could be related to the effects of climate change. The new European Union (EU) marine environment policy has defined the marine environment as the key asset in development of the maritime policy, since the sea accumulates all the pollutants discharged into rivers and partially into the air. Therefore the marine environment clearly shows both efficiency of the legislation in the EU environmental sector and success of each Member State in protecting the environment.

The quality of Latvian coastal waters and water in the Gulf of Riga shows certain slight trends towards long-term improvement due to reduction of the nitrogen concentration facilitated by both decline in industrial and agricultural activities and success in the area of waste water treatment, as well as introduction of good agricultural practice by construction of manure storage facilities and limiting the use of fertilisers. At the same time, the concentration of phosphorus has continued to increase due to the growing economic activity in the sector of logging instead of agriculture, which in its turn contributes to the development of cyanobacteria assimilating the atmospheric nitrogen. Based on the improving situation of sediments in the Gulf of Riga, it is expected that the concentration of phosphorus will start to reduce gradually in the subsequent years due to stronger accumulation of phosphorus in the sediments, as well as it is expected that reduction of the phosphorus concentration and thus changes in the environmental conditions will occur very slowly. This process could be accelerated by a well-considered approach to logging, e.g., by prevention of clear-cutting causing the release of biogenic substances or by limiting cutting areas located nearby rivers. According to the requirements of the WFD one transitional water body (hereinafter – the WB) has been identified in Latvia. It is a low salinity area in the southern part of the Gulf of Riga, nearby estuaries of the rivers Daugava, Lielupe and Gauja. Also six coastal WBs along the Latvian coastline have been identified. The main point-source loads in these WBs are caused by discharges of waste water from the large cities, as well as by incoming pollution from the large rivers. Major construction works have been carried out to ensure the operation of ports, therefore it can be considered that a part of coastal and transitional WBs has been significantly altered. In addition, a special emphasis has to be put on such issue as the transboundary transport of pollution into the sea, including operation of the Butinge Oil Terminal nearby the border of Latvia. In general, Latvian transitional and coastal waters can be defined as waters which as a result of human activities have undergone significant alteration in the eco-system and in quality indicators describing their natural condition.

The Strategy identifies the the following major loads on the environmental quality of the Baltic Sea coast of Latvia and risks affecting their quality:

- 1) increase in maritime transportation of goods, including oil products and hazardous substances (also in the vicinity of the Latvian sea coast);
- 2) insufficient resources for response to combat accidents on sea;
- 3) risk of eutrophication and excessive growth of the toxic cyanobacteria;
- 4) overall increasing turnover of oil products in Latvian ports, as well as potential extraction of hydrocarbon in the continental shelf;
- 5) gas and oil pipelines constructed in the sea also increase the risk;
- 6) there is a risk that imprudent construction of wind power plants in the sea could present threats to the marine eco-system.

Eutrophication

To reach the objective of good environmental status, according to the preliminary burden-sharing arrangement between the countries, Latvia must reduce its **nitrogen** load by **2560** tonnes and its **phosphorus** load by **300** tonnes until 2021. The nitrogen load reduction concerns the Baltic Proper, whereas no additional reduction in nitrogen is required in the Gulf of Riga. The phosphorus load reduction concerns both the Baltic Proper and the Gulf of Riga.

The BSAP was based on the best knowledge available in the year 2007. However, significant fraction of nutrients entering the Baltic Proper from Latvia originates outside its borders. Also there are a lot of uncertainties regarding natural background loads and natural retention of nutrients in the drainage basins of the Latvian rivers and lakes, making the current nutrient reduction commitments highly sensitive to coincidence of unmanageable natural circumstances. Transboundary pollution loads entering the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga through Latvia and coming from Belarus, as well as from Lithuania, have not been taken into account in the calculations of the reduction targets. Therefore, nutrient reduction targets for Latvia set by the BSAP could be considered as very preliminary and would be adjusted. According to the BSAP, the load calculations shall be reviewed starting from 2008, taking into account the updated information and PLC-5 data. Therefore the reduction targets and action programmes can be revised, if necessary, and decision on the ultimate reduction needs could be taken at the meeting of environmental ministers in 2013. Therefore, it is possible that the reduction requirements imposed on Latvia may change.

