

EU Law and Policy on Aquaculture in the Baltic Sea

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Antti Belinskij, Professor of environmental law, University of Eastern Finland / Finnish Environment Institute SYKE

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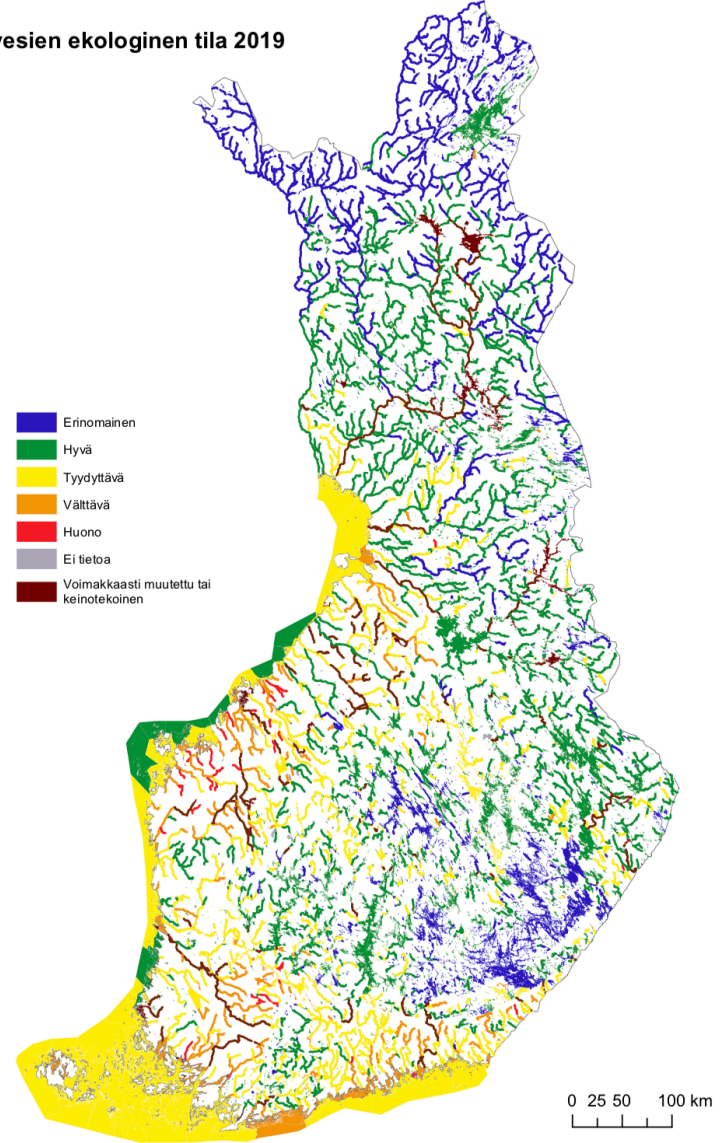
Blue growth policy

- EU Blue Growth Agenda (2012), Guidelines for the sustainable aquaculture (2013), Baltic Sea Region Action Plan (2009)
- Aquaculture – important and growing source of animal protein
- Stagnant growth
 - Lack of available maritime space, competition in the global market
 - Administrative constraints concerning licensing procedure
- Promotion as part of the Common Fisheries Policies
 - Strategic guidelines, national strategic plans, exchange of best practice
 - Improvement of administrative practices, especially in licensing
 - Financial support for sustainable ways to increase production
- Environmental sustainability

Environmental objectives

- Water Framework Directive
 - Inland and coastal waters (1 nautical mile from the baseline)
 - Environmental objectives
 - Non-deterioration of the status of water bodies
 - Good water status or good ecological potential
- Weser case (CJEU C-461/13)
 - No authorisation if a project may cause deterioration or jeopardise the attainment of good water status (exemptions apply, however)
 - Deterioration as soon as the status of one quality element falls by one class

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Environmental objectives

- Marine Strategy Framework Directive
 - Good environmental status in the marine environment
 - Member States determine a set of characteristics and establish a comprehensive set of environmental targets and associated indicators
 - Link to Baltic Sea Action Plan + HELCOM Recommendation on Sustainable Aquaculture in the Baltic Sea Region (2016)
- Habitats Directive
 - Conservation of Natura 2000 sites

Reconciliation

- Technologies – impact mitigation
 - Open net rearing, recirculation and closed-loop systems, integrated multitrophic aquaculture (bio mitigation)
- Location guidance
 - No deterioration, the attainment of good water status, Natura 2000 sites
 - Open net rearing: Offshore areas, changes of location, permit agent system
- Nutrient offsets / compensations
 - Mussels, macroalgae, fish removals, fish feed, nutrient abatement in agriculture and forestry
 - Management of cumulative impacts: WFD PoMs, review of existing activities
- Limited possibilities for exemptions

Conclusions

- EU blue growth policy
 - Strong support for aquaculture
- Challenges to reconcile aquaculture with environmental objectives
 - Eutrophication as a major problem in the Baltic Sea
 - Attainment of good water status
 - Food policy not a part of license discretion
 - Location guidance and new technologies
- Important to manage cumulative impacts
 - In Finland, aquaculture causes around 1 percent of total nutrient loading
 - Instruments to abate nutrient loading from diffuse sources
 - Nutrient offsets / compensations

Thank you!



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Further reading: Soininen, Belinskij, Similä, Kortet (2019) *Too important to fail? Evaluating legal adaptive capacity for increasing coastal and marine aquaculture production in EU-Finland*. Marine Policy 110 (Open Access)