

Kiel University  
Institute of Social Sciences  
Division for Peace and Conflict Research



**Tom Schumacher**

# **The capacity of the European Union to address Baltic Sea eutrophication**

**Presentation of preliminary research results**

**AMBER annual meeting,**

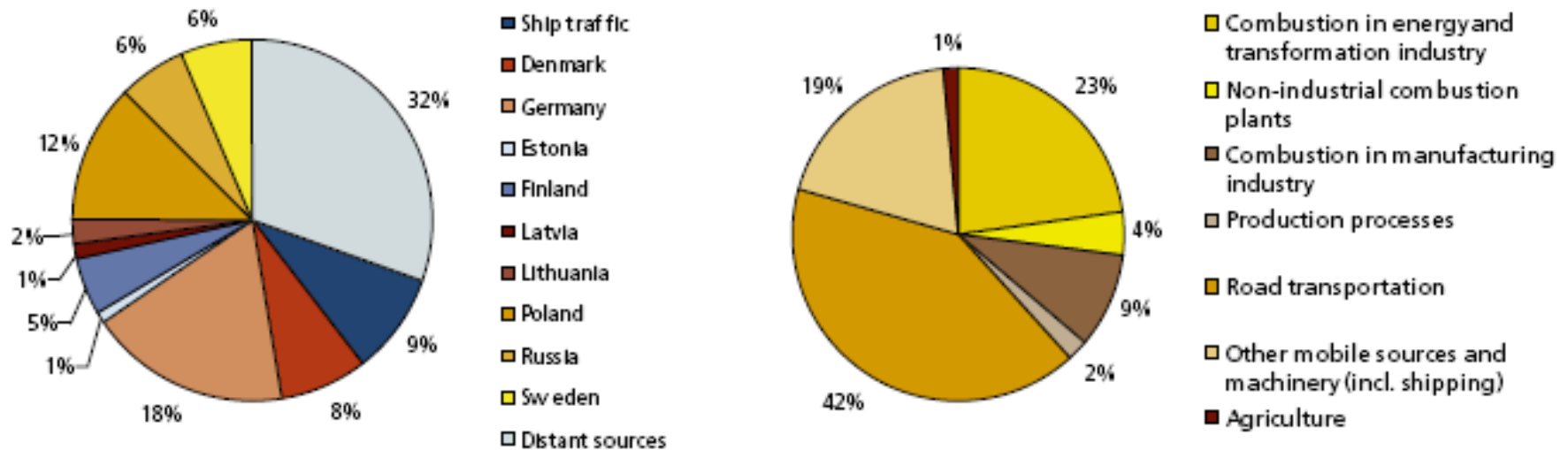
**15 March 2010**

**in Warnemünde**

# Is the EU the appropriate level to address Baltic Sea eutrophication?

- covers most of the states that suffer from and/or cause eutrophication
- potential to even engage non-member states (Russia, Belarus)
- strong institutions
- Competences across all relevant sectors

# Contribution of different emission sources to the atmospheric deposition of nitrogen



**Figure 3.6** Contribution of different emission sources to the atmospheric deposition of nitrogen. Left diagram: percentage of total emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) from different sectors in the HELCOM Contracting Parties in 2005 (HELCOM 2007a). Right diagram: Proportion of contribution by source to the atmospheric deposition of nitrogen entering the Baltic Sea basin in 2005; over 30% of the total nitrogen load originates from sources outside the HELCOM area (HELCOM 2007a).

# Relevant sectors of European policy

- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- water pollution control policy
- air pollution control policy
- maritime policy
- Baltic Sea Strategy

# Adapting the CAP to environmental needs

- Inclusion of environmental concerns started only in the 1980ies
  - First through conflict model: improving water quality through imposed regulation
- New integrative approach since 1990ies and Luxembourg Conclusions (2003)
  - Incentives for environmental friendly farming

# Weaknesses of CAP-reforms

- CAP reforms were triggered not mainly by environmental concerns but by challenges like
  - overproduction
  - budget problems
  - idea of market orientation
  - global trade considerations
- The extent to which CAP-reforms actually lead to environmental improvements depends on the way how they are being implemented

# Water pollution control policy

- *Urban Waste Water Directive*(1991)
- *Nitrates Directive* (1991)
- *Water Framework Directive* (2000)
- *Groundwater Directive* (1979, 2006)