In 2008- 2010 the following **research and assessment projects** are carried out or still are ongoing in Latvia to obtain the missing information on distribution and pollution level of nutrients, priority and dangerous substances in the Latvian water bodies, as well as to assess effectiveness of the measures taken :

- (1) *“The effectiveness assessment of measures taken during 2000 – 2007 in municipal waste water treatment sector in Latvian coastal area to improve marine waters` quality and to reduce pollution load to the Baltic Sea”* was carried out in 2008, to assess compliance with the requirements of the Directive 91/271/EEK on urban wastewater treatment (hereafter – the UWWTD) and the HELCOM. The assessment was carried out in 12 Latvian coastal agglomerations, discharging directly or indirectly into the Baltic Sea or the Gulf of Riga, *inter alia*, the HELCOM Hot Spots.

(2) Assessment “*Screening of nitrates, priority and dangerous substances in surface and groundwater water bodies*” was launched on 01.09.2009 (within the framework of the EU CF co-financed project „Technical assistance to water management development projects of Latvian municipalities”). Results of the screening will be the following: 1) obtained missing information on occurrence and pollution level of nitrates, priority and dangerous substances in water bodies, including sediments and biota; 2) identified potential pollution sources, 3) assessment of transboundary pollution and loads to the Baltic Proper and Gulf of Riga. Obtained information would allow the public institutions to carry out consistent and cost effective supervisory activities within the framework of national monitoring programme.

(3) *Evaluation report on investments allocated to the water management infrastructure in 88 agglomerations of more than 2000 population equivalent or p.e.* (hereafter – the Evaluation report). The aim of the Evaluation report was the compilation of the results on implementation of the UWWTD, including information on implementation of the UWWTD in 88 agglomerations. Evaluation assessed compliance of discharged wastewaters with the legal requirements; it also studied technical provisions, disposal of the funds and consistently evaluated financial needs for each of the agglomerations after the year 2015. The evaluation also assessed water and wastewater management systems’ development, as well as the progress towards implementation of environmental quality objectives of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (2000/60/EC (hereafter – the WFD).

(4) *National Research Programme “Climate Change Impact on Water Environment of Latvia”* (KALME) was carried out in 2006 – 2009 (<http://kalme.daba.lv/en/wp1/>). The aim of the programme was to investigate how climate change would potentially influence Latvian surface water bodies and the Baltic Sea coastline and coastal waters, and to elaborate science-based proposals that would allow adapt to adverse impacts and mitigate them. The results of the programme provide an information basis for Latvia, which may be used for adaptation to climate change impacts on the Baltic Sea and its catchment area (projection horizon – year 2050).

The Strategy identifies that the major problems, which require specific governmental policy, are the following: eutrophication of the Gulf of Riga; trans-boundary pollution by nutrients and hazardous substances that comprise more than 50% of all waterborne loads, as well as risk of accidents. The policy objectives set by the Strategy are to **ensure compliance of marine and surface waters quality with legal acts requirements, to reduce eutrophication and to ensure qualitative water management services.**

The BSAP is focused on anthropogenic sources, primarily discharges from agriculture and municipal wastewater treatment plants, as well as on-site wastewater treatment of single-family homes and forestry to a lesser extent. In addition, air emissions, including from shipping, account for a significant share of the anthropogenic load.

According to the BSAP the implementation of the measures shall be started no later than by 2016, in order to achieve good ecological and environmental status of the Baltic Sea with regard to eutrophication by 2021. A directive- specific implementation and financing plan for Latvia sets a time frame for compliance with the requirements of the UWWTD until 2015, including transition periods. The same deadline is set also for reaching good environmental status of surface and ground waters according to the WFD. Taking into account the timetable

for implementation of the WFD, it could be stated that national actions to great extent are and will be based on implementation of this particular directive, including appropriate measures included into river basin management plans.

