

Special session at BSSC

Theme: Sea Dumped Munitions in the Baltic Sea

Description:

Approximately 200 000 t of Chemical munitions were dumped in the Baltic Sea after World War 2, and similar amount was dumped in the Skagerrak Area. Apart of that, unknown amount of conventional ammunition is dumped in many areas of the Baltic Sea. Those munitions pose a permanent threat for the Baltic Ecosystem – an unknown number of them has corroded, and Chemical Warfare Agents and Explosives degradation products leak into surrounding sediments. Although majority of the dumpsites is situated in deep, anoxic basins, polluted sediments might spread with bottom currents into shallower areas, with abundant benthic fauna, and hence be included in the foodchain.

This matter is receiving a lot of attention in recent years – HELCOM has formed a working group MUNI, mandated to update old reports of CHEMU group from 1994– final report will be available on the beginning of 2013. An European Flagship Project “A need to clean up Chemical Munitions” is currently underway, supporting EU BSR #069 project Chemical munitions Search and Assessment (CHEMSEA). Also, new initiatives emerge in national projects and NATO SPS projects. All those activities are constantly producing new, unpublished results, which could be presented on Baltic Sea Science Congress in Klaipeda.