



Baltic issues from
a regional perspective.
The BSSSC biennial
report 2011–2012.



A timeline of the Westpomeranian Chairmanship in the BSSSC (2011–2012)

End of the Westpomeranian Chairmanship / beginning of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region presidency	December 2012	
	3/4 December	BSSSC Board meeting in Brussels, Belgium
6th issue of the BSSSC newsletter	December	
	17/19 September	BSSSC Board meeting in Lillestrom, Norway 20th BSSSC Annual Conference <i>From economic crises to opportunities and actions – Baltic Sea Regions promoting green innovation in energy and water</i>
5th issue of the BSSSC newsletter	July	
Letter on the legislative proposals for the EU cohesion policy 2014–2020	June	
Declaration of Common Interest between the Committee of the Regions and BSSSC, B7, UBC, Euroregion Baltic and Euroregion, Pomerania	June	
Joint position on the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (BSSSC, B7, UBC, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Euroregion Baltic)	April	
	23/25 April	BSSSC Board meeting in Berlin, Germany Joint meeting of the CBSS CSO and the BSSSC Board Baltic Sea Days 2012
4th issue of the BSSSC newsletter	March	
	23/24 February	BSSSC Board meeting in Rovaniemi, Finland
3rd issue of the BSSSC newsletter	December	
	29/30 November	BSSSC Board meeting in Brussels, Belgium
Statement on Cohesion Policy in the Multi Annual Financial Framework 2014–2020	5/7 October	BSSSC Board meeting in Szczecin, Poland 19th BSSSC Annual Conference <i>The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Cohesion Policy – expectations and the role of the regions in the BSR</i>
2nd issue of the BSSSC newsletter	September	
	18/20 May	BSSSC Board meeting in Gdańsk, Poland European Maritime Day 2011
1st issue of the BSSSC newsletter	April	
	15/16 March	BSSSC Board meeting in Oslo, Norway Joint meeting of the CBSS CSO and the BSSSC Board
	27 January	BSSSC Board meeting in Hamburg, Germany
The Westpomeranian Region takes over the chairmanship in the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation	January 2011	

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Interview with BSSSC Chairman 2011–2012, Olgierd Geblewicz

What are the benefits for the regions of being a member of an organisation such as the BSSSC?

The BSSSC has been on the Baltic Sea scene for 20 years; it has developed a solid brand and a strong position during that time. The operations of such organisations as the BSSSC first of all ensure that contacts with EU institutions are effective. This applies especially in those areas where all member regions share the same standpoint. Lobbying with regard to the next programming period is a good example. The BSSSC's jointly-developed and unanimous standpoint was presented to the European Commission last year.

I hope that other BSSSC Board members agree with me that one of the main advantages for a politician is the possibility of participating in and contributing significantly to political debates that concern the region's basic problems. In many cases, the innovative solutions and policies discussed by the Baltic Sea forum later influence national policy. Therefore, it is important for us to be where these solutions are created and negotiated.

The BSSSC also provides great opportunities for partnerships to be established between the regions. Each of the 10 Baltic Sea States is represented on the BSSSC Board by two regions. Therefore, each of the regions may potentially establish a partnership with 18 foreign partners. It is known that apart from political and economic aspects, personal contacts and belief in the reliability of the partner are of great significance as far as deciding to establish cooperation is concerned.

Thanks to the BSSSC, we are able to build on various modernisation experiences, e.g. Danish regions have been successfully implementing climate-change adaptation strategies for a long time. The results of the Baltic21 Lighthouse Projects were included in recommendations provided to regional Local Governments. Many other instances of good practice are presented at BSSSC annual conferences and seminars. They are becoming an inspiration for changing and developing our regions.

Support and implementation of Baltic Sea projects, primarily those financed by the Baltic Sea Region Programme, is a very important area of the BSSSC's operations. The BSSSC appears here as an associated partner; however, each region may join projects on a partnership basis. The Eastern Norway County Network joining the TransGov project, which is a continuation of the Transbaltic project, is such an example. In turn, the city of Hamburg has been successfully implementing programmes of cooperation between Hamburg-Turku and Saint Petersburg, the so-called Turku Process. The Westpomeranian Region is engaged in the "Best Agers" project that deals with the issues of demographic changes.

What is your assessment of BSSSC's work within the past two years? What would you say were the most important successes of the organisation during the Westpomeranian chairmanship?

From my perspective, the past two years have been intensive work both for myself and for the BSSSC. I am happy that I have



photo: Tomasz Murański

managed to combine two such important functions in that period- that of the Region's Marshal and BSSC Chairman. Looking at the effects of the organisation's work, I would like to point to the active participation of the BSSC in the Baltic Sea dialogue. This is proven by BSSC's presence at the most im-

portant Baltic Sea events, including, among others, the Baltic Development Forum in Gdańsk, where, in 2011, I presented the position of the Baltic Sea regions in the process of EUSBSR implementation; however, this year, I had the opportunity to take part in a discussion on public-private partnership.

I would also like to mention two very successful conferences staged by our organisation during the past term: in 2011 in Szczecin and in September this year in Lillestrom. It needs to be emphasised that the results of both events, collected in post-conference resolutions, were reflected in some provisions of the draft Action Plan of the revised EUSBSR. For example, Culture was included as a new Priority Area, which was the aim of the organisation in the past period.

The events that I listed are just part of the work done by the BSSSC in 2011-2012. I will not list all of our achievements, but I would like to also mention the BSSSC Board's regular contact with other Baltic Sea organisations, exemplified by two joint meetings of the organisation's Board with the Council of the Baltic Sea States Committee of Senior Officials, the Cooperation Declaration signed on the BSSSC's initiative in June this year between the EU Committee of the Regions and Baltic Sea Organisations, as well as the long-term cooperation of the Working Group on Maritime Policy with the appropriate CBSS, UBC, and BSPC groups.

Therefore, looking at the organisation from the perspective of the now-passing Westpomeranian Chairmanship, I have a sense of a job well done and I am convinced that the BSSSC has spoken on the most important issues that concern the future of the regions' development in the EU's upcoming financial perspective.

What in your opinion will be the future of the BSSSC and the regions in this part of Europe?

When the BSSSC was established in 1993, the aim of the organisation was to support the building of democratic structures in the countries of the former communist bloc and to establish regional and local contacts between the West and the East. Today, collaboration develops between the regions based on partnership and cooperation. With the Community expanded, it is now time to

implement EU policies and maximise their positive influence of bridging the development gaps between particular regions.

EU funds play a huge role, allowing regions such as the Westpomeranian Region to catch up with Danish, Swedish, and German regions.

I think that it will be crucial for the future of the Baltic Sea region to find such a development model where each region will find its place and its specialisation, and, at the same time, the standard of living will rise steadily throughout the region. Potentially, the Baltic Sea region may become the leading exemplary centre of innovative green technologies, as well as a centre of excellence for regional industry of clean technologies.

However, problems which inhibit development need to be solved. They have been defined in the strategy for the Baltic Sea. These are the pollution of the Baltic Sea, poor transport connections in the region, and the poor competitiveness of the region on the global market. On the macro scale, these problems need to be solved by the EU and national institutions; however, regional cooperation organisations, such as the BSSSC, are left with the most important task: adapting these solutions to the specific local conditions and implementing these solutions on the ground. However, I am an optimist in this respect and my optimism is based on observations of the processes that are taking place in our region, politicians' determination in searching for the best solutions, the creativity of local communities, and the ability to organise oneself as oriented towards common goals, of which the BSSSC is the best example. As the outgoing Chairman of the organisation, I would like to wish the next Chairman – the Mayor of the Helsinki-Uusimaa region, Mr Ossi Savolainen – success, and the BSSSC organisation at least another 20 years in the Baltic arena!

The BSSSC biennial report 2011–2012

The BSSSC Chairmanship summarizes the last two year period with this publication “Baltic issues from a regional perspective. The BSSSC biennial report 2011–2012.” The first part of it gives an overview on the political work and activities undertaken by the organization. The report is divided in accordance with the priority areas which have been included in the BSSSC Work Plan for 2011–2012. The member-regions have contributed, with their reports, on areas which are being coordinated by them. The Westpomeranian presidency was focused on the fields directly related to the ongoing processes in the European Union – the shaping of the new Cohesion Policy and the revision of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. There was also the emphasis on increasing the engagement of other Baltic regions with the BSSSC network and its promotion across Europe. Among many events, the BSSSC organized two successful Annual conferences – in 2011 in Szczecin and in 2012 in Lillestrøm, Norway and jointly developed significant position papers.



Cohesion Policy

During the Westpomeranian chairmanship of the BSSSC, Mr Knud Andersen, Danish member of the BSSSC board, has chaired the Ad hoc Working Group on Cohesion Policy which has focused on the new EU budget and the Cohesion Policy 2014–2020.

The main focus has been on the preparations for new regulations governing the Cohesion Policy, the multiannual financial framework and the planning of the territorial cooperation programmes.