To cut the nutrient load from waterborne inputs

The BSAP prescribes to **include the required and appropriate measures into national programmes and/or river basin management plans developed under the WFD**. There are 4 river basin management plans elaborated and approved in Latvia for the six years period between 2010 and 2015. The programme of measures of the each management plan include basic measures for improvement of surface waters quality, e.g., UWWTP construction and /or reconstruction, compliance with requirements of protective belts around water bodies, permits for the performance of polluting activities, as well as supplementary measures to reduce point and diffuse source pollution (improvement of efficiency of UWWTP, evaluation and remediation of polluted sites, establishment of buffer zones etc.).

Transboundary pollution originating in the non-Contracting States, e.g. Belarus, should be addressed by initiating joint activities, for instance, by bilateral and/or multilateral projects and through other existing funding mechanisms, as well as by international agreements.

To reduce emissions from wastewater treatment plants

In order to achieve country-wide nutrient reduction targets, the Contracting States should choose the most appropriate and cost-effective measures, taking into account requirements of the two HELCOM recommendations: **28E/5 and 28E/6**.

The directive-specific implementation and financing plan for Latvia sets time frame for compliance with the requirements of the UWWTD in all 88 agglomerations of more than 2000 p.e. According to the Annex VIII of the EU Accession Treaty, Latvia was granted transitional periods by the end of 2015 to ensure full compliance with the requirements of the UWWTD. Planning process is carried out in accordance with the National environmental investment strategy and with the Operational programme for the planning period 2007 - 2013. The compliance will be achieved gradually, according to the priorities set in the UWWTD:

- for agglomerations of more than 100 000 p.e., by the end of 2008 (2 cities);
- for agglomerations between 10 000 - 100 000 p.e., by the end of 2011 (24 agglomerations);
- for agglomerations between 2000 -10000 p.e., by the end of 2015 (62 agglomerations).

According to the results of “The effectiveness assessment of measures taken during 2000 – 2007 in municipal waste water treatment sector in Latvian coastal area to improve marine waters` quality and to reduce pollution load to the Baltic Sea”, from 2000 till 2007 the effectiveness and extent of wastewater treatment has improved showing compliance with requirements of the national laws and regulations in almost all WWTPs.

The HELCOM recommendation 28E/5 sets more stringent requirements for P-removal from municipal wastewater treatment plants (above 10,000 p.e.) and introduces requirements for wastewater management for small- and medium-sized municipalities (300-10,000 p. e.). To ensure further implementation of the recommendation SIA „Rīgas Ūdens” (Riga Water Ltd.) (> 100 000 p.e.) and SIA „Jūrmalas Ūdens” (Jurmala Water Ltd.) (10 000 – 100 000 p.e.) will participate in the PURE project (*Project on Urban Reduction of Eutrophication*) in the EU Baltic Sea Region financed from 2010 by 2012. The project aims at exchange of information on the best technological solutions.

Latvia will apply for deletion from the list of the remaining HELCOM Hot Spots by 2012.

To improve on-site wastewater treatment

The HELCOM recommendation 28E/6 sets requirements on improvement of on-site wastewater treatment of single-family homes, small businesses and settlements up to 300 p.e.

According to the Cabinet Regulation No. 34 "Regulations regarding Discharge of Polluting Substances into Water" (adopted on 22.01.2002), all the territory of Latvia is designated as a highly sensitive area, to which more stringent requirements for urban waste water treatment apply. The borders of the sensitive area match with the land borders of the Republic of Latvia. It is prohibited to discharge untreated industrial wastewater and wastewater sludge from businesses and industrial sites into the surface waters or environment. According to the Evaluation report, no significant polluters have been identified discharging untreated wastewater into the environment. Elimination of such direct discharges has been a priority for all agglomerations concerned. It is planned that by ensuring 95% connection to a centralized sewerage system, such illegal discharges would be eliminated in future.

Funding for water and wastewater infrastructure development in smaller settlements is available from the EU ERDF under the priority „Development of water management infrastructure in populated areas, where number of residents is up to 2000”. The settlements having between 200 and 2000 inhabitants are eligible for this funding. This funding can be also used for settlements of less than 200 inhabitants, establishment of autonomous water supply and sewage systems in schools etc., if significant environmental or human health risks exist, or if such infrastructure contributes to regional development.

