

OUR BAL TIC

CONFERENCE #OURBAL TIC
28 SEPTEMBER 2020



Virginijus Sinkevičius

Commissioner

Virginijus Sinkevičius is the present Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, at the European Commission. Mr Sinkevičius was from 2017 to 2019 Minister of Economy, and before he was leading the Committee of Economy at the Parliament of Lithuania. Mr. Sinkevičius was elected to the Parliament in October 2016. Prior, he was a Team Lead for Regulatory Affairs at Invest Lithuania. Mr. Sinkevičius holds BA in International Relations and Affairs from Aberystwyth University and Master's degree in European International Affairs from Maastricht University.

Rüdiger Stempel

HELCOM Executive Secretary

An international lawyer by training, Rüdiger Stempel looks back on many years of experience of environmental law, policy, and diplomacy at the national and international levels, with a particular focus on international marine conservation.

Among his previous appointments are the positions of Executive Secretary of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (UNEP/ASCOBANS) and of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS). He has also worked as a consultant for a number of United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Moreover, Rüdiger has a background as a journalist and professional communicator and he is the author or co-author of numerous articles and several books.

In addition to his work as Executive Secretary of ASCOBANS, his specific Baltic credentials include chairing the ASCOBANS Baltic Sea Steering Group ("Jastarnia Group") from 2009 to 2017 and his membership in the Advisory Board of the Baltic Centre of Excellence for Development, Education and Research (BALTDER), University of Gdańsk, Poland from 2003 to 2005.

A German national, Rüdiger studied at the University of Bonn, Germany and obtained the First and Second German State Examinations in law in 1991 and 1995 respectively.

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Marta Ruiz

Associate Professional Secretary, HELCOM

Marta Ruiz is Associate Professional Secretary of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM), working on marine litter, underwater noise and non-indigenous species issues. Concerning marine litter, she provides support on monitoring and assessment issues as well as on the follow up of the implementation of the HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.

Before joining HELCOM in May 2013 as project staff, Marta was in charge of the Technical Secretary of the Spanish Technological Platform for the Protection of the Coast and the Marine Environment (2011-2013). She worked as technical advisor on marine pollution issues both in the Spanish Ministry of Public Works (2010-2011 & 2006-2008) and in the private sector (2008-2009).

Both Marta's MSc and PhD are in the field of marine sciences, as was her postdoctoral stay at the Technical University of Crete (2004-2006).

Susanna Kaasinen

Associate Professional Secretary, HELCOM

Susanna Kaasinen is Associate Professional Secretary of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM), working on nutrient related issues and the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. She supports the work of the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices and during her time in HELCOM she has been involved in Interreg BSR funded projects Manure Standards and SuMaNu.

Prior to joining HELCOM in 2015, Susanna has worked in various international and Finnish national projects dealing with sustainable agriculture e.g. in the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners and Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. She holds a Master's degree in Environmental Science and Policy.

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Anders Finnson

Chair of the EurEau Joint Working Group on Water Framework Directive

Anders Finnson enjoys the Baltic sea every summer – and is worried! Anders works in the field of wastewater and environment at Svenskt Vatten (the Swedish Water & Wastewater Association). His expert fields are control at source strategies for hazardous chemicals, circular economy, wastewater treatment processes and energy & biogas production. Anders is also coordinator for European affairs at Svenskt Vatten. Anders has had several different positions at EurEau, the voice of Europe's drinking water and wastewater service operators.

Mr Nils Höglund

Chair of the BSAC working group on ecosystem-based management

Mr Nils Höglund, although started studying biology ended up with a mixed educational background in environmental law, economics and political science to focus on the ecosystem problems we have today from a slightly different angle. Nils has many years of experience in environmental work, and has dealt with specific issues, such as climate change and environmental education before joining CCB.

Mr Höglund has worked 11 years with the Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB) NGO network on marine policy and fisheries policy. In CCB he has mainly been engaged with MSFD, in the CFP reform and implementation process, including aspects on aquaculture, in fora like the Baltic Sea Advisory council (BSAC), HELCOM, Baltfish etc.

Lena Bergström

Associate Professor at the Department of Aquatic Resources

Lena Bergström is an Associate Professor at the Department of Aquatic Resources, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. Her research focus is on ecosystem analyses and Baltic Sea ecology. She is actively involved as an expert in the work of HELCOM and ICES.

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Ottilia Thoreson

Director of WWF's Baltic Ecoregion Programme

Ottilia Thoreson is Director of WWF's Baltic Ecoregion Programme, leading the work with WWF and NGO partners in each of the nine coastal Baltic Sea countries to secure a healthy, diverse and resilient Baltic Sea, sustainably managed for the benefit of people and nature of the region. Since 2009 onwards Ottilia has been serving as the focal point for WWF on Baltic related environmental issues stretching from eutrophication, agriculture and food systems, to fisheries, sustainable blue economy and maritime policy. Prior to joining WWF in 2007, Ottilia worked in aquaculture and research and has a Master of Science in Marine Environmental Protection.

