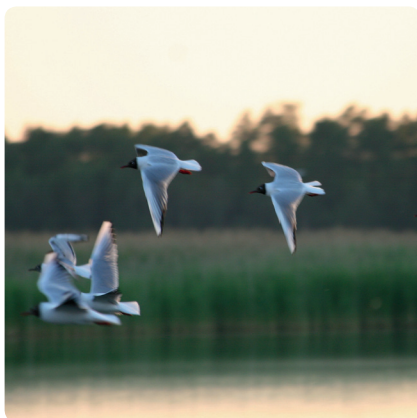


BalticSurvey – a study in the Baltic Sea countries of public attitudes and use of the sea

Summary of main results

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*Baltic***STERN**



BalticSurvey – a study in the Baltic Sea countries of public attitudes and use of the sea

Summary of main results

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This report summarizes the basic results of BalticSurvey – a project to conduct a survey in the nine littoral countries of the Baltic Sea, i.e. Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), Germany (DE), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Poland (PL), Russia (RU) and Sweden (SE). For more details on the results and the project, the reader is referred to the separate report “BalticSurvey – a study in the Baltic Sea countries of public attitudes and use of the sea: Report on basic findings” and other material available at www.naturvardsverket.se/balticstern and www.stockholmresilience.org/balticstern.

BalticSurvey elicited information on how the general public in these countries uses the sea, and what attitudes people in these countries have towards the marine environment and towards various measures for improving the environment. It included about 9,000 interviews carried out in April–June 2010 in all the Baltic Sea countries.

Telephone interviews were used as the means of data collection in all the countries except Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in which face-to-face interviews were used. In all the nine Baltic Sea countries except Russia, random sampling of the adult national population was applied. The sample size allowed about 1,000 interviews in each country. For Russia, due to its large population and wide geographical extent, a separate sample was made for the population living in the two Russian regions situated closest to the Baltic Sea, i.e. the coastal regions of St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad (RU-c). Results from this sample were judged to be reasonably comparable to the national samples of the other countries. The sampling was made with a focus on the urban population of St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad and 1,000 interviews were carried out. “Russia” in this report therefore refers to this particular sample and not to the rest of Russia.

Comparisons with national statistics revealed that in most countries, there was an overrepresentation among the respondents of females and of relatively old people. In order to achieve an improved representativity of the results, weighting was therefore applied with respect to gender and age. The results presented in the report are based on weighted data.

Preface

Inspired by “The Economics of Climate Change – the Stern Review” (2007), the Nordic Ministers for the Environment in September 2008 jointly called for Stern-like reviews of the Nordic Seas, in order to gain a broad perspective of the socio-economic consequences of human pressures on the marine environment.

Following this call, the Swedish Government instructed the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) to compile information on the economic implications of human impact on the Baltic Sea and on the Skagerrak. The information was gathered in seven background reports in the Economic Marine Information project. In a final synthesis report “What’s in the sea for me?” (2009), SEPA concluded that at present, the knowledge needed for a comprehensive analysis was lacking and further research is needed. The Swedish Government decided to continue with in depth analyses regarding the socioeconomic impacts of the environmental development in the Baltic Sea and in the Skagerrak and instructed SEPA to finance such studies.

In parallel an international research network, BalticSTERN, with partners from all countries surrounding the Baltic Sea was established with the purpose of carrying out cost-benefit analysis regarding the environmental problems of the Baltic Sea. BalticSTERN also aims to provide guidance regarding the cost-effective measures and policy instruments that are needed to secure the ability of the Baltic Sea ecosystem to provide ecosystem services. The acronym STERN stands for Systems Tools and Ecological-economic evaluation – a Research Network. The network is coordinated by the BalticSTERN Secretariat, established at the Stockholm Resilience Centre. Based on the research carried out by the network, the Secretariat will make a synthesis report directed to decision makers, which is to be published in 2012.

BalticSurvey is a subproject within BalticSTERN financed by SEPA and the Finnish Advisory Board of Sectoral Research. It has identified how people around the Baltic Sea and parts of Skagerrak use the sea and what attitudes they have towards the marine environment. The project was coordinated by Enveco Environmental Economics Consultancy Ltd. (Sweden) in partnership with National Environmental Research Institute, University of Aarhus (Denmark), Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre, Estonian Institute of Sustainable Development (Estonia), MTT Agrifood Research (Finland), Berlin Institute of Technology (Germany), Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy Studies (Latvia), Center for Environmental Policy (Lithuania), Warsaw Ecological Economics Center, University of Warsaw (Poland) and Centre for Economic and Financial Research at New Economic School (Russia). Synovate Sweden coordinated the data collection.

Further information about the BalticSTERN partners, projects and publications can be found at: <http://www.stockholmresilience.org/balticstern>.

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In short, did you know that...

...some **80%** of us who live in the Baltic Sea region have spent leisure time at the Baltic Sea.

...the most frequent visitors are found in Denmark, Finland and Sweden. On average, the respondents in these countries spent at least some leisure time at the Baltic Sea on **22–35 days** of the 180 days in the period of April–September 2009. For Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia, the corresponding interval was **9–19 days**. Being at the beach or seashore for walking, sunbathing and the like, and swimming, were the most frequent activities.

...**37–47%** of respondents in Poland, Germany and Lithuania tended to agree with the statement “I am worried about the Baltic Sea environment”. **53–77%** tended to agree in Denmark, Latvia, Sweden, Estonia, Russia and Finland.

...in all countries except Poland and Sweden, **a majority** tended to *disagree* that they personally affect the Baltic Sea environment.

...in Poland and Sweden, **a majority** tended to agree with the statement “I can myself play a role in improving the Baltic Sea environment”. In the other countries, **17–37%** tended to agree.

...”litter” is a marine issue that was regarded by **a majority** of the respondents in all countries as a rather big or very big problem in the Baltic

Sea. The same is true in at least seven of the nine countries for “damage to flora and fauna in the sea”, “heavy metals and other hazardous substances”, “small everyday oil leakages”, “possibility of major oil spill” and “algal blooms”. In general, “gas pipelines lying at the sea bottom”, “open sea water quality” and, in particular, “off-shore wind turbines” tended to be viewed as less problematic in most countries.

...in all countries, **a majority** tended to view it as necessary that their own country’s wastewater treatment plants, professional fishermen, industry, sea transports and ports take actions to improve the Baltic Sea environment. **A majority** in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden thought it is necessary that their own country’s farmers take actions.

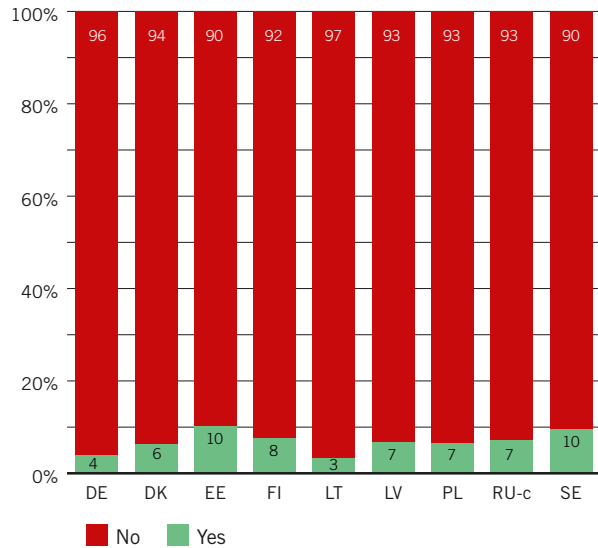
...there is widespread support for the Polluter Pays Principle. **A majority** of the respondents in all the countries considered increased pollution emissions charges for individuals and enterprises to be an acceptable way of funding actions to improve the Baltic Sea environment. Increases in taxes or water bills are not popular, though people are in general less negative towards making payments that are paid by all and are earmarked for funding actions.

People's connection to the Baltic Sea

Relations between people's work and the sea

“Do you have or have had an occupation that is somehow dependent on the Baltic Sea?”

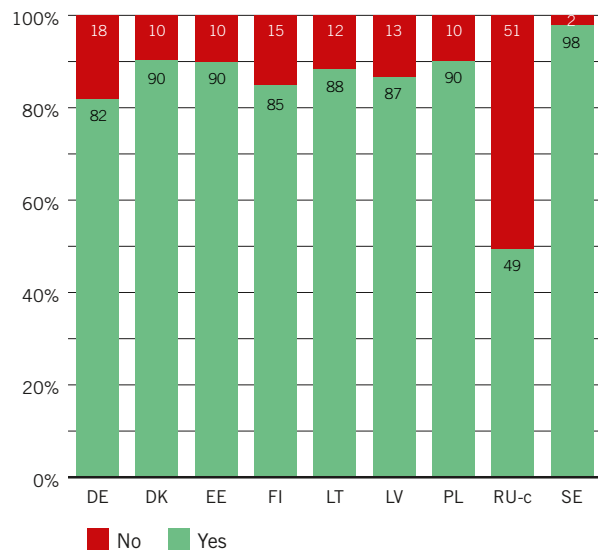
The proportion of respondents saying that they have or have had an occupation that is dependent on the sea is less than, or equal to, about 10% in all countries.



Have you ever been to the sea for leisure?

“Have you ever been to the Baltic Sea to spend leisure time there? This could be about swimming, boating and fishing, but also for example walking along the seashore, skating and going on a cruise.”

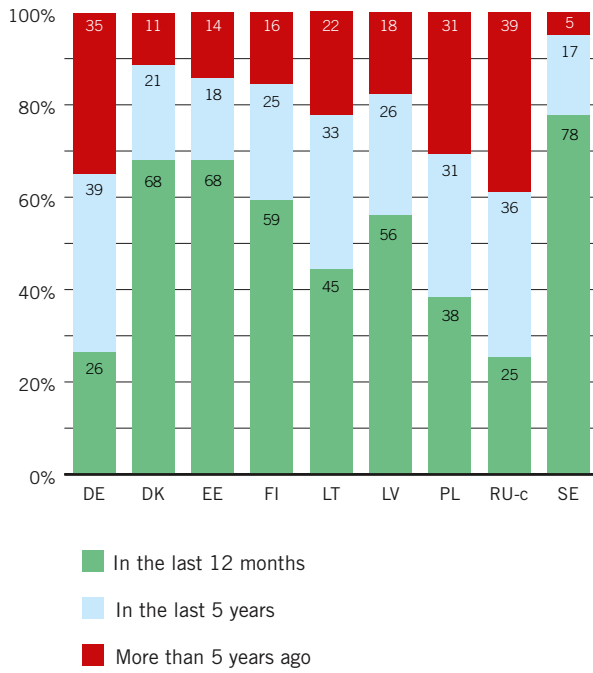
In all the countries except Russia, more than 80% of the respondents have been at the sea at least once. The highest percentage, 98%, is found in Sweden. In Russia, almost 50% of the respondents have been to the sea to spend leisure time.



Most recent visit to the sea

“When was your last visit to the Baltic Sea to spend leisure time there?”

This question was posed to those respondents who had visited the sea at least once. The most recent visit occurred in the last 12 months for a majority of respondents in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Sweden. For Germany, Poland and Russia, the most recent visit took place more than 5 years ago for 30–40% of the respondents.