To ban phosphates in detergents

The HELCOM recommendation 28E/7 sets measures for the substitution of phosphorus in detergents. In accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No. 748 (adopted on 07.07.2009) „Regulation on restrictions in marketing of the phosphates containing laundry detergents” distribution of washing powders and liquids, which phosphates content is more than 0,5 % P weight/ weight, shall be prohibited in the Latvian market as from 01.06.2010. However, the Regulations concerns only laundry detergents for household use. The decision on the total ban of phosphates containing detergents will be taken, basing on rigorous studies including those initiated by the European Commission, provided these studies would prove efficiency of such a ban.

To deal with nutrient inputs from agriculture

The BSAP commands to take necessary steps towards designation of the relevant parts of the agricultural land in the Baltic Sea catchment area as a zone vulnerable to nitrates pollution. Latvia has designated a vulnerable zone according to the requirements of the Nitrates Directive 91/676/EEC. The Cabinet Regulations No. 531 (adopted on 18.12.2001) “On Protection of Water and Soil from Pollution with Nitrates Caused by Agricultural Sources” are in place. Latvian report on implementation of the Nitrates Directive covering the period of 2004 – 2007 is available through the following link: <http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/lv/eu/nid/envspyhpa> . The report contains the information on designation of vulnerable zone, water monitoring data, agricultural statistics, information

about the implementation of the Action Programme for the vulnerable zone. It should be underlined that, according to studies, significant amount of nitrogen pollution within the vulnerable zone is caused by transboundary pollution. Evaluation of long-term monitoring data shows that about half of nitrates discharged by the Lielupe River into the Gulf of Riga originate outside Latvia. The same applies to the Venta River basin. Monitoring results demonstrate that, except for few rivers within the vulnerable zone, nitrates pollution is insignificant, therefore proving insignificance of agricultural and other pollution sources in the territory of Latvia.

To transpose Annex III of the Helsinki Convention in Latvian legislation

Draft law on ratification of the amendment of the Annex III, Part II on prevention of pollution from agriculture of the Helsinki Convention is in the adoption process. Its adoption is planned by the end of 2010. It is envisaged to incorporate Annex III into Latvian legislation through applicable regulatory enactments.

To reduce diffuse pollution, additional measures are included in the river basin management plans, such as buffer zones, fertilisation plans, manure handling. Latvia is implementing the IPPC 96/61/EK directive in accordance with the Law on Pollution and the Part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention. Therefore there are no agricultural hot spots in Latvia - installations for the intensive rearing of cattle, poultry and pigs not fulfilling the requirements.

To facilitate agri-environmental measures, Latvia is participating in the following international **projects**:

- „Baltic COMPASS - *Comprehensive Policy Actions and Investments in Sustainable Solutions in Agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region*” (partner – “Latvian Farmers Parliament (Zemnieku Saeima)”);
- BONUS EEIG project *Reduction of Baltic Sea Nutrient Inputs and Cost Allocation within the Baltic Sea Catchment, RECOCA*, (01.1.2009. - 31.12.2011) (partner – Latvian University of Agriculture).

Latvia supported joint HELCOM submission to IMO in order to elaborate relevant new regulations to **eliminate the discharge of sewage from ships**

To reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides to the Baltic Sea

The BSAP tasks the coastal countries to make use of the assessments of the inputs and effects of airborne nitrogen to the Baltic Sea during the revision of the emission targets for nitrogen under the 1979 UNECE Convention for Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution and EU National Emissions Ceilings Directive (Directive 2001/81/EC), aiming to include also emissions from ships. Latvia regularly reports on the implementation of the above mentioned legal acts: Regular Report under the EU NEC prepared on 2007 is available in Internet: <http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/lv/eu/colrztrba>. Regular Report under the CLRTAP prepared on 2007 is available in Internet: http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/lv/un/copy_of_colqhgwdg/colszqtbq. However, as it was recognised in the Strategy EPG, to implement new more stringent requirements planned by the UNECE and the EU, new measures would be needed in Latvia to reduce air emissions from different pollution sources. A policy objective set by the EPG is to ensure air quality in compliance with the requirements of legal acts, involving municipalities, businesses and society in general.