Based on the work of the Ad hoc Working Group, the BSSSC board adopted a statement on ‘Cohesion Policy in the Multi Annual Financial Framework 2014–2020’ reflecting the general views of the BSSSC towards the EU cohesion policy 2014–2020. The statement was sent to the European Commission, the Council of the EU, the European Parliament, and the Committee of the Regions in the autumn of 2011.

Later, in October 2011, the European Commission presented the draft regulations on the future Cohesion Policy, which are currently negotiated by the European Parliament and the European Council. Simultaneously, the multiannual financial framework is being negotiated.

Following the publication of the draft regulations, the BSSSC board decided to follow up on the BSSSC statement on Cohesion Policy by sending a letter to the European Commission to reflect BSSSC views on concrete elements in the legislative proposals. The BSSSC board members were furthermore encouraged to actively lobby for the regional viewpoints, for example through contacts to MEP's, members of national parliaments and ministry officials.

Support for a Cohesion Policy for All Regions

The BSSSC has supported the European Commission's proposal to focus the future Cohesion Policy within the Europe 2020 strategy. A Cohesion Policy in which all regions and territories are covered can deliver an important contribution towards achieving the objectives of the strategy.

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is very important as a committed political strategy tool for the Baltic Sea Region. The BSSSC finds that the macro-regional objectives and priorities should be present when develop-

ing territorial cooperation programmes in the Baltic Sea Region. Moreover, it seems reasonable to focus funding on thematic areas relevant to the Strategy. Especially funding within the Baltic Sea Region Programme should be spent according to the priorities of the Strategy. Furthermore, a central point of contact for the Strategy could help establish connections between the EUSBSR on the one hand and ETC programmes as well as regional structural funds on the other.

Regional Actors

Multi-level governance and the active participation of the regional authorities in the policy and the strategy of the Baltic Sea Region is a prerequisite of a successful implementation.

Meta-Regions

The Baltic Sea Region consists of a number of functional meta-regions, e.g. the Barents Region, the South-Eastern Baltic Region and the STRING Region in the South-Western Baltic Sea. The geographical configuration of these regions does in most cases not match the overall ETC funding architecture. Meta-regions would still be facing obstacles as regards their participation in ETC programmes, as the geography neither matches the cross border programmes nor the transnational programmes.

Intensified cooperation between INTERREG B programmes

The BSSSC considers cooperation and exchange of results with other INTERREG B programmes highly relevant. In order to further improve cross-programme cooperation, BSSSC supports the Northern German Länder's efforts to extend the North-West-European Programme Area up to the Baltic Sea shores. Such a programme area adjustment can stimulate cooperation between the Baltic Sea Region and the economically strong European core regions.

Simplification

The BSSSC recognises the European Commission's effort to lower the administrative burden but would emphasize the need for further initiatives in this regard, e.g. common application forms, funding regulations or assessment criteria for project approvals.

Private Sector Engagement

A considerable degree of uncertainty concerns compliance with European State Aid rules. The European Commission is urged to provide adequate guidance on the inclusion of private sector and state aid exemption for the ETC projects.

Intercultural Cooperation

Intercultural cooperation is important for the development of the Baltic Sea Region. The BSSSC therefore supports that intercultural cooperation is added to the list as an ETC investment priority. In this context, culture is understood on the one hand as creative industries, art and regional identity and on the other hand as youth cooperation, youth councils and intercultural dialogue.

Lead Partners from Third Countries

Successful co-operation is built on an equal partnership and it is important to continue the good experience from involving Norway as an equal partner in the Northern European INTERREG B-programmes.

Active Involvement of Russia

The BSSSC stresses the importance of the participation of Russian partners in the EUSBSR and in the relevant ETC programmes.



**KNUD
ANDERSEN**
Danish
Regions

**DANISH
REGIONS**



The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

BSSSC has been an active player in the development of EUSBSR – the first ever European macro-regional strategy, from the very beginning. The official consultation process was launched by the European Commission at the BSSSC Annual Conference in Kaunas in September 2008, where the first of four roundtables took place (transport/accessibility).

The first Annual Forum of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy was organized back-to-back with the BSSSC's Annual Conference in Tallinn in October 2010. Thus the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has guided the actions of the BSSSC and its regions in terms of devising the strategy, involvement in the implementation, taking on the responsibility for flagship projects and giving a support in numerous projects and participating as a key stakeholder in the strategy.

The Westpomeranian Chairmanship 2011-2012 continued involvement over implementation process and naturally the Strategy has become one of the main priorities of the Chairmanship. Therefore the 19th BSSSC Annual Conference in Szczecin 5-7 October 2011 focused on The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Cohesion Policy – expectations and the role of the regions in the BSR.

The sessions and four parallel workshops provided the possibility of discussion with the best experts on regional cooperation, territorial and social cohesion, the cooperation of urban and rural areas, education and innovation. The conference was held under the auspices of the Polish Presidency in the EU.

During the conference the Resolution has been adopted and then distributed to the

EU institutions, and regional and national authorities.

The conclusions from the conference were included in the European Commission document on the new programming period of 15 November 2011 and presented during the III Annual Forum of the European Commission on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in Gdansk.

The European dimension of the BSR cooperation was remarkably deepened and the cooperation in many regions profited from the new macro-regional policy approach presented by the European Commission.

The BSSSC referred to the Strategy implementation process in its position paper The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The Second Year of Implementation, which was adopted at BSSSC Board meeting in Oslo in May 2011. In that statement the BSSSC regions have expressed their view on the Strategy's impact on political aspects of regional cooperation. The main focus was on:

- the impact on fostering cooperation between regions,
- the influence of the Strategy on strategic planning in regions,
- the impact on creating a new way of multi-level governance in the Baltic Sea Region,

In the paper the BSSSC regions admit that with the Strategy the main challenges and opportunities of the Baltic Sea Region have been defined and supported by concrete actions and by involving players at all levels. The EU Strategy has thus elevated the cooperation to a new political level. The European dimension of the BSR cooperation was remarkably deepened and the cooperation in many regions profited from the new macro-regional policy approach presented by the European Commission. However the positive effect has been much stronger on a national level than on a regional, as the regions have cooperated in the Baltic Sea Region long before the strategy. For regions with well established partnerships the Strategy did not greatly influence the quality and quantity of cooperation links. Therefore BSSSC in its statement calls for broader involvement of the regions in the implementation of the action plan as new priority area coordinators and new project leaders. Another strong claim was In spite of the fact that the Strategy has been lounged as an EU initiative the BSSSC recognizes that the aims of the strategy cannot be realized without including countries outside the EU, especially Russia.

BSSSC also admits there that the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region should also be implemented through regional programmes. This will only be possible by linking priorities of the Structural funds to the Strategy. After 2013 the transnational programmes should also be programmed



specifically for the support of the macro-regional strategies.

Regional events were used as a tool for promoting and lobbying the regional view on EUSBSR by the BSSSC among most prominent were:

- Baltic Development Forum Summit in Gdańsk organised along the Second Annual Forum of the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – the BSSSC presented the regional approach and views towards the implementation of the Strategy.
- Open Days in Brussels in 2011 and 2012
- Conference of Polish regions – The Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region –Future, Innovation and Transfer of Knowledge in Brussels, November 2011
- Baltic Development Forum and III Annual Forum of the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in Copenhagen, June 2012

The key messages of the BSSSC statements concerning the Strategy has been included in the Joint position on the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region adopted by the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, B7 Baltic Islands Network, Baltic Development Forum, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Euroregion Baltic and Union of the Baltic Cities, in April 2012.

The BSSSC Resolution from Lillestroem in 2012 also refers to the developments in the EUSBSR and:

- welcomes the EU Council Conclusions on the review of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and endorsement of the EU Commission's proposals on improving the strategic focus, alignment of policies and funding, clarification of responsibilities of different actors and better communication.
- calls for more intensive involving the relevant regional partners from all BSR countries, in particular the Russian Federation and Norway, The establishment of a cooperation with Russia as to the objectives of the Action Plan via the Northern Dimension, the Council of the Baltic Sea States or the Nordic Council of Ministers should be complemented by practical activities of other actors, especially cities, – e.g. by taking advantage of existing twin – cities relations, regions, universities, NGO's and private business partners.
- supports the task of branding of the BSR which should be continued and conducted both internally towards the "Baltic Sea Region citizen" and externally towards the outside world. This process should involve a variety of relevant actors, among others branding specialists and tourist organisations.
- welcomes the inclusion of a priority area for culture & regional identity within the EU Commission's proposal for the revised EUSBSR Action Plan (July 2012 version) and calls for maintaining it in the final version. The cultural diversity and the cultural heritage of the BSR are assets to be enhanced and visualized in order to contribute to the attractiveness of the region and to strengthen regional identity. Furthermore culture and creative industries is a growing economic sector contributing to the Europe 2020 objectives.

MAŁGORZATA LUDWICZEK

The BSSSC Secretariat

Maritime Policy

To become a model region for clean shipping

The BSSSC Working Group on Maritime Policy, chaired by the region Schleswig-Holstein, wants to contribute to the development of the Baltic Sea Region into a European maritime best practice region which demonstrates that a prospering maritime economy can be compatible with the restoration and preservation of a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea. This goal was formulated in the declaration of the European Maritime Policy Conference 2006 in Kiel establishing the Terms of Reference of the Group.