# Integrated Maritime policy

- New policy sector, only established in 2007
  - Primarily aiming to develop maritime economy
- *Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008)* should function as the environmental pillar
  - to achieve good environmental status for marine environments in 2020



# Weaknesses of the Marine Strategy

- Many exemptions possible
- Main efforts are delegated to member states
- No binding inclusion of regional seas conventions/HELCOM
- Does not directly address the CAP
- Does not directly address ship emissions

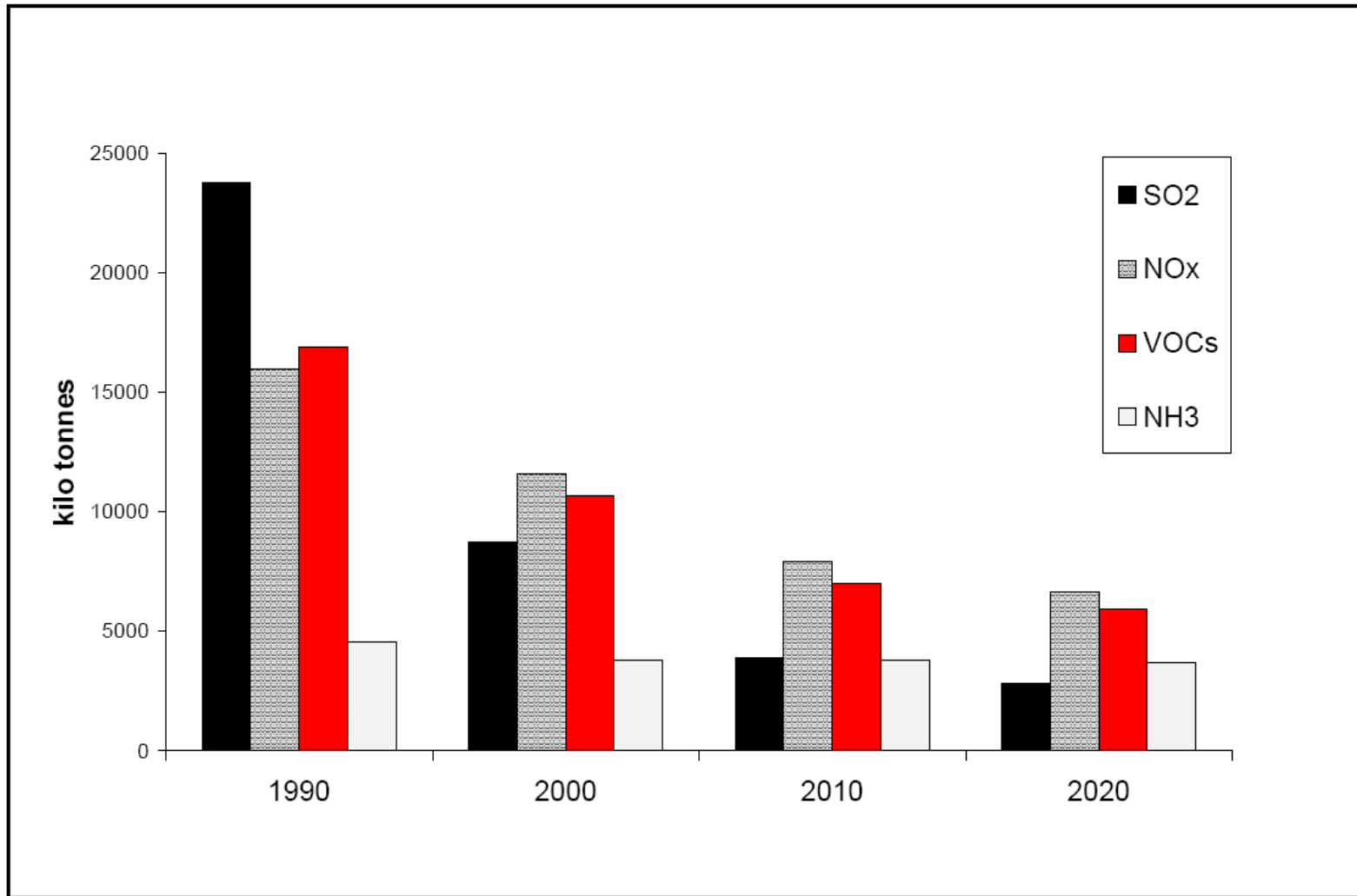
# Air pollution control policy

- *Directive on Large Combustion Plants* (1988)
- *National Emission Ceilings Directive* (2001)
- Thematic Strategy on air pollution (2005)

