

## **Baltic is in Poland, Baltic is in Europe**

### **BACKGROUND:**

“The Baltic is in Poland, The Baltic is in Europe” is a response to the 2007 Eko Unia campaign, “The Baltic is in Poland”. The 2007 campaign lasted only 10 months but had wide reaching impacts. It sparked public activity and diminished the prejudices between various interest groups, e.g. between fishermen and environmental organizations, and between fishermen and scientists. It was quickly apparent that there is a need for deeper partnerships on the Plan for the Baltic, which was collectively developed by the Baltic Sea Network, a network of Swedish, Finnish and Polish NGOs established in 2007 in Poland.

The Plan for the Baltic has pointed to a number of threats in Poland: lack of societal awareness and familiarity with such topics as water contamination and eutrophication, the Natura 2000 network or the species of fish found in the Baltic Sea. Many seaside visitors who buy pangas or butterfish believe that those fishes come from the Baltic Sea. This poor consumer awareness carries a long-term threat to the stability of Baltic fisheries. The accumulation of garbage in the Baltic Sea and its drainage basin remains a huge problem.

To save the Baltic, a European sea, it is essential to cross borders and cooperate on a supranational level. That is why Eko Unia has partnered with Nasza Ziemia Foundation and The Fisheries Secretariat and started “The Baltic is in Poland, The Baltic is in Europe” campaign.

### **AIMS:**

The goal of the project “The Baltic is in Poland, The Baltic is in Europe” is to help protect the environment and ensure sustainable growth of the Baltic Sea. The project aims to conduct informational and educational campaigns to highlight the Baltic Sea, to protect the waters of the Baltic Sea, to implement agri-environmental programme and to promote Baltic fish. The Nasza Ziemia Foundation will organize the international “Clean the Baltic” initiative in 2009 and 2010.

On the international level, Eko Unia will work with NGO’s from countries neighbouring the Baltic Sea. “The Partnership for the Baltic”, which is a broad network of Swedish, Finnish and Polish NGOs, will help implement the Project, the Marine Directive, HELCOM’s Baltic Sea Action Plans, the Natura 2000 plans, and eco-friendly tourism.

Collaboration with the various stakeholders will also be aimed at the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea, particularly the protection of fish such as the cod which has become an endangered species.

### **Objectives:**

The general objective is related to the promotion of public involvement and increasing the awareness and knowledge on the regional and local levels. The campaign activities are aligned with the following objectives:

- Drawing public attention to the need for maintaining a sustainable environment
- Creating opportunities for the involvement of citizens
- Promotion of partnerships between NGOs and local authorities

Meetings of the Partnership for the Baltic (various Baltic Sea interest groups) will help bring together target groups, leading to more balanced and more rational decisions concerning the required marine and coastal research (scientists), better understanding and adherence to the Common Fisheries Policy, exploitation of the sea in a manner consistent with the need to preserve its resources in the long term (fishermen), implementation of the mission, conservation of the environment and marine ecosystems, and building a position as mediators (NGOs), reconciling local development with nature conservation - the Natura 2000 network, environment conservation, and waste management (government).

The work will lead to a number of benefits

- The Baltic NGO Network – the project will develop and energize international cooperation, and improve the integration and increase the influence of environmental organizations on policies related to the Baltic Sea.
- Farmers will receive information about how to protect the environment and water resources in exchange for additional funds to improve their economic situation.
- Consumers (particularly housewives) will be encouraged to use smaller amounts of detergents, which will positively affect the condition of rivers and the Sea, as well as home budgets.

### **Planned Activities:**

During the project, three 2-day coordination meetings will be organized in various countries bordering the Baltic Sea. These will concern problems such as the destruction of habitats, Natura 2000, overfishing, eutrophication, tourist pressure. The “Baltic NGO Network” will communicate in the course of the project and, in case of breaking events on an international scale, will make its voice heard.

So far Eko Unia in collaboration with Nasza Ziemia Foundation and FISH, have carried out two workshops , [one in December, 2008](#) and another one [at the beginning of June of this year](#).

FISH has also organized a [3-day study trip](#) to Sweden for representatives of our various Polish partners (fishermen, local government, scientists, NGOs). The objective was to learn about the Swedish experiences in reconciling fisheries with the exploitation of fish to enable our Polish stakeholders to better plan the conservation of resources and the future of the fishing industry.