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**Political Cooperation and International Environmental Governance
in the Baltic Sea Region after World War II**

Taavi Kelder

**Thesis submitted to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences at West Virginia
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

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ABSTRACT

Political Cooperation and International Environmental Governance in the Baltic Sea Region after World War II

Taavi Kelder

Today, global environmental problems have become one of the most important international issues. This Master's thesis is about international environmental and political cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region after World War II. The Baltic Sea is surrounded by nine states and the degradation of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea has become a common problem. However, international environmental cooperation depends on many political factors: financial support, international organizations, the attitude of states, international law and the status of environmental issues in the international arena. This thesis focuses on different forms of political cooperation which have influenced international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea area. These forms of political cooperation include that of the Cold War political situation, despite the division between the East and the West, increased cooperation after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Helsinki Commission and the European Union. International environmental cooperation needs an appropriate political environment where states around a sea have incentives and will to protect the environment. The Baltic Sea is a good example of international governance of a maritime environment.

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INTRODUCTION

The political map of the world where we live today is not composed only of nation-states dealing with their narrow national interests. The world has become much more global and international in political, environmental (global warming, maritime pollution) and economic terms. There are also regions where states in the same area, on the same coast or around the same sea have similar environmental problems. Geography and belonging to a certain region, international organization or environmental regime forces states to act in certain ways. However, there are different factors which influence cooperation among states in the region or regime: for example, the political situation, different economies or an unequal level of political development.

This Master's thesis is about political cooperation and international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea Region after World War II. Why is this subject important? Most of all, the Baltic Sea Region is a unique one. The Baltic Sea marine environment is an extremely sensitive, fragile and vulnerable ecosystem as the sea is a shallow, enclosed and brackish water basin. At the same time, the Baltic Sea is under severe stress from pollution and human activities, including industries and shipping. There were serious signs of the environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea already at the end of the 1960s.

On the other hand, the Baltic Sea is fragmented politically: there are nine states around the sea. Historically, the Baltic Sea area has long been a region of cooperation, shipping and trade. However, it has also been a region of conflicts and divisions, especially during the twentieth century, World War I, World War II, and the Cold War.

The Baltic Sea Region after World War II has been the scene of different security issues, power politics and environmental problems. This research is focused on environmental cooperation around the Baltic Sea, mainly since 1974 when the Helsinki Convention was signed. Environmental cooperation among states in the Baltic Sea Region is an important form of cooperation as the Baltic Sea is heavily polluted by shipping, urban waste, chemicals, toxic substances, agriculture and industries. But cooperation among states has also been influenced by different factors and a changing political climate, starting from the Cold War and ending with the European Union whereby eight states out of nine belong now in the Baltic Sea Region.

The first part of the thesis gives theoretical background regarding environmental issues and problems in the field of international relations, focusing on two aspects of global environmental policy: the Green theory and regime theory. On the one hand, states may have green thoughts and environmental-friendly policy, on the other hand, international environmental cooperation, especially as regards maritime environment, depends on how efficiently international environmental regimes (international organizations and groups of states with similar environmental problems) among states work. At the end of the first part, the methodology, hypothesis and research question(s) are also introduced. The general research question of the thesis is the following one: what have been the contributory factors of different forms of political cooperation to international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea region?

The second part of the thesis deals with empirical background: the political context after World War II, environmental governance since the 1970s and the role of the European Union in the Baltic Sea Region.

The third part, empirical analysis, focuses on two major international bodies as regards international environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region: the Helsinki Commission and the European Union. This part is divided into three sections: the Helsinki Commission during the Cold War, environmental cooperation after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the European Union's policy in the Baltic Sea area after the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 when Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland became full members and the Baltic Sea almost an internal sea of the European Union. In the conclusion, the main results of the empirical analysis of the Master's thesis are described.

1. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AS PART OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

This section of the thesis will focus on the role of ‘environment’ in the theory of international relations. The starting point of this section is how much theories of international relations pay attention to environmental issues and environmental cooperation among states. The current and previous level of knowledge on the topics of international environmental governance and international environmental regimes will help us to evaluate and understand the importance of environmental problems in international and regional (Baltic Sea) politics. Based on this knowledge of theoretical perspectives, it will be possible to analyze international environmental governance and the effectiveness of environmental protection in the Baltic Sea region after World War II.

1.1 Liberal Institutionalism and International Regimes

At the beginning of the twentieth century environmental problems in the world were not as significant and serious as at the end of the twentieth century. One of the features of environmental problems is that they are international and trans-national: they spread from one state to another, from one sea to another, or from one region to another. If an oil tanker sinks in the international waters, the pollution caused by the tanker may simultaneously affect coastlines and territorial waters of many states around the sea or ocean where the disaster occurred, thus

affecting also societies, tourism, and economies of many states. Regional or local environmental disasters can easily become international environmental problems. Environmental problems affect all states around the world. No state is an island unto itself. Therefore, environment is also an important aspect of international relations and politics, more today than in the past.

As regards the theory of international relations, one has to come to terms with the fact that thanks to environmental problems the world has entered a new era which is different from the nineteenth-century power politics which emphasized a balance of power. The oldest and most commonly adopted theory of international relations is realism: it is a tradition of analysis in international relations that emphasizes the way states pursue power politics and protect their own national interests.¹ According to the realist approach states act according to this type of “thinking” and do not pay too much attention to what were once considered to be secondary questions like environmental issues. However, realism can deal also with environmental issues, but based on the assumptions of realist tradition and state-centric worldviews where environment cannot be more than a secondary issue.

Realists argue that in the conditions of international anarchy states are always concerned foremost with their own security and interests, focusing on the ways in which other states may threaten their security. Because of this realists have always paid much less attention to global environmental change and other types of soft issues in world politics.

Rather than being optimistic concerning possibilities of international cooperation as are liberal-internationalists, realists have instead generated a research agenda in international relations theory which focuses on how global environmental change can produce interstate

¹ Jack Donnelly, “Realism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott Burchill et al. (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 29.

conflicts. For realists, environmental problems can only mean that the causes of insecurity have changed (or may change) from military affairs to environmental degradation, whereas the referent of security remains the same – the nation-state with its interests and security issues. For instance, based on the realist approach, environmental problems and environmental change (water scarcity, limited renewable resources, etc.) can lead to interstate wars and conflicts in the future.² Thus, realism does not pay attention to the ways how to avoid environmental problems, but rather how to come to terms with environmental problems, and how to deal with possible conflicts caused by environmental problems (disruption of the balance of power).

Liberalism in the field of theory of international relations takes a different approach when it comes to explaining and analyzing global and regional environmental problems and cooperation among states. As one of the great philosophical frameworks of the European Enlightenment era, liberalism traditionally focuses its attention on individual liberty, rights, political freedom, democratic traditions, equality, market capitalism and globalization.³ According to Daniel Green, liberal international relations theory was originally ideological, normative and prescriptive, focusing on the creation of an international organization, international cooperation, increasing interdependence, international law, world peace and simultaneous domestic and international democratic political orders.⁴

Liberalism is a theory of international relations where relationships between nation-states are determined by domestic politics, which ideally should be also democratic. Liberals believe that in the international arena various rights and liberties should be protected in the same way as

² Matthew Paterson, *Understanding Global Environmental Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 18-20.

³ Scott Burchill, "Liberalism," in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott Burchill et al. (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 55.

⁴ Daniel Green, "Liberal Imperialism as Global-governance Perspective," in *Contending Perspectives on Global Governance: Coherence, Contestation and World Order*, ed. Alice D. Ba and Matthew J. Hoffmann (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 235-236.

they are protected in a democratic state and society.⁵ One of the rights and liberties that a citizen and a state should stand for is people's right to live in a clean and healthy environment. Global environmental problems are an increasingly important issue today and they are leading or have already led the world into a new era where environmental problems are common. However, at least according to the liberal-institutionalist Peter Willetts, it is also naïve to hope that environmental values will always override basic interests, security, wealth, autonomy and status of states.⁶

Different international relation theories vary in the way they see the role of politics, states and institutions in the world when it comes to solving global environmental problems. Whereas realism says that global environmental problems are sources of conflicts (paying more attention to the conflict itself than environmental problem and solution of environmental crisis), according to liberal institutionalism global environmental change leads to increasing cooperation and interdependency among nation-states, and thus has led to the emergence of international environmental regimes since the 1970s.⁷ Liberal institutionalism pays more attention to the solutions of environmental problems than realism or neo-realism do. According to Matthew Paterson, social and political problems that transcend state boundaries and become international problems in the realm of sovereign states become in this way a collective problem and must be resolved through international cooperation or collaboration. The central devices of international cooperation since the 1970s are international regimes which explain largely the mechanism of

⁵Burchill, 81.

⁶ Peter Willetts, "Who Cares About the Environment?" in *The Environment and International Relations*, ed. John Vogler and Mark F. Imber (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 121.

⁷Paterson, 22.

international environmental politics and global economic politics from the aspects of liberal institutionalism.⁸

The study as well as the term of “international regime” emerged during the 1970s, first in the field of economics, offering a theoretical framework for analyzing economic and political governance at the international level, especially after the incapability and ineffectiveness of the United Nations and other organizations or states to deal with increasing international economic (and environmental) problems.⁹ On the other hand, the emergence of international regimes can be interpreted also as a response to regional integration in Europe which was inspired by the belief that conflicts between states would be reduced or avoided by creating economic and political frameworks among members of the same geographic region.¹⁰

One of the most important theoreticians of regime theory, Oran R. Young, defines international regimes in terms of institutional arrangements: sets of roles, rules, decision-making procedures, programs and relationships whose members are usually states, but may be also non-state actors and whose operations and actions center on specific issues and problems associated with global civil society. “International environmental regimes” are based on ecological criteria and sustainability, trying to manage and contain international environmental problems.¹¹ Examples of international environmental regimes include the Antarctic Treaty System, different regional seas arrangements, the Great Lakes water quality regime in the North America, the

⁸Paterson, 12.

⁹ Oran R. Young, “Regime Theory and the Quest for Global Governance,” in *Contending Perspectives on Global Governance: Coherence, Contestation and World Order*, ed. Alice D. Ba and Matthew J. Hoffmann (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 88.

¹⁰Burchill, 64.

¹¹ Oran R. Young, *Governance in World Affairs* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 10-13, 120.

North Sea management regime and the regime for the protection of the stratospheric ozone layer.¹²

At the beginning of the process of launching contemporary environmental regimes to deal with the transnational and maritime pollution, global warming and sustainable development, the frameworks of environmental regimes had little political and academic support. However, they gained more support during the 1980s and 1990s when liberal institutionalism as a discipline of international relations was formed in a response to the new course in the international relations theories and to a new mindset in global politics where environmental regimes received more support and attention. Liberal institutionalism sorted out international cooperation as a central determinant in global environmental governance and sustainable development.¹³

Liberal institutionalism emphasizes the role of cooperation among states in maintaining regularity and predictability in international politics: the world is stabilized by regimes which constrain state behavior and conform expectations of each state to areas of shared interest.¹⁴ As regards environmental threats and problems caused by human impact on nature, environment and climate, one of the shared interests of states is to limit environmental degradation and avoid further international environmental problems.

As a result of the emergence of international regimes, a global community, institutionalization, globalization, rising environmental problems and the decline of the dominant actors in the world, regime theory arose as a possible solution to the puzzle of global governance in the new era. According to regime theory defined by Oran B. Young, states in the international

¹²Ibid, 115.

¹³John Vogler and Mark F. Imber, editors, *The Environment and International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 3-7.

¹⁴Burchill, 65.

system are defined as utility-maximizing actors and they engage in interactive decision-making processes, regime formation and international cooperation in which there are mutual benefits regarding cooperation (states are interested in the success of the regimes) and incentives for the participants. States may also choose non-cooperative strategies if necessary, but only when there is no central international authority or government as such.¹⁵

According to Paterson, regimes are not the same as specific agreements, particular international organizations or international institutions. Regimes are narrower in their scope and can be defined as a subset of international institutions with specific principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures. Regimes are important because they are able to change the behavior of states, and influence interstate collaboration, for example, as a result of specific global environmental problems (maritime pollution, climate change, carbon dioxide emissions). However, regimes do not force states, but rather alter incentives facing states and thus play a profound role in transforming states' perceptions of their interests.¹⁶

According to Oran R. Young, regime theory is based on the assumption that international cooperation among states is successful only when states are able to form successful international regimes – international arrangements or sets of roles, rules and relationships. The main question in regime theory is: what are the causes of successes or failures in the processes of forming and maintaining international regimes among states in the world. For regime theorists, the formation of international regimes can be explained by emphasizing the role of power, interests or knowledge. Those theoreticians who explain the formation of international regimes by emphasizing power explain the regime as a network where a dominant actor plays the key role

¹⁵ Oran R. Young, *Governance in World Affairs* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 189-190, 120.