With its initiative "Clean Baltic Shipping" within the consultation process on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) the BSSSC, supported by another five Baltic Sea organizations, could achieve that one of the 15 priorities of the EUSBSR is "To become a model region for clean shipping". The Working Group is involved in the implementation through its engagement in the INTERREG project CleanShip. The Group seeks at cooperation with other maritime actors in the region.

European Maritime Day 2011 in Gdansk and 2012 in Gothenburg

"Common vision, linking efforts, strengthening visibility"

Under this motto the maritime experts of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) and the BSSSC came together for the first time in the scope of the European Maritime Day 2011 in May in Gdansk. The cooperation, representing the national, the regional and the parliamentary political levels of the region, discussed perspectives

of a future-oriented maritime policy in the region and agreed upon a regular dialogue and common activities which at the same time contribute to the competitiveness of the

tary Conference, HELCOM, the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics, the BONUS Baltic Sea Re-search and Devel-op-



maritime economy and the improvement of the marine environment of the region.

As a follow-up of the Maritime Day in Gdansk further Baltic Sea organizations with maritime competences were invited to join the cooperation. Six organizations followed the call! Within the scope of a first working meeting in January 2012 nine Baltic Sea organizations agreed upon having a joint event within the European Maritime Day conference on 22 May 2012 in Gothenburg.

With participation of the BSSSC Working Group on Maritime Policy and moderated by its chairman Stefan Musiolik (region Schleswig-Holstein) representatives of nine Baltic Sea organizations discussed objectives and topics of cooperation in a joint conference session. The event was organized by the Expert Group on Maritime Policy of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, further parties involved were the Baltic Sea Parliamen-

ment Programme, the Baltic Sea Forum and VASAB (Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea).

The objective shared is the coordination of joint political initiatives and activities in the field of an integrated maritime policy. First priorities agreed upon are clean shipping (e.g. promotion of alternative propulsion systems and fuels like liquefied natural gas, abandoning of waste water discharges in the Baltic Sea) and maritime spatial planning. Joint lobbying for an integrated maritime policy and better political and financial conditions for this approach will be a further part of future joint activities. All activities shall be connected with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

MARLENE ROTHE

State Chancellery
of Land Schleswig-Holstein

Climate Policies

photo: Senate Chancellery Hamburg



2011 BSSSC, the City of Hamburg and BALTEX organized a conference “Adapting to Climate Change – Case Studies from the Baltic Sea Region”. The key objective of the conference was to give practitioners and decision-makers at the regional and local administrative level in the Baltic Sea Region

CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21

BSSSC is a member of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21. So BSSSC is present in the Baltic 21 meetings which take place twice a year. Important topics during the past two years were i. a. policy input to the EU Consultation on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 as well as to the Rio+20 process, furthermore recommendations and input to the 9th Baltic Sea States Summit and to the BSSSC Annual Conference 2012. Moreover contributions to the revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan and ETC Financial Framework Programmes 2014–2020 were worked out. Baltic 21 recommendations on development of renewable energy systems in the BSR were recently adopted by the BSSSC Board.

Co-operation with BALTEX

BALTEX (the Baltic Sea Experiment) is a Regional Hydroclimate Project. Its study region is the Baltic Sea and its hydrological drainage basin. Co-operation with BALTEX started during the BSSSC Annual Conference in 2009 and continued in the following years. The BSSSC Chairman delivered a speech in the BALTEX study conference 2010. In May

a platform to present and discuss concrete examples of regional or local adaption to climate change. The conference offered the opportunity to access first hand information on regional climate change in the Baltic Sea region and its impacts. Speakers from various countries in the Baltic Sea Region presented case studies on climate change adaptation plans and activities. Finally the conference participants approved a “Hamburg Declaration” on man-made climate change and its risks for the well-being of people and societies and for the health of the natural environment. The declaration recommended very concrete options for action how to deal with these changes.

Commitment in Projects

Last but not least BSSSC and BSSSC regions continue to initiate and to support projects which deal with climate change matters and they commit themselves as active project partners e. c. in the projects BaltCICA, Clean Ship, Cool Bricks.

BIRGIT KÜSTNER

Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg
Senate Chancellery

Science and education

BSSSC regards education and science as key elements for the further development of the Baltic Sea Region and therefore underlines the importance of education and training in the post-Lisbon strategy “EU 2020”.



photo: Lars Krüger

In a globalised world, which is rapidly developing into a knowledge society, the qualification of people is of highest relevance. This holds especially true for the Baltic Sea Region which is in many of its parts poorly endowed with natural resources and therefore relies crucially on its human resources. Further raising the competences of the people living here remains a task of utmost importance to the region. The BSR can already today build on a partly excellent infrastructure concerning education, science and research. Nevertheless, there are still challenges to meet. One precondition to improve education systems is to intensify transregional coordination and cooperation.

Against this background BSSSC during the past two years focused on activities in

the framework of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). This means that the organization as well supported the debates following the EUSBSR in the field of education, i. a. looking at opportunities of developing cooperation between universities in the Baltic Sea Region as took actively part in projects and events.

Many BSSSC member regions are partners in flagship projects mentioned in the Action Plan of the EUSBSR, such as the Baltic University Programme, a network of more than 190 universities and other institutes of higher learning throughout the Baltic Sea region. It focuses on questions of sustainable development, environmental protection and democracy in the Baltic Sea region.

Another example is the Baltic Science Link which is a network between research facilities of photon and neutron sources and its users. It aims to support and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the Baltic Sea Region. This flagship project presented itself at the Baltic Sea Region Programme Conference in Lilleström, Norway, 19–20 September 2012 which took place back to back to the BSSSC Annual Conference. 17 partners from 8 countries are working together in the project. The project period is from January 2012 to 2014.

Possible new flagship projects could deal with early school leavers and with establishing a network of school partnerships in the BSR. First ideas have been discussed.

Main event in the years 2011 and 2012 was the Baltic Sea Conference on Education “From Education to Employment – Optimizing Transition Management”.

The conference took place in Hamburg on 31 May and 1 June under the auspices of the German Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. Participants included high-ranking experts from the ministries of education and employment, both from the employer associations and from the employee associations, from employment agencies, universities and scientific institutes as well as from the European Commission. The conference offered a platform to exchange experience and to submit proposals for problem-oriented solutions.

The overall subject of transition management was approached by three emphases:

1. Linking school and labour market: ensuring and improving employability
2. Permeability of educational systems
3. Transnational Mobility

The main results of the conference can be summed up as follows:

- General conditions for a smoother transition from general education to either vocational education and training (VET) or higher education (HE) must be made possible. As highlighted in the discussions, measures should include the optimization of training on the job and studies – both from an individual and a macroeconomic perspective.
- Moreover, potential innovative methods as to how to improve the transition into the labour market after completing VET or HE were discussed. Amongst others, the topics included the assessment of VET outcome-based qualifications and degree programmes



as well as the prevention of youth unemployment.

- The discussions revealed that quite a few innovative measures (e.g. in further education and training as well as in HE) have been developed and implemented in various Baltic Sea states. In fact, permeability between the areas of education is one of the goals in the design of the European Education Area.
- Finally, best practice examples and ideas for transition across national borders were discussed, such as the issues of regional mobility and the recognition of national qualifications in the Baltic Sea States.

Apart from its benefit as a platform to exchange experience, the Baltic Sea Conference on Education provided the opportunity to initiate new mobility partnerships among the participants from the different Baltic Sea States.

BIRGIT KÜSTNER

Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg
Senate Chancellery

Youth policy

2011 and 2012 was marked by intensive work for the BSSSC's Working Group on Youth Policy (WGYP) with events and youth meetings that offered opportunities for young people to come together and to exchange experiences that strengthen the network by joint efforts in organizing seminars and conferences.

In the cross-border region. Preparatory meeting in Greifswald

A preparation to the international youth seminar before the 19th BSSSC Annual Conference was the main subject of the BSSSC Working Group on Youth Policy meeting. The group met on the turn of March and April 2011 to discuss the youth seminar which had been planned to begin two days before the 19th BSSSC Annual Conference. Youth voluntary service and its role in development of social cohesion has been chosen as the main topics of the youth event in Szczecin. In addition to the workshops, there were discussions about possible study visit on the Polish-German border. It was decided that the aim of such visit should be presenting practical results of the European Union cohesion policy. The representatives of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig Holstein, Hamburg City, Tallinn City and the Westpomeranian Region also took part in the discussion on the youth seminar schedule.

Baltic Sea Region – a good place for living – a short film contest

The Westpomeranian Region organized a film contest for the young people aged 15–30 from the Baltic Sea States. The idea was to promote the Baltic Sea Region as a good

place to live, work and study. The contest was launched in May and ended in August. The winners of the competition had the opportunity to share their impression about the Baltic Sea Region with other young people and regional politicians and to present their talent and skills of film making. The first prize has gone to Lucja Kassolik from Poland who is an active member of regional division of the WWF. Her interests were reflected in the film which reported on the frog's journey through the Baltic landscapes. Lucja will be able to improve her skills by using professional video editing software awarded by the contest jury.