Kaj Granholm

Project manager, Baltic Sea Action Group

Kaj Granholm works as a project manager at the Baltic Sea Action Group, a private non-profit foundation based in Finland. Kaj's main focus at the BSAG is international cooperation and the policy interface especially in the thematic area of sustainable agriculture. The international community around the Baltic Sea has been Kaj's professional home base for more than fifteen years, having worked, for instance, at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and HELCOM. Kaj holds a Master's degree in Political Science, but also has professional certificate and experience in seafaring. Currently, Kaj's work in various projects focuses on co-design, communication and advocacy related to nutrient recycling, river basin management, carbon farming as well as policy and market incentives for regenerative agriculture, carbon sequestration and other ecosystem services.

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Žymantas Morkvėnas

Baltic Environmental Forum

Z. Morkvenas is acting director and biodiversity expert at the NGO Baltic environmental forum. His thematic focus is practical nature conservation in open landscapes, agricultural practice impact to biodiversity, development of socio-economic mechanisms of maintaining biodiversity in rural landscapes.

Z. Morkvenas was leading the team to create new agri-environmental measure to support maintenance of alluvial grasslands and fen mires for conservation of globally threatened aquatic warbler. The measure is successfully running in current financial period and has been nominated as good practice example in several publications. He has been involved in a research on the outcome-based agri-environmental measures. Z. Morkvenas is a thematic expert on biodiversity in various European networks.

Z. Morkvenas has long years experience on various conservation projects, in particular addressing aspects of wetland habitat restoration, nature communication, promoting small scale nature friendly farming, promoting short food supply chains, fostering natural and cultural heritage in the context of rural development. Currently, major work focus of Z. Morkvenas is practical conservation of rarest Europe's passerine bird Aquatic warbler and promoting biodiversity conservation at farmland areas.

Besides being director and senior biodiversity expert at Baltic environmental forum, Z. Morkvenas is also a lecturer at Vilnius University teaching environmental communication and conservation biology.

On a private basis, Z. Morkvenas is also a farmer acting in small 20 ha farm with extensive cattle grazing and management of wetland habitat. Z. Morkvenas is chairman of the board at association of small-scale farmers called "VivaSol".

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Hans Bruyninckx

Executive Director of the European Environment Agency

Hans Bruyninckx is the Executive Director of the European Environment Agency since 1 June, 2013. In 1996 Dr Bruyninckx completed a PhD in international environmental politics at Colorado State University.

From 2010 to 2013, he was head of the policy oriented research institute, HIVA, in Leuven, Belgium. He was head of the Political Science department at Leuven University from 2007 to 2010.

Over the last 20 years, he has conducted research in areas including environmental politics, climate change, and sustainable development. He has taught on global environmental politics and global environmental governance in relation to the European Union (EU), publishing extensively on EU environmental policies and its role as an actor in global environmental governance.

Throughout his career Dr Bruyninckx has worked with and advised governmental agencies, civil society and businesses.

Georg Hanke

Joint Research Centre

Georg Hanke is since 25 years working at the European Commission Joint Research Centre in Italy on topics of marine pollution, in particular related to chemical contaminants and marine litter. JRC is providing technical support to implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. He is one of the 3 chairs, together with colleagues from France and Germany, of the MSFD Technical Group on Marine Litter. He contributes also to some technical fora on Marine Pollution outside EU.

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Angela Schultz-Zehden

Founder and manager-owner of 's.Pro sustainable-projects GmbH' and the 'SUBMARINER network for Blue Growth EEIG

Angela Schultz-Zehden (MBA, MSc, BSc), founder and manager-owner of 's.Pro sustainable-projects GmbH' and the 'SUBMARINER network for Blue Growth EEIG' is one of the core experts on Integrated Maritime Policy and the Blue BioEconomy in Europe and has been at the forefront of developing both concepts for more than 20 years by now acting as senior advisor to national ministries; the European Commission as well as IOC UNESCO.

Angela has led a multitude of 'blue' projects within Europe as well as increasingly also world-wide. Among others she was in charge of EU MSP (Maritime Spatial Planning) Platform and has led the large scale study including an extensive stakeholder process leading towards the 'Implementation Strategy for the Baltic Blue Growth Agenda'.

As the managing director of SUBMARINER – a unique network bringing together public authorities, research institutes, business parks and companies involved in the blue bioeconomy across the Baltic Sea Region – she is continuously analysing, initiating and guiding projects designed to foster innovative and sustainable uses of marine resources. As of today SUBMARINER has raised more than 25 mio EUR in funding for more than 16 different projects and the SUBMARINERs Accelerator has provided comprehensive advise and guidance to more than 35 start-ups and spin-offs from all spheres of the blue bioeconomy.

For her work Angela has received the European Commissions' award 'Woman of the Year in the Blue Economy 2016'.