¹⁶ Paterson, 12-13.

by choosing to exert its influence to induce others to agree to cooperation. Those who highlight the interests of states in the process of the formation of international regimes interpret the process of regime formation rather as a bargaining process where regimes form only when states get benefits from striking a bargain. Those who emphasize the role of knowledge as a key factor in the formation of regimes see discourses and epistemic communities as key elements in collective action among states.¹⁷

However, according to Young, international regime formation is not a purpose in itself, but is formed to solve a problem. There is the continuous highly structured situation similar to a prisoner's dilemma where states either choose cooperative strategy or not, the problems are solved through the strategy or not, the regimes are formed or not, etc.¹⁸ Regimes are not always successfully formed and maintained, and obviously they do not always solve all the problems in the world. However, regimes are formed to enhance trust, order, stability and continuity; they develop habits of cooperation, monitoring and sanctioning defectors in the ungoverned and decentralized world.¹⁹

In sum, international regimes are based on the interests and incentives of the participants (states) rather than power-based frameworks and gains (proposed by international relations theories of realism and neo-realism). According to Robyn Eckersley, understanding the broader constellation of interests associated with international regimes helps us to understand also the

¹⁷ Oran R. Young, *Governance in World Affairs* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 191.

¹⁸ Young, 195.

¹⁹ Burchill, 65.

effectiveness of international regimes.²⁰ However, regime theory alone cannot be the basis of analysis of international environmental governance.

1.2 Green Theory in International Relations

After World War II, towards the end of the twentieth century, environmental protection emerged as an additional and subsidiary task of the Western welfare states. Environmental issues also became international political problems which needed solutions, although obviously it was not yet a primary task for states.²¹ However, as time went by, environmental problems became everyday political problems rather than marginal ones, as they had been before the Second World War. In the beginning, environmental awareness was marked by the first wave of environmentalism and international environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s which helped to push environmental issues from the margins to the mainstream of public policy agendas.²² For instance, the term “deep ecology” was coined by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess which opposed earlier, anthropocentric “shallow” ecology. According to the principle of “deep ecology”, no one human being or state is given legal or moral dominion over the rest of

²⁰ Robyn Eckersley, *The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004), 28-29.

²¹ Eckersley, 79.

²² Steven Bernstein and Maria Ivanova, “Institutional Fragmentation and Normative Compromise in Global Environmental Governance,” in *Global Liberalism and Political Order*, ed. Steven Bernstein and Louis W. Pauly (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 164.

nature.²³ Also, the term “social ecology” was coined by Murray Bookchin, which suggested that environmental degradation is a product of relationships of domination and exploitation of nature by human beings.²⁴

As regards the first international environmental problems, the United States of America played the vital and crucial role for the prospects of international cooperation, for instance in the case of Montreal Protocol in 1987, being able to take an effective lead, whereas more recently the United States have failed in assuming the leadership of climate change and biodiversity policy.²⁵ On the one hand, international environmental problems have become much severe, on the other hand there are also other problems in the world (wars, poverty).

According to Paterson, the problem is that political decisions concerning global climate change are deeply imbedded in the broader reproduction of state, political-economic and scientific-technological power structures, because of which the neutrality of political decision-making cannot always be presumed.²⁶

As a result of the emergence of international environmental regimes and decline of dominant powers in the world, international relations theories also have to come to terms with the changed situation. According to Peter Willetts, a different research programme and theory and a positivist approach for an alternative global international system paradigm are needed.²⁷

²³ Eric Laferriere and Peter J. Stoett, *International Relations Theory and Ecological Thought* (London: Routledge, 1999), 60.

²⁴ Laferriere and Stoett, 63.

²⁵ Robert L. Paarlberg, “Lapsed Leadership: U.S. International Environmental Policy Since Rio,” in *The Global Environment: Institutions, Law, and Policy*, ed. Norman J. Vig and Regina S. Axelrod (Washington, D.C.: A Division of Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1999), 245.

²⁶ Paterson, 9.

²⁷ Willetts, 135.

Liberal institutionalism and regime theory promote international regimes in solving the environmental problems in the world. However, according to many scholars, global environmental regimes have not fulfilled the task of responding adequately to the global environmental problems for which they originally were designed.²⁸ The problem with current international cooperation in regard to the environment is that international environmental regimes are bureaucratic and ineffective. A major overhaul of current international environmental regimes should be undertaken in order to overcome the fragmentation of the current structure of environmental governance and establish an authoritative international environmental body “*with a first-rate staff, a reputation for analytical rigor, and the capacity to take on tasks such as dispute resolution.*”²⁹

Regarding theories of international relations discussed thus far, while liberal institutionalism, neo-liberalism, neo-realism and even realism more or less address and deal with international environmental problems (international environmental regimes, organizations and institutions) and environmental politics, none of them provide a thorough explanation of how and why international environmental problems emerge and how they can be solved in international politics.

Green theory, a more recent theory in international relations, is specifically focused on environmental protection, the emergence of environmental problems and the human impact on environment in the contemporary international political context. According to Paterson, the defining characteristics of Green theory as a competing theory in international relations (side by side with realism, liberalism and liberal institutionalism) is that it focuses mainly on the role of

²⁸Bernstein and Ivanova, 170.

²⁹Bernstein and Ivanova, 179.

anthropocentric ethics in reducing nature and the environment to their economic value alone for human beings and states, and on the questions of limits to growth of human societies.³⁰

The important question as regards Green political theory in international relations is: why is Green theory needed at all? While the previous theories of international relations had been sufficient for studying the system of international relations which dominated before World War II or before the end of the Cold War, they cannot be sufficient for analyzing environmental issues as a new and increasing subject in politics. Now, as environmental degradation is inevitable in many parts of the world, based on the literature of Green political theory, the human impact on ecosystems is the main reason of environmental degradation, and the same theories which focused on the power politics and international system which have caused environmental degradation are no longer sufficient to deal with problems caused by nation-states. Moreover, the state-centric framework of realism cannot satisfactorily explain how international law is observed by most states most of the time and why basic environmental cooperation between states occurs routinely.³¹

According to Eckersley, Green international relations theory is by nature critical, problem-oriented, interdisciplinary, and normative, promoting environmental justice and sustainable patterns of development.³²

Paterson refers to three major authors in the contemporary literature of Green political theory in international relations: Robyn Eckersley, Robert Goodin, and Andrew Dobson. According to Eckersley, the defining characteristic of Green political theory in international

³⁰Paterson, 35.

³¹Eckersley, 28.

³² Robyn Eckersley, "Green Theory," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 255, http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199298334/dunne_chap13.pdf (Accessed 29 March 2012).

relations is Ecocentrism which is a view that opposes to anthropocentrism (which leads to environmental degradation rather than environmental protection) and says that the world is composed of interrelationships, that all entities are embedded in ecological relationships, and that there is no rigid distinction between human beings (or states in international relations) and the rest of the nature.³³

According to Robyn Eckersley, one has to revalue the role, function and power of states in environmental issues and environmental politics. Although the political autonomy of states is widely believed to be in decline, states possess a monopoly of control over the means of coercion; accordingly, the coercive arm of states can be used to protect the environment.³⁴ At the same time, states should pay less attention to pursuit of national security as military training, weapons production and armed conflicts can also be major causes of ecological degradation in the world.³⁵

The views of Robert Goodin in Green political theory are based on ethics and values ('Green theory of value') which are defining characteristics and at the center of Green political theory. According to Paterson, Goodin's formulation of Green political theory is highly problematic because he, unlike Eckersley who has a holistic view of ecocentrism, emphasizes a distinction between natural (non-human) nature and artificial (human) environment and does not argue so much why the environment is being destroyed by humans. Andrew Dobson's view of Green political theory is based on the 'limits of growth' argument; based on that argument the exponential economic growth and industrialization are the root causes of environmental degradation and crisis in the world. Economic growth has produced a situation where the world

³³ Paterson, 36-37.

³⁴ Robyn Eckersley, *The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004), 7.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 25.

is running out of natural resources and the environment does not have absorptive capacity to assimilate the waste and pollution caused by industrialization and economic growth. Based on this Green political theory, the economic and population growth of human societies is the reason for environmental crises in the world and therefore, human societies may experience collapse in the future.³⁶

Green political theory tries to analyze and critically assess world politics and the international relations theories which have been dominant before the current environmental crisis. International politics which have led to environmental crisis cannot be supported or maintained if the goal of international system is to save or protect the environment. Paterson's argument is that global environmental governance and environmental problems should be interpreted as phenomena inside the logics of interrelated power structures of the state system, capitalism, scientific knowledge and patriarchy. According to Paterson, these four basic power structures have caused the environmental degradation and in order to solve or come to terms with environmental problems, one should evaluate and critically estimate these power structures.³⁷

According to Paterson, scientific knowledge should be regarded as an underlying structural cause of environmental problems for two reasons. First, Paterson argues that modern science was founded on the assumption that humans are separated from the rest of natural world and thus dominate over the environment, which accordingly has led to anti-ecological attitudes and practices as nature is regarded as an object for human instrumental use.³⁸ The second argument of Paterson is that scientific knowledge, as knowledge of particular scientific elites, has taken away control over the environment from individuals and communities who would be

³⁶ Paterson, 36-38.

³⁷ Paterson, 40.

³⁸ Paterson, 50.

more interested in sustainable management of environments than modern states and modern scientific elites.³⁹

Green political theory criticizes also the basic components and units of international systems which are the focus of previous, traditional international relations theories. On the one hand, Green political theory is against the state-centric worldview. According to Paterson, state-building, state systems and state elites have systematically promoted accumulation, in this way producing environmental change as a product of their internal operation.⁴⁰ On the other hand, Green theory emphasizes the role of nation-states, since states, once they act collectively, have the capacity to limit ecological problems (global warming, nuclear waste) and the environmentally harmful consequences of capitalism.⁴¹

However, international relations theories like realism and neo-liberalism, or liberal institutionalism, do not pay attention to environmental issues as the most important component of international relations and world politics. For example, liberal institutionalism focuses on how international regimes are maintained, formed and how they coordinate the behavior of states in mutually beneficial ways.⁴² Therefore Green political theory focuses on environmental issues as major international problems caused by state political systems and claims industrialism – the cause of environmental degradation – to be overriding feature common to both capitalism and communism.⁴³

Green theory is becoming more important in the field of international relations, as the theory is based on the problems states are facing today, not only explaining the historical

³⁹Paterson, 51.

⁴⁰ Paterson, 43-45.

⁴¹ Eckersley, 7-8.

⁴²Paterson, 13.

⁴³ Andrew Dobson, *Green Political Thought* (London: Routledge, 2000), 29.

developments of the previous state system (balance of power, formation of international regimes or interdependence). According to theoreticians Eric Laferriere and Peter J. Stoett, the era of environmental problems and globalization means that it is an appropriate time to also add ecological thought and Green political theory to the wide scope of international relations scholarship in order to understand the relationship between the contemporary political order and ecological crisis.⁴⁴

1.3 Methodology

Green political theory and regime theory are going to be the basis for my analysis of international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea region after World War II. Both theories have a common issue they are dealing with: environment. Green theory looks at international politics and political cooperation from the perspective of environmental problems and Green ideas. Regime theory, on the other hand, tries to look at international political cooperation from the perspective of how international environmental regimes and forms of international environmental cooperation (institutions, arrangements, and agreements) among states work. Therefore together, these two theories form a framework which helps to evaluate the effectiveness of international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea region. How much international cooperation has there been based on Green views? How effective are international environmental regime(s)? These questions are also the starting point for empirical analysis in this

⁴⁴Laferriere and Stoett, 165.

research. Also, how realistic are prospects for solving transnational environmental problems in the current world, asks Oran B. Young in the book “Governance in World Affairs”.⁴⁵ The same question can be asked about the Baltic Sea in the context of the European Union and international cooperation: the states are dealing with their own national interests, but what motivates them to solve international environmental problems?