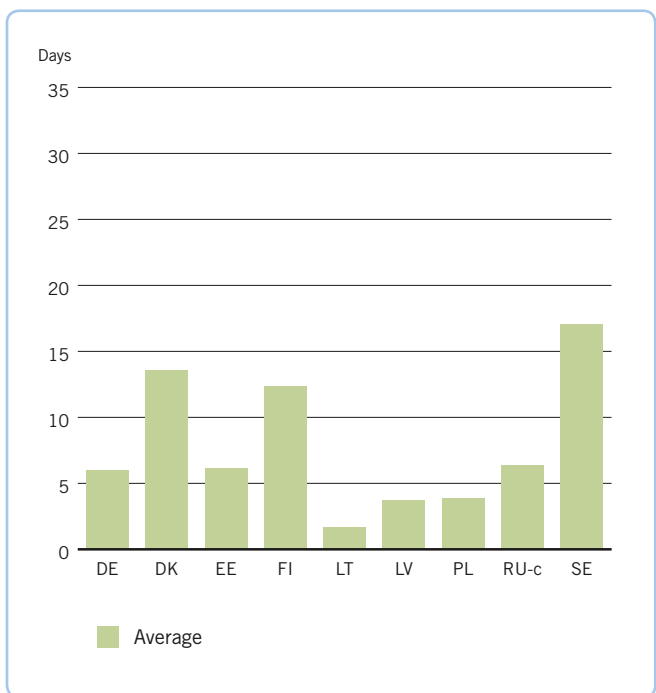
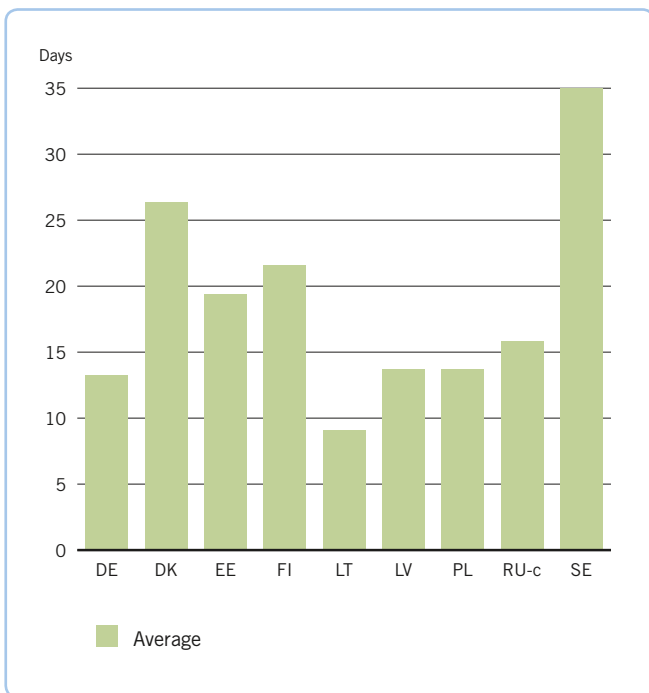
Number of days that included a visit to the sea

Respondents who had made a visit to the sea in the last twelve months were asked to report how often they had been to the sea during the six-month period of April–September 2009 and during the six-month period of October 2009–March 2010. The frequency of visits was measured as the number of days in which the respondents had spent at least some leisure time at the sea. Consequently, the maximum value is 180 days for both six-month periods.

The average values suggest that visits to the sea are most frequent in Sweden, Denmark and Finland, and least frequent in Lithuania, Germany, Latvia and Poland. This is true for both six-month periods, but the number of days with a visit is, not surprisingly, considerably lower for all countries for the October–March period.

“Now think about the months of April to September 2009. This means about 180 days. On about how many of these days did you spend at least some leisure time at the Baltic Sea?”

“And now think about the months of October 2009 to March 2010. Again, this means about 180 days. On about how many of these days did you spend at least some leisure time at the Baltic Sea?”



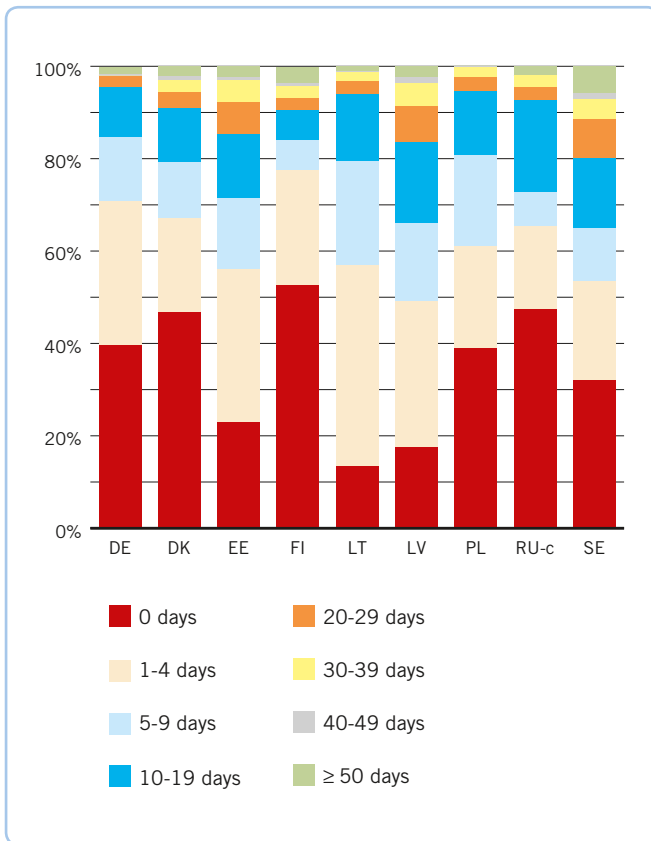
What do people do when visiting the sea?

“Now think about the last 12 months, i.e. April 2009 to March 2010, and the days you spent at least some leisure time at the Baltic Sea. On about how many of these days did you do the following?”

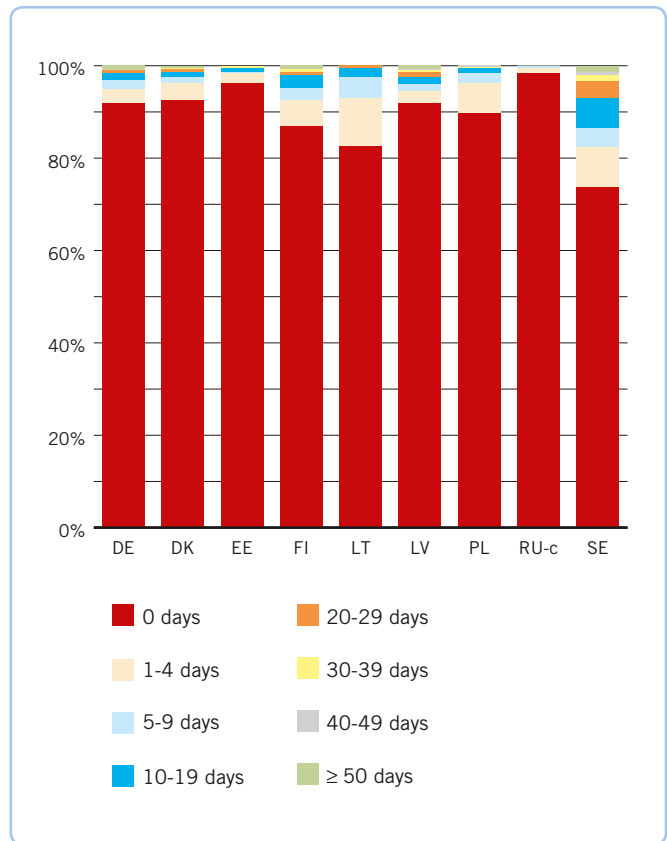
The respondents’ answers to this question indicate what they do when they visit the sea. Respondents were asked to consider the whole period of April 2009–March 2010 and the particular days on which they spent at least some leisure time at the sea. They were requested to report on how many of these days they under-

took different activities; see the diagrams. The most common activities in all countries are swimming and being at the beach or seashore for walking, sunbathing or the like. Boating and going on a cruise are also relatively common in some countries.

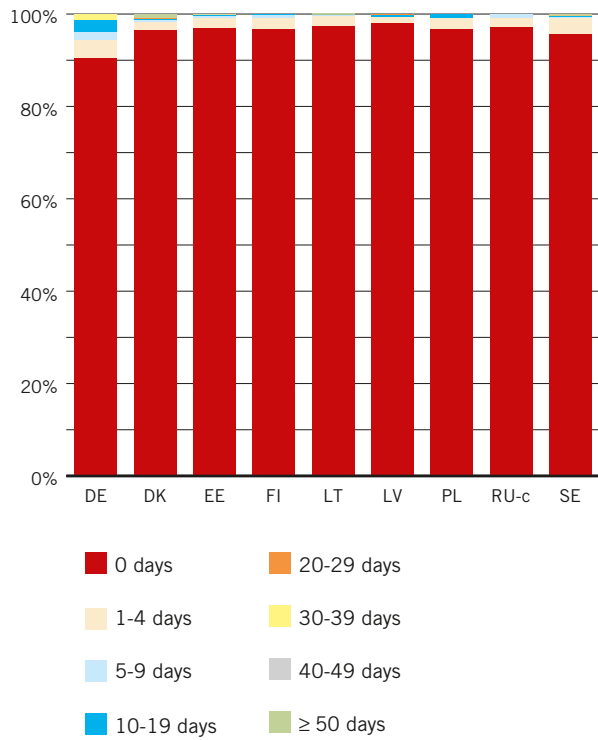
Swimming (in the sea)



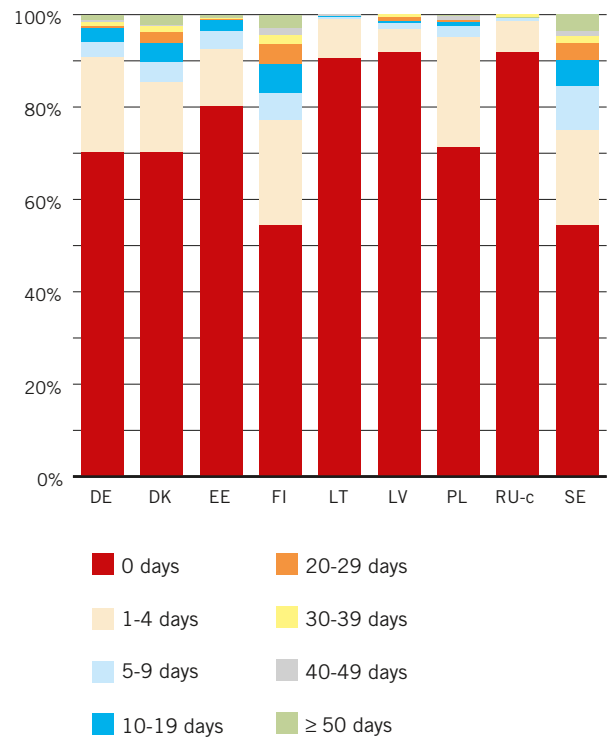
Diving (in the sea)



