

Date: July 4, 2016

To:  
The European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 Brussels  
BELGIUM

### **Accident on Fredericia Harbor causes large nitrogen run off to the marine environment**

We would like to make the European Commission aware of the fact that an explosion in several storage tanks on Fredericia Harbor on February 3 this year has caused significant nitrogen run off of between 4,000 and 5,000 tons to the Little Belt and nearby waters. This exacerbates the problems of increased nitrogen emissions from agriculture, which the Commission is in the process of discussing with the Danish government in relation to the recent so called Agriculture Package and Denmark's implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

The accident occurred because of the explosion and collapse of several storage tanks on the harbor of Fredericia. The tanks contained palm oil and fertilizer respectively. The total nitrogen runoff from the tanks amount to approximately 25 per cent of the annual nitrogen emissions to the water bodies affected by the explosions.

We fear that this massive discharge will have significant environmental consequences for large parts of the Danish inland waters. And it may also have a negative environmental impact on nearby German coastal waters.

The water bodies, which could be affected by the runoff are already now not fulfilling the requirements for 'good ecological status', and thus do not meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

We find it extremely important, that the objective of good ecological status of the aquatic environment is achieved. It is a prerequisite for preserving European marine nature. This will only succeed through the fulfillments of the mandatory measures set out by the Commission, among which is the Water Framework Directive.

This accident and subsequent run off will require a much greater effort in Denmark to meet the requirements of the WFD objectives than previously thought. We therefore urge the Commission to take the initiative to discuss the environmental impact of the spill with the Danish government, and to discuss the necessary initiatives that have to be taken as a consequence of this.

Shortly before the heavy runoff from the collapsed storage tanks took place, the Danish government entered into an agreement on an agricultural package with its

parliamentary majority. With the package, the parties agreed, among other things, to defer 6,200 tons of the total effort on reducing nitrogen leaching to 2027. The total amount has been estimated to be about 10,000 tons in order to achieve good ecological status in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

The parties also agreed on several initiatives that will lead to increased nitrogen discharge into Danish waters in the coming years. Seeing that the Commission has already sent a pilot letter to the Danish Government on the agricultural package asking questions on multiple directive obligations, we also call on the Commission to raise the issue with the Danish government on how the emissions from the collapsed storage tanks will be handled in relation to the initiatives arising from the agriculture package.

We are also aware that the Danish implementation of the Nitrates Directive is currently being discussed with the Commission for revision. Considering that the implementation of the Nitrates Directive and compliance with the Water Framework Directive are essential elements in the Commission's work to ensure the marine environment, we also call on the Commission to include the issue of necessary initiatives in a revised Danish nitrate action plan to address the environmental impact of nitrogen run off from the collapsed storage tanks.

We are of course available for further information if necessary.

On behalf of Målopfyldelsesrådet<sup>1</sup> in Denmark, in this case signed by The Danish Society for Nature Conservation, The Danish Anglers Association, The Danish Ornithological Society and The Ecological Council.

Yours sincerely



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<sup>1</sup> The Danish Compliance Council (for Nature and the Environment) members are: Danish Society for Nature Conservation, Dansk Ornitologisk Forening/BirdLife Denmark, The Ecological Council, The Danish Anglers Association, and Organic Denmark. WWF Denmark and The Danish Outdoor Council are associated.