The second prize went to Camilla Szymkiewicz from Sweden for the film titled "The Baltic Sea Region – exclusively Yours" and the third one to Sven Kõllamets from Estonia for the film titled "Baltic Sea Region – a Good Place for Living and Studying".

The prizes were presented during closing session of the 19th BSSSC conference in Szczecin.

The films can be viewed at the BSSSC website.

Youth on the importance of voluntary work. The BSSSC WGYP meeting in Szczecin

The meeting took place in International Centre of Studies and Meetings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer between 3th and 7th of October. The youth and youth workers – the representatives of Baltic Sea regions from Germany, Denmark, Norway, Poland, Estonia and Kaliningrad took part in the event which was prepared with a joined effort of the BSSSC youth team. Two main topics were on the agenda: cross – border cooperation and the role of volunteering for the young people

and society. The youth were searching for answers to the question of the role of volunteering in development of social cohesion and the results of European Union's cohesion policy. In Świnoujście – the twin city of Heringsdorf, which is situated right on the Polish-German border, the participants were visiting main cross-border project carried out by both municipalities. The results of that three-day Youth Event has been presented by the BSSSC Youth Board Members: Ingrid Klemp from Norway and Vladimir Svet from Estonia during the BSSSC 19th Annual Conference at the workshop "Social cohesion and voluntary work" and during a discussion at the closing session.

Getting ready for GREEN.

WGYP preparatory meeting in Tallinn

Between 10–12 May 2012 a meeting of young people from the Working Group on Youth Policy was held in Tallinn. The capital of Estonia welcomed 30 participants from Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Germany and of course Estonia with beautiful and sunny weather.

The discussion focused on the proposal of a youth workshop which should be held before the BSSSC Annual Conference in September 2012 in Oslo, Norway. The youth members presented ideas, suggestions and comments related to this workshop. Additionally the idea of creating a youth declaration was presented by one of the two youth representatives on the BSSSC Board – Vladimir Svet. The initiative has sparked a lively and interesting discussion. Cultural, legal and social differences between the regions led to different opinions on how to best promote and support the work of youth city councils in the Baltic Sea Region. Due to many divergent opinions, only a preliminary draft regulation was agreed upon. A presentation of the final version of the guidelines was scheduled for September 2012, following consultations in the regions and online discussions.

All about energy efficiency. Youth Conference GREEN in Lillestrom

Between 17th and 19th of September the BSSSC 20th Annual Conference was held in Lillestrom, Norway. Also this time prior to the Annual Conference the Youth Event of BSSSC Youth Network took place. The main topic of the youth meeting was energy efficiency – that is why it was called GREEN; the acronym stands for Gathering on Regional Energy Efficiency in Norway.

During the first day of the GREEN conference youth representatives from the countries from the BSR made presentations about their regions. Young people exchanged their experiences and knowledge about: organizing youth structures in their regions, regional and national level government priorities concerning youth, energy resources used by countries and changes which occurred in the field of energy efficiency in the last few years within the regions.

The youth not only held discussions about the topic of energy efficiency but were encouraged create solutions to raise the level of it as well. The ideas of the young people were judged by a professional Jury, which gave the best group a prize. Also during this day the election of the new youth representative to the BSSSC Board took place. Kevin Kiraga from the Westpomeranian Region was chosen to represent the interests of the young representatives in the Board.

A big success of the youth team was adopting the Declaration on Youth Participation – this paper was a result of work of the whole youth team led by the BSSSC youth board member Vladimir Set.

In the next days the youth joined the BSSSC AC to listen to politicians and specialists from the Baltic Sea Region who were discussing renewable energy resources, fighting against the economical crisis, energy efficiency, financial support of energy renewable resource projects and energy efficiency in connection to the future programming period.



photo: Paweł Maciejewski

Summary

Youth participation in meetings and exchange is very important and forms an integral part of the youth work within the BSSSC network. Young people are given the opportunity to learn about international teamwork and tolerance, which are extremely valuable for understanding and cooperation. But the youth work of the BSSSC consists not only of youth meetings. Even more important is ensuring a real influence on the decision making process and regional youth policies. The system of the BSSSC youth board members seems to work well. The youth board members are the link between the youth network and the board of the BSSSC. The task of the youth board members is to be the voice of the youth throughout the Baltic Sea Region. The communication has to go both ways, to inform the youth about the things going on in the board and to give back the youth per-

The youth not only held discussions about the topic of energy efficiency but were encouraged to create solutions to raise the level of it as well.

spective on these things after they have been discussed in the youth network. The youth Board members have the same membership as all other Board Members and have therefore full rights of speech and vote. Through the Youth Board members the youth of the Baltic Sea Region have a unique position and opportunity to get heard and their opinions expressed.

MAŁGORZATA LUDWICZEK

WGYP Coordinator

Public Health and Quality of Life – Westpomeranian Region

The main activities of the BSSSC in the area of Public Health are related to the work of the Northern Dimension Public Health and Social Well-Being. The BSSSC obtained the partner status in NDPHS in 2007 since that time the cooperation is close and stable but varies in particular focus on interest throughout the years.

During recent two years the BSSSC promoted the projects that were carried out by the Partnership. Since NDPHS coordinates the sub-priority of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and also has a strong co-operation with non-EU members in the region, the BSSSC regards the NDPHS as the good but not sufficient mechanism of involving countries such as Russia in the EUSBSR. The BSSSC representatives (the Secretariat) took part in the NDPHS Committee of Senior Representatives meetings (in Oslo in April 2011 and in Helsinki-Vantaa in April 2012); the Chairperson of the NDPHS Expert Group on Primary Health and Prison Health Systems was a moderator of the session on social cohesion issues at the BSSSC Annual Conference in Szczecin in October 2011. The involvement of BSSSC regions in the NDPHS projects should be intensified and cooperation within the revised EUSBSR strengthened.

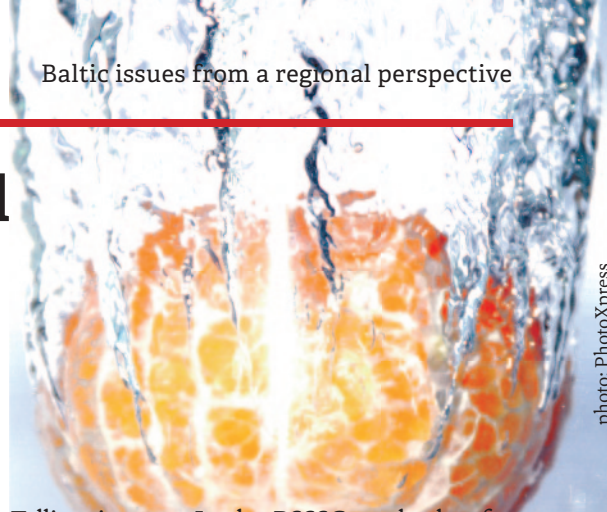
In the field quality of life the BSSSC continues its engagement in demography change issues.

Demographic Change and migration issues were discussed at the BSSSC Annual conferences in Zealand, Denmark in 2010 and in

Tallinn in 2011. In the BSSSC work plan for 2011–2012 demography change was included as one of the BSSSC priorities. In December 2011 the project Best Agers was presented to the BSSSC Board. The project describes the changing role of older people in Baltic Sea economies which are increasingly confronted with the consequences of demographic changes. What is more it demonstrates several approaches with which voluntary economic activities as well as entrepreneurship of older people can be encouraged and supported. Structures and networks have been created or strengthened and connected with each other across borders. The project was given full support and approval of the BSSSC Board as the BSSSC has acknowledged the importance of innovative age management and inclusion or preventing exclusion of elderly employees out of labour market. During the BSSSC Annual Conference in Lillestrom, 17–19 September 2012, the Best Agers seminar as a side event took place and the idea of the Best Agers virtual network was introduced to the audience. As the result the interactive platform has been created in the BSSSC website, which will serve the stakeholders of the BSSSC regions to be used for exchange of best practice examples, developing common projects, disseminating the results of the project in the BSR community.

The BSSSC will support the extension of the Best Agers project as the starting point to broader discussion on demography change challenges in the BSR.

THE BSSSC SECRETARIAT





Baltic Sea Region Programme

A part of BSSSC's mission, as a regional platform in the Baltic Sea Region, is to provide expertise, best practice examples and implementation capacity. BSSSC recognises that the territorial cooperation programmes and the ENPI (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument) are important instruments to foster concrete regional cooperation projects in the BSR.

Supporting projects under the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007–2013 has given BSSSC an opportunity to contribute to concrete activities for the benefit of subregions in the BSR, and at the same time helped to better fulfil the ambitions laid down in the BSSSC's Work Plans.