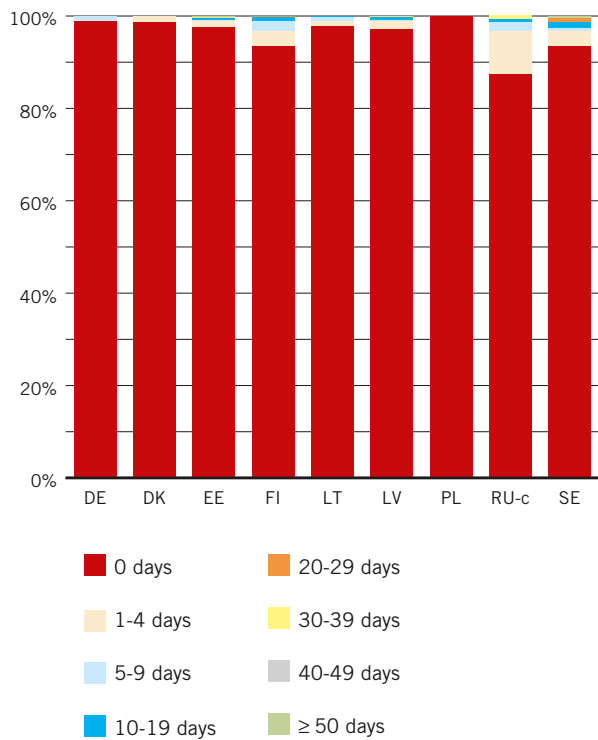
Windsurfing, water skiing



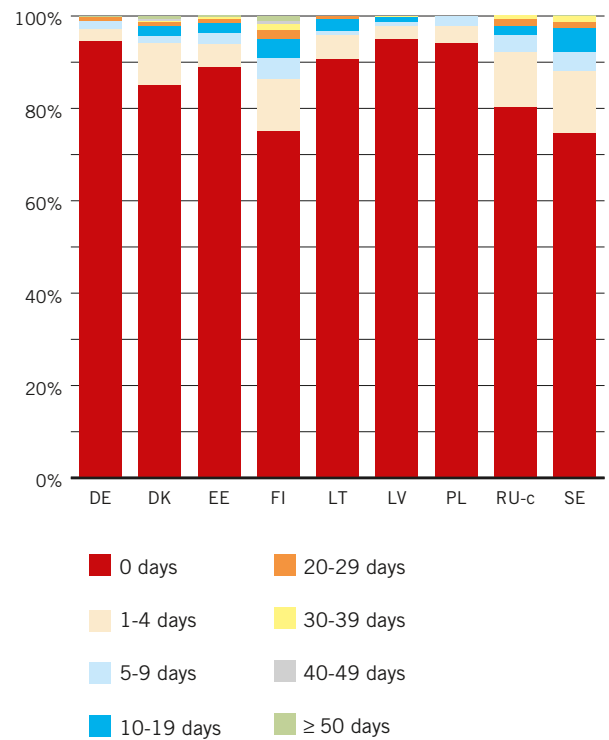
Boating – e.g. sailing, power boating, rowing, canoeing/kayaking



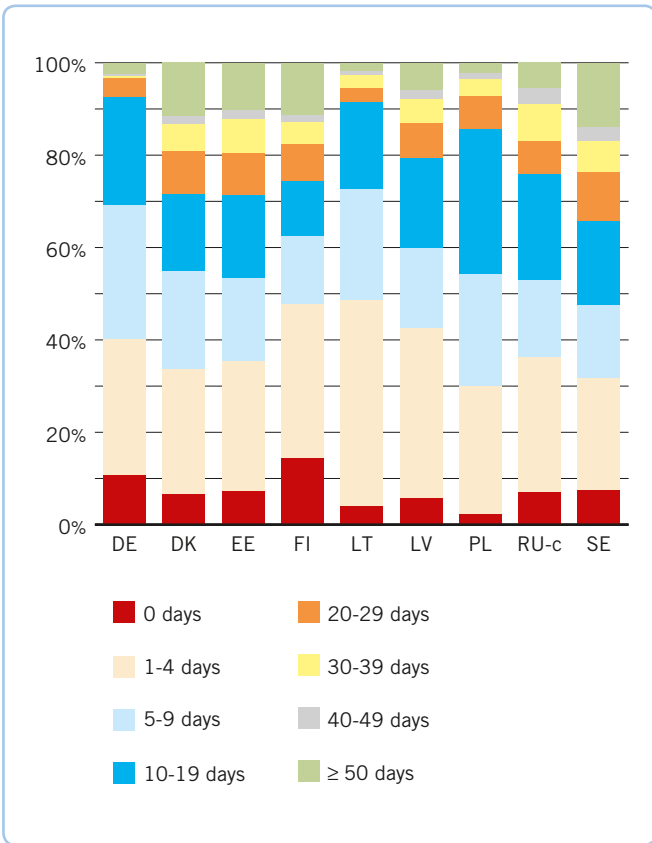
Jigging



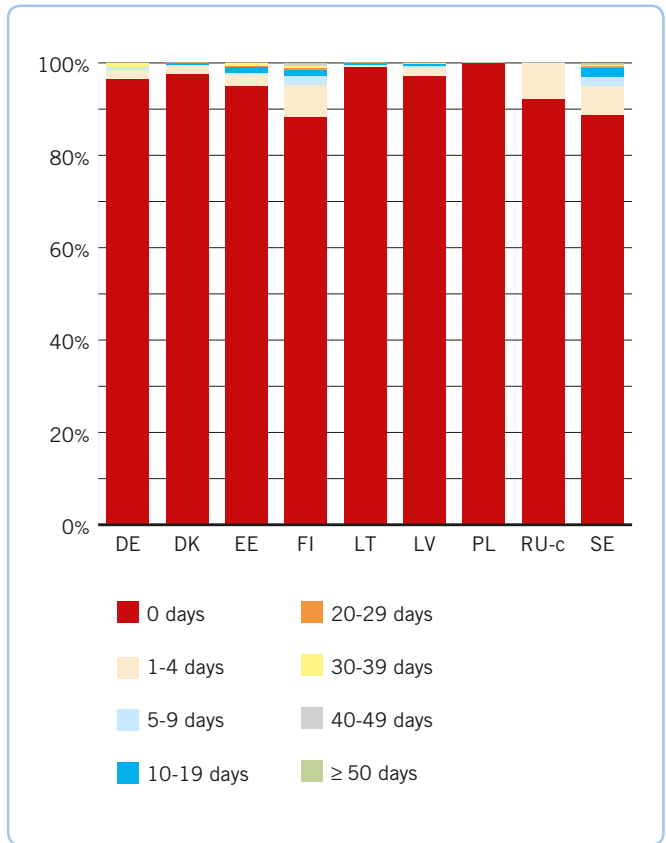
Other types of fishing than jigging



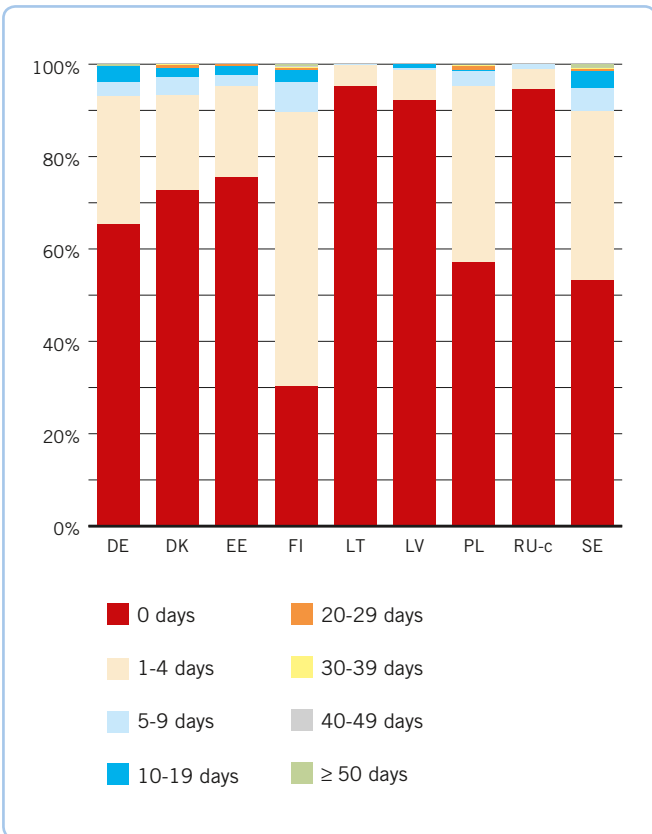
Being at the beach or seashore for walking, picnicking, sunbathing, visiting touristic or cultural sites, etc.



Skating, skiing



Going on a cruise/using water-based transportation for recreation



**People's attitudes towards
the marine environment and
actions for improving it**

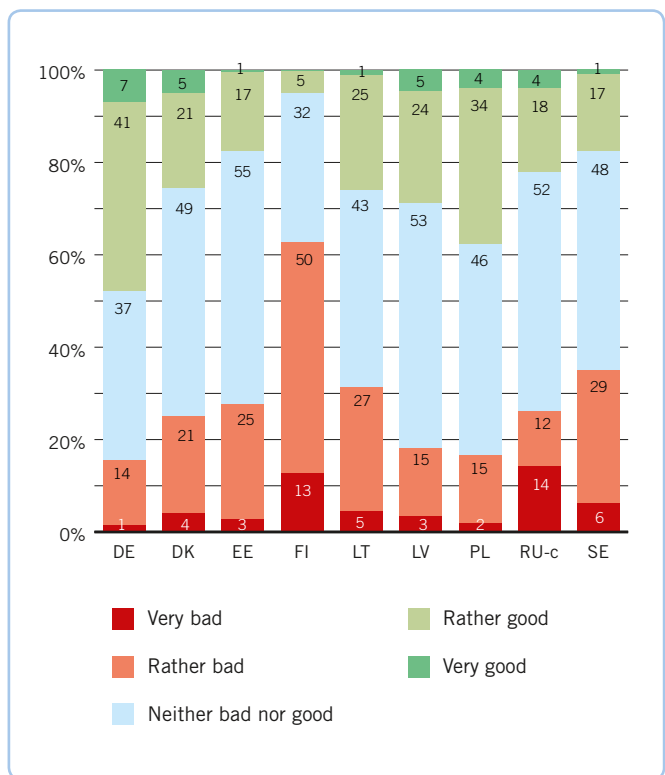
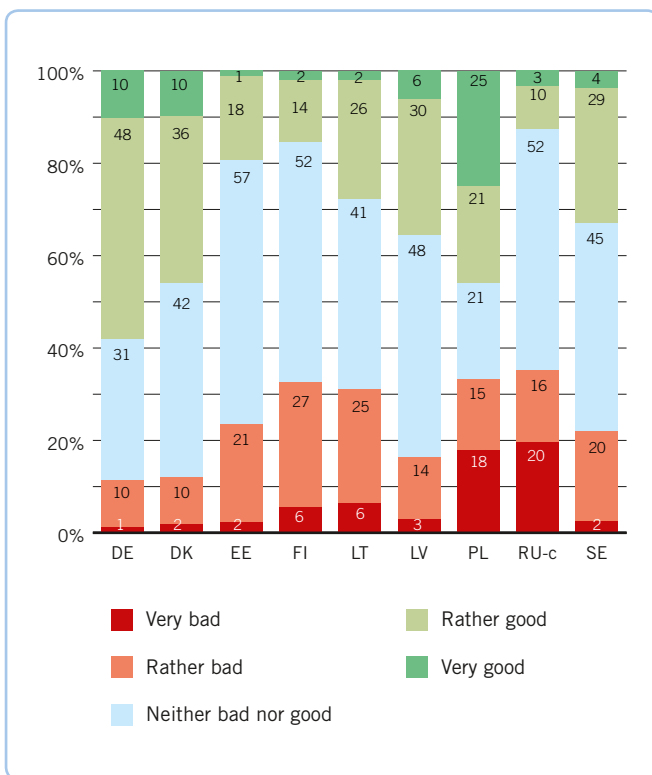
The status of the marine environment

Two questions were posed regarding the respondents' opinion about the status of the marine environment; one about the status of the marine environment within the borders of the respondent's country and one about the status from the

perspective of the whole Baltic Sea. There is a slight tendency in most countries to view the status of one's own country's part of the sea as being *better* than the status of the sea as a whole.

“In your opinion, what is on average the status of the environment in the XXXish [refers to the respondent's own country] part of the Baltic Sea? Please use a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for ‘very bad’ and 5 stands for ‘very good’.”

