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Helsinki Commission wins 2009 Swedish Baltic Sea Water Award

Marine environmental organization cited for its intergovernmental work and development of the Baltic Sea Action Plan

Stockholm, Sweden, August 20, 2009 – The Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) has been named the winner of the 2009 Swedish Baltic Sea Water Award. The award was announced today by the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation Ms. Gunilla Carlsson at the Baltic Sea Seminar during the 2009 World Water Week in Stockholm.

HELCOM works to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution through intergovernmental co-operation between Denmark, Estonia, the European Community, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden. The organisation is the governing body of the "Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area" – commonly known as the [Helsinki Convention](#).

The Swedish Baltic Sea Water Award highlights important work towards halting the Baltic's deterioration and improving its ecological balance. Because of its special geographical, climatological, and oceanographic characteristics, the Baltic is highly sensitive to the environmental impacts of human activities in its sea area and its catchment area, which is home to over 85 million people. The Sea currently suffers from extensive "eutrophication" from phosphate pollution that causes large-scale algae blooms, as well as overfishing, oil spills, waste from cruise ships, and an oxygen depleted-seabed, among other problems.

"HELCOM and its secretariat under Executive Secretary Anne Christine Brusendorff have taken marine environmental protection to a new level," noted the Swedish Baltic Sea Water Award Jury in its citation. "HELCOM has shown exemplary commitment to improving the Baltic Sea through the adoption of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The Action Plan takes on the complexity of issues that need to be addressed in an innovative manner, linking it to ongoing initiatives and becoming the backbone of the environmental actions in the coming Baltic Sea Strategy."

HELCOM will receive the Swedish Baltic Sea Water Award at a ceremony in Stockholm on September 17 in connection with a dinner hosted by EU Minister Cecilia Malmström on the eve of a Ministerial Conference on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region. H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden will personally present the award.

About the Swedish Baltic Sea Water Award

Established in 1999, the Swedish Baltic Sea Water Award recognises direct and practical efforts to improve water quality in the Baltic Sea. The regional award is presented annually by Sweden's Ministry for Foreign Affairs during the World Water Week in Stockholm in appreciation of the dedicated work done by individuals, companies, organisations and actors within the public sector. The award honours



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innovation and new methods that protect the Baltic Sea water environment and includes a SEK 150,000 prize sum. A jury appointed by the Swedish Government reviews the nominations and selects the winner, which can come from any of the Baltic Sea countries. The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) administers the Award.

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The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is a policy institute that contributes to international efforts to find solutions to the world's escalating water crisis. SIWI advocates future-oriented, knowledge-integrated water views in decision making, nationally and internationally, that lead to sustainable use of the world's water resources and sustainable development of societies.