BSSSC has given political support to the following projects under the 2007–2013 BSR programme:

- New Bridges
- Bio Energy Promotion
- Baltic Master II
- TransBaltic
- First Motion
- Clean Baltic Sea Shipping
- COOL Bricks
- Amber Coast Logistics
- ScienceLink
- INVOLVE (multilevel Governance in the EU Strategy for the BSR) rejected

During 2011 and 2012 – under the West-Pomeranian Chairmanship of BSSSC – the Baltic Sea Region Programme has been on the agenda in most of the Board meetings. The

Board has been informed about the calls for projects as well as the results from the funding decisions in the Monitoring Committee. The Board members have also got information about the results from the strategic evaluation of the programme and on the cluster initiatives – as input to the BSSSC work.

BSSSC has since 2007 cooperated closely with the BSR Programme in connection with its annual conferences. Partnersearch forums/cafes' have been an important part of the conference programmes – organised by the programme secretariat in Rostock. In September 2012 at Lilleström, Norway the BSSSC Annual Conference and the Baltic Sea Region Programme Conference were organised together – including one joint session.

In 2012 the preparatory work with the new BSR Programme 2014–2020 has also been on the agenda. BSSSC has been approached to give its views to the selection of focus areas and has sent their respond to a questionnaire from the Joint Programming Committee. BSSSC is thus a part of the reference group for the new BSR programme. BSSSC has also in its statement on Cohesion Policy and the Multi Annual Financial Framework – adopted by the Board in 2011 – supported the transfer money from external relation to DG Region for cooperation with Russia and Belarus under the ETC programmes. This approach now seems to be the EU-commission proposal for the new BSR Programme 2014–2020.

ANN IRENE SAETERNES

Eastern Norway County Network

Cooperation with Russia



The Turku Process – a new form of co-operation

Co-operation between EU countries and Russia is vital to tackling many of the regional challenges in the Baltic Sea region and to utilizing its development. BSSSC is very well aware of this fact and therefore co-operation with Russia has been of high relevance for the work of our organization for many years. Against this background it is a milestone to have a new horizontal action “Neighbours” in the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region which aims at closer co-operation between stakeholders in EU member states and Russian regions.

One of the proposed flagship projects in the horizontal action “Neighbours” is the “Turku Process” which is a joint initiative of the City of Turku / Regional Council of Southwest Finland, the City of Hamburg and the City of Saint Petersburg, supported by the European Commission’s Directorate General for Regional Policy (DG REGIO). This new form of co-operation between regions in EU member states and Russian

regions was inspired by the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and its Action Plan as well as by corresponding regional Russian strategies. Well-proved and long lasting sister city relations between Hamburg and Saint Petersburg and Turku and Saint Petersburg serve as a solid basis for co-operation. The process is open for other interested partners from the Baltic Sea Region.

In September 2012 stakeholders and working groups of the Turku Process met in Hamburg. Project ideas in the field of innovation, environment and labour market were discussed as well as further steps. Next challenge will be to develop project applications for the next programming period of the Baltic Sea Region Programme.

Conference “Co-operation Development in the Macro-region – The Baltic Sea Region: from Planning to Common Action” in Saint Petersburg

Another major event was the meeting “Co-operation Development in the Macro-region – The Baltic Sea Region: from Planning to



The Turku Process meeting in Hamburg, September 2012, photo: Finnish Consulate General

Common Action” in Saint-Petersburg on 21 March 2012. The event was organized by the Russian Association North-West in co-operation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Higher School of Economics Saint-Petersburg and North-West Development and Investment Promotion Agency. The meeting was very well frequented by a highly interested audience from North-West Russian institutions, partner regions of Russian regions, Baltic Sea organizations, CBSS, ND and other bodies. Among the speakers were representatives from the German CBSS Presidency, the incoming Russian CBSS Presidency, the government of the Russian Federation, EU DG Regio and the Director General of the CBSS. In this meeting a strong interest of the Russian side in the EU Baltic Sea Strategy

became evident. The Russian Strategy 2020 was presented and discussed and furthermore representatives from North-West Russia presented an appropriate strategy for the North-West Region.

Co-operation in the framework of projects in the Baltic Sea Region

Co-operation with Russian partners in the framework of Baltic Sea Region projects has been for years another main pillar of the work of BSSSC. Important examples are TransBaltic, PortIntegration or Amber Coast Logistics.

BIRGIT KÜSTNER

Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg
Senate Chancellery

News from Brussels



The declaration of Common Interest between the Committee of the Regions and BSSSC, B7, UBC, Euroregion Pomerania and Euroregion Baltic

Mr Gerhard Stahl – Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions joined on 5 June the 8th International Self-government Forum which was held in Szczecin. Apart from taking part in the event as a speaker, Mr Stahl, on behalf of the Committee, put his signature on the Declaration of Common

The document was signed by Mr Gerhard Stahl (Committee of the Regions), Mr Olgierd Geblewicz (BSSSC), Ms Ulla Pettersson (B7 Baltic Islands Network), Mr Piotr Krzystek (Euroregion Pomerania).

Interest. The document was signed by Mr Olgierd Geblewicz – the BSSSC Chairman, Ms Ulla Pettersson – Chairwoman of the Board of the B7 Baltic Islands Network and Mr Piotr Krzystek – President of Euroregion Pomerania, Mayor of Szczecin. It will also be signed by the authorities of the Union of the Baltic Cities and the Euroregion Baltic in the near future.

The Declaration was signed for the first time in 2007 between the BSSSC and the Committee for years 2008–2011. The B7 and the UBC joined the agreement.

The present Declaration is in force for the period of 2012–2015 and it covers the following aspects of cooperation between the parties:

- Involvement of expertise in selected areas of interest of the Committee of the Regions.
- Dialogue between the European Commission and the Associations of Regional and Local Authorities.
- Participation in conferences and other activities organised respectively.
- Joint activities in the field of communication and the mutual publicity of key events.
- Joint efforts to strengthen regional participation in the Northern Dimension
- The development and realization of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region towards Europe 2020 Strategy: A common objective.
- Regional response to economic crisis.

Polish Regions at the Committee of the Regions

On 30 November about 200 BSR stakeholders took part in a seminar entitled “EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Regions – future, innovation & transfer of knowledge”. The event was organized by the Polish Regions under the patronage of the Polish Presidency in

the Council of the EU, at the premises of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels.

The aim of this conference was to present the most important issues related to the progress of implementing the EU Strategy for the BSR, particularly in the areas of knowledge transfer and building regional competitiveness by promoting innovation. The speakers and participants once again stressed the importance of an integrated approach to the funding strategy and the role and shape of the macro-regional strategy in the new programming period. A significant part of the debate was devoted to the involvement of local and regional authorities in the implementation process, which is a key to the overall success of the strategy.

Among the invited speakers were: Mercedes Bresso – Chairwoman of the Committee of the Regions, Johannes Hahn – Commissioner for Regional Policy, Danuta Hübner – Chairwoman of the Committee for Regional Development of the European Parliament. Polish regions were represented by Olgierd Geblewicz – Marshal of the West-pomeranian Region and Mieczysław Struk – Marshal of the Pomorskie Region.

The second part of the conference was focused on the issues of the transfer of knowledge. The session moderated by Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański from Euroregion Baltic, included among others a presentation given by: Lennart Svensson – Head of the Division for Innovation and Cluster Development (Region Skåne), Risto Poutiainen – from Regional development and Regional planning (Council of North Karelia) and Niels Chresten Andersen – national contact point of the South Baltic Programme in Denmark.

THE BSSSC SECRETARIAT

19th BSSSC Annual Conference

The 2011 BSSSC Annual Conference was held on 5–7 October in Szczecin, Poland under the title of “the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Cohesion Policy – expectations and the role of the regions in the BSR”. The event was hosted by the Westpomeranian Region and organized under the patronage of the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union.

Over 200 participants, including BSR stakeholders, political representatives of the regions and major EU bodies had the opportunity to take part in 3 thematic sessions-debates (on EU Strategy for the BSR, cohesion policy and financing the future of BSR cooperation) and four par-

allel workshops, devoted respectively to the issues of: territorial cohesion, co-operation between cities and rural areas, science, education and innovation and social cohesion and voluntary work. As with tradition, the conference was preceded by the BSSSC Board meeting, in which the 2011 BSSSC Resolution was adopted. The conference, with its significance for the Baltic Sea macro-region, was also an opportunity for its participants to establish contacts, and exchange regional experiences, ideas and knowledge (particularly concerning the possibilities of acquiring the means for initiatives and projects).

THE BSSSC SECRETARIAT



Patronage
of the Polish EU Presidency



all photos: Tomasz Murański

20th BSSSC Annual Conference

photo: John Petter Reinertsen



Between 17th and 19th of September 2012, the city of Lilleström in the Oslo Region of Norway hosted the 20th BSSSC Annual Conference. Upon the invitation of the Eastern Norway County Network, over 400 participants – regional authorities from all over the Baltic Sea Region, scientists, project stakeholder and representatives of other Baltic organizations and institutions participated in the event entitled “From economic crises to opportunities and actions – Baltic Sea Regions promoting green innovation in energy and water”.

The conference was organized alongside the Baltic Sea Region Programme Conference 2012, making it this year’s second biggest and most important BSR event, after the BDF Summit / 3rd EUSBSR Forum.