“In your opinion, what is on average the status of the Baltic Sea environment in general? Please use a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for ‘very bad’ and 5 stands for ‘very good’.”



Other perceptions about the marine environmental status

“To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? Please use a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for ‘I totally disagree’ and 5 stands for ‘I totally agree’.”

The respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a number of statements about the marine environment. In all countries, at least a third of the respondents answered either “I totally agree” or “I agree rather than disagree” regarding the statement “I am worried about the Baltic Sea environment”.

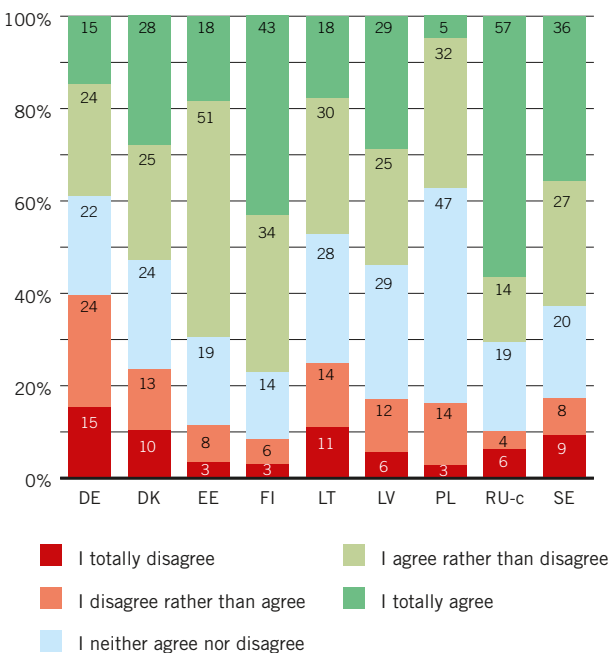
Another statement was about whether respondents feel that the environmental problems of the Baltic Sea belong to the three most important environmental problems in their own countries. In all countries except Denmark and Germany, a majority of respondents answered either “I totally agree” or “I agree rather than disagree”.

As to the respondents’ perception on whether the Baltic Sea environment has improved or deteriorated during the last 10 years, there is

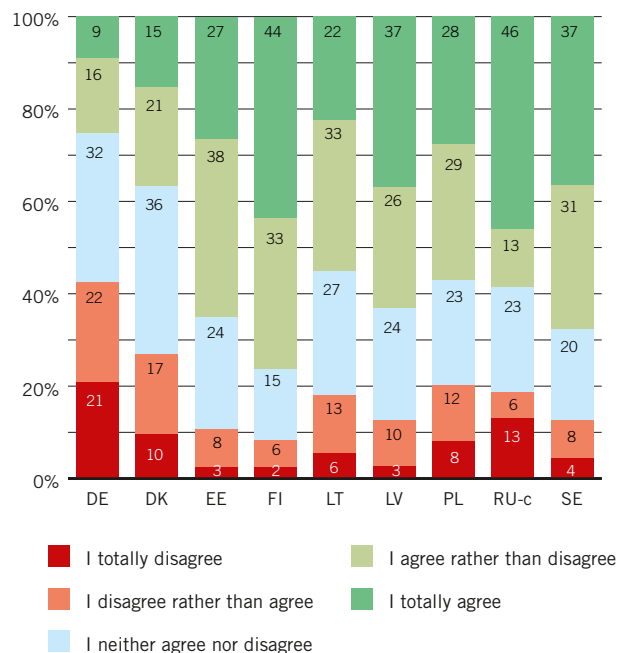
a tendency in most countries to agree on there being a deterioration rather than there being an improvement. This tendency is particularly strong for Russia. However, German and Polish respondents are on average more inclined to the view that an improvement has taken place. It is not very common that respondents feel that the water quality of the Baltic Sea at present restricts recreational opportunities. This indicates that there are generally other marine environmental aspects than water quality that people are concerned about.

Finally, in most countries, respondents do not feel that they are affecting the Baltic Sea environment themselves. In all countries except Poland and Sweden, a majority of respondents answered “I totally disagree” or “I disagree rather than agree”.

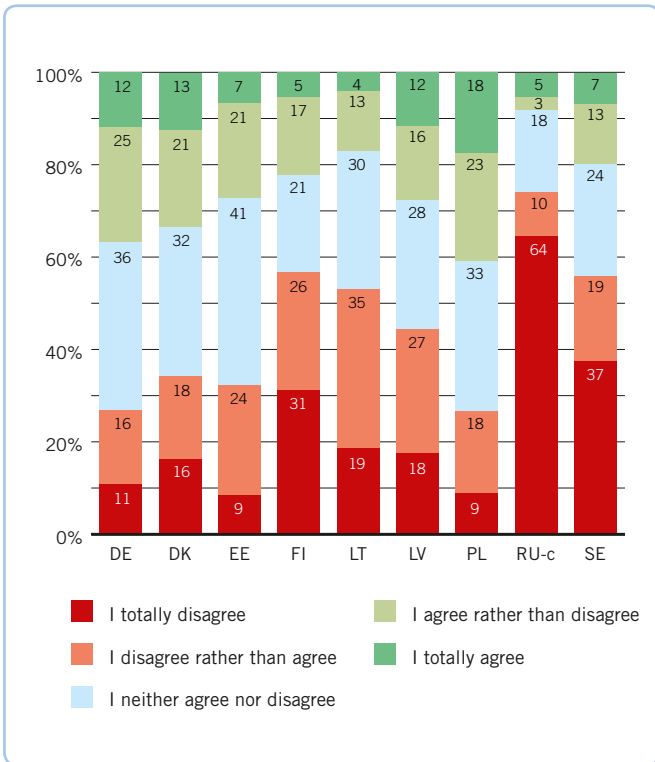
“I am worried about the Baltic Sea environment.”



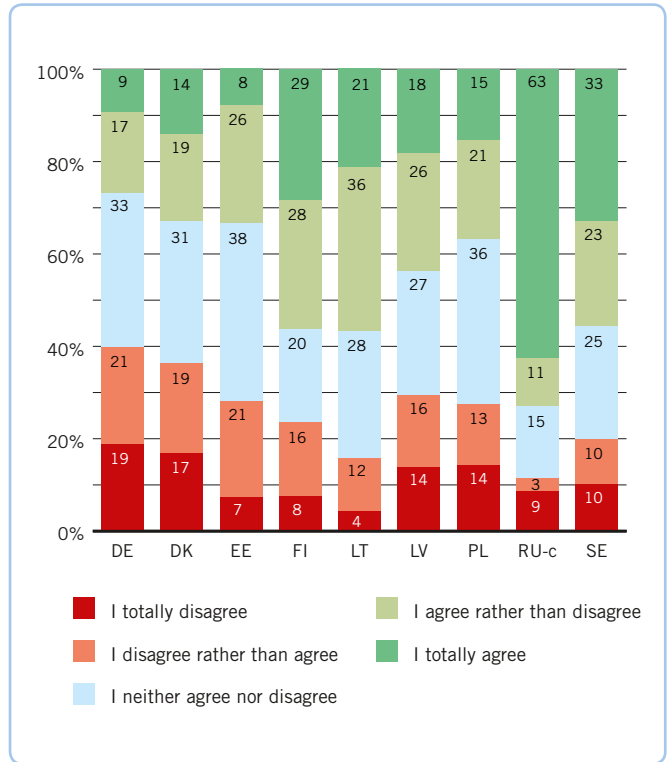
“Baltic Sea environmental problems belong to the three most important environmental problems in XXXland [the respondent’s own country].”



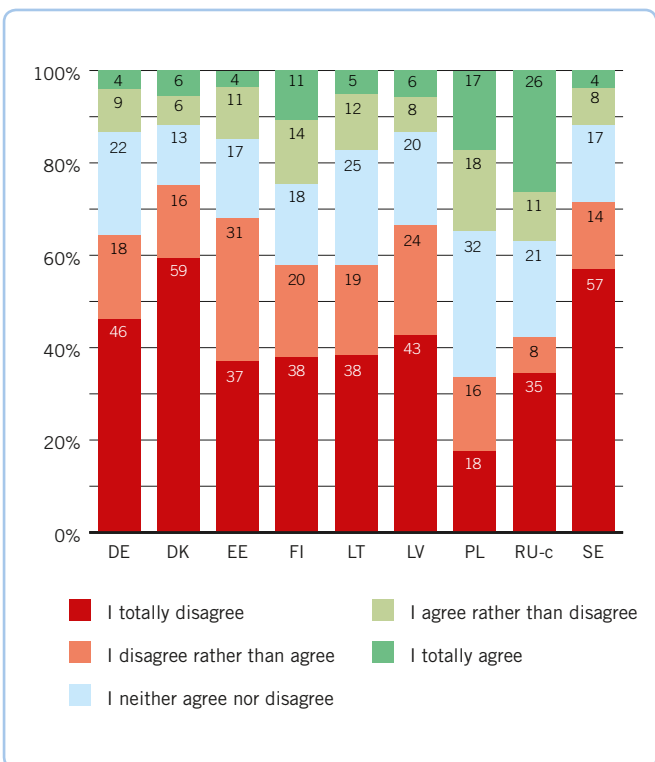
“The Baltic Sea environment is better today than 10 years ago.”



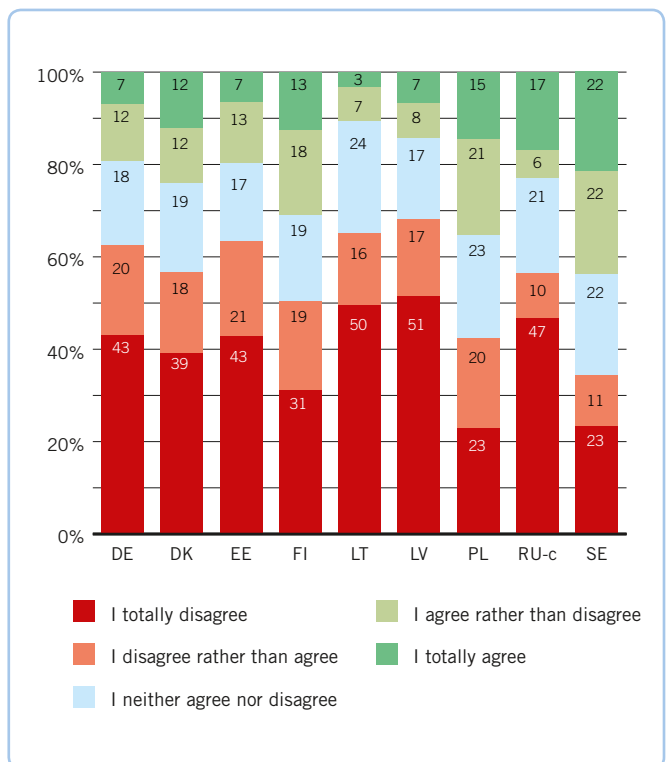
“The Baltic Sea environment is poorer today than 10 years ago.”



“The water quality of the Baltic Sea restricts my recreational opportunities at present.”



“I affect the Baltic Sea environment.”



What marine issues are problems?