According to Young, the effectiveness of international environmental regimes is based on an evaluation of how regimes solve environmental problems, or to what extent regime sare able to avoid further degradation of the environment without solving the problem.⁴⁶ According to Young, international regimes arise to solve environmental problems. However, it is hard to say whether an environmental regime has failed or not only based on whether a problem is absolutely solved, but it is possible to find out which factors lead to the further degradation of environment and which factors help an environmental regime become more effective in the future. According to Young, an environmental problem can grow even more severe in the absence of an international environmental regime.⁴⁷ Accordingly, the Baltic Sea could be in much worse condition in the absence of the European Union which may be important to maintain environmental regimes. Young emphasizes that the core of regime theory is that states have their motives and mutual benefits derived from international regimes.⁴⁸ The European Union and its regulations can be a reason to take part in environmental cooperation.

In sum, based on regime theory there are regimes and institutions which matter in the politics of contemporary world. In the Baltic Sea region, one cannot ignore the importance of the

⁴⁵Oran B. Young *Governance in World Affairs* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 108.

⁴⁶Ibid, 109.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid, 190.

European Union, the Helsinki Commission, international organizations, and other forms of cooperation among states. During the Cold War and immediately thereafter, cooperation among states in the Baltic Sea region was less effective than it is now, after the enlargement of the European Union in 1995 and 2004. However, during the past four decades the development of international environmental regimes in the Baltic Sea region has been influenced by different factors: foreign policies, economy, security, civil society, and democratization. International environmental protection of the Baltic Sea has been influenced by environmental regimes.

How can an environmental regime be more effective based on Green theory? Green theory emphasizes the role of nature and environment in international relations and human societies. On the other hand, green theory emphasizes also networks in the political space, focusing rather on cooperation than the nation-state-centric worldview.⁴⁹

How does political cooperation help to protect the environment? What are the political causes of the environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea? Taking into account the green political theoreticians' arguments how environmental and ecological problems can be solved in the broader international level, it is also more understandable why and how the environmental governance in the Baltic Sea region is in the condition that it is now (what are the reasons of eutrophication, high level of hazardous substances and problems with wastewater treatment), and how this environmental cooperation can be increased and made more effective in the future. Or, why the environmental institutional governance cannot be effective at all in the region based on the current environmental regimes and low or insufficient level of political cooperation.

⁴⁹Paterson, 39.

The research question of the thesis is: what are the contributory factors of different forms of political cooperation to international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea region? The periods of time on which the research will focus are: 1) the period before the collapse of the Soviet Union (after World War II until 1991) and the period after the fall of the Iron Curtain and collapse of the Soviet Union. These periods are comparable in terms of Europeanization, democratization, economic growth and the enlargement of the European Union. The process of joining the European Union started in the Baltic Sea region after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The expanded research questions are: what are more specifically these different forms and institutions of political cooperation which are contributing factors to the international environmental governance of the Baltic Sea region, and how did these forms of political cooperation and institutions come into existence after World War II? For example, international and intergovernmental organizations which deal with the environmental protection of the Baltic Sea have always been influenced by the political climate in the Baltic Sea region. For example, one could assume that the Helsinki Commission was influenced by the existence of the Soviet Union (or Iron Curtain, and East-West division) and is influenced by the European Union (the enlargement of the EU, the EU strategies, research funding, etc.). The effects of the European Union on the environmental governance and cooperation in the Baltic Sea region is an important issue, especially if we take into account the period before the collapse of the Soviet Union and the period after the enlargement of the European Union. For example, while the European Union is important for international environmental cooperation, the environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea obviously did not also stop after the collapse of the Soviet Union and after the enlargement of the European Union. However, the importance of the Helsinki Commission as an

intergovernmental organization, side by side with the environmental awareness, has increased after the enlargement of the European Union in the Baltic Sea region.

But international environmental governance is influenced also by other factors, such as economic cooperation, the EU-Russia relations, bilateral and multilateral agreements (Nord Stream gas pipeline). For instance, cooperation between the European Union and Russia can significantly influence international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea region. Russia, in the context of the European Union-Russia relations after the enlargement of the European Union, is not dealing with the nation-states in the Baltic Sea region (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, etc.), but with the European Union as a much larger and more powerful political entity. On the other hand, the European Union has become one of the most important factors and actors in the protection of the Baltic Sea also in regards to the relationships between states inside the European Union: states which are part of the European Union have to play by the rules of the European Union.

The variables of the current research are international environmental cooperation and the factors which have influenced it in the Baltic Sea region. The dependent variable is international environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. The independent variables are factors which influence or have influenced international environmental governance, including different forms and institutions of political cooperation, for example – the European Union, cooperation between the European Union and Russia, the Helsinki Commission and other international organizations, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), scientific community, agreements between nation-states, etc.

The hypothesis of the thesis is that the protection of the international environment and international environmental cooperation depends on the effectiveness of the framework of international political cooperation. For example, this framework can be based the European Union. In this case, it is necessary to analyze the European strategies towards the Baltic Sea (the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the European Union's Baltic Sea Region programme 2007-2013, etc.). On the other hand, the framework can be based on the intergovernmental organizations which aim at protecting the environment of the Baltic Sea (the Helsinki Commission). In that case, the thesis will analyze the documents of Helsinki Commissions (the Helsinki Convention, HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan). Also, based on literature and documents which evaluate the role of the Helsinki Commission before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a critical assessment of the work of the Helsinki Commission is needed. Obviously, international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea region has not been a success story.

In sum, international environmental cooperation does not depend only on attitude of nation-states towards the environment, although this may be one of the reasons why some states have more Green politics than do others. But in spite of the fact that one could be optimistic and hope that there are in a democratic world-order and according to liberal institutionalism more states which have more environmental-friendly domestic and foreign policy than others, the protection of the Baltic Sea as a transnational water basin is much more complicated issue. States have also other interests than the environment as do have people in their societies. However, according to Paterson, other goals of states have been disrupted by global environmental problems.⁵⁰ This can be one of the reasons why states in the contemporary world are more

⁵⁰Paterson, 15.

willing to cooperate than confront each other, compared to the era of the Cold War. While there may be a general reason why states around the Baltic Sea protect the environment (at the end of the day, everybody wants to live in a clean environment), the current thesis will focus on more specific factors which influence states in the Baltic Sea region to cooperate in order to protect the environment of the Baltic Sea.

2. EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

At the beginning of the Cold War, international environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region was out of the question: post-war states around the Baltic Sea were not able to cooperate in the field of environmental issues – although there were already signs of environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea. However, during the 1960s international cooperation on environmental issues became used to foster trust between countries that belonged to opposing military alliances in the Baltic Sea region.⁵¹ Later on, the Helsinki Commission (since 1970s) and the European Union (after enlargements in 1995 and 2004) have been the main engines of international environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.

This chapter focuses on the background of the international environmental and political cooperation in the Baltic Sea region since World War II.

The chapter is divided into three parts: the first part is dealing with political context of the Baltic Sea region after World War II which gives an overview of the early developments in the political and environmental cooperation in the Northern Europe.

The second part of this section is dealing with international environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. The Helsinki Convention was the first important form of international environmental cooperation during the Cold War.

⁵¹TuomasRäsänen&SimoLaakkonen, “Institutionalization of an International Environmental Policy Regime: The Helsinki Convention, Finland and the Cold War,” in *Governing a Common Sea: Environmental Policies in the Baltic Sea Region*, ed. Marko Joas, DetlefJahn& Kristine Kern (London, Sterling: Earthscan, 2008), 46.

The third part of this section is dealing with the European Union and The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The European Union is playing a vital part also in the work of the Helsinki Commission after the EU enlargements as eight out of nine contracting parties of the Helsinki Commission belong now to the European Union.

2.1 The Baltic Sea Region after World War II: Political Context

According to a book written by Dr. Alfred Bilmanis and published in 1945 in Washington D.C., with the title “Baltic Essays”, the Baltic Sea has a certain analogy with the Mediterranean Sea as it separates and unites simultaneously nine riparian countries – Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.⁵² While describing the Baltic Sea, Bilmanis mentions that because of its geographical position, the Baltic Sea lies in the Northern Europe: “The distance between Kiel and Haparanda, the Swedish port at the most north-eastern point of the Baltic sea, is roughly 1000 miles, whereas the latitudinal distance across the Baltic Sea, from east to west, is about 275 miles. To the north lies the Gulf of Bothnia, and to the north-east the Gulf of Finland. To the east extends the large shallow Gulf of Riga, so called after Latvia’s capital.”⁵³

However, in 1945 the further situation and destiny of the Baltic Sea was determined rather by political East-West division than by geographical peculiarities or the historical identity

⁵² Alfred Bilmanis, *Baltic Essays* (Washington D.C.: Latvian Legation, 1945), 3.

⁵³ Bilmanis, 3.

of the Baltic Sea as a sea in the North. Bilmanis continues: “The Baltic peoples, who during the middle ages and the Renaissance were the prospective victims of the policy of larger states, came of age at last and assumed their own life as independent nations. The newly established Baltic States became economically self-supporting, the Baltic Sea free, and the Baltic ports were more efficiently operated than ever before. This situation could have been made lasting. But instead of agreeing to maintain the neutral bridge between them, Germany and Russia, in 1939, returned to power politics.”⁵⁴

The Baltic Sea became a divided sea during and after World War II. As the collapse and division of Germany led to a new political situation in Europe, almost the entire postwar Baltic Sea region fell under the dominance of Russian power which had for centuries struggled to gain a presence in the Baltic Sea region.⁵⁵ Increased Soviet military presence in the Baltic Sea became unavoidable. The Danish island of Bornholm was liberated by Russian troops, Soviet rule was established in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Soviet Union dominated the Allied Control Commission in Finland where the Soviet Union maintained also a military base until 1955, and the Soviet Union wrangled with the Swedish government over the delineation of territorial waters.⁵⁶

One cannot ignore or undervalue the importance of the Soviet impact on the Baltic Sea region after World War II. After World War II, the Soviet bloc stretched from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea and for almost a half a century the states under Soviet hegemony were removed from full membership in the European community where they had belonged before World War

⁵⁴Bilmanis, 11.

⁵⁵ David Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772-1993: Europe's Northern Periphery in an Age of Change* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 372.

⁵⁶Kirby, 373.

II. A 'new Eastern Europe' was formed in the Baltic Sea region, regardless the previous historical evolution of the states on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. The continuous process of Soviet remodeling of the political, social and economic structures took place on the eastern shore.⁵⁷

One of the crucial results due to the division of the Baltic Sea after World War II was that the two western neutral countries, Finland and Sweden, became the leaders in intergovernmental negotiations on political cooperation in the Baltic Sea area without provoking political conflicts between the Great Powers. In late 1960s, Sweden took the first initiative by advocating an agreement to protect the Baltic Sea from oil discharges from ships which, however, resulted in no international agreement.⁵⁸

The underlying problem in the Baltic Sea region was the division of Germany as NATO countries refused to sign intergovernmental agreements in which the German Democratic Republic was a contracting party.⁵⁹

The role of Finland in promoting international cooperation, stabilization and peacemaking among the states of the Baltic Sea became crucial during the Cold War. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), proposed by the Soviet Union, was regarded as the most important Finnish foreign policy achievement at the time.⁶⁰

The years after World War II were the years of economic growth, economic transformation, rise of industrial output, and foundation of modern welfare states in Finland,

⁵⁷Mieczyslaw B. Biskupski, *The History of Poland* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), 125.

⁵⁸Räsänen and Laakkonen, 46.

⁵⁹Räsänen and Laakkonen, 47.

⁶⁰Räsänen and Laakkonen, 48 .

Sweden and Denmark. For example, in Finland World War II was decisive in reshaping society's attitude towards welfare provision – the state-sponsored welfare system was established.⁶¹

Different was the post-war experience in the newly formed socialist states of the Baltic Sea region. In the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and Poland, post-war economics and politics were characterized by forced deportations, collectivization (collective farms and state farms) and the procurement policies of the Stalinist regime.⁶² According to David Kirby, collectivization was a social and economic disaster where pragmatic economic considerations mattered less than the political imperatives of the Soviet Union.⁶³

According to Clive Archer, during the Cold War period, the whole Baltic Sea region was enmeshed in the realist and heavily state-oriented understanding of security: the overriding security concern was the interests of the Soviet Union.⁶⁴

The collapse of the Soviet Union finally brought change to the Baltic Sea region. According to Archer, in the 1990s, the Baltic Sea region states recognized that their security situation had changed as the fear of bipolar conflict in Europe had almost disappeared and new threats and problems were on the way: ethnic issues, migration, criminality (international crime), threats to the environment (increasing threat as the new capitalist countries in Eastern Europe were experiencing economic growth), the spread of disease (open borders).⁶⁵ In addition, the impact of the Cold War did not disappear immediately: the armed forces, weaponry, military basis, etc.

