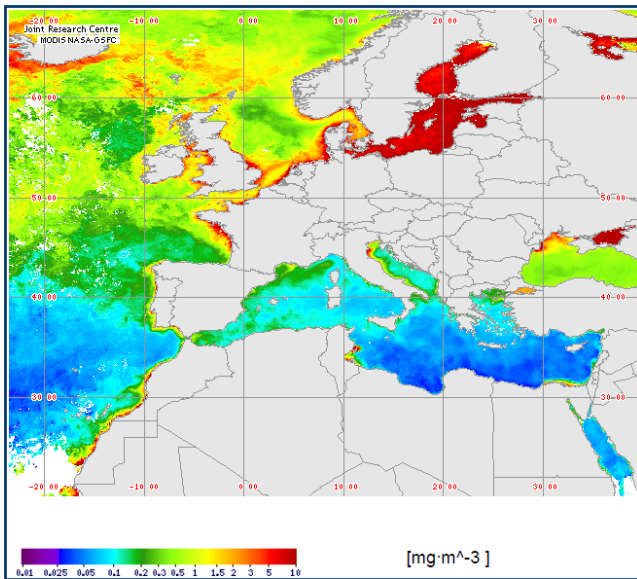


EU-wide ban on phosphates in household detergents adopted



Household detergents are a major source of phosphorus input to our aquatic environment, in particular causing, together with nitrates, eutrophication of waters. Figures show that prior to introduction of phosphate-free products, household detergents contributed to almost half of the phosphorus load affecting waters.

Map: results of satellite surveillance of chlorophyll-a as an indicator of eutrophication; data of July 2008; source: European Commission
<http://emis.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Within the 27 EU countries, a range of approaches has been followed in the past, from legal bans via voluntary agreements to no measures at all ⇒ see [overview](#).



To address this evidently transboundary challenge at a European level, the European Commission presented a legislative proposal, leading to European Parliament and Council agreeing on phasing out phosphates in household detergents. The timeline (proposal 4 November 2010, adoption 14 March 2012) as well as the positions/decisions of involved European institutions are available at http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?L=en&DosId=199817

This European initiative is building on transboundary commitments already taken earlier, such as those within the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) http://www.icpdr.org/participate/danube_river_basin_management_plan, the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) <http://www.helcom.fi/BSAP> and the International Commission for the Protection of Lake Geneva (CIPEL) <http://www.cipel.org/sp/article43.html>.

In a nutshell, under the Regulation any household detergents shall not be placed on the EU market if the total phosphorus content is

- 0.5 grams per main washing cycle (consumer laundry detergents) and
- 0.3 grams per standard dosage (consumer automatic dishwasher detergents).

The extension of the restrictions to dishwasher detergents followed an initiative by the European Parliament.

The restrictions will apply

- for consumer laundry detergents as from 30 June 2013,
- for consumer automatic dishwasher detergents as from 1 January 2017.

⇒ More information ...

- Read the full text of the new Detergents Regulation 2012 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:094:0016:0021:EN:PDF>
- Read the full text of the existing Detergents Regulation (consolidated version of Regulation 2004 as amended 2006, 2008 and 2009) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2004R0648:20090627:EN:PDF>
- Read the impact assessment accompanying the legislative proposal <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SEC:2010:1277:FIN:EN:PDF>
- Contact: Mr Klaus Berend, European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry, Head of Unit ENTR.G.2, email: klaus.berend@ec.europa.eu

Reactions ...

- AISE, the International Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products, welcomed the new regulation, stressing it would provide the industry with necessary business certainty whilst reducing regulatory complexity. [http://www.aise.eu/PDF/AISE - Press release - Detergent Regulation - 14 Dec 2011.pdf](http://www.aise.eu/PDF/AISE_-_Press_release_-_Detergent_Regulation_-_14_Dec_2011.pdf)
- Environmental NGO WWF Europe welcomed the decision as “paving the way for the most cost-effective solution to reduce the algal blooms in our rivers, lakes and seas” whilst regretting that the deadlines would not reflect the urgency of the problem in particular in the Danube and Black Sea areas as well as the Baltic. <http://www.wwf.eu/?202835/Eu-market-get-rid-of-phosphate-detergents>,
- CEEP, the association of European phosphate producers, regretted the decision on dishwasher detergents as “contrary to the principles of better regulation” and “an undesirable development”. <http://www.ceep-phosphates.org/Files/Document/94/Ceep%20statement%20EU%20detergent%20P-ban%2014%20Dec%202011.pdf>