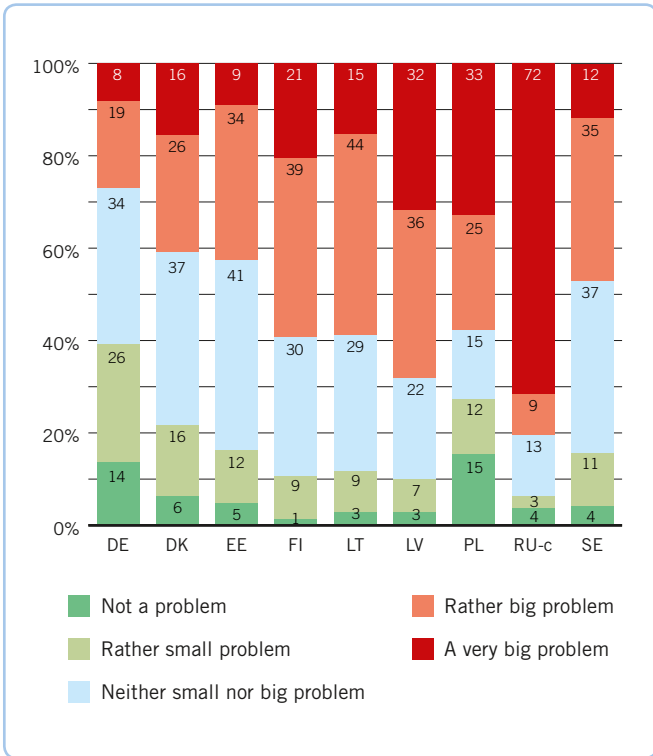
“I will now mention some Baltic Sea issues. For each of them you are asked to say to what extent you view it as a problem or not, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for ‘Not at all a problem in the Baltic Sea’ and 5 stands for ‘A very big problem in the Baltic Sea’.”

Respondents were asked to state the extent to which they view a number of different issues as being a problem in the sea. Some of the issues were indeed stated as being a rather big or very big problem by a majority of the respondents. This was true in the following countries for each of the issues:

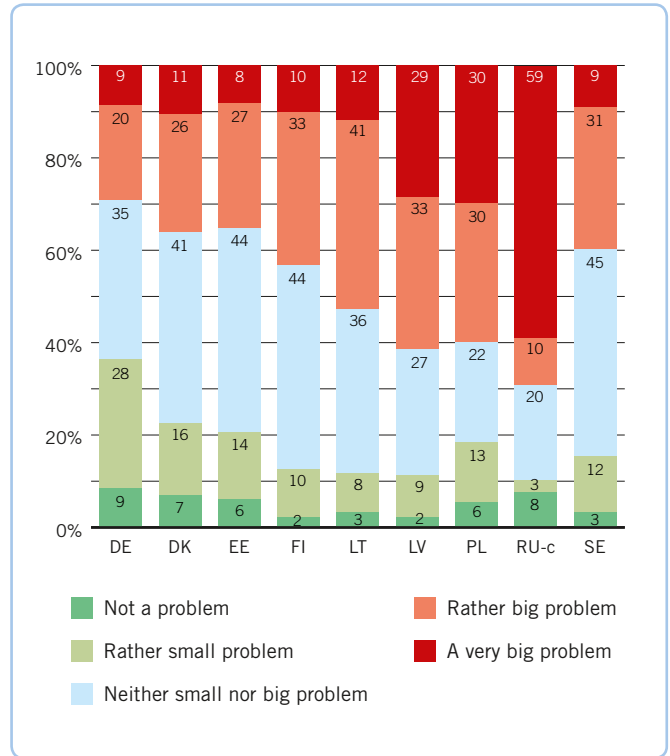
- Litter: in all 9 countries
- Damage to flora and fauna in the sea: in 8 countries (all the countries except Denmark)
- Heavy metals and other hazardous substances: in 8 countries (all the countries except Germany)
- Small everyday oil leakages: in 8 countries (all the countries except Germany)
- Possibility of major oil spill: in 8 countries (all the countries except Poland)
- Algal blooms: in 7 countries (all the countries except Germany and Poland)
- Lack of oxygen in sea bottoms: in 6 countries (all the countries except Estonia, Germany and Poland)
- Coastal water quality: in 5 countries (all the countries except Denmark, Estonia, Germany and Sweden)
- Water turbidity: in 5 countries (all the countries except Denmark, Estonia, Germany and Sweden)
- Overfishing: in 5 countries (all the countries except Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania)
- Unexploded mines and chemical weapons lying at the sea bottom: in 5 countries (all the countries except Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden)
- Gas pipelines lying at the sea bottom: in 4 countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia)
- Open sea water quality: in 4 countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia)
- Offshore wind turbines: in 1 country (Poland)

In addition, the respondents were asked to answer an open-ended question about whether there are any other very big problems in the sea. Common responses to this question included emissions and other disturbances caused by boating and sea transports.