Reducing emissions of **nitrogen oxides by shipping** is of major importance to the entire Baltic Proper. Latvia supported joint HELCOM submissions to IMO.

Hazardous substances

Targets and actions in the programme to reduce hazardous substances are to great extent linked to EU chemicals policy and regulatory framework REACH, as well as international conventions and SAICM process, and their implementation is therefore dependent on European Community legislation in this area.

The objectives and actions of the BSAP have been included into the Environmental Policy Strategy of Latvia for 2009 – 2015 (hereafter – Strategy). Strategy emphasizes the high priority of chemicals management both at global and EU level. REACH Regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006 is binding for Latvia as an EU Member State. To implement REACH regulation increased cooperation among involved institutions is needed both at national and EU level. Latvia is preparing the first REACH implementation Report to be due by 1 June 2010.

Measures to implement the REACH are in place, however as regards to participation in the Strategic Approach on International Chemicals Management **SAICM implementation process**, there is a need for more information on safe and controlled turnover in neighbouring countries, because such information would substantially cut down expenditures of transboundary monitoring of priority substances. The 1st Central and Eastern European (CEE) regional meeting on SAICM (4 -6.12.2006 in Riga, Latvia) developed guidance for its regional representatives, established a “bridging group” that would act as a bridge for information exchange between the regional focal point and members of the region, and adopted a regional position on financial support and technical cooperation.

As regards to **implementation the Globally Harmonised System (GHS)** on classification and labelling of chemicals and to take into account Strategy for preparing safety data sheets, Latvia acts according to regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 is in force. Titles II, III and IV of the Regulation shall apply in respect of substances from 1 December 2010 and in respect of mixtures from 1 June 2015.

Latvia has ratified 2001 **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Convention** on 28/10/2004. National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention "Persistent organic Pollutants: National implementation plan for 2005 – 2020" adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on 31 March 2005. UNDP/GEF Project “Environmentally sound disposal of PCBs-containing equipment and waste in Latvia” was carried out 30.03.2006 - 01.04.2009. The overall objective of the project was to avoid the release of PCB from working and obsolete electrical equipment and to provide environmentally sound disposal of PCB containing equipment and waste. Implementing the EU Regulation (EC) No850/2004 (29 April 2004) on Persistent Organic Pollutants Latvia has committed herself to totally withdraw from circulation by the end of 2010 PHB containing transformers and condensers, and to introduce appropriate management system.

The Rotterdam Convention and the associated Regulation 304/2003 concerning the export and import of dangerous chemicals is a way of fulfilling the requirements on **application by the same rules as the EU to products that are marketed globally**.

Regarding promotion and support of **identification and inclusion of new candidate substances to Stockholm POPs Convention** and the 1998 Aarhus Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants to the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (**CLRTAP Aarhus Protocol**) Latvia participates in and supports activities of the EU MS in these frameworks.

Process of setting restrictions on the substances is in progress in EU. As an example, at the moment HBCDD is recommended by European Chemicals Agency for strict control under authorisation route. EU-wide risk-limiting measures or bans are to be expected in the future.

Other substances are under overview. Restrictions on the use of mercury and use and control of other heavy metals are planned by the EU.

Regulation (EC) No 1102/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the banning of exports of metallic **mercury** and certain mercury compounds and mixtures and the safe storage of metallic mercury, Directive 2007/51/EC. Recycling of mercury containing lamps takes place in Latvia for more than 20 years so ensuring withdraw of mercury containing products from use. The Cabinet Regulation No5, (27.06.2006) determines permissible concentration of **cadmium in fertilizers** in Latvia.

