



Hundred million of support for research to protect the Baltic Sea

16 June 2010

The European Parliament has in its plenary sitting in Strasbourg today supported the European Council's compromise which will launch a new research programme to protect the Baltic Sea.

The new programme 'BONUS-169' will produce and implement 'fit-for-purpose' regulations, policies and management practices specifically tailored for the Baltic Sea region. In its work BONUS-169 will consider both the marine ecosystem and the socio-economic activities in the Baltic Sea area. Half of the funding comes from the EU Commission's Research Framework Programme and half from the national funding agencies in the Baltic Sea countries.

BONUS-169 builds on the already existing BONUS Plus Programme and has engaged through its research programme over one hundred research institutes and universities in nine Baltic Sea countries to date. These countries also form the member states of BONUS-169: Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Also scientists from the Russian Federation participate in the research projects.

'The decision made by the Parliament today is very encouraging for sustainable development of the region. BONUS-169 will allow us to run cross-regional, collaborative projects based on both the scientific excellence and their relevance for the protection of the Baltic Sea,' said Steering Committee member Fritz Köster from the Danish Agency of Science, Technology and Innovation, the participating funding agency from Denmark. *'Already now the ongoing 16 BONUS Plus projects have generated tens of proposals and modifications to Baltic Sea related policy and action plans.'*

In the coming year BONUS-169 will focus on building strong links across the wider communities and different sectors in the society within and between the Baltic Sea countries. These activities will also provide valuable guidance to development of the strategic research agenda of the programme. The BONUS-169 programme will also act as a model for the protection of the other regional seas in Europe – the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the North Sea.

'It is extremely important that – both intellectual and material – resources of the Baltic Sea science community are joined to support the protection of the Baltic Sea. In a core of BONUS-169 is long-term collaboration that supports the work of the Baltic Sea Environment Protection Commission HELCOM,' concluded Fritz Köster.

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Notes to editors

- **About EU and protection of regional seas.** In the recent years the state and future of the regional seas has become one of the main environmental concerns of the European Union. Four years ago the EU approved a broad integrated maritime policy which aims at guiding the societal activities into directions which minimize the pressures towards the sea and secure their good status and productivity also in the future. The importance of excellence in marine research and technology has been highlighted in several contexts as a cornerstone for the success of the maritime policy. For more information visit <http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/>
- **BONUS-169** is a Joint Baltic Sea Research Programme to be implemented under article 185 (former 169) of the EC Treaty. It has been prepared during the last six years as a joint effort by research funding organization in the Baltic Sea countries. The Danish participant in the funding cooperation is the Danish Agency of Science, Technology and Innovation. For more information visit www.bonusportal.org
- **HELCOM** is the governing body of the "Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area" - more usually known as the Helsinki Convention. It 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. For more information visit www.helcom.fi