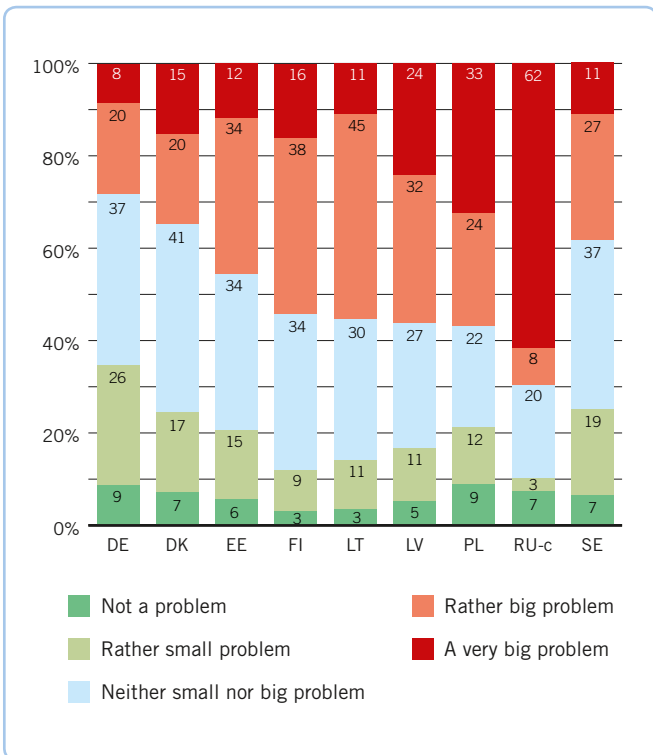
Coastal water quality



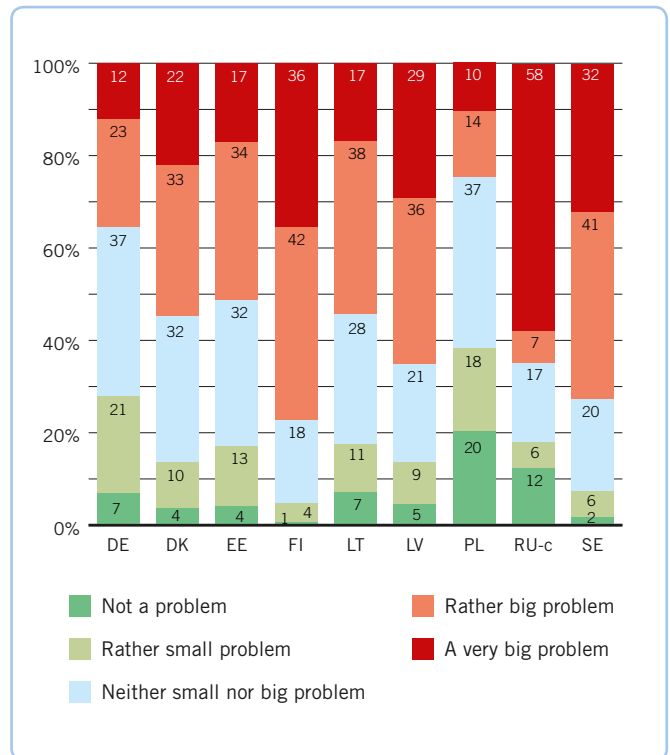
Open sea water quality



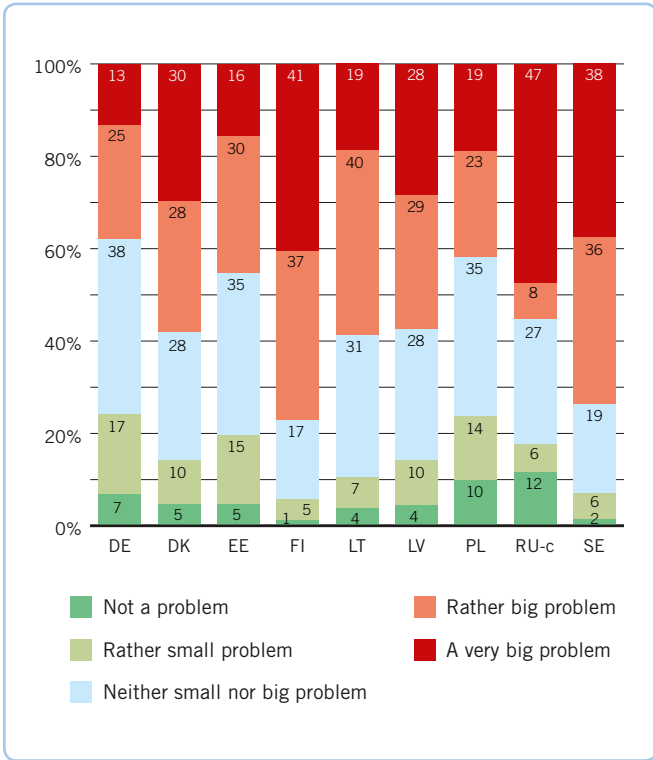
Water turbidity



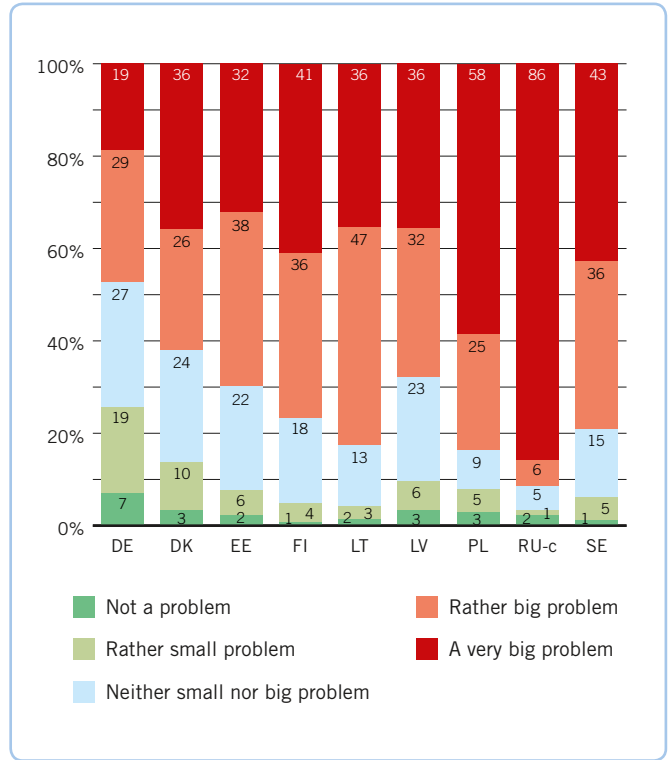
Algal blooms



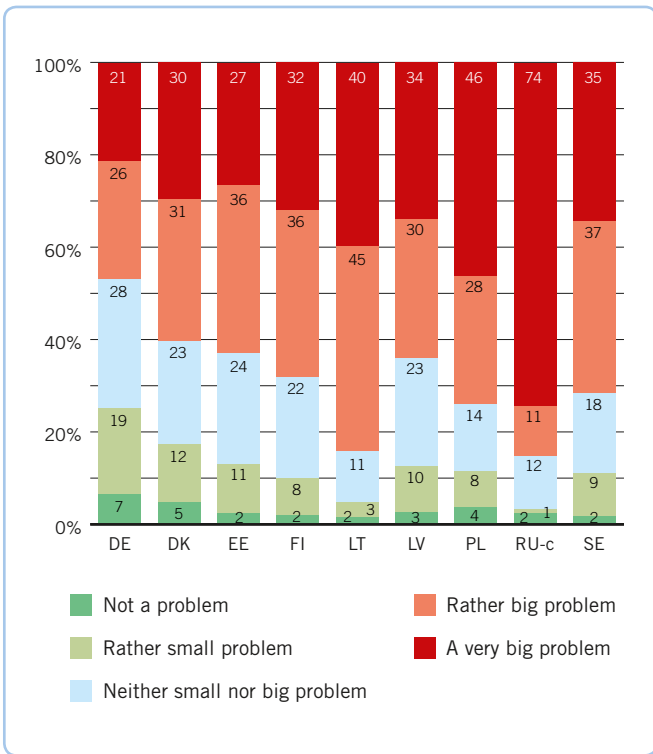
Lack of oxygen in sea bottoms



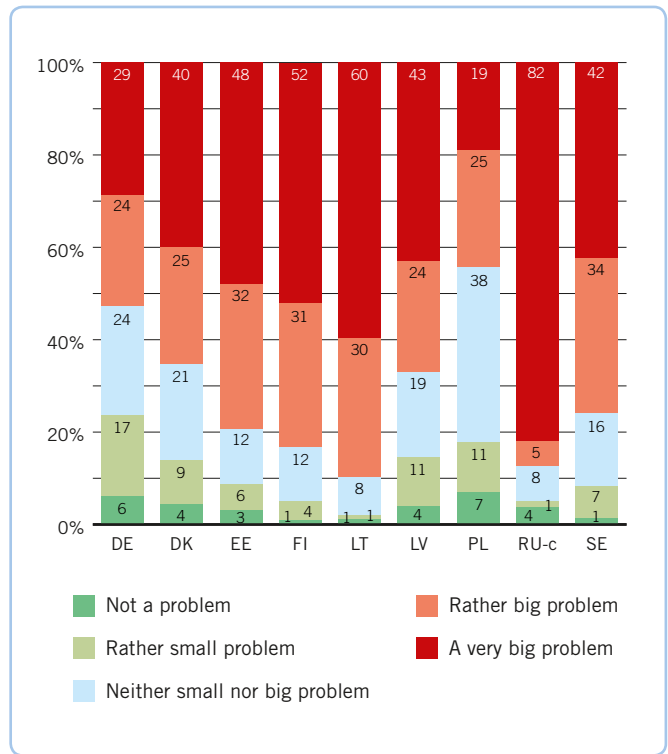
Heavy metals and other hazardous substances



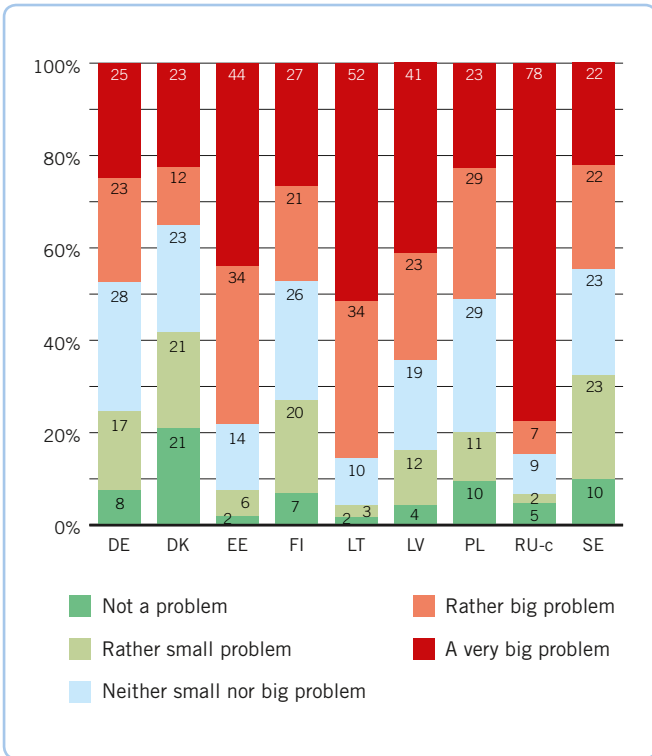
Small everyday oil leakages



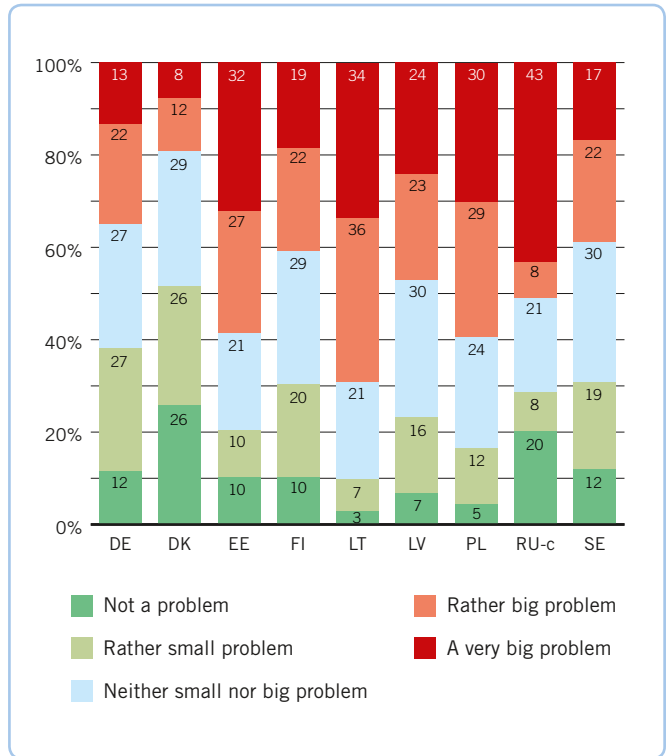
Possibility of major oil spill



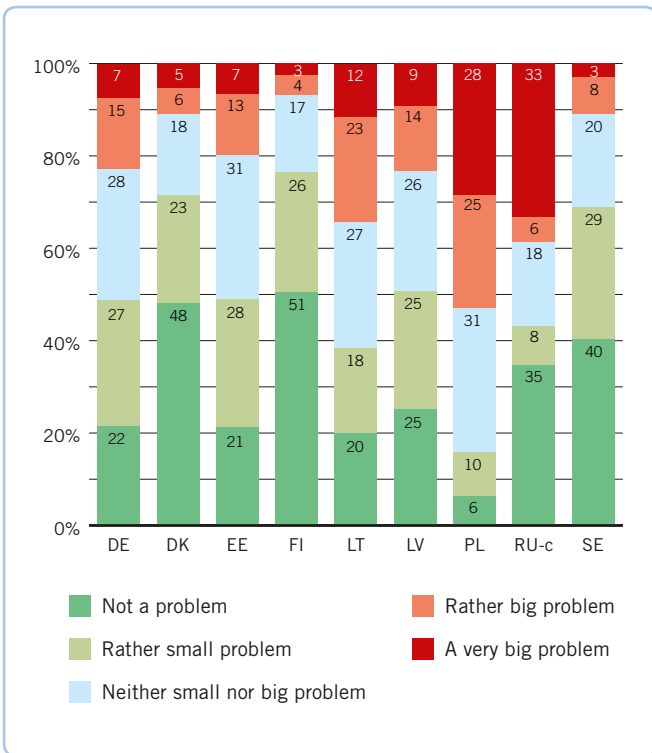
Unexploded mines and chemical weapons lying at the sea bottom



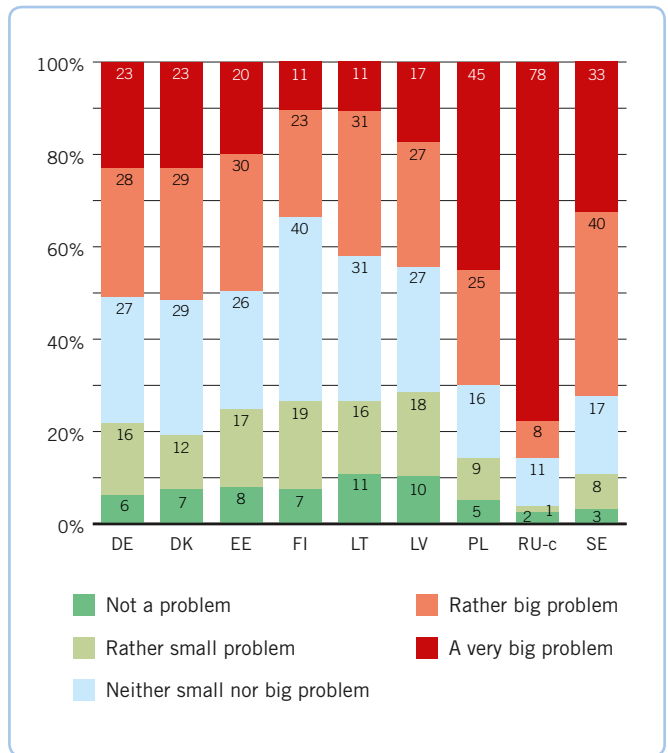
Gas pipelines lying at the sea bottom



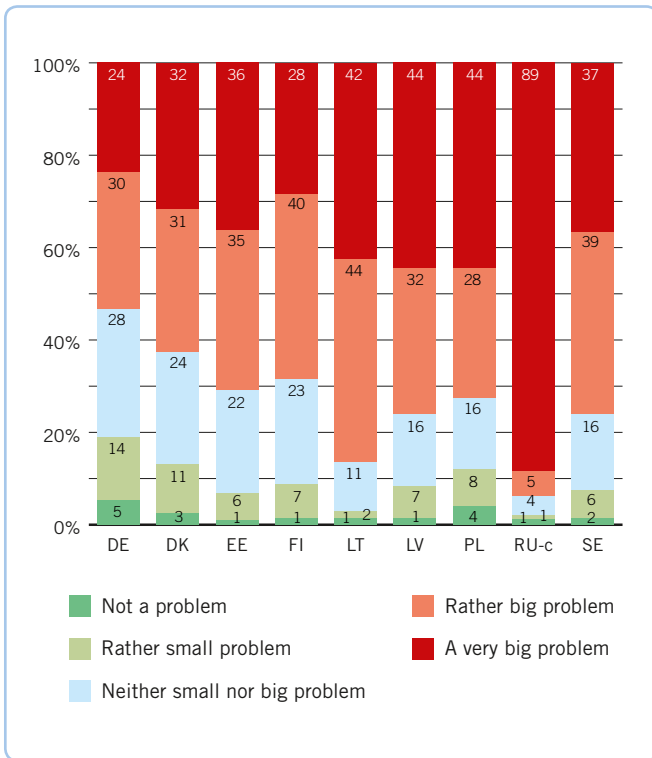
Offshore wind turbines



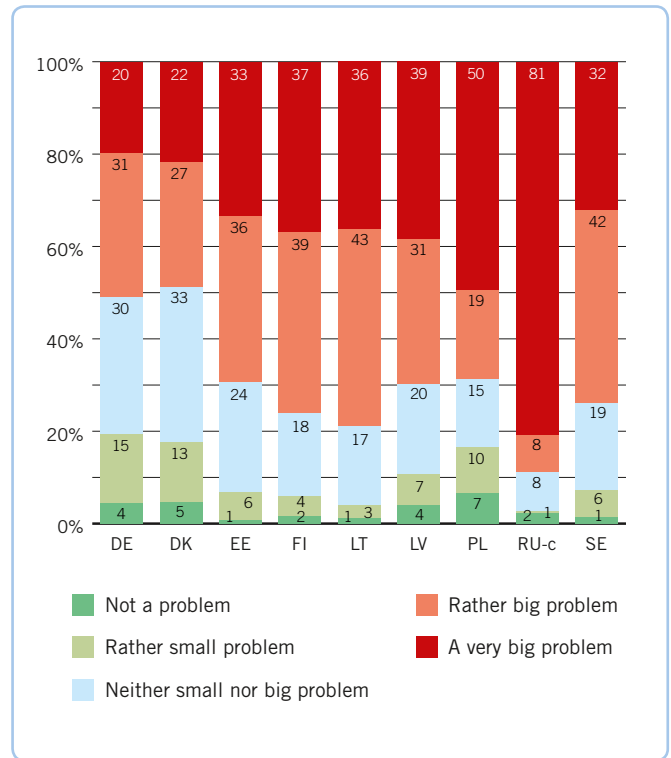
Overfishing



Litter



Damage to flora and fauna in the sea



What can I do myself?