⁶¹Kirby, 385.

⁶²Kirby, 416.

⁶³ Kirby, 411-412.

⁶⁴ Clive Archer, "Regional Security, the War on Terrorism and the Dual Enlargements," in *Remaking Europe in the Margins: Northern Europe after the Enlargements*, ed. Christopher S. Browning (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 17.

⁶⁵Archer, 19.

However, after the Cold War the Baltic Sea region developed a highly dynamic transnational cooperation and new networks emerged in the area, for example the Union of Baltic Cities, regional multi-stakeholder approaches like Baltic 21, etc. The Baltic Sea region appeared to be a fertile ground for transnational networks and international cooperation.⁶⁶

During the 1990s, environmental issues were often sidelined by more immediate economic and geopolitical concerns on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea (Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania).⁶⁷ Obviously entry into the Euro-Atlantic community was a natural progression for the states on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea.⁶⁸ The Baltic States and Poland chose to pursue the foreign policy goal of full and speedy integration into the European Union and NATO and in 2004 this goal was achieved.⁶⁹ At the same time, all the Baltic States and Poland also had the goal to seek a withdrawal from Russia's sphere of influence.⁷⁰

After the end of the Cold War, increasing cooperation among the states in the Baltic Sea Region occurred on many levels: in September 1991, the Union of the Baltic Cities was founded in Gdansk, Poland by 32 cities from ten countries around the Baltic Sea: this network was formed as a tool for the activities and interests of its members. Transnational urban policy focused on different issues, including environment, health and social affairs, education, society, tourism, transportation, business, culture, sports, and urban planning.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Marko Joas, Detlef Jahn and Kristine Kern, *Governing a Common Sea: Environmental Policies in the Baltic Sea Region* (London: Earthscan, 2008), 7.

⁶⁷ David J. Galbreath, Ainius Lašas and Jeremy W. Lamoreaux, *Continuity and Change in the Baltic Sea Region: Comparing Foreign Policies* (Amsterdam – New York: Editions Rodopi B. V., 2008), 114.

⁶⁸ Galbreath et al, 37.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 1.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 34.

⁷¹ Kristine Kern and Tina Löffelsend, "Governance Beyond the Nation State: Transnationalization and Europeanization of the Baltic Sea Region," in *Governing a Common Sea*, 129-130.

2.2 Environmental Governance in the Baltic Sea Region after World War II

The environmental protection of the Baltic Sea became an important political issue for the Baltic Sea Region after World War II. As a result of pollution, increased marine traffic and general environmental awareness, scientists started to evaluate the Baltic Sea already by the 1970s as one of the most polluted seas in the world.⁷²

According to Juha Beurling, the health of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea has been seriously damaged already since the 1960s as a result of untreated human waste, various toxic substances and materials, metal (especially lead), urban pollution, industrial water, agricultural run-off (fertilizers) and wastewater from pulp-and-paper industries.⁷³

The degradation of the environmental status of the Baltic Sea during the late 20th century had many causes: “The most popular hypothesis starts from the assumption that economic performance causes environmental problems and increasing economic performance boosts environmental degradation (*prosperity pollution*).”⁷⁴

As a result, environmental issues were placed on governmental domestic political agendas in Sweden, Finland and Denmark during the 1960s and 1970s. As there was no international framework or agreement, the main solutions were national point-source pollution abatement. However, as a result of the cross-border character of pollution in the Baltic Sea, also some treaty mechanisms and (international and local) control institutions were also created in the

⁷²Räsänen and Laakkonen, 43-44.

⁷³Juha Beurling, “The Baltic Sea – The Most Polluted Sea Area in the World,” *Baltic Rim Economies* (2006), 10.

⁷⁴DetlefJahn and Kati Kuitto, “Environmental Pollution and Economic Performance in the Baltic Sea Region,” in *Governing a Common Sea*, 19.

framework of United Nations already before the 1980s.⁷⁵ Also, in 1968 Finland and the Soviet Union agreed on bilateral scientific and technological cooperation relating to the Gulf of Finland, and a few years later Sweden and the Soviet Union engaged in similar bilateral research cooperation.⁷⁶

Increased regional and international environmental cooperation among states in the Baltic Sea area led finally to the formation of Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, also called the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM). The Helsinki Commission, as one of the most important regional environmental organizations now in the Baltic Sea region, is the governing body of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, which was signed in Helsinki on the 22nd of March 1974.⁷⁷

The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, widely known as the Helsinki Convention, is a legally binding international treaty.⁷⁸ At the time it was signed, it was a pathfinder in the international environmental policy, in the protection of the marine environments and in Baltic Sea politics generally in many ways. The Helsinki Convention as a treaty which covered almost all the area of a sea and all the pollutants of the sea known at the time it was drafted, signed and ratified, was the first of its kind as an international environmental convention, and was used later as a model by other international environmental conventions.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Marko Joas and Björn Grönholm, "Local Level Sustainability Policies in the Baltic Sea Area: Local Agenda 21 within the Union of the Baltic Cities Network," *Ambio: A Journal of the Human Environment*, Vol. 30, No. 4-5 (2001): 315.

⁷⁶ Räsänen and Laakkonen, 46.

⁷⁷ Räsänen and Laakkonen, 54.

⁷⁸ Kern and Löffelsend, 122.

⁷⁹ Räsänen and Laakkonen, 44.

The first and the most important reason why the Helsinki Convention was signed was environmental pollution of the Baltic Sea, but this was not the only reason states around the Baltic Sea decided to cooperate: the Helsinki Convention had also a political dimension and reason which determined the framework and the contents of the convention.⁸⁰

In a way the originally signed convention failed to fulfill its purpose. The Helsinki Convention was revised, updated and broadened in 1992, now including also coastal zone management, inland waters of the Baltic Sea states and biodiversity. Thus it also became applicable to the new political situation in the Baltic Sea Region after the fall of the Berlin Wall, signed by all nine independent states around the Baltic Sea and by the European Community.⁸¹ On the other hand, as already mentioned the Helsinki Convention has always had a political dimension, and it had an extraordinary meaning in the context of the Cold War. In 1974 when the states of the Baltic Sea region signed the Helsinki Convention, the Baltic Sea was divided both politically and culturally by the Iron Curtain and the main task of the convention was to harmonize the scientific and technological practices of the seven signatory countries which included then Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Soviet Union, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, and the Federal Republic of Germany.⁸² Therefore one could say that it was a remarkable achievement: it was the first multilateral convention which was signed by the members of two mutually competing military alliances – Warsaw Pact and North Atlantic Treaty Organization – in addition to the politically neutral states Sweden and Finland.⁸³ This led to increased political cooperation in the Baltic Sea region during the Cold War.

⁸⁰Joas, Jahn and Kern, 11.

⁸¹Kern and Löffelsend, 122.

⁸²Räsänen and Laakkonen, 54.

⁸³Ibid, 44.

The Helsinki Commission as an intergovernmental organization started to operate by 1980 – after the coastal states of the Baltic Sea of the Cold War era had ratified the Helsinki Convention and the convention officially entered into force.⁸⁴

The aim and responsibility of Helsinki Commission was to be the main environmental policy-maker for the Baltic Sea region by ensuring navigation safety, hastening national and trans-national response to accidents at sea, protecting biodiversity of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea and developing specific measures to protect the Baltic Sea from land-based and sea-based pollution.⁸⁵ The Helsinki Commission in its style and purpose has worked as a technical-scientific organization responsible for monitoring and compilation of data on the Baltic Sea marine environment and making certain decisions or recommendations to end the use of certain pollutants.⁸⁶ The organization is working mainly through intergovernmental cooperation between the coastal states of the Baltic Sea. The coordination of intergovernmental environmental activities is supported by a secretariat in Helsinki where the commission meets annually and holds occasional ministerial meetings.⁸⁷

The Helsinki Commission is assisted and supported also by separate committees, experts and working groups which are dealing with specific issues of the Baltic Sea marine environment, like monitoring and nature conservation.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Ibid, 54.

⁸⁵ Helsinki Commission: Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, *HELCOM Atlas of the Baltic Sea* (Finland: KaristoKirjapaino OY, 2010), 7.

⁸⁶ PerttiJoenniemi and Carl-EinarStålvant, ed., *Baltic Sea Politics: Achievements and Challenges* (Stockholm: Nordic Council, 1995), 41.

⁸⁷ Kern and Löffelsend, 122.

⁸⁸ Per Mickwitz, *Implementation of Key Environmental Principles: Experiences from the Protection of the Baltic Sea* (Copenhagen: Nordic Council, 1998), 28.

During its activity for more than three decades the Helsinki Commission has produced several environmental and operational response networks in the Baltic Sea area which give the people around the Baltic Sea some hope that the deterioration of one of the most polluted sea areas in the world can be stopped.⁸⁹ However, to stop the pollution entirely is impossible.

One of the most important duties of the Helsinki Commission has been to make decisions, resolutions or recommendations which, however, have an advisory nature and are not legally binding: these recommendations must only be taken into account in national legislations and environmental programmes of participants (states) and thus place emphasis on the political will, national capacities and financial resources of the states concerned.⁹⁰ Decisions are taken by the Helsinki Commission unanimously, and most of them take the form of recommendations to the governments of the contracting parties.⁹¹

The achievements of the Helsinki Commission include approximately 110 recommendations since the beginning of the 1980s, the reduction of industrial emissions and hazardous substances, new legislation for the prevention of pollution by marine traffic and the improvement of regional environmental monitoring and assessment.⁹²

The nature of the Helsinki Commission has changed gradually, but it has extended its role, authority and activities quite significantly. In the beginning, the Helsinki Commission was restricted by the national security doctrine of the Soviet Union, but after the end of the Cold War the authority of the Helsinki Commission extended also to the coastal zone of the Baltic Sea.⁹³ In

⁸⁹ HELCOM Atlas, 7-8.

⁹⁰Kern and Löffelsend, 122.

⁹¹Mickwitz, 28.

⁹²Kern and Löffelsend, 123.

⁹³Räsänen and Laakkonen, 55.

addition, the Helsinki Commission has enhanced cooperation with the non-governmental sector, civil society actors and other stakeholders.⁹⁴

However, the environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea has not yet stopped. The countries around the Baltic Sea have become economically more prosperous than they had been before:

“One explanation for increasing levels of fertilizer consumption in the Eastern riparian countries may be found in growing competition within the agricultural sectors of these countries resulting from European Union (EU) membership. However, with the exception of Poland, it needs to be stressed that the level of fertilizer consumption on arable land in Eastern riparian countries is substantially lower than that in Western countries (around 3000 kilograms per square kilometre (kg/km²) of arable land in 2000 in Estonia and Latvia, and 5000 kg/km² in Lithuania compared to 10,000 to 22,000 kg/km² at the same point in time in Western riparian countries).”⁹⁵

However, the Helsinki Commission is not the only institution dealing with environmental protection of the Baltic Sea. In 1952 the Nordic Council was established for cooperation among Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland (which joined the council in 1955). In the framework of the Nordic Council, several programs of environmental cooperation were prepared and established, including the Nordic Program for the Environment (1989), joint action plans covering air and sea pollution issues and promoting cleaner waste and recycling technology in the Baltic Sea region.⁹⁶

⁹⁴Kern and Löffelsend, 124.

⁹⁵Jahn and Kuitto, 33.

⁹⁶ Ann-SofieHermanson, “Environmental Concerns within the Baltic Sea Region: A Nordic-Baltic Comparison,” in *Governing a Common Sea*, 78.

Because of the lack of instruments to force states around the Baltic Sea to act in accordance with the letter of the Helsinki Convention, environmental policy in the Baltic Sea Region remained inefficient and deficient until the end of the Cold War and even at the beginning of the 1990s, before the enlargement of the European Union.⁹⁷ States around the Baltic Sea actually did not fulfil the recommendations of the Helsinki Commission, and there were huge differences between states in adding the recommendations to their domestic legislations and creating effective means to combat marine pollution.⁹⁸

2.3 The European Union and the Baltic Sea

Western Europe states (and later the European Union) have played a vital role in environmental and political cooperation of the Baltic Sea Region during and after the Cold War. Four important western and European organizations have played an important role in representing the process of western integration in the Baltic Sea Region: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, the European Union (EU), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁹⁹

During the 1980s and 1990s, in Western Europe environmental awareness and concern were growing and gained an important place on the political agenda.¹⁰⁰ Earlier, traditional

⁹⁷Räsänen and Laakkonen, 55.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Galbreath et al., 35.