The programme of the conference focused on several issues regarding the area of sustainable, green growth: clean water and green energy, forests as resource for green energy, wind and wave energy, water and energy in urban development and promot-

ing green innovation for the future. The participants had a chance to join in several sessions and five parallel thematic workshops, including a study visit to Akershus Energy Park at Lilleström. The issue of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region appeared many times in the discussions and interventions throughout the conference and it was continued during the BSR Programme Conference over the following 2 days.

Closing the conference, BSSSC Chairman Olgierd Geblewicz has handed over the symbolic BSSSC bell to Mr Ossi Savolainen – Regional Mayor of Uusimaa Regional Council – the chairing region in 2013–2014. In his speech, Chairman to-be, MrSavolainen has officially invited all guests to the 21st BSSSC Annual Conference, which is to be held on 16–18 October 2013 in Helsinki region.

THE BSSSC SECRETARIAT



The Finnish BSSSC Chairmanship Helsinki-Uusimaa 2013–2014

photo: Tuula Palaste-Eerola

The regional Council of Helsinki-Uusimaa will hold the BSSSC Presidency 2013 – 2014. The BSSSC President will be Regional Mayor Mr. Ossi Savolainen and the Secretary General Mr. Janne Tamminen. Other people involved in the work of the BSSSC Presidency will be the Director of International Affairs Mr. Jaakko Mikkola, Senior Advisor Ms. Tuula Palaste-Eerola and Planner of International Affairs Ms. Josefina Bjurström.

The Finnish Presidency will carry on the work the previous Chairs have created. The themes of the Finnish Presidency will be discussed by the BSSSC Board and by all BSSSC regions interested in developing the everyday work. The point of view in the following is very practical and concentrates on the work which will be done in different working groups.

 Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation
Helsinki-Uusimaa Chairmanship
2013–2014

During the Finnish BSSSC Presidency the following themes will be highlighted:

1) Maritime Issues

Maritime Issues contain a vast field of different policies varying e.g. from maritime spatial planning to maritime safety. Many of these maritime issues have already been focused on in the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission where the regional council of Helsinki-Uusimaa has held the secretariat from 2011. One of the region's biggest topics was lobbying for a new integrated EU directive for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). The new directive was approved by the Commission earlier this autumn 2012.



An important task for Helsinki-Uusimaa is to find synergy between the different working groups of all Baltic Sea organizations. Synergy and desirable added value of mutual co-operation should always be born in mind whenever possible. One example and suggestion to other key actors would be holding joint meetings of those working groups of the BSSSC and the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission working in the same fields – whenever a mutual interest of both partners can be found.

2) Energy and Climate Issues

Energy and Climate Issues are important factors when it comes to the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). The

use of renewable energy solutions has become more and more important due to the changing climate and the decreasing energy resources. The economic crisis has hit the public finances, which calls for innovation and ingenuity in creating sustainable and resource efficient energy and climate friendly solutions. The BSR is known for its know-how and efforts in the fields of research, development and innovation, which efficiently should be exploited when planning energy and climate policies.

3) Youth Policy

Helsinki-Uusimaa will in the field of youth policy continue the strong efforts the West-pomeranian Chairmanship has carried out during the 2011–2012 period. In 2012 Helsinki-Uusimaa is one of the European Entrepreneurial Regions (EER) and the focus of the

year has among others been on youth. The region wishes to embed the results and teachings of the EER year in the work of the coming Presidency. Furthermore the Presidency also wishes to focus on e.g. tackling youth unemployment and promotion of youth guarantee schemes on the regional level.

4) From “A Northern Dimension” to “An Arctic Dimension”

The Arctic Dimension contains many policies dealing with the northernmost part of the BSR. Whilst the EUSBSR nowadays mainly comprises the fields of the older concept of Northern Dimension - that first was introduced in 1997 – the new concept of Arctic Dimension would comprise the northernmost areas of the BSR.

The Barents Sea and the Norwegian Sea issues, the new concept of the North-East Passage leading from the BSR along the Siberian coasts towards the Far East will have an important role in the future transport policy. There is currently a lot of research work about the arctic regions and seas, also because of the climate change. The area of interest would cover Iceland and the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Federation.

5) Cohesion Policy

The Finnish Presidency will continue the work related to the preparations of the future EU programming period for 2014–2020. The focus will e.g. lie on ensuring that the principles of subsidiarity and multi-level governance will be taken into account when preparing, implementing and monitoring the new Partnership Contracts and Structural Funds Programmes. Furthermore focus will lie on promoting the implementation of the objectives of the EUSBSR through the relevant Operational Programmes.

BSSSC SECRETARIAT 2013–2014

Helsinki–Uusimaa Region



Communication

Apart from traditional BSSSC policy areas, branding has been one of the main goals set by the Westpomeranian presidency. Visual identification and recognition plays a key role nowadays, particularly in institutions which are based on the exchange of information, cooperation and networking.

The 2011–2012 Chairmanship entered the new presidency period with a completely new layout of the BSSSC website (www.bsssc.com). The new design replaced the old module giving a modern, fresh breeze to the website. Apart from the visual aspect, browsing has been improved and the content better-organized. The new structure gives a range of possibilities, including the electronic registration forms for the BSSSC meetings and an active event calendar. This particular application functions thanks to the constant exchange of information, which thereby makes it an excellent tool for maintaining close cooperation with other BSR actors. The calendar is being constantly updated, forming a solid database of all the ventures undertaken by the various Baltic organi-

zations, EU institutions, projects' stakeholders etc.

Just recently the Pan Baltic Regions Network for Innovative Age Management has been established in cooperation with the Best Agers project within the bsssc.com. It is a contact point for the institutions, located around the Baltic Sea Region, who deal with age management issues.

The Westpomeranian Chairmanship has also developed a system of visual identification which consists of a set of different elements covering both written and visual materials. The logo and the prominent BSSSC image, which has been used from the very beginning of the BSSSC existence, have both become well-recognized across the Baltic Sea.

The BSSSC newsletter was another communication channel used during the presidency in order to strengthen the visibility of the BSSSC. During these last 2 years the Secretariat has released 6 issues – professionally edited, with an attractive layout coherent to visual identification. Each issue delivers a number of interesting, up-to-date articles on various topics regarding BSR cooperation. We reported on the most important events in the BSR, we published detailed articles which analyzed the state of the region from many different angles and presented what was crucial for the BSR at those moments. It has also become a tradition to publish a text about the project in each release. Amid the 56 colorful pages many well-known organizations and institutions have contributed to the newsletter (HELCOM, CBSS, NDPHS, the European Commission), as well as many high-ranking figures.

At present the newsletter is being received by over 2,100 recipients, not only from the Baltic states but across the whole of Europe!

THE BSSSC SECRETARIAT

Experts' view on the state of the region

The following section reflects the experts' view on the Baltic issues in selected areas, which are in line with the BSSSC policy areas. The space was given to well-known professionals – scholars and researchers, representatives of ministries and regional governments, organizations from all around the Baltic Sea and major EU decision-makers. The following articles give an insight into issues from the top of the Baltic Sea Region and the European Union agendas: cohesion policy, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, transportation, maritime, climate and energy policies, youth affairs and students' mobility, cooperation of Russia and the Northern Dimension and many others. With this publication the BSSSC intends to contribute to the ongoing debate on the future of the Baltic Sea Region.



DR TOBIAS ETZOLD
PEER KRUMREY

State of the Region: the Baltic Sea Region in 2012 and beyond

The Baltic Sea region (BSR) has seen a fairly high number of cooperative initiatives since the Iron Curtain, dividing Europe including the Baltic Sea region, fell two decades ago. Cooperation evolved on inter-governmental, sub-national, sub-regional and civil society levels. The region and regional cooperation profited, at least within certain areas of cooperation, in particular from its deep and wide popular foundation and bottom-up approach. In contrast to wider EU cooperation and EU institutions, several of the regional platforms are open, accessible and understandable for the public. Also thanks to the various forms of regional cooperation, a lot has been achieved in the region, changing it tremendously in political and socio-economic respect within the past 20 years. The countries of the region are engaged in a close political dialogue on various levels, exchange views and experiences, cooperate closely with each other on various levels and in many issue areas. By that they have achieved some tangible results and improvements as well as established and maintain tight trade relations. Overall, BSR cooperation has been a success story and by and large has not lost its relevance despite fundamental changes in its external environment.

When in 2004 all Central and Eastern European Baltic Sea littoral states but Russia joined the European Union, a first phase of cooperation endeavours came to an end. While this superficially caused a pause in Baltic Sea cooperation commitment – as the initial major goal of regional cooperation to stabilise and reunite the region had been achieved – a reorganisation process has been started within all regional cooperative structures shortly after. As a consequence of the enlargement, the pre-conditions for regional

cooperation and its institutions have changed fundamentally, requiring reforms of existing structures and new forms of cooperation. All these efforts finally got wrapped up by the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) which originated in the European Parliament and brought BSR issues more prominently to Brussels as well as Brussels to the Baltic Sea region capitals, reflecting the fact that by now the Baltic Sea had become almost entirely an EU-internal sea.

