

EN

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(8.11.2024)

The Commission recognises the significant and multifaceted threat posed by munitions and chemical weapons on the Baltic seabed.

In addition to the pilot project ‘Saving our Seas’, the Commission is collaborating closely with the Baltic states and international partners¹, to develop a comprehensive strategy for the clean-up of the Baltic Sea. In addition, during the ‘Our Baltic’ Conference in 2023, Baltic Sea Member States agreed on a set of comprehensive commitments on Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)². This cooperation will enhance monitoring, risk assessment, and the development of best practices for the safe removal of hazardous materials and optimise the clean-up of sea-dumped chemical munitions and unexploded ordnances.

The Commission has supported projects in the Baltic Sea, starting with Chemsea³ (2007–2013) for munitions mapping and later with Daimon 1⁴ and Daimon 2⁵ (2014–2020) for underwater detection. Projects like Basta⁶ and ExploTECT⁷ (2019–2022) developed methods to neutralize munitions.

Currently, the Commission funds the following projects: Muni-risk⁸, Mine-sweeper⁹, and Munimap¹⁰ that assess unexploded ordnance risks and further map contaminated areas, reflecting its commitment to safeguarding the Baltic Sea.

The Commission is undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy. As part of this process, a public consultation will be opened in the fourth quarter of 2024. The results of the evaluation, expected towards the end of 2025, will inform future policy development. The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund¹¹, the European Regional Development Fund¹² and Horizon Europe¹³ continue to provide relevant funding.

¹ The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (known as Helsinki Convention - HELCOM) and the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

² https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/publications/our-baltic-conference-2023-commitments_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/finland/chemsea-tackles-problem-of-chemical-munitions-in-the-baltic-sea

⁴ <https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/daimon/>

⁵ <https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/daimon-2/#:~:text=The%20project%20DAIMON2%20optimised%20the%20tools%20that%20allow%20on%20the%20management%20of%20the%20dumped%20munitions> .

⁶ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/featured-projects/basta_en

⁷ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/featured-projects/exploTECT_en

⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43392145/101173075/EMFAF>

⁹ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101167839>

¹⁰ <https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/munimap/>

¹¹ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/emfaf_en

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en

¹³ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en