¹⁰⁰Egbert Tellegen, "Regional Environmental Cooperation and Preventive Environmental Policy in Central and Eastern Europe," in *The Global Environment in the Twenty-first Century: Prospects for International Cooperation*, ed. Pamela S. Chasek (New York: United Nations University Press, 2000), 304.

environmental policies and environmental cooperation in Western and Northern Europe had rather had a local conservation approach (commissions and associations for nature conservation and preservation in Denmark).¹⁰¹ During the Cold War nation-states were the major actors in the field of environmental policy and environmental protection, but as a result of EU enlargement, the European Union became the principal actor in the field of environmental policy at the transnational and regional level of the Baltic Sea region.¹⁰²

After the enlargement of the European Union, the EU started to play an important role in security and environmental issues of the Baltic Sea area as the Baltic Sea became almost an inland sea of the European Union, and the problems of the Baltic Sea affected directly also the European Union. Eight out of nine Baltic Sea states are now full members of the European Union. However, for the new Eastern European member states, environmental issues have often been sidelined by more immediate economic, security and geopolitical concerns: environmental concerns over the protection of the Baltic Sea marine environment surface appeared on the foreign policy agendas only when aligned with direct geopolitical issues (Nord Stream pipeline project between Germany and Russia).¹⁰³ Therefore, one can still see the differences between the environmental attitudes of Western Europe and new member states of the European Union on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea.

Good examples of the EU policy towards the Baltic Sea are “the European Union’s Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013” and “the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region” (2009). These political programs concern the eight member states bordering the Baltic Sea, and focus on topics like economy, environment, sustainable management, regional policies

¹⁰¹Hermanson, 62-63.

¹⁰²Ibid, 66.

¹⁰³Galbreath et al., 114.

etc. Increasingly important is also cooperation between the European Union and Russia which is not a member state, but belongs to the Baltic Sea region and is engaged in economic and political activities of the Northern European and Baltic Sea space.¹⁰⁴

One of the most significant programs regarding the European Union and the Baltic Sea Region is The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region which was launched in 2009 and which quickly became the major way in which the European Union relates to the Baltic Sea region. The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is a macro-regional strategy which alters relations with and among other institutional actors in the Baltic Sea Region (the Helsinki Commission, Council of the Baltic Sea States, The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, and the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation).¹⁰⁵

The EU strategy is built around four pillars or priority areas: 1) environmental sustainability, 2) prosperity of the region, 3) accessibility and attractiveness, and 4) safety and security.¹⁰⁶ The strategy has coordinating nature: it does not carry projects on its own, but rather aims at coordinating international environmental governance around the Baltic Sea.¹⁰⁷

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region faces many problems and challenges, regarding funding, political will, international attention, and the wider role and impact of the strategy.¹⁰⁸ It is not yet possible to say whether the strategy has been a successful tool in the environmental governance of the Baltic Sea.

¹⁰⁴European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Commission of the European Communities, Brussels (2009), http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/baltic/com_baltic_en.pdf.

¹⁰⁵Rikard Bengtsson, "The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: Golden or Missed Opportunity?" in *Estonian Foreign Policy Yearbook 2011*, ed. Andres Kasekamp (Tallinn: Estonian Foreign Policy Institute, 2012), 7.

¹⁰⁶Ibid, 10.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Bengtsson, 28.

The EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region deals also with problematic interaction with the non-EU partner of the Baltic Sea – Russia, and with the cooperation between the European Union and Russia in the Baltic Sea Region.¹⁰⁹ In a way, the Baltic Sea is a meeting place of EU-Russia relations. First of all, Russia is obviously an important actor in the Baltic Sea regional energy structure, being a major supplier of energy resources for the European countries and the Baltic Sea region countries bordering Russia, the Nord-Stream gas pipeline being one of the most significant examples of Russia’s newly established and increased interactions with the European Union.¹¹⁰ In addition to natural gas, electricity supplies and power generation facilities have become important issues in the regional energy dynamics of the Baltic Sea region.¹¹¹ Russia has shown its willingness to retain its presence in the electricity markets of the Baltic Sea region – however, the prospective power plant in the Kaliningrad region of Russia may raise questions regarding environmental threats.¹¹²

In sum, in this chapter I have focused on environmental and political cooperation in the Baltic Sea region after World War II: first, focusing on political context of the post-war years, then on the Cold War and the role of the Helsinki Commission, and finally on the impact of the European Union and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Marine environmental protection in the Baltic Sea region has been a problematic issue which has been influenced by many factors, including the political situation of the Cold War period and post-Cold War era (the 1990s), the enlargement of the European Union, economic activities (shipping), marine pollution (oil

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 30.

¹¹⁰ Andris Sprūds, “Russia in the Baltic Sea regional energy architecture,” in *Estonian Foreign Policy Yearbook 2011*, ed. Andres Kasekamp (Tallinn: Estonian Foreign Policy Institute, 2012), 33.

¹¹¹ Sprūds, 47.

¹¹² Ibid.

pollution, industrial waste, agriculture, urban waste management), local policies, energy policies, and by the willingness of the Baltic Sea states to decrease human impact on the sea.

3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The empirical analysis of this thesis focuses on the work and co-production of two international bodies – the Helsinki Commission and the European Union –for two main reasons. First, pollution and environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea is a trans-boundary and international (political) problem, not a local one affecting a single state that can be solved by domestic policy. Although heightened national concern can have impact on governments to take stronger action on the environment,¹¹³ effective environmental protection of the Baltic Sea depends on international cooperation. The environmental situation of the Baltic Sea can be improved only through international cooperation. Environmental policy of every state of the Baltic Sea Region also has an impact on the Baltic Sea, but the Baltic Sea is most of all a common water basin. Therefore, it is important to focus on international, intergovernmental organizations and trans-boundary cooperation between the nation-states.

Secondly, there is no doubt that these two international organizations – the Helsinki Commission and the European Union – have already had more impact on the international environmental governance of the Baltic Sea Region than any other organization or form of political cooperation. They both have contributed to international environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region to a certain degree, depending on the political situation and changing political environment. For instance, the Cold War period and the 1990s put limits on international cooperation, whereas the enlargement of the European Union contributed to the environmental cooperation. Although the intergovernmental regimes are often regarded as

¹¹³ James Gustave Speth and Peter M. Haas, *Global Environmental Governance* (Washington: Island Press, 2006), 131.

endless and ineffectual wordsmiths,¹¹⁴ the impacts of these two organizations on the environmental protection of the Baltic Sea have not been based only on words, but also on deeds and real actions, like monitoring, improved navigation safety and waste-water treatment.

3.1 The Helsinki Convention

In order to analyze or evaluate the work, effectiveness, meanings and role of the Helsinki Commission, one must start from the very beginning: the draft of the Helsinki Convention in 1974. The starting point is the formation of an international environmental regime during the 1970s in the Baltic Sea Region among the contracting parties of the Helsinki Convention.

This part of the analysis will try to answer the following two questions: how was the Helsinki Commission influenced by the contradictory political situation of the Cold War, meaning both the division of the Baltic Sea Region (East *versus* West) and the rise of environmental awareness in the international arena during the 1970s (conventions, regimes and international law)? As a matter of fact, the primary reason for the founding of the Helsinki Commission was environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea, but to a certain extent the formation of the environmental regime was also a political process and political initiative of certain states.

¹¹⁴Speth and Haas, 136.

The second question is: how much has the Helsinki Commission influenced and increased international environmental protection in the Baltic Sea region: in other words, how to estimate the effectiveness of this international organization as an environmental regime?

There are many ways how to measure effectiveness of a regime. One meaning of effectiveness with regard to international environmental regimes is based on the extent to which regimes solve the problems that lead to their formation.¹¹⁵ The other meaning of effectiveness is based on the behavioral consequences of the members of regime: whether regimes or international environmental governance play a role in shaping or guiding the behavior of member states of international regimes.¹¹⁶ Based on these two criteria of effectiveness also the following analysis is conducted.

According to the former Executive Secretary of the Helsinki Commission, Anne Christine Brusendorff, the Helsinki Commission has been the main environmental policy-maker for the Baltic Sea Region by developing specific measures to protect and conserve the unique marine environment of the Baltic Sea.¹¹⁷ Brusendorff maintains that these environmental gains of the Helsinki Commission validate the belief that the deterioration of one of the most polluted seas in the world can be stopped and the state of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea improved.¹¹⁸ This is one way how to evaluate the effectiveness of the environmental regime.

However, the efforts of this organization have not been entirely successful—the condition of the Baltic Sea has been deteriorating also during the time the Helsinki Commission has been

¹¹⁵ Oran R. Young, *Governance in World Affairs* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 109.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹¹⁷ Anne Christine Brusendorff, "HELCOM's Contribution to the Prevention of Marine Environment," in *Pollution of the Sea – Prevention and Compensation. Volume 10 of Hamburg Studies on Maritime Affairs*, ed. Jürgen Basedow and Ulrich Magnus (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2007), 85.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

existent. The degradation of the environmental status of the Baltic Sea occurred also during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s for many reasons, economic growth and increased prosperity of the coastal states and societies being the main ones.¹¹⁹ For example, pollutants of the Baltic Sea are caused also by car traffic which has increased substantially in most Eastern European riparian countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹²⁰ One could ask, was the Helsinki Commission able to reduce human impact on the Baltic Sea, or were the efforts of the Helsinki Commission rather of marginal importance in solving the environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea?

According to Tuomas Räsänen and Simo Laakkonen, pollution of the seas is an excellent example of so-called “tragedy of the commons” – the concept first used by Garrett Hardin in 1968 – as no single state around a sea or on the shore of an ocean or sea claims ownership of the seas, and once the serious degradation of the marine environment occurs, states lack capacity, strength, financial and scientific ability and knowledge to limit the degradation and the will to claim political responsibility.¹²¹ However, once the situation is bad enough, there is no choice any more: states must act in order to save their environment, including coastal areas, high seas, islands, archipelagos as sensitive regions, maritime environment of the territorial waters, etc.. The environmental situation, on the other hand, influences also the societies, tourism and economies of the coastal states, and therefore it is in the interests of the coastal states to protect the sea.

A similar thing happened to the Baltic Sea already at the end of the 1960s: states around the Baltic Sea lacked both capacity and will to cooperate politically or start solving the environmental problems of their common sea, but the Baltic Sea was also politically divided sea

¹¹⁹Jahn and Kuitto, 21.

¹²⁰Ibid, 35.

¹²¹Räsänen and Laakkonen, 43.

as there was the Iron Curtain between the east and west coast of the sea. However, the Helsinki Convention was an exception in that unfriendly political environment where states were dealing only with their national interests and military capacity, but not with soft political issues like environment. In a way, the Helsinki Convention was a step towards the end of East-West division in the Baltic Sea Region.

According to Egbert Tellegen, the Baltic Sea is the most trans-boundary sea between Eastern Europe and Western Europe, and abatement of transnational pollution of the Baltic Sea was recognized as a common interest of both Western and Eastern European countries surrounding the Baltic Sea at the beginning of the 1970s.¹²² Therefore, in 1974 the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea (Denmark, Finland, the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, Polish People's Republic, Sweden, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) were able to sign the Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of Baltic Sea. What was the meaning of this convention and why did states sign it? This is an important question.

First of all, this was a process of institutionalization of an international environmental regime in the context of the Cold War: as the environment of the Baltic Sea needed protection and the sea is not owned by any of the coastal states, this was an appropriate situation for building a comprehensive international environmental regime in the Baltic Sea Area.¹²³ Also, the situation of the 1970s was slightly different from the situation of the early Cold War during the 1950s: significant progress had been made in so-called German question and border disputes between the Federal Republic of Germany and Poland. Finally, as environmental issues started to

¹²²Tellegen, 304.