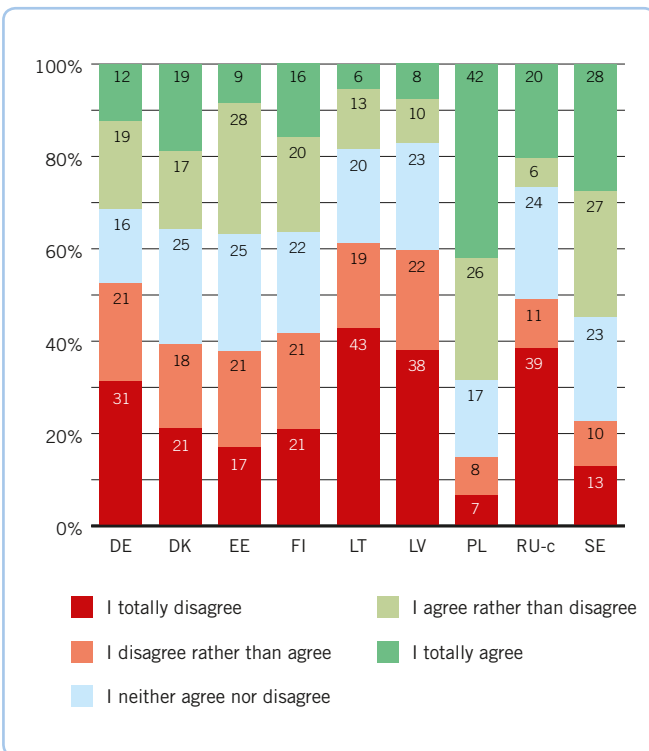
“To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements about your role in taking actions for improving the Baltic Sea environment? Please use a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for ‘I totally disagree’ and 5 stands for ‘I totally agree’.”

This question is about how respondents perceive themselves as actors that can take actions to improve the marine environment.

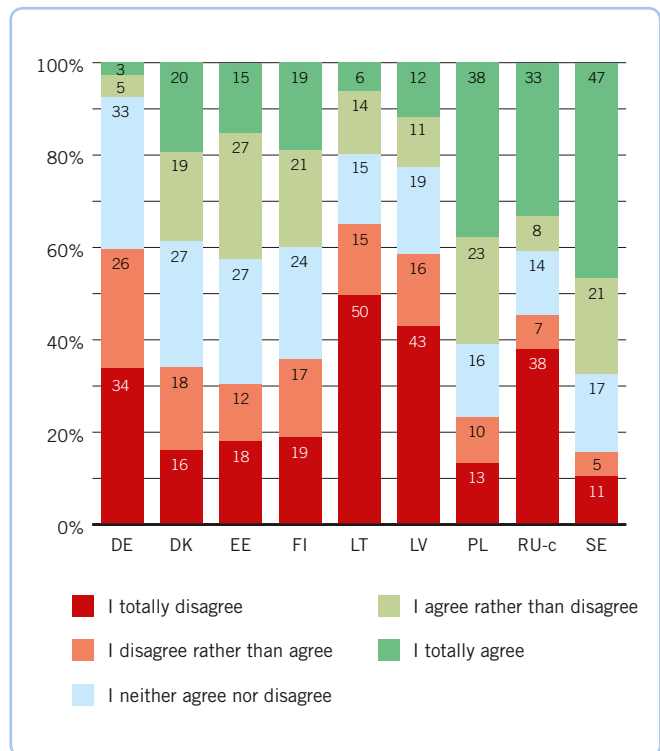
They were first asked to state the extent to which they disagree or agree with the statement “I can myself play a role in improving the Baltic Sea environment”. In two countries, Poland and Sweden, a majority of the respondents answered either “I totally agree” or “I agree rather than disagree”. In Germany, Latvia and Lithuania, a majority answered instead “I totally disagree” or “I rather disagree than agree”.

Poles and, in particular, Swedes are those who most clearly tend to regard themselves as currently contributing financially for funding actions through taxes or other types of payments. When asked if willing to contribute *more* financially for funding actions, a majority of respondents answered “I totally disagree” or “I disagree rather than agree” in Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia.

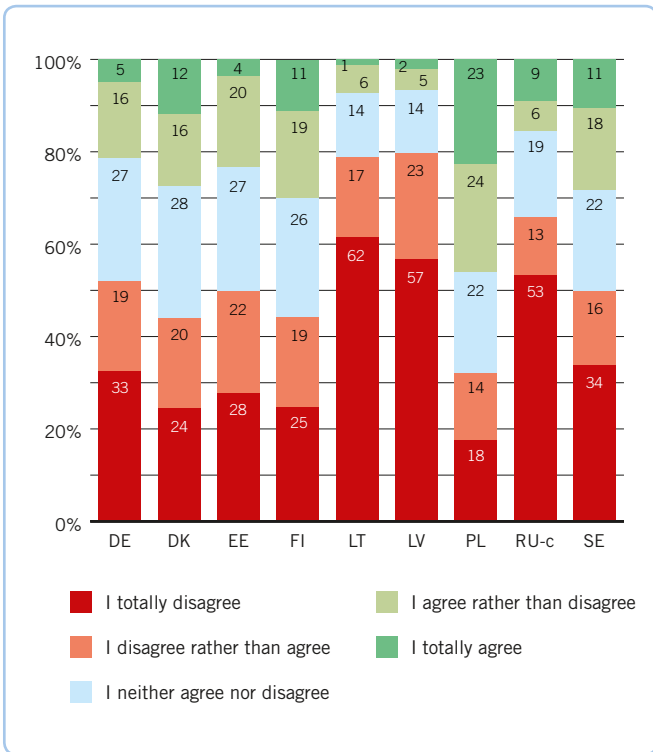
“I can myself play a role in improving the Baltic Sea environment.”



“I currently contribute financially for funding actions through taxes or other types of payments.”



“I am prepared to contribute more financially for funding actions.”



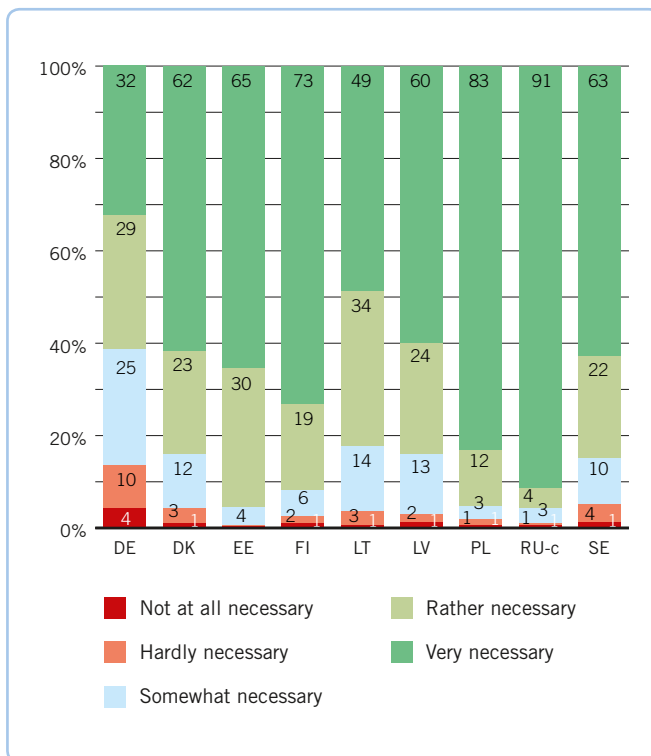
What should other actors in my country do?

“I will now mention five XXXish [refers to the respondent’s own country] actors who might take actions for improving the Baltic Sea environment. Then I will ask you for each of them to say to what extent you view it as necessary or not that they take action, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for ‘Not at all necessary’ and 5 stands for ‘Very necessary’.”

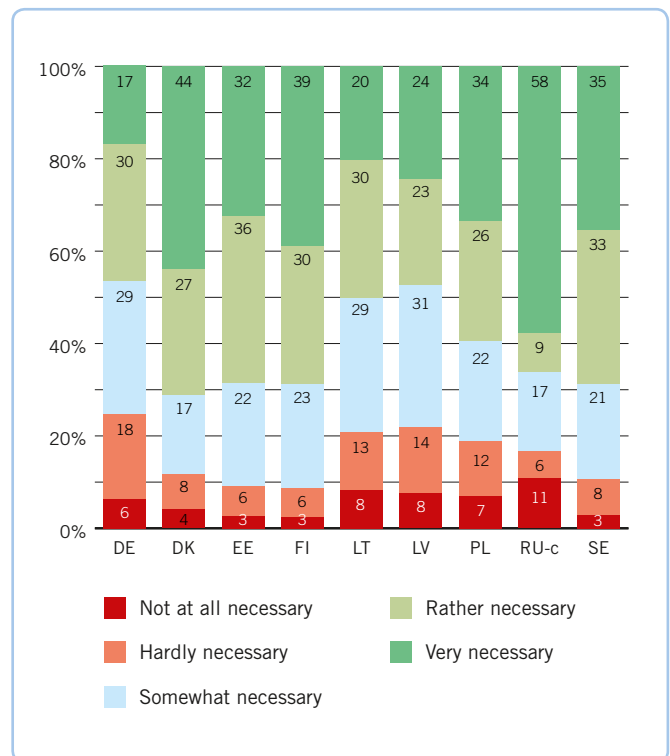
This question contained statements about actions by other actors in the respondents’ own countries. Five different actors were mentioned. Only in two cases was there a majority of respondents *not* answering “very necessary” or “rather necessary”. These cases were about farmers and were

found among German and Latvian respondents. All other cases indicate a widespread support for action to improve the Baltic Sea environment by wastewater treatment plants, farmers, professional fishermen, industry, sea transports and ports.

