The purpose of the workshop on Waste and Hazardous substances was to get the input from stakeholders on the topic through presentations from experts and through discussions. Stakeholders were invited to present what in their views would be the main actions / solutions to be implemented in order to address the existing problems.

Below is a summary of the input from stakeholders:

**Presentations**

- **Bo Nyström, Swedish Chemicals Agency:** The presentation highlighted that the Baltic Sea is a sensitive area as it is surrounded by densely populated and industrialised countries, as it is relatively shallow and has limited contacts with the open ocean, as it has a cold climate reducing the degradation rate of chemicals and as it has a limited number of species due to brackish water and cold climate. In addition, the problem with hazardous substances is that they can remain for a very long time in the marine environment especially in the sediment.

- **Kaj Forsius, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE):** The presentation highlighted in particular the COHIBA project (Control of Hazardous Substances in the Baltic Sea Region; financed by the ERDF under the ‘Baltic Sea Region’ Programme) which supports the implementation of the section on hazardous substances of the ‘Baltic Sea Action Plan’ (BSAP) of HELCOM. This was seen as a good example of support from the Commission to the BSAP. This project will start in 2009 and will last 3 years. The aim is to identify the sources of pollution of 11 selected hazardous substances, to analyse the circuit of these pollutants (from the source to the soil, to the rivers and to the sea), to identify possible solutions and to promote capacity building namely through case studies. The work will be done in close coordination with HELCOM.

**Actions / Solutions**

- The situation has improved in recent years for some waste and hazardous substances. This means that when there is a political will, funding and technology, the situation can be changed to the better. The consequence of this change is, for example, that the population of the Baltic grey seals and of the sea eagles has increased over recent years.

- There was a strong support for the ‘Baltic Sea Action Plan’ (BSAP) adopted in the frame of HELCOM. It was considered as covering the main important issues, as being ambitious, and as being very concrete. The general idea was not to “reinvent the wheel” and to benefit from the fact that this plan has been approved by Member States, the Russian Federation and the European Commission. In addition the system to monitor the implementation of the actions was praised.
• The importance of proper implementation of the EU legislation was highlighted (in particular the REACH Directive). However, it was noted that EU legislation is adopted by 27 Member States in very different situation and may therefore not fully suit the specific needs of the Baltic Sea Region. Hence, it might be useful to consider going beyond the requirements of EU legislation. To do so, the system in place is Sweden could be inspirational: the public authorities negotiate with the industry on the levels of pollutants instead of relying solely on the legislation.

• Regarding hazardous substances there is a need to have a better knowledge of the pollutants involved (levels, sources, flows, influence on the environment,...) and then to decide whether to ban them, to reduce them or to replace them. All this should be complemented by awareness raising campaigns and capacity building.

• Regarding waste, participants expressed the need for more Solid Waste and Waste Water Treatment Plants. It was made clear that these should include the latest technologies to be able to remove all the pollutants including those from pharmaceutical origins.

• In the Member States who recently joined the EU, the agriculture is still very traditional, thereby respecting the environment especially the humid zones and the rivers. Hence, it was underlined that this is an asset for the sustainable development of these regions and that the modernisation of these agricultures should be well thought in order not to be detrimental to the environment.