¹²³Räsänen and Laakkonen, 45-46.

be in the political agendas all around the world, also the idea of an international environmental conference and multilateral agreement on the pollution of the Baltic Sea was realized in the early 1970s.¹²⁴ During late 1960s and early 1970s sovereign states in the Western world established several international environmental regimes of marine protection in order to solve the problem of environmental degradation.¹²⁵ For instance, the Oslo Convention, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), and the Paris Convention were established at the beginning of the 1970s. In particular, MARPOL (1973) was adopted as a result of numerous tanker accidents at the seas during the years of 1976 and 1977, and it aimed at preventing and minimizing pollution from ships, including both accidental pollution and pollution from routine operations.¹²⁶

However, what was the meaning of multilateral Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area in the international system of the Cold War in the Baltic Sea Region? Was it an extraordinary achievement, did it fulfill the expectations, or was it just a marginal victory? Or, was it a first step in the long process of further mutual cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region? Was it a success story in spite of the fact that environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea continued?

According to James Gustave Speth and Peter M. Haas, international environmental treaties are referred to as multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) which can take the

¹²⁴Räsänen and Laakkonen, 48.

¹²⁵Ibid, 43.

¹²⁶International Maritime Organization, "International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), [http://www.imo.org/about/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-prevention-of-pollution-from-ships-\(MARPOL\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/about/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-prevention-of-pollution-from-ships-(MARPOL).aspx).

form of broad conventions or more specific and typically action-oriented protocols or they can also codify or advance international law in a broad or specific area like the Law of the Sea.¹²⁷

According to Speth and Haas, those treaties or conventions, once they are ratified by governments, are sometimes referred to also as international environmental regimes, but the regime concept is wider and used also more broadly than just a treaty or convention.¹²⁸

What does a treaty or convention mean for a state? According to Speth and Haas, another distinction which is important in international law, is the difference between signing and ratifying a treaty. Usually, major treaties and amendments to treaties typically require ratification by contracting governments: ratification is a process where the domestic legislation or rule-making body approves the treaty and converts it to domestic law, but these processes underscore that adoption of treaty commitments is voluntary and does not entail any sacrifice of national sovereignty. The last point is reinforced by the fact that contracting parties can leave a treaty at any time if they want.¹²⁹ However, when a government signs a treaty, it merely indicates preliminary support for the commitments written in the treaty.¹³⁰

This leads to the question of the importance of the Helsinki Commission for state behavior in the context of the Cold War. The Helsinki Convention was ratified by all the coastal states of the Baltic Sea not before 1980, whereas the Helsinki Commission as an intergovernmental organization and governing body of the Helsinki Convention was established already in 1974.¹³¹ The fact that states around the Baltic Sea were able to form an

¹²⁷Speth and Haas, 83.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹Räsänen and Laakkonen, 54.

intergovernmental organization was a proof that further cooperation between them was necessary.

On the one hand, the Helsinki Convention was an achievement in the period it was signed: it was unique in its comprehensive approach to protection of the marine environment.¹³²The Helsinki Convention (1974) prescribed the general attitude how the Baltic Sea states should or are recommended to deal with the Baltic Sea as common resource:

“The Contracting Parties shall individually or jointly take all appropriate legislative, administrative or other relevant measures in order to prevent and abate pollution and to protect and enhance the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area.”¹³³

According to Anne Christine Brusendorff, the Helsinki Convention of 1974 provided the basis for later environmental improvements of the Baltic Sea by the Helsinki Commission. The work of the Helsinki Commission after the ratification of the Helsinki Convention increased and deepened scientific knowledge of the state of the Baltic Sea and collected knowledge of the factors affecting the state of the sea, collected data, served as provider of supportive information to decision-makers (governments), focused on the prevention of all sorts of pollution from ships and co-operation in case of accidents at sea, encouraged regional cooperation, and made recommendations limiting or eliminating the use of specific substances recognized as harmful to marine ecosystems.¹³⁴

However, one could ask how was it possible that states around the Baltic Sea in the suspicious and paranoid context of the Cold War were able to cooperate in the field of

¹³²Brusendorff, 85.

¹³³The Helsinki Convention (1974), 4.

¹³⁴Brusendorff, 86.

environmental protection while they were not so successful in other types of cooperation: in the fields of economy, transportation and education (science and research), for example.

According to Alexander L. George, the way in which leaders of nation-states view each other is of fundamental importance in determining what happens in relations among states.¹³⁵ Therefore, as Finland was the key actor in emphasizing environmental issues in the Baltic Sea Region, also the Soviet Union as a military superpower saw environmental cooperation as a new challenge in the Baltic Sea Region. One can even argue that the Soviet Union used environmental issues as a new tool of power politics in the Baltic Sea Region.¹³⁶ The Convention was drafted and signed against the general context of Cold War rivalry in the Baltic Sea Region.¹³⁷ This paradox can be explained by the fact that the emphasis of the Helsinki Convention was on neutral issues in the context of the political atmosphere of the Cold War: environment affects every state, whether it is a weak or strong state, communist or capitalist state, Eastern or Western (European) state.

On the other hand, the Helsinki Convention had limited capacity: the convention did not play the key role in the Baltic Sea Region during the Cold War period, and environmental gains of the Helsinki Commission were rather modest during the 1970s and 1980s in terms of real actions: there were differences between contracting parties of the convention, violations, etc.

According to Tellegen, before the fall of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe in 1991, common efforts to protect the Baltic Sea were limited mainly to the prevention of pollution by ships: for instance, the protection of national sovereignty and state

¹³⁵ Alexander L. George, "The "Operational Code": A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision Making," in *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays*, ed. G. John Ikenberry (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989), 483.

¹³⁶ Räsänen and Laakkonen, 55.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

secretly hindered inclusion of land-based activities and inland waters surrounding the Baltic Sea as also sources of pollution – the inclusion of land-based and inland water pollution was particularly resisted by the Soviet Union and probably there were certain reasons for that.¹³⁸

The Helsinki Convention (1974):

“While the provisions of the present Convention do not apply to internal waters, which are under the sovereignty of each Contracting Party, the Contracting Parties undertake, without prejudice to the sovereign rights, to ensure that the purposes of the present Convention will be obtained in these waters.”¹³⁹

Also, the Helsinki Convention was limited to the prevention of pollution by only certain type of ships (commercial vessels, passenger ships, etc.), and thus did not include all ships (naval vessels, warships etc.):

“The present Convention shall not apply to any warship, naval auxiliary, military aircraft or other ship and aircraft owned or operated by a State and used, for the time being, only on government non-commercial service.”¹⁴⁰

The comprehensiveness of the Helsinki Convention was derived from the limited area that the Convention covered geographically and this enabled states to focus only on solving complex environmental problems.¹⁴¹ What this means is that the Helsinki Convention of 1974 was not aimed at solving local and specific regional environmental problems (for instance, waste water treatment in Kaliningrad oblast or in Saint Petersburg), but rather more comprehensive,

¹³⁸Tellegen, 305.

¹³⁹The Helsinki Convention (1974), 4.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Brusendorff, 85.

and unfortunately more blurred international environmental and maritime problems like safety and pollution which are more general by nature. The Convention was not specific, but comprehensive, in both a negative and positive way. The positive aspect would be that it supported cooperation between states around the sea:

“Although the Convention established internationally legally binding obligations to be undertaken by each Member State, it primarily created the legal basis for a close and permanent co-operation among the Member States.”¹⁴²

The negative aspect is that the Helsinki Convention was rather blurred than focused on the specific problems of the sea, like waste-water treatment of urban areas or industrial waste from coastal industries. It was more convenient for states to focus on general issues.

According to Speth and Haas, some international environmental regimes addressing marine pollution, ocean dumping and whaling have had considerable success, but in international environmental regimes concerning protection of marine fisheries economic interests routinely trump good and neutral science.¹⁴³

This leads us to the question of the effectiveness of the Helsinki Convention as an environmental regime. What would have happened without the Convention? According to Speth and Haas, in measuring regime effectiveness, the conceptual framework starts with three levels of accomplishments: first, what the situation would have been without the environmental regime; second, what is the actual performance obtained under the environmental regime; and third, what is the best result that could be accomplished. The difference between the situation without the

¹⁴²Brusendorff, 86.

¹⁴³Speth and Haas, 98.

regime and actual performance obtained under the regime is a measure whether environmental regimes matter.¹⁴⁴

According to Anne Christine Brusendorff, the Helsinki Commission has produced many environmental gains over the past thirty years (recommendations, monitoring, science)¹⁴⁵ – therefore one can assume that the situation without the environmental regime would have been much worse than it is today, there would be no recommendations or regulations, and therefore, it would be only up to environmental awareness and responsibility of every single state how to protect the vulnerable marine environment.

At the beginning of the current part of the analysis, two main questions were formed: how the Cold War influenced the formation of the environmental regime of the Helsinki Convention and how much the Helsinki Commission has influenced the environmental governance of the Baltic Sea Region. In sum, the paradox of the Cold War was that, on the one hand, the political situation did not support political cooperation in solving the German question and changing the Soviet Union from a closed and isolated system, but on the other hand the Cold War was a good soil for starting international environmental cooperation and launching an environmental regime – the environmental issues were neutral issues and international cooperation was possible mainly based on such kinds of issues (not, for example, economic issues).

Many factors influenced the work of the Helsinki Commission in the early days. The Helsinki Convention had limited capacity as the political climate of the Cold War was determined by hard realist politics (the convention did not apply to warships) and states were not

¹⁴⁴Ibid, 100.

¹⁴⁵Brusendorff, 85.

legally forced to fulfill the purposes of the Helsinki Convention. The Helsinki Convention was not ratified by all states before 1980: a treaty enters into force only after its ratification.¹⁴⁶ However, the intergovernmental organization called the Helsinki Commission was formed already in 1974.

The Helsinki Convention was a basis for a more efficient international environmental regime in coming decades. It set a course for the environmental policy and international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea Region already before the collapse of the Soviet Union. In a way, the Helsinki Convention was a unique achievement at the time it was signed and ratified by the coastal states of the Baltic Sea. It formed an environmental regime which aimed at protecting an entire sea from pollution. The role of the environmental regime can be viewed as decisive in the international and environmental cooperation of the Baltic Sea area. Without the regime the situation of the Baltic Sea would be worse.

The work of the Helsinki Commission was rather a political process than a process caused by environmental awareness of states like the Soviet Union: how much did the Soviet Union actually pay attention to environmental problems? Actions of different states were caused by their perceptions of the political environment in the Baltic Sea Region: as environment seemed to be a neutral international issue, hostile states in the context of the Cold War on the opposite shores of the Baltic Sea were able to cooperate in the field of environment whereas there are no other good examples of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region among states in the Cold War climate of the 1970s.

¹⁴⁶Speth and Haas, 84.

3.2 A New Political Situation

This section of the analysis focuses on the environmental regime of the Baltic Sea Region during the 1990s, based on a renewed and revised Helsinki Convention. What were the impacts of the new political situation on the international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea Region? How do we estimate the effectiveness of the Helsinki Commission during the new era? Once communism collapsed and the Iron Curtain between the East and the West disappeared, the situation was appropriate for a better cooperation, but also for increased prosperity, economic growth and increased human impact on the marine environment.

At the beginning of the 1990s a new era in the history of the Helsinki Commission was launched, caused by political changes in Europe: the emergence of new independent states on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe (Poland, Baltic States), the reunification of Germany, and developments in international environmental and maritime law which led to the increased environmental awareness in the world more generally.¹⁴⁷

This new political situation led to a revised Helsinki Convention (1992), signed by states bordering the Baltic Sea and the European Commission. The new version of the Helsinki Convention led to the changed role, effectiveness and significance of the Helsinki Commission as an intergovernmental organization and governing body of the Helsinki Convention.

¹⁴⁷Brusendorff, 86.

According to Brusendorff, the new era of the Helsinki Commission is characterized by new principles and approaches of the work of the Helsinki Commission since 1992:¹⁴⁸

- 1) The expansion of the area of the work of the Helsinki Commission, or so-called “Convention Area” – in addition to the Baltic Sea itself also the inland waters became subject to the marine environmental protection
- 2) The expansion of the area in which the coastal countries of the Baltic Sea are committed to implement the provisions of the Helsinki Convention and pertinent Recommendations, or so-called “Area of Application” – in addition to the sea area the area of application was enlarged to include also the catchment area
- 3) A recognition of the need to mobilize financial resources and increase cooperation and co-ordination between the Helsinki Commission and international financial institutions – the work of the Helsinki Commission was expanded to include not only the coastal countries of the Baltic Sea, but also the countries in the catchment area of the Baltic Sea, including Belarus, Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Slovakia: an approach was taken that use pre-feasibility studies to identify pollution hot-spots and insure this identification would lead to the design of projects capable of attracting funding.
- 4) The expansion of the work of the Helsinki Commission to cover also nature conservation, biodiversity issues and sustainable use of the natural resources of the Baltic Sea Area as parts of the area of the Helsinki Convention

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 86-87.

