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## Action 7

„To legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents“

7th Steering Group Meeting of the Priority Area 4 - To restore and maintain the quality of waters - of the EUSDR

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# Table of contents

- Historical background
- Main reasons behind the regulation
- Findings of the Overview Report
- Recommendations on short-term policy responses

# Historical background

**Priority Area 4** : To restore and maintain the quality of waters

- **Action 7** : “To legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents”.
  - **Milestone n°2** : Policy response on the Overview Report

# Reasons

- Nutrient pollution is a priority challenge - it affects not only freshwaters but groundwater and the marine environment as well
- Eutrophication of surface waters
- Negative impacts on the status of water ecosystems
- Phosphates: improve the cleaning effects of detergents + contributes to strongly increased levels of nutrients.

# Reasons

- EU-25: consumption of phosphate-containing detergents about 1.8 million tonnes (110.000 tonnes of phosphorus content)
- 90-95% of these are consumed in domestic laundry and dishwashing detergents
- Without treatment – direct way into the aquatic environment
- Reducing the amount of phosphates in detergents - cost effective pollution control initiative which can quickly and effectively reduce the nutrient pollution in the Danube region

# Overview Report

- ICPDR January 2013: "Interim Report on the Implementation of the Joint Program of Measures in the Danube River Basin District"
- Objective: provide an overview on the state of play regarding the implementation of the JPM as included in the DRBM Plan

# Main findings of the Overview Report

- Introduction of phosphate-free detergents : fast and efficient measure to reduce nutrient emissions into surface waters.
- Reducing phosphate in detergents may contribute greatly to decreasing nutrient loads in the Danube.
- Scenarios calculated in the DRBMP : a ban on phosphate-containing laundry detergents by 2012 and dishwasher detergents by 2015 would reduce the levels of phosphates by approximately 2,000 tons a year, to a level of only 5% above the values of the 1960s.

# Main findings of the Overview Report

Alternatives to phosphate based detergents are available.

- laundry detergents on the **German** and **Austrian** market are almost completely phosphate-free
- the **Czech Republic** permits phosphate content up to 0.5% of weight in laundry detergents, except for detergents produced for industrial use and agents for dishwashers
- some countries, such as Germany and Austria, have successfully reduced the amount of phosphates through industry agreements
- in other countries, including **Hungary**, reducing phosphate content is currently in progress
- in **Croatia, Serbia, Romania and Ukraine**, legislation or voluntary agreements are under development
- in other Danube countries such as **Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia**, the shift to phosphate-free detergents was market-driven



# Main findings of the Overview Report

- Directive **2000/60/EC** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (WFD)
- Regulation (EU) No **259/2012** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 2012 amending Regulation (EC) No 648/2004 as regards the use of phosphates and other phosphorus compounds in consumer laundry detergents and consumer automatic dishwasher detergents

# Regulation 259/2012

## Aims:

- to protect the environment by reducing eutrophication caused by phosphorus in detergents used by consumers
- to reduce the costs of phosphates removal in waste water treatment plants
- to ensure the smooth functioning of the internal market in consumer laundry detergents and consumer automatic dishwasher detergents

# Regulation 259/2012

- the content of phosphates and other phosphorus compounds in consumer laundry detergents and consumer automatic dishwasher detergents is limited
- **30 June 2013** : the total content of phosphorus in **consumer laundry detergents** placed on the market shall be **less, than 0.5 grams** in a standard washing machine load
- **1 January 2017** : the total content of phosphorus in **consumer automatic dishwasher detergents** placed on the market shall be **less, than 0.3 grams** in a standard machine load

# Recommendations on short-term policy responses

**A complex policy which aims to reduce and/or phase out phosphates from detergents shall be based on the following measures:**

- legislative measures;
- voluntary agreements;
- an eco-labelling system of detergents;
- taxes or fines;
- increased public awareness and involvement.

**National legislative measures** may include the following:

- introduction of a total ban of phosphates in detergents;
- restriction of phosphates in laundry detergents; or
- setting limit values for the content of phosphates in detergents.

# Recommendations on short-term policy responses

## Short-term policy reflections

- **In those countries where no legislation on phosphate-free detergents exists yet, preparing impact assessments in order to find the most suitable policy option for further action.**
- For those countries where the relevant legislation or voluntary agreements aiming to reduce/eliminate the phosphate content of detergents are already in place, the top priority is to **monitor compliance with already existing agreements or legislation, with the assistance of NGOs when possible.**

# Recommendations on short-term policy responses

- Promoting public debate and involvement
- Raising consumers' awareness of negative environmental impacts of products
- Organising workshops
- Maintain close contact with the relevant government departments of the countries concerned
- Maintain a dialogue with both the industry and the relevant trade associations
- International co-operation among the relevant stakeholders

# Summary

- Introduction of limitations on phosphorus in detergents, like a phosphorus limitation in laundry detergents by 30 June 2013 and in dishwasher detergents in January 2017, is seen as a cost-effective and necessary measure to complement the efforts of implementing urban wastewater treatment and reach a phosphorus level equivalent to the one in the 1960's.
- However, in order to reach these objectives, effective cooperation and an exchange of information are essential to share already existing good practices and to provide legal and technical assistance across the Danube countries.

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Thank you for your attention!

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