→ Primary concerns are acidification, ground-level-ozone, climate change

⇒ Eutrophication not a strong driving force

# EU-25 land-based emissions of NECD pollutants



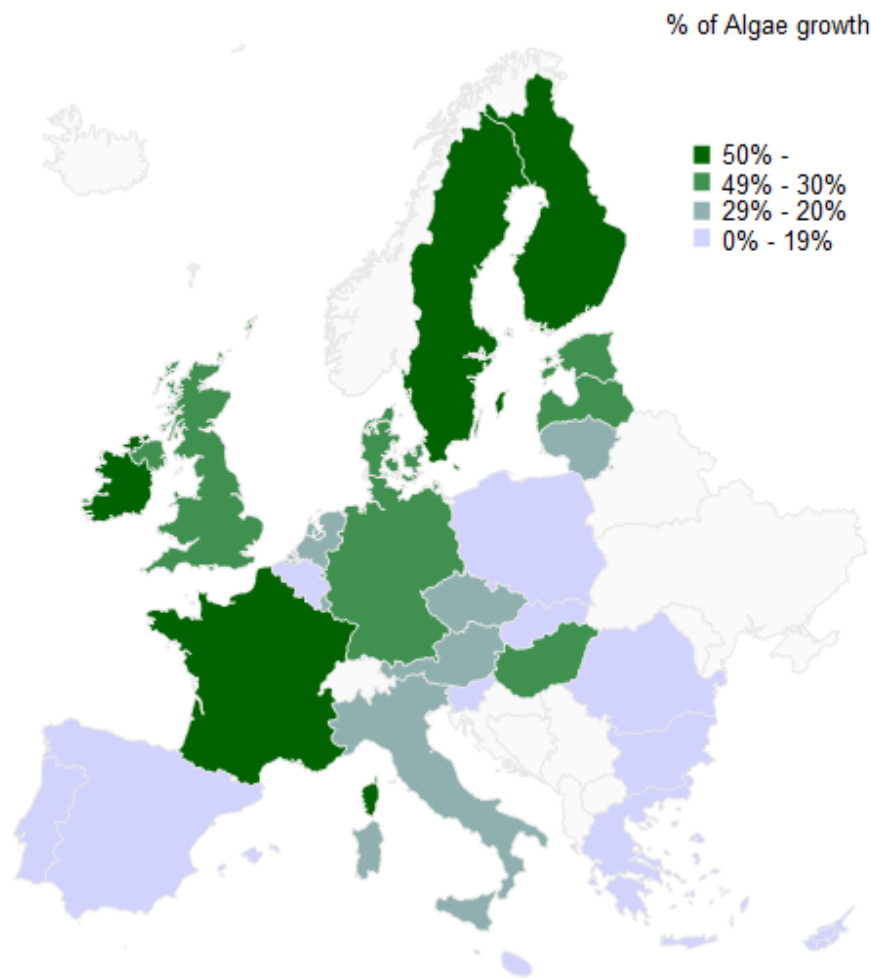
# General obstacles in EU-politics

- There is no specific European anti-eutrophication policy
- Any progress depends on how eutrophication is related to other, more urgent issues
- Tendency to develop uniform policies without taking regional situations into account

# European citizens' threat perceptions regarding algae growth

FI	78%
SE	65%
FR	54%
IE	53%
UK	49%
EE	45%
DK	40%
LV	37%
HU	35%
DE	32%
EU27	30%
LT	27%
CZ	25%
NL	23%
LU	23%
IT	20%
AT	20%
BE	18%
EL	18%
SK	14%
MT	14%
PT	12%
RO	12%
SI	11%
PL	10%
ES	9%
CY	8%
BG	7%

What are the main threats to the water environment in your country?