With the implementation of the EUSBSR as first of its kind as macro-regional approach the quest for meaning and relevance within Baltic Sea regional cooperation structures somewhat took a back seat again, enabling stakeholders to recollect these structures' former strength of concrete problem handling in regional matters. Simultaneously, voices contesting the existing structures as such fall more and more silent enabling challenged institutions of Baltic Sea cooperation as for instance the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) to find their place within the renewed regional set-up. The years 2011 and 2012 illustrated this nicely as they were marked both by commemorating the start of Baltic Sea cooperation in the early 1990s as well as a regained awareness of added value through cooperation in certain policy areas such as environment, energy, infrastructure and trans-border safety and security. Here, various challenges and problems continue to exist, making joint regional efforts continuously necessary.

It is worth particular mention that despite the European debt crisis BSR cooperation has managed to maintain its position on the agenda of all involved EU member states, thereby successfully underscoring the essence of the region as being prosperous and progressive. The region profits from the fact that its countries are fairly stable and reliable both in economic as well as in political terms and follow a similar economic philosophy of austerity, consolidation and structural reforms. This provides the countries of the BSR with the opportunity to contribute to jointly finding solutions not just for the regional but also for the EU's current problems. This article gives an account of at least some of the recent regional developments in the BSR in order to underpin the arguments given above.

The implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) made some progress in 2011/2012. Although results are not in all areas too obvious, visible and tangible as yet, at least in some areas within the strategy, concrete project-based activities seem to be evolving. The Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of 2011 conducted the first revision of the EUSBSR and co-hosted the second Annual Forum for the EUSBSR, jointly with the 12th Baltic Development Forum Summit, in Gdańsk in October 2011. The review focused on improving the strategy technically and has been continued by the consecutive Danish Presidency. The first part of the review has been

The region profits from the fact that its countries are fairly stable and reliable both in economic as well as in political terms and follow a similar economic philosophy of austerity, consolidation and structural reforms.

Regional developments in 2011/2012

adopted in the form of conclusions of the Council of the EU in November 2011. The conclusions acknowledged “the need to make the strategy more effective and result oriented for further attaining the Strategy objectives”¹. The European Commission issued a Commission Staff Working Paper on the implementation of the strategy in September 2011 and a Communication on the strategy on 23 March 2012. The latter stressed that the results of the strategy need to become clearer and more visible both at national and EU levels in order to maintain high-level political commitment². This communication was issued on the encouragement of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2012, reflecting the fact that Denmark was conscious of its responsibility to create momentum for the strategy, which, however, was not mentioned in the Presidency’s working programme. The Danish Presidency co-hosted and co-organised the third annual forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region which was held jointly with the 13th Baltic Development Forum Summit in Copenhagen on 17-19 June 2012. Towards the end of the Danish Presidency term, the Council adopted conclusions on the completion of the review of the EUSBSR.

Yet, beside the relative newcomer EUSBSR also a long established institution of intergovernmental Baltic Sea cooperation returned into the limelight: the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) celebrated its 20th anniversary in spring 2012. Germany, co-founder of the CBSS in 1992, assumed the CBSS Presidency for the second time after 2000/2001 on 1 July 2011 and devoted quite some time and energy to commemorate the launch of the CBSS and other regional institutions such as *Ars Baltica*. The German Presidency was fairly active and (co-)organised an impressive number of conferences, meetings and workshops covering a wide range of topics relevant for the BSR as well as several festive events. A highlight was a festive anniversary act in combination with an extra-ordinary meeting of foreign ministers of the CBSS member states at Plön Castle in Schleswig-Holstein on 5 February 2012. Even the two founding fathers of the CBSS, the former foreign ministers of Germany and Denmark, Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Uffe Elleman-Jensen, were present. On 23-25 April 2012, the Baltic Sea Days in Berlin formed another highlight of the German presidency. They entailed a large number of meetings and conferences, amongst which the Baltic Sea NGO Forum, a BSR business forum, a climate change adaptation policy forum, the Baltic Sea Youth Session and several high-level meetings of the various BSR cooperation structures. The Baltic Sea Days attracted hundreds of stakeholders from the entire BSR and even high-level participation. Concluding the German Presidency term, the Baltic Sea States Summit of heads of government, hosted by federal chancellor Angela Merkel, took place in Stralsund on 30 and 31 May 2012. Prime ministers of all CBSS member states but Russia were present. Also, Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, attended the meeting. The Summit primarily discussed the, for all the countries of the region, vital topics of current and future demographic development and energy. The latter is probably one of those issue areas in the BSR that attracts most attention. It even could be seen as some kind of driving force in the BSR and

regional cooperation. It was politically significant that the foreign ministers of the CBSS member states adopted a declaration on energy security at their meeting in Plön and that the heads of government took this issue up. The countries believe that the CBSS could still play an important political role in the field of energy. On the other hand, energy cooperation is one of the most difficult aspects of Baltic Sea cooperation. It is an area in which cooperation and coherence is still underdeveloped. The national interests within this field among the countries of the region diverge greatly and countries are keen to keep national control over energy. Most concrete and relevant energy projects often involve only few partner countries (bilateral, tri-lateral) but are rarely conducted within a multilateral framework. Nonetheless, there is some potential for cooperation and for creating more coherence, especially in respect of 'small' and 'new' energy (renewable energies, energy efficiency etc.).

Overall, the German Presidency primarily aimed at continuing existing work and making tangible progress in all the five long-term priority areas of the CBSS (economic development, environment and sustainability, energy, education and culture, and civil security and the human dimension). Nonetheless, it also introduced a new project/programme, focussing on the South Eastern Baltic Sea (SEBA) region including Kaliningrad, striving for modernisation through cooperation. The two-year SEBA project has been launched jointly by Germany and Russia and will be continued by the Russian CBSS Presidency 2012/13. The initiative will proceed by conducting concrete, tangible and innovative projects, primarily with a focus on small and medium enterprises and public-private partnerships. In order to be able to conduct such projects, a project fund has been established by all CBSS member states as well as a credit line of €100 million by the German Bank for Reconstruction (KfW) and its Russian counterpart.

On average, the German CBSS Presidency has been more active than one could expect, in particular in terms of organising various events. It made an overall valuable effort. It perhaps did not accomplish so much in real project terms as it rather focussed on organising and continuing a political dialogue among all the states of the region which is obviously also of great importance. When the German term at the helm of the CBSS ended on 30 June 2012, Russia assumed the CBSS Presidency for the second time after 2001/02. Russia wishes to continue the work of the preceding presidencies and will mainly focus on the development of the South Eastern part of the region (SEBA see above). However, two months into its CBSS Presidency, Russia has still not produced a presidency programme, obscuring its goals and priorities.

In the wake of aforementioned major events, also other regional institutions continued their steady and durable activities and held their annual meetings and conferences. The Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation (BSSSC) organised its annual conference in Szczecin on 5-7 October 2011. The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference held its 2011 annual conference in Helsinki in August 2011 and its 2012 conference in St Petersburg in August 2012. The Union of the Baltic Cities convened for their XI. general conference in Liepāja/Latvia on 4-7 October 2011.

Future prospects for regional cooperation in a wider perspective

In several issue areas, such as environment, civil security and maritime affairs, the cooperation and co-ordination among stakeholders seem to evolve fairly smoothly indeed and the various stakeholders' activities seem to have a complementary effect.

Taking into account the numerous institutions and structures of regional cooperation, the creation of a “coherent framework for cooperation” in the region forms a major task, aiming at linking the various structures of Baltic Sea cooperation more closely together. This in turn could enable the different fora to achieve effective and efficient cooperation, sustainable results and an effective and efficient ‘smart’ division of labour³. To this end, the German CBSS Presidency has done an effort to start a discussion and consultation process. The numerous structures of Baltic Sea cooperation represent various levels and actors which focus on (slightly) different thematic as well as geographical areas. The factual overlap is not as bad as sometimes suggested but there still is a need for more coherence and closer coordination in order to render the work of the vari-

ous bodies more effective and tangible. In several issue areas, such as environment, civil security and maritime affairs, the cooperation and co-ordination among stakeholders seem to evolve fairly smoothly indeed and the various stakeholders' activities seem to have a complementary effect. In other areas, primarily energy and culture, stakeholders still have some work ahead of them in this respect. All these areas of cooperation will maintain relevant in the future. Overall, it is important that the issue of creating coherence stays on the political agenda to achieve more tangible results and improvements than in the past.

As argued above, the region has a lot of potential. However, at times, while strong on sub-national, local and civil society levels, it seems that the overall interest in the BSR of most of its countries' central governments is not particularly intense. Apart from Finland, Sweden and to some extent the Baltic coun-

tries to which the BSR has a particular significance and for whom as small countries the BSR is an important political arena, none of the bigger Baltic Sea littoral states has developed a coherent national Baltic Sea policy. The BSR, its problems, challenges and opportunities and regional cooperation are by central governments often perceived as marginal and not as urgent priorities on the political agenda which currently in an EU-context tends to be dominated by crisis-management. The obvious trend is that issues and political processes with a wider European/EU relevance prevail over regional issues. To give an example, during its EU Council Presidency, Denmark together with some other net contributor to the EU's budget has been advocating the need to cut down on structural funds. Such step could complicate the elaboration and implementation of regional projects. Overall, a certain imbalance between the EU and regional levels in terms of funding, political commitment and prioritization has become apparent.