- 5) The shift towards a sector-wise approach to address also land-based pollution from point and diffuse sources and a change towards promoting best available techniques and best environmental practices rather than setting limit values
- 6) The change in the work of the Helsinki Commission on land-based pollution sources, the emphasis was now placed on the harmonization of measures with those taken in the European Union and the similar organizations, like the sister organization of the Helsinki Commission in North-East Atlantic Ocean, the OSPAR Commission.

These changes in the work of the Helsinki Commission during the 1990s, on the other hand, characterize the ineffectiveness of the older version of the Helsinki Convention and the former work of the Helsinki Commission. According to Speth and Haas, there are many impediments to effective international environmental cooperation, but those impediments should not be viewed fatalistically, but critically – as pointing to corrective actions on the environmental and political front that are needed.¹⁴⁹ The Helsinki Convention of 1992 is an example of the political will of contracting parties to improve the effectiveness of the current environmental regime. The environmental regime was expanded according to the new political situation on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, and according to the environmental degradation of the Baltic Sea.

According to Speth and Haas, effectiveness of international environmental regimes has been widely studied – academics and scholars all around the world have sought to identify factors that contributed to enlarged international environmental cooperation and environmental protection.¹⁵⁰ According to Speth and Haas, effective international regimes are those regimes that lead nations to make policy changes that support the goals of the regimes, leading to the results

¹⁴⁹Speth and Haas, 103.

¹⁵⁰Ibid, 128.

which indicate that there are improvements in environmental quality.¹⁵¹ For instance, if the Helsinki Convention would have led the Russian Federation to make policy changes that would support the goals of the Helsinki Convention in Kaliningrad the work of the Helsinki Convention would be regarded as more successful and efficient than it is now.

It is important to mention that the regime does not force states to solve a problem. However, during the 1990s the Helsinki Commission launched certain goals which were supposed to be the basis for policy changes in environmental issues: for instance, countries around the Baltic Sea agreed on the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Program in 1992 which had six broad goals:¹⁵²

- 1) Establishment of a long-term environmental management framework in each country of the Baltic Sea Region
- 2) Institutional strengthening, human resource development in the Baltic Sea Region
- 3) Launching a program for infrastructure investment in specific measures to control point and non-point sources of pollution and to minimize and disposal of wastes
- 4) Management of coastal lagoons and wetlands
- 5) Supporting applied research to build the knowledge base needed to develop solutions
- 6) Encouraging public environmental awareness and education.

While these goals did not cause a policy change immediately, a new course was set for policy change. Oran R. Young points out that the disappearance of the problem that led to the formation of environmental regime does not justify the conclusion that the regime had no effect

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Beurling, 10.

at all.¹⁵³ But if an environmental regime does not solve a problem at all the regime cannot be regarded as effective either. According to Young, the following questions are important in determining the effectiveness of an international regime: “Do regime members take vigorous steps to implement regime rules or commitments within their domestic jurisdiction? Do states or subjects operating under their auspices comply with regime rules or live up to the commitments they make in creating regimes?”¹⁵⁴

According to the statements of the officials of the Helsinki Commission, its work has had many impacts on the environmental governance of the Baltic Sea after the Cold War. According to Brusendorff, the encouraging results and achievements of the Helsinki Commission include the following examples:¹⁵⁵

- 1) All in all, the degradation of the Baltic Sea has slowed– in fact, one has to take into account also economic growth in the Baltic Sea Region after the collapse of communism and ask what would have happened without the environmental regime
- 2) Many positive improvements in the state of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea have been observed lately by scientists and scholars
- 3) The Helsinki Commission has been working through 200 Recommendations thanks to which coastal countries have significantly reduced discharges of organic pollutants and nutrients
- 4) Overall reduction in the emissions of oxygen-consuming substances has been achieved since the early 1990s

¹⁵³Young, 109.

¹⁵⁴Ibid, 110.

¹⁵⁵Brusendorff, 87-88.

- 5) Many hot spots have been eliminated: 81 out of the 162 major pollution hot spots in the Baltic Sea have been successfully eliminated since 1992
- 6) Special legislation to prevent pollution from ships has been developed by the Helsinki Commission, including measures to eliminate illegal discharges by ships into the Baltic Sea and to ensure navigation safety
- 7) The Helsinki Commission has established joint monitoring of the state of the marine environment and carried out regular assessments as a precondition for evaluating the need for new protection measures: in fact, how do we know about the environmental state of the sea if there is no monitoring and information?

These achievements of the Helsinki Commission are examples of effectiveness and achievements of the work of the Helsinki Commission after 1992. The new Helsinki Convention was signed as a result of the changes in Europe: the political climate had improved in the Baltic Sea Region, there was appropriate soil for increased environmental cooperation, and states had motives to cooperate. Speth and Haas state that examples of effective environmental regimes are those where the environment is confidently believed to be improved or on the path of improvement; these include the stratospheric ozone regime, the European acid rain treaty, efforts to protect the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, international protection of Antarctic living resources, the regulation of ocean dumping and marine pollution from ships, whereas examples of ineffective environmental regimes include regimes where the results are more disappointing, like deforestation in Indonesia, management of toxic substances and nitrogen pollution.¹⁵⁶

Once it is known what conditions, factors and initiatives further the effectiveness of international environmental regimes states will know where to invest money and political will

¹⁵⁶Speth and Haas, 128.

for better results.¹⁵⁷ The new Helsinki Convention (1992) was an example how the goals of the Helsinki Commission were applied to the new political situation: there was no fear of major conflict any more between states around the Baltic Sea, environmental degradation became more important than the hard politics of nation-states and it was up to states how to save the sea.

On the other hand, while the Helsinki Commission has been able to improve the environment of the Baltic Sea in some respects (listed above), and can be regarded and classified as successful international environmental regime, the Helsinki Convention has been unable to solve other severe environmental problems of the Baltic Sea. For instance, nutrient pollution in the Baltic Sea region has remained a serious and unsolved environmental problem and important political issue already since the late 1980s when the 50 % reduction target for nutrient input was set up.¹⁵⁸ Also, environmental degradation may be caused by economic growth.¹⁵⁹ Is an environmental regime supposed to act as an impediment to economic growth?

In sum, a new and revised Helsinki Convention signed in 1992 changed the role of the Helsinki Commission as an environmental policy-maker in the Baltic Sea Region: this intergovernmental organization now became a considerable international body with initially remarkable achievements. Also, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of communism on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea there was an appropriate political situation in the Baltic Sea Region to expand and enlarge the area of the Helsinki Convention, the meaning of pollution and the political responsibility of states around the Baltic Sea.

The change of the work of the Helsinki Commission enabled states around the Baltic Sea to cooperate and coordinate their environmental policies more efficiently than before. However,

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Brusendorff, 87.

¹⁵⁹ Jahn and Kuitto, 21.

the environmental degradation was not stopped as shipping, industries, and agriculture still had impact on the environmental condition of the Baltic Sea.

All in all, the role and work of the Helsinki Commission during the time changed, as did the political situation in the Baltic Sea Region. In the context of political changes, a new Helsinki Convention led to an extended role of the Helsinki Commission in the Baltic Sea Region.

3.3 Environmental Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region after the Enlargement of the European Union

The current part of the analysis focuses on an environmental regime in the Baltic Sea Region formed after 2004 based on the enlargement of the European Union – eight out of nine states in the Baltic Sea Region formed the group of states which had similar goals as regards environmental governance of the Baltic Sea and belonged also to the Helsinki Commission.

As already mentioned before, there are many ways how to evaluate the effectiveness of an environmental regime: Oran R. Young maintains that a limited approach to effectiveness of an environmental regime focuses on the extent to which the regime succeeds in solving the problem that led to the formation of the regime.¹⁶⁰ This kind of approach is limited as it does not pay attention to other aspects of the regime: for example, controlling a situation can also be an

¹⁶⁰Young, 109.

achievement and a purpose in itself. An environmental regime may have managed to avoid major environmental or shipping disasters in a region, as a result of increased monitoring and maritime safety regulations. For example, in spite of the fact that there are still signs of environmental degradation of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea, there have been no severe oil disasters in the Baltic Sea Region.

Another way to evaluate the effectiveness is to focus on behavioral consequences of the international environmental regime – namely, how regimes play a role in shaping or guiding the behavior of those who are formal members of the international regime (governments and states), international agencies, interest groups and also individuals.¹⁶¹ However, regimes are only one of number of forces that shape the behavior of states.¹⁶² For instance, there may be also other issues at stake, including security and energy policy which may lead to policy change or environmental awareness.

The current part of the analysis is based on the assumption that the governments of nation-states as principal actors in making international environmental policy respond to pressure from a number of external and internal forces, like other nations, the work of the United Nations, international organizations (the European Union, the Helsinki Commission), NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and nation-states' own business sectors and domestic factors.¹⁶³ Because of that, international environmental politics can be regarded as a two-level game where one playing field is domestic politics and the other international politics.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹Ibid, 110.

¹⁶²Ibid, 111.

¹⁶³Speth and Haas, 85.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

Once Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland joined the European Union, a club of Baltic EU Member States included almost all the Baltic Sea Region, leaving Russia the only contracting party of the Helsinki Convention not belonging to the European Union. The enlargement of the European Union led to a completely new political situation in the Baltic Sea Region: the large area of the Baltic Sea and its catchment area became covered by the EU regulations, directives and marine strategy.¹⁶⁵ Also, some decision-making powers were directly delegated to Brussels and Baltic Sea Region states had to contribute to implement EU regulations.¹⁶⁶ This is a clear example how the European Union had a strong impact on state behavior in the Baltic Sea Region in regard to environmental policy and cooperation. The work of the European Union became a contributory factor to the international environmental governance of the Baltic Sea Region and formation of a new environmental regime, based on European Union regulations and directives which coordinated also the work of the Helsinki Commission. How to estimate the effectiveness of this environmental regime compared to the environmental regime of the 1990s and the environmental regime based on the first draft of the Helsinki Convention (1974)?

According to Speth and Haas, there are many factors which lead to more effective international environmental regimes, including cooperative political factors which make it easier for states to reach meaningful agreements (groups of states, blocs of countries, and negotiations), capacity constraints (environmental technology), and heightened national concern (media, public

¹⁶⁵Brusendorff, 88.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

opinion) which also pressures governments to take stronger actions on international environmental issues.¹⁶⁷

When states around the Baltic Sea entered the European Union, they became a bloc of countries in the European Union with a common sea – the Baltic Sea. As a result they became countries with similar environmental awareness, interests, attitudes and political will to act in a certain way. The Baltic Sea environmental regime (the work of the Helsinki Commission) was supported by the directives of the European Union. For instance, one of the important goals of the Helsinki Commission is to reduce human induced eutrophication to desirable levels, but similar goals and principles also has the EU Water Framework Directive regarding the coastal waters of the Baltic Sea.¹⁶⁸ Also, the Helsinki Commission works in accordance with the EU Common Agricultural Policy concerning impact of agriculture as one of the most important environmental problems of the Baltic Sea. Special characteristics of the Baltic Sea marine environment are fully accounted for in the maritime and environmental politics of the European Union: for instance, European Marine Strategy foresees an Action Plan for each eco-region of the European Union.¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, on the 15th of November 2007, the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan was adopted in Krakow, Poland where states agreed to more specific actions to achieve a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea by 2021.

The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan differed from previous environmental activities and programs of the Helsinki Commission on three main points:¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷Speth and Haas, 128-131.

¹⁶⁸Brusendorff, 90.

¹⁶⁹Ibid, 94.

¹⁷⁰Brusendorff, 94.

- 1) The expansion of stakeholders who had an active role in the work of the Helsinki Commission in the drawing up of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan: in addition to governments, also international organizations, NGOs, and individual citizens were supposed to take part in forming the plan
- 2) This time the Helsinki Commission defined governments' common vision of a healthy Baltic Sea by using ecological objectives for the Baltic marine biodiversity, combating eutrophication, curbing inputs of hazardous substances and ensuring maritime safety
- 3) The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan was implemented via targeted and cost-effective measures.