The BSAP sets measures and actions for improvement of hazardous substances management in the entire Baltic Sea region as well as for emergency response capacity on noxious substances and oil. Therefore the EPG recognizes emergency capacity of coastal municipalities as an important task to ensure adequate response to coastline pollution.

Provisions of the Directive 2008/105/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directives 82/176/EEC, 83/513/EEC, 84/156/EEC, 84/491/EEC, 86/280/EEC and amending Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council shall be incorporated into national laws and regulations of Latvia by July 2010.

The calculations of the use and emissions of the substances prioritised in the BSAP are highly uncertain. The same applies to what is known about the possible effects of these substances on marine life. According to latest HELCOM assessments, majority of the substances prioritised in the BSAP are in low concentrations in the Latvian marine waters and biota or are not present at all. A substantial part of the national implementation programme is therefore devoted to enhancing knowledge about the sources and distribution of hazardous substances in the Baltic sea and surface water bodies to identify sources and obtain missing data and information to analyse any adverse effects.

Latvia is (or was) participating in the following international and national **projects** facilitating the implementation of the BSAP in regard to hazardous substances:

- 1) "Screening of occurrences of hazardous substances in marine environment" (2008-2009, financed by Nordic Council of Ministers) in cooperation with other HELCOM countries;
- 2) *Control of hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea region (COHIBA)* (co-financed by EU Baltic Sea Region Program) – aimed at trying to identify sources of the prioritised hazardous substances in the framework of BSAP, as well as to introduce whole effluent assessment for monitoring of complex discharges of hazardous substances. Project partner: BEF- Latvia;
- 3) LIFE+ Project "*Baltic Actions for Reduction of Pollution of the Baltic Sea from Priority Hazardous Substances*" (*BaltActHaz*) (01.01.2009 – 31.12.2011) Project partner: BEF-Latvia The Public information strategy has been developed in the framework of the *BaltActHaz* to raise public awareness.
- 4) Assessment "*Screening of nitrates, priority and dangerous substances in surface and groundwater water bodies*" launched on 01.09.2009 (in the framework of EU CF co-financed project „Technical assistance to water management development projects of Latvian municipalities”. Result of the screening: 1) obtained missing information on occurrence and pollution level of nitrates, priority and dangerous substances in water bodies, including sediments and biota, risk water bodies and potential sources identified.
- 5) For the **development of biological effects monitoring** Latvian Institute of the Aquatic Ecology and Institute of Biology are Partners in BONUS EEIG project *BEAST* „*Biological Effects of Anthropogenic Chemical Stress: Tools for the Assessment of Ecosystem Health*” (2008-2011). The pan-Baltic BEAST project is targeted at developing integrated measures of chemical pollution and tools needed to detect and understand human-induced pressure on the Baltic Sea ecosystem.

Latvia participates in HELCOM MORS-PRO project – an ongoing activity on **radioactivity** monitoring marine environment according to HELCOM Recommendation 26/3 based on the “State Environment Monitoring Strategy for 2009 – 2012” monitoring of radioactivity in marine and surface waters is carried out according to the Water monitoring programme.

Process of setting **restrictions on the substances** is in progress. As an example, at the moment HBCDD is recommended by European Chemicals Agency for strict control under authorisation route. Other substances are under overview. BSAP tasked to assess by 2009 the possibility of **introducing restrictions for cadmium** content in fertilisers and to apply strict restrictions on the use of **mercury** in products and from processes and support the work towards further limiting and where feasible totally banning mercury.

The Cabinet Regulation No5, (27.06.2006) lays down permissible concentration of cadmium in fertilizers in Latvia. Regulation (EC) No 1102/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the banning of exports of metallic mercury and certain mercury compounds and mixtures and the safe storage of metallic mercury, Directive 2007/51/EC are binding for Latvia. Recycling of mercury containing lamps takes place in Latvia for more than 20 years so ensuring withdraw of mercury containing products from use. To apply the **principle of substitution to replace** selected hazardous substances with substances with less hazardous properties there are a number of databases on the Latvian Environment, Geology and meteorology Centre website aimed at making it easier for companies, authorities and private individuals to deal with chemicals and apply the principle of substitution.