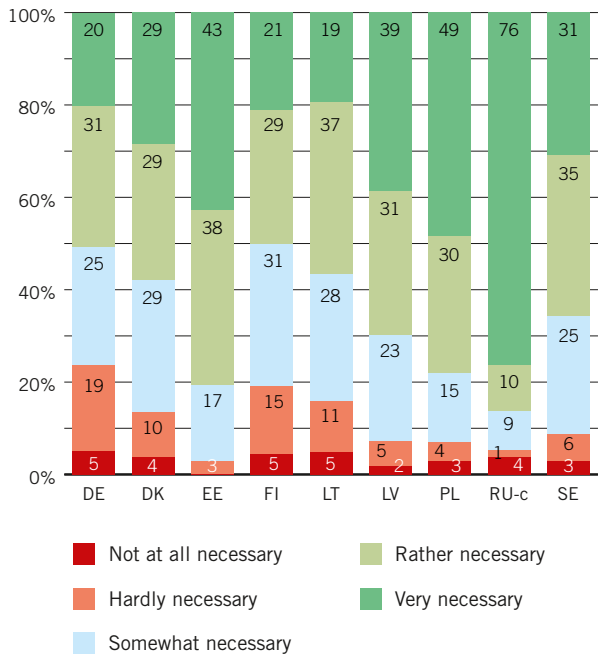
Wastewater treatment plants



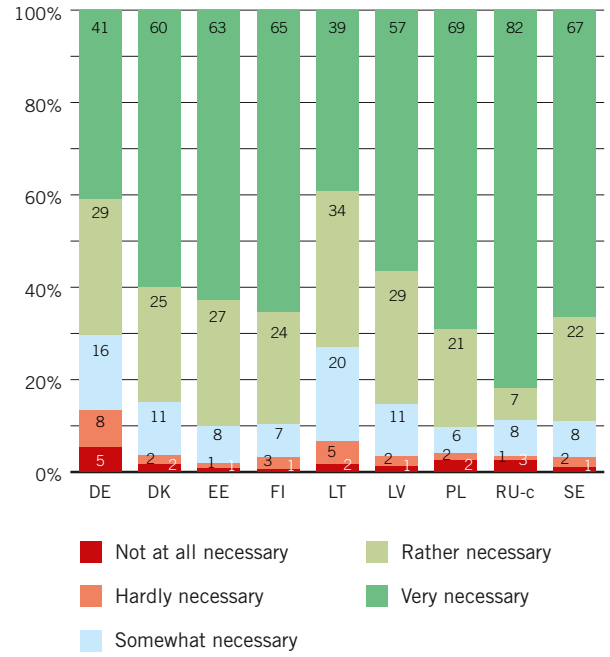
Farmers



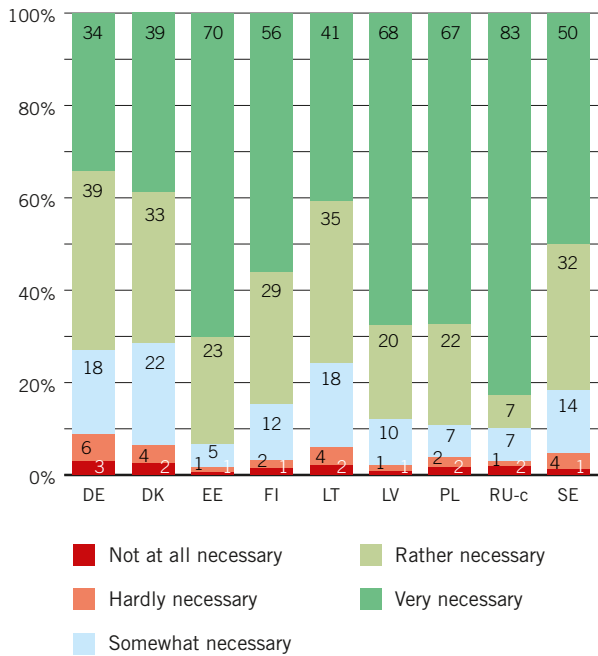
Professional fishermen



Industry



Sea transports and ports



How should actions be paid?

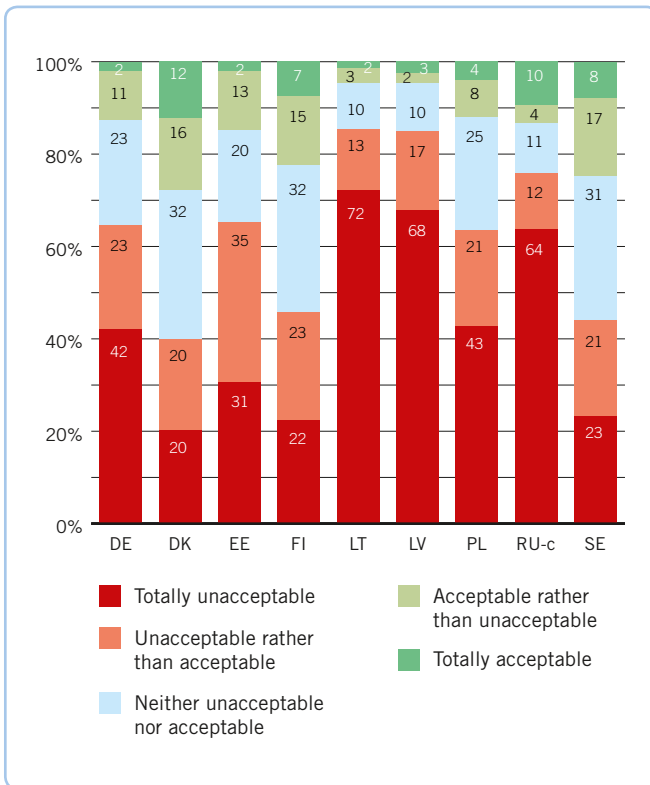
“I will now mention four ways that can possibly be used for individuals and enterprises in XXXland [the respondent’s own country] to fund actions to improve the Baltic Sea environment. Then I will ask you for each of them to say to what extent you find them acceptable or not, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for ‘Totally unacceptable’ and 5 stands for ‘Totally acceptable’.”

The final attitude question was about four different ways in which money could be collected from individuals and enterprises in the respondents’ own countries for the purpose of funding actions to improve the marine environment. The answers indicate a strong support among respondents for funding actions through increased charges on pollution emissions: a majority of respondents answered “totally acceptable” or “acceptable rather than unacceptable” in all countries.

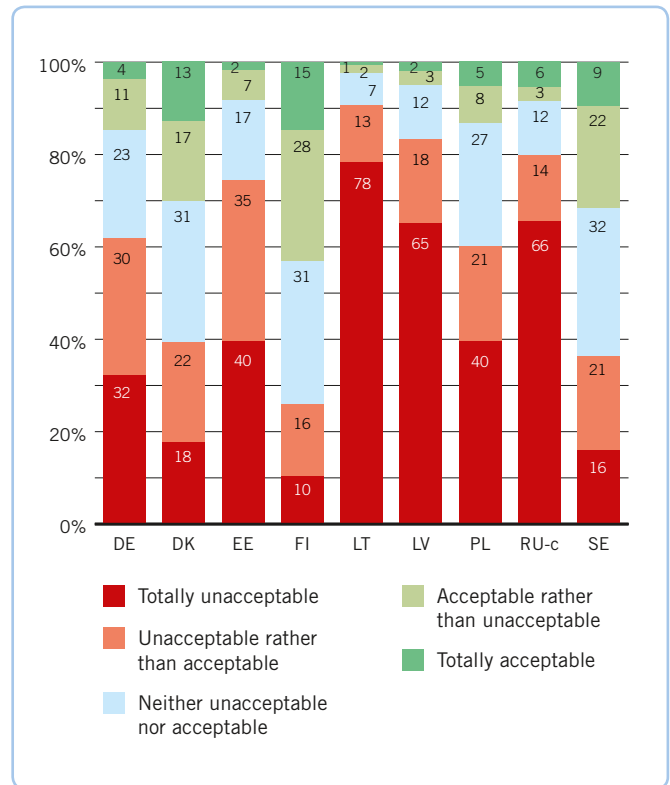
The other types of payments suggested in this question were considerably less popular. A strongly negative attitude towards increased

taxes and increased water bills is particularly evident in Latvia, Lithuania and Russia. However, it is worth noting that “earmarked payments paid by everyone” in general tended to be more acceptable than “increased water bills” and “increased taxes”. The reason might be that “taxes” and “bills” have a strongly negative association for the respondents. It is also possible that they associate taxes and water bills with a risk that their payments will not be used for funding actions once the payments are collected. In contrast, earmarked payments could be received by a fund whose only purpose is to fund actions to improve the marine environment.

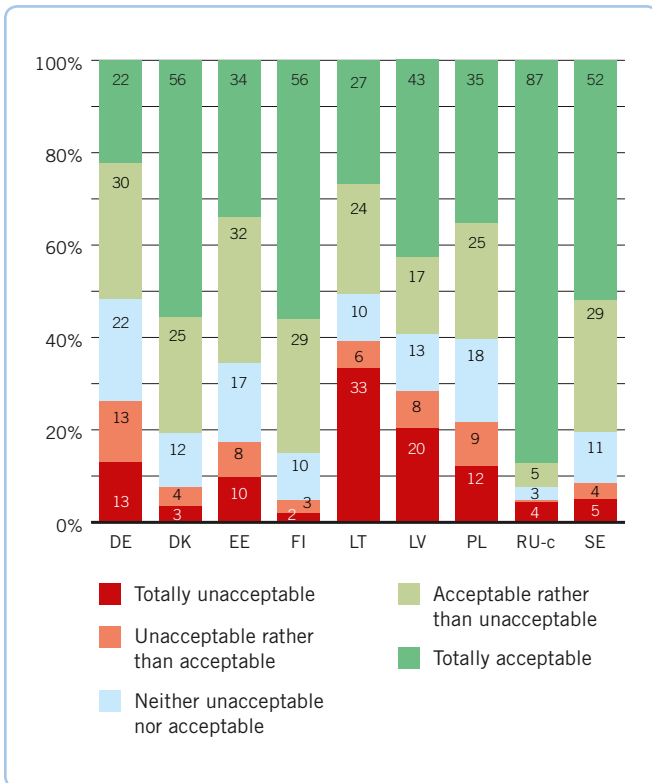
Increased taxes



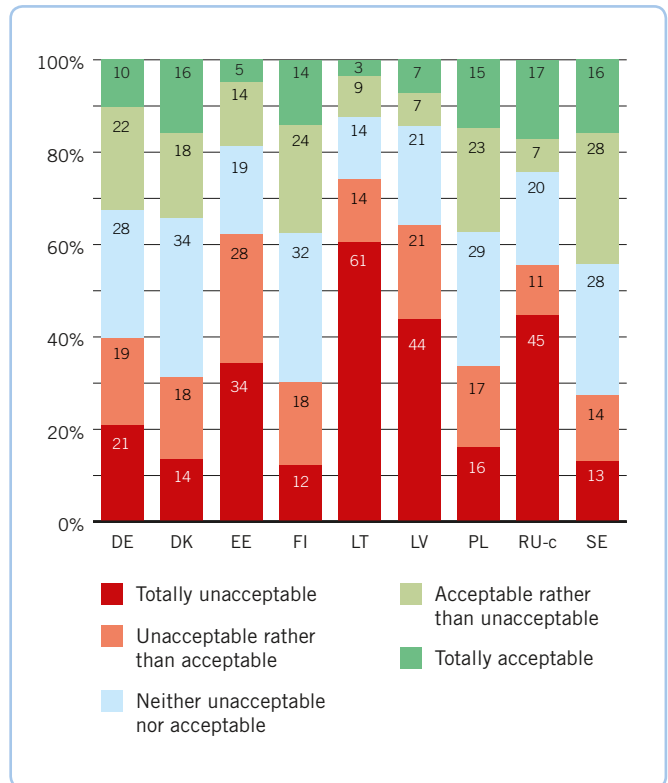
Increased water bills



Increased charges on pollution emissions



Earmarked payments paid by everyone



BalticSurvey – a study in the Baltic Sea countries of public attitudes and use of the sea

REPORT 6382

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Summary of main results

The report contains some of the results of BalticSurvey, a unique opinion poll conducted in all nine countries around the Baltic Sea. It has identified how people around the Baltic Sea and parts of Skagerrak use the sea and what attitudes they have towards the marine environment and towards various measures for improving the environment. It includes about 9,000 interviews carried out in April–June 2010. BalticSurvey is a subproject within the BalticSTERN research network.

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