According to the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (2007), the overall goal of the Helsinki Commission is to keep the Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication – a major problem of the Baltic Sea already since 1900 as the Baltic Sea has changed from an oligotrophic clear-water sea into a eutrophic marine environment.¹⁷¹

In the framework of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, the Helsinki Commission adopted the following goals and ecological objectives in order to describe the characteristics of the Baltic Sea: concentrations of nutrients close to natural levels, clear water, and natural levels of algal blooms, natural distribution and occurrence of plants and animals, and natural oxygen level.¹⁷² On the other hand, the wider goal of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan was to stress the further need to co-ordinate and harmonize the work of the Helsinki Commission within the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan to initiatives at the international level, including the EUMarine

¹⁷¹ HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, Krakow, Poland, 15 November 2007, http://www.helcom.fi/stc/files/BSAP/BSAP_Final.pdf.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

Strategy Directive, the EU Maritime Policy and the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation.¹⁷³

The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan emphasized that the general state of the Baltic Sea can only be improved through combined efforts and integrated actions.¹⁷⁴ The plan emphasizes also the cooperation between science and policy.

According to Speth and Haas, two characteristics of the international organizations can influence outcomes of the international environmental regimes and the willingness of contracting parties to cooperate:¹⁷⁵

- 1) Horizontal linkages: these refer to overlapping memberships in organizations or regimes in which countries are members: for instance, the European Union is dense with horizontal linkages and therefore EU member states are more likely to comply with EU directives and norms and environmental treaties when those treaties become part of EU commitments, as is the case with the Helsinki Commission and its environmental treaties
- 2) Vertical linkages: these refer to broadly accepted international norms that can be applied to govern state behavior in particular domains: for instance, if environmental issues are conducted under the auspices of United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) or International Maritime Organization (IMO), or even EU Maritime Policy, then those norms of environmental protection and sustainable development will be accorded higher priority, and the environmental protection will be more effective.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Brusendorff, 94.

¹⁷⁵ Speth and Haas, 130.

After the enlargement of the European Union, when Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland became full member states of the European Union, the environmental governance of the Baltic Sea Region became influenced by the policy of the European Union. This fact helps to reevaluate the wider role and importance of the European Union in the Baltic Sea Region and the effectiveness of the environmental regime based on the European Union. What would happen in the absence of the European Union? How would environmental governance be conducted without the European Union?

According to Oran R. Young, there are three types of regime consequences: outputs, outcomes and impacts.¹⁷⁶ The outputs are regulations, programs and organizational arrangements that actors establish to operationalize the provisions of a regime, moving from words to deeds.¹⁷⁷ The outcomes include changes in the behavior of members of regime (for example, states of the European Union in the Baltic Sea Region), and impacts are effects and solutions of problems.¹⁷⁸

For instance, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is an example of output. The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was launched in 2009, concerning the eight member states bordering the Baltic Sea and catchment area of the Baltic Sea:

“The Strategy covers the macro-region around the Baltic Sea. The extent depends on the topic: for example on economic issues it would involve all the countries in the region, on water quality issues it would involve the whole catchment area, etc.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶Young, 111.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

What was the impact of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region on the environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea area? What was the role and meaning of the strategy? As the Baltic Sea has been basically an ‘inland sea’ of the European Union since 2004, with the exception of Russian territories, environmental governance of the Baltic Sea becomes gradually unified over the whole region in accordance with the guidelines of the EU environmental policy.¹⁸⁰ According to Yrjö Haila, unification of environmental policy is a process with two different impacts. On the one hand, unification of environmental policy helps to assess environmental problems and integrate environmental goals within other sectors of public policy.¹⁸¹ On the other hand, environmental policy is made up of a highly heterogeneous set of specific environmental problems (like eutrophication, waste-water treatment), and at some level of resolution, also differentiation of policy instruments and differentiation of ways of implementation may be necessary.¹⁸²

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has become the major way in which the European Union relates to the Baltic Sea environment, altering relations in and among other institutional actors.¹⁸³ According to Rikard Bengtsson, macro-regional strategies have become one of the catchwords of contemporary European Union debate.¹⁸⁴

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is built around four pillars:¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰Yrjö Haila, “Unity versus Disunity of Environmental Governance in the Baltic Sea Region,” *Governing a Common Sea: Environmental Policies in the Baltic Sea Region*, ed. Marko Joas, Detlef Jahn & Kristine Kern (London, Sterling: Earthscan, 2008), 194.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Haila, 194.

¹⁸³ Bengtsson, 7.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

- A. To make the Baltic Sea an environmentally sustainable place through reducing nutrient inputs, preserving natural zones and biodiversity, reducing the use of hazardous substances, promoting clean shipping and mitigating climate change
- B. To make the Baltic Sea Region a prosperous place through removing hindrances to the internal market, exploiting the full potential of the region in research and innovation and promoting entrepreneurship
- C. To make the Baltic Sea Region an accessible and attractive place through improving transport links, education, tourism and health in the region
- D. To make the Baltic Sea a safe and secure place through improving maritime safety and security and reinforcing protection from major emergencies at sea.

The most important challenge of them is environment and particular attention is given to the impacts of the excess nutrients leading to eutrophication, but the strategy pays attention also to the sustainability of transport modes and to other issues, like accessibility and attractiveness of the Baltic Sea Region.

The work of the European Union in the matters of the Baltic Sea as a multinational region encourages cooperation among different multilateral cooperation structures and networks in the Baltic Sea Region, including the Northern Dimension, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Nordic Council of Ministers, the Helsinki Commission, Visions and Strategies around Baltic Sea (VASAB), Baltic Sea States Sub regional Cooperation. The European Union is also a mechanism which clarifies the roles and responsibility of different actors and stakeholders of environmental policy and international cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, for example the implementing stakeholders of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, including National Contact Points (NCPs), Priority Area Coordinators (PACs), Horizontal Action Leaders (HALs), and Flagship

Project Leaders (FPLs). In addition, the European Union encourages cooperation between these structures, stakeholders and the Russian Federation.¹⁸⁶

Rikard Bengtsson points out several examples of progress, outcomes and impacts of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, including projects in transport and energy sectors, such as “Cleanship”, “Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan”, “Baltic Transportation Outlook” and “BaltAdapt”. According to Bengtsson, the EU Strategy is drawing together several independent actors and serving as a platform for more effective and coherent policy development in the Baltic Sea Region.¹⁸⁷

According to the Council of the European Union, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region “constitutes an integrated framework to address common challenges in the macro-region benefiting from strengthening co-operation between its stakeholders.”¹⁸⁸ Also, based on the Council of the European Union, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is contributing to economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union, and accordingly in the Baltic Sea Region.¹⁸⁹

According to Speth and Haas, a number of factors can improve the context which makes it easier to reach meaningful agreements and more effective environmental protection.¹⁹⁰ Thus, the European Union has provided the political context and cooperative environment as a factor leading to a more effective environmental regime in the Baltic Sea Region. Bengtsson maintains

¹⁸⁶Council of the European Union, “Council Conclusions on the review of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region”, 3125th General Affairs Council Meeting, Brussels, 15 November 2011, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/baltic/pdf/council_conclusions_eusbsr_15112011.pdf.

¹⁸⁷Bengtsson, 15.

¹⁸⁸Council of the European Union, “Council Conclusions on the review of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region”, 3125th General Affairs Council Meeting, Brussels, 15 November 2011, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/baltic/pdf/council_conclusions_eusbsr_15112011.pdf.

¹⁸⁹Ibid.

¹⁹⁰Speth and Haas, 128.

that, for example, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has in a short time period come to be perceived as a way in which the European Union and its institutions and Baltic Sea states relate to each other.¹⁹¹

According to Speth and Haas, another important factor leading to an effective regime is national capacity, based on financial mechanisms, knowledge and technology.¹⁹² Therefore, the structural funds of the European Union as the primary financial mechanism are also important contributory factor to political and environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.¹⁹³

However, in regard to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the construction of the strategy is also based on close interaction with Russia, Belarus and other non-members of the European Union.¹⁹⁴ This means that the European Union is working not only to strengthen relations between the countries which belong to the European Union as a Baltic club of EU member states, but also as a bridge between those countries (involving former parts and influence sphere of the Soviet Union) and non-EU countries. This may lead to better environmental governance as in this framework states are more willing to protect the common sea.

The environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region after the enlargement of the European Union has been much more coordinated, strengthened, and motivated than before. The European Union has produced many contributing factors to the cooperation among the Baltic Sea states as it serves as a basis for cooperation:

¹⁹¹Bengtsson, 16.

¹⁹²Speth and Haas, 131.

¹⁹³Bengtsson, 16.

¹⁹⁴Bengtsson, 30.

- 1) The Baltic Sea has become an “inland sea” of an international organization, so this is the internal problem of this organization to be responsible for the good environmental status of the sea
- 2) The goal of the Baltic Sea Region is now to be one of the leading regions in many issues: as regards maritime safety, security, attractiveness, sustainability, tourism and exploiting full potential of the region in research, science and innovation¹⁹⁵
- 3) The EU Strategy has contributed to restructuring institutional relations and tasks and multilateral cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region¹⁹⁶
- 4) The European Union has enhanced the dialogue with Russia in the Baltic Sea Region as states are not dealing with Russia separately
- 5) The European Union has built a macro-region around the Baltic Sea which have led to increased cooperation among states which already had an environmental regime before (the Helsinki Commission), but which have lacked political will and coordination during previous times
- 6) The actions which show states’ mutual will to protect the environment and cooperate have grown significantly after the enlargement of the European Union in the Baltic Sea Region

In sum, the environmental governance of the Baltic Sea Region after the enlargement of the European Union became more coordinated in accordance with the strategies and directives of the European Union. This refers to the impact of the European Union on the willingness and ability of Baltic Sea states to protect the environment of a common sea. The effectiveness of the environmental regime built after the enlargement of the European Union has been based on the

¹⁹⁵Bengtsson, 10-11.

¹⁹⁶Ibid, 27.

supportive network of the European Union in the Baltic Sea Region. While the previous environmental regime, based on the Helsinki Convention, was quite limited especially before 1992 during the Cold War, the environmental governance of the Baltic Sea under the auspices of the European Union has been much more successful in terms of cooperation.

However, the European Union has increased also economic growth, prosperity and human impact on the marine environment (car traffic, shipping, agriculture) in the Baltic Sea Region. On the other hand, the European Union supports clean shipping and new regulations in maritime policy and agriculture.

CONCLUSIONS

The current Master's thesis has focused on the political cooperation and international environmental governance in the Baltic Sea Region, mainly since 1974 when an environmental regime, the Helsinki Commission, was formed. The environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region has been based on the political situation for the time being. In order to analyze the effectiveness of an environmental regime, it is needed to take into account also the political situation – are there hostile and limited relationships among states or is there an international network which encourages different types of cooperation, including international environmental governance of a sea? On the one hand, the question is about the responsibility of nation-states. On the other hand, effective protection of marine environment is determined by international cooperation.

Empirical analysis was composed of three parts. The first part, which focused on the emergence of an environmental regime in the Baltic Sea Region, posed two issues: how was this environmental regime influenced by the political situation of the Cold War, and how did the regime influence the environmental cooperation? Regarding the incentives of states to cooperate in the climate of the Cold War, a conclusion is that the environmental cooperation was a political process rather than something caused by Green thoughts. Another conclusion is that limited environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region during the Cold War was a better option than no environmental regime at all: the Helsinki Convention of 1974 was a basis for further environmental cooperation, the revised Helsinki Commission in 1992 and a more effective environmental regime in the Baltic Sea Region that resulted.

The analysis of the environmental regime in the Baltic Sea Region during the 1990s focused on the role of the new political situation in the international environmental cooperation. The environmental governance of the Baltic Sea became more effective and the role and work of the Helsinki Commission expanded and enlarged (to catchment area, etc.).

The last part of the analysis focused on the role of the European Union in building an environmental regime in the Baltic Sea Region. The situation in the Baltic Sea Region changed fundamentally after 2004 when Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland – four coastal states of the Baltic Sea – joined the European Union. A new course was set in the Baltic Sea Region: the environmental governance became coordinated in accordance with the directives (EU Water Framework Directive), strategies (EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region) and policies (EU Maritime Policy) of the European Union. International environmental cooperation reached a new level according to which also the effectiveness of the environmental regime can be measured. On the one hand, the European Union produced many contributory factors to the environmental cooperation of the Baltic Sea. On the other hand, the economic growth, prosperity, pollution and increased impact of agriculture after the enlargement of the European Union have also had impacts on the marine environment of the Baltic Sea. The Baltic Sea has not only become an internal sea of the European Union, it has become also an internal environmental problem of the European Union.

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