This comes a bit as a surprise as countries of the BSR have in fact a lot to offer and a chance to position themselves as and at the Top of Europe. The

region is currently Europe's only economic growth motor. Common features like austerity, consolidation and structural reforms are often emphasised, for example when high-ranking government representatives from the countries of the region meet. Therefore, the countries around the Baltic Sea could play a key role in generating growth and helping the continent return to a sustainable path. At least, appropriate networks and frameworks have been established for the region, playing a more active role in, for example, implementing infrastructure and (sustainable) energy projects that could benefit the competitiveness of Europe on the global scale more widely. Being able to play such a role, would, however, require an even closer political and economic dialogue and stronger coordination and cooperation of the BSR countries both within a regional as well as an EU context.

This applies with reservations even on a global scale. The BSR may only be a very small region that by no means stands in the focus of global developments. Nonetheless, it has even some significance for countries outside the region and even outside Europe. The US always had a stake in the region, not least as a security provider for Poland and the three Baltic states. Also economically, the region attracts the interest of global powers. The Baltic Sea is becoming increasingly relevant as a transport route serving the world market. Some even perceive the region as a transport hub connecting Europe and major parts of Asia⁴, bearing a potential for increasing future relevance. The planned opening of the North-East passage, the Trans-Siberian railways, intensified connections by air or the waterways and a river-system linking the Baltic Sea with the Barents Sea and the High North make such future scenarios fairly realistic⁵.

In order to materialise such scenarios and to maintain the European and global relevance of the Baltic Sea region, it will be vital to preserve the interest of all the relevant actors in the region which indeed is one of the main challenges for the near future. Furthermore, the trend of creating a certain imbalance between regional, national and EU levels needs to be reversed. It might be risky to neglect the political, environmental and economic developments and potential of the BSR as a European key region that could offer solutions to wider Europe's and the EU's general problems.

ENDNOTES

¹ Council of the European Union (2011), Council Conclusions on the review of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, 3125th General Affairs Council meeting Brussels, 15 November 2011, p. 2, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/baltic/documents_en.cfm#1

² European Commission (2012), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, COM(2012) 128 final, Brussels, 23.3.2012, p. 3, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/baltic/documents_en.cfm#1

³ Federal Foreign Office (2011) German Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States 2011/2012, Programme of Work, pp. 3 and 9, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Europa/Ostseerat/110624-Praesidentschaft_node.html

⁴ Pertti Joenniemi (2011) Baltic Sea Regionalization; on the need of a master plan, Unpublished Discussion paper for SWP-workshop, Berlin 9 September 2011, p. 2.

⁵ Ibid.



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PROF. DANUTA HÜBNER



Regional policy after 2013: towards new European Territorial Cooperation

European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), previously known as INTERREG Community Initiatives, has been part of the Cohesion policy since 1990 providing a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States. Today, it is even more important as the challenges faced by Member States and regions increasingly cut across national borders and require common action at the appropriate territorial level.

Aims

Territorial cooperation aims to help territories and regions to work together in tackling their common challenges, to reduce the physical, cultural, administrative and regulatory barriers to such cooperation and to lessen the “border effect”. It facilitates solutions to common problems and exchanges of ideas as well as it encourages work towards common goals, in the way that the borders are not any more the barriers. Today nobody can imagine Europe without cooperation: cross-border, transnational and interregional. We need cross-border solutions to mobility, to risk prevention, to health care, and to many other problems.

In the daily practise of cross-border cooperation we see how numerous are barriers to European territorial cooperation and how big effort is still needed to overcome national borders, language barriers, cultural and mentality differences, to fill in the gaps on cross border infrastructure, on provisions of services, we see how big is the unused potential of cooperation that could contribute to growth and job creation.

European Territorial Cooperation, an important dimension of European regional policy, is a vehicle to exploit better the resources that cooperation mobilises. Harnessing the ETC more effectively and efficiently is what Europe needs

today in the context of growth deficits, of high unemployment and fragile competitiveness of its economy.

But ETC is not only about overcoming territorial barriers to growth. We should not talk anymore about merely reducing or even erasing barriers to cooperation. In Europe, we need powerful tools to boost cooperation. The new European Territorial Cooperation can be a very a powerful tool. It can give us a lot: from learning from others through sharing ideas and experiences, to developing common strategies to overcoming administrative limitations and barriers in cooperation, to decisively pushing towards joint solutions.

Achievements

During the last 20 years the European Territorial Cooperation activities have had impressive achievements. The European Commission's Interreg III ex-post evaluation offers convincing evidence of the European added value of the ETC. In the period 2000–2006 it contributed to the implementation of 1030 infrastructure projects, more than 18 000 km of roads, railways and pathways were built or upgraded, 115 200 job and 5800 new businesses were created. With its support almost 12 000 cooperation networks and structures were brought into being. Also, experience from the current programming period shows that the increase of the available resources allows even more successful cooperation.

The ETC can benefit enormously from further ongoing reforms of the Single Market where still many barriers do exist and undermine cooperation. But the ETC has also huge potential to boost the power of internal market. ETC has gone a long way through the history of European regional policy. From small Interreg programme to a fully fledged strand of regional policy with its separate regulatory framework envisaged for the period 2014–2020.

New regulations

In October 2011, the European Commission adopted a draft legislative package for the future European Cohesion Policy for 2014–2020.

As a part of the regulation package a separate regulation was proposed for the European Territorial Cooperation to take better account of the multi-country context of the programmes and make more specific provisions for cooperation programmes and operations. The aim of a separate regulation is to allow a clearer presentation of the specificities of ETC and to facilitate its implementation, since terminology can be directly adapted to the multi-country context of cooperation programmes.

The proposed regulation contains the alignment with the Europe 2020 strategy, elements to increase the effectiveness of Fund interventions and an overall simplified approach to implementation. In the new regulatory framework for European Territorial Cooperation there is both a continuity and change. The three strands of the ETC (cross-border, transnational and interregional) will be maintained in the future financial period. This will facilitate its implementation and the use of the already gained experience.

In the future Cohesion Policy stronger emphasis will be given to the thematic concentration and strengthened links to other EU programmes. The European Commission proposed that the number of thematic objectives, defined in the Art 9 of the Common provisions, that cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes could choose will be limited in number. The interregional

cooperation programmes can still select all the thematic objectives. Currently the Commission's proposal foresees that only up to 4 thematic objectives shall be selected for each cross-border or transnational cooperation programme. In addition to this limitation, within the transnational cooperation programmes ERDF can support development and implementation of macro-regional and sea-basin strategies.

In the new regulatory framework for ETC there is both a continuity and change. The new regulatory framework for ETC brings further progress into how this strand of regional policy can function. But there are issues worth discussing. Disregard for the complexity and some of the challenges faced especially by border regions (e.g. limited accessibility to services of general economic interest) and by transnational cooperation areas (e.g. demographic change) might be unfortunately highlighted as far as the limitation of choice of thematic priorities to maximum four. This should be further discussed and reconsidered for the ETC programmes, as otherwise it would not be possible to select the most appropriate combination of solutions to common challenges. The thematic objectives of the ETC should correspond to its special nature and not necessarily be copied from mainstream programmes. It should be guaranteed that the themes presented by the Commission are sufficient to cover the differing needs of cross border, transnational and interregional cooperation. A delicate balance between a greater regional flexibility and the need to achieve results with scarce resources at hand has to be found. Balance, however, can be achieved only if all the parties to the negotiations are treating each other as partners.

In the 2007-2013 programming period, the emergence of new forms of territorial cooperation could be observed, designed to address macro-regional challenges. At the request of the European Council, two macro-regional strategies have been prepared by the European Commission for the Baltic Sea and the Danube Regions respectively. In the future, Cohesion policy will support the macro-regional forms of cooperation in an even stronger way than today. Macro-regional strategies are explicitly foreseen in the draft of the legislative proposal for EU Cohesion policy 2014-2020. On the basis of Art 14(a)v of the Common provisions regulation, future Partnership Contracts shall set out the main priority areas for cooperation, taking account, where appropriate, of macro-regional and sea basin strategies. These strategies will help coordinate actions by the European Union, EU countries, regions, pan-regional organisations, financing institutions and non-governmental organisations aiming to develop the macro-regions. The future EU policy will benefit from the rich experience of the first two macro-regional strategies: the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

The European Territorial Co-operation ought to be encouraged, not only with words, but also with money. This is why we in the European Parliament Regional Development Committee, will continue to consistently push for the

The European Territorial Co-operation ought to be encouraged, not only with words, but also with money.

Macro-regional strategies

7% target in the ETC spending in all its three strands and all its dimensions, internal and external (with the European Neighbourhood Instrument as well as the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance), in the multiannual financial programming period for