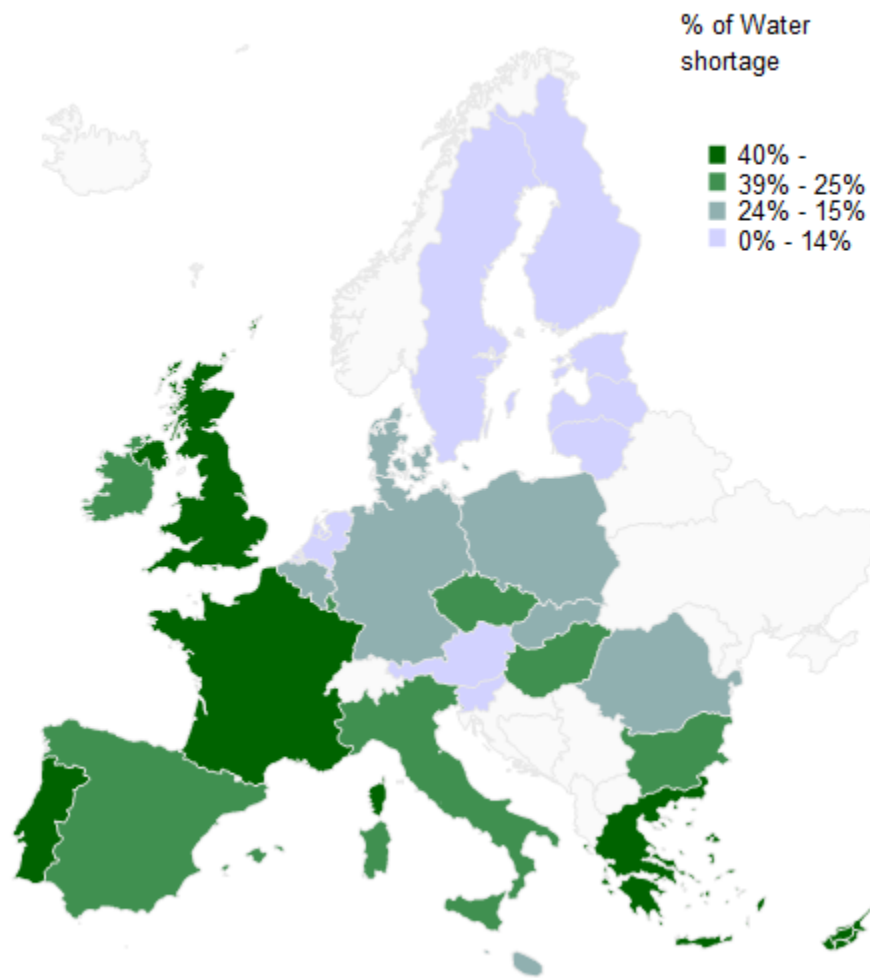


Source: European Commission 2006: Flash Eurobarometer on water,

# European citizens' threat perceptions regarding water shortage

CY	73%
UK	50%
FR	44%
PT	44%
EL	41%
BG	33%
ES	32%
IE	31%
IT	31%
EU27	30%
HU	29%
CZ	27%
LU	25%
MT	24%
PL	23%
DE	23%
SK	22%
RO	20%
DK	17%
BE	16%
AT	14%
SE	13%
SI	12%
EE	11%
LT	8%
FI	7%
NL	6%
LV	6%

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Source: European Commission 2006: Flash Eurobarometer on water,

# General obstacles in EU-politics

- There is no specific European anti-eutrophication policy
  - Any progress depends on how eutrophication is related to other, more urgent issues
- Tendency to develop uniform policies without taking regional situations into account
- Weak institutional position of environmental protection
- Separation of policy fields and in particular isolation of CAP decision making structures
  - prevents integrative approaches

# Structural advantages in EU-politics

- European Parliament has in many cases proved to give priority to environmental protection
  - Could be a great chance as EP has achieved co-decision power in CAP with Lisbon Treaty
- European Court of Justice likewise has often decided in favour of environmental protection
- Overall tendency towards integrated approaches in EU-politics



# The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea

- Has the potential to compensate for some of the weaknesses of the EU's political system by
  - improving cross-sectoral policy coordination and implementation
  - promoting the macroregional level and committing the EU to Helcom objectives
  - Encouraging member states to jointly influence Council decisions in the interest of Baltic Sea protection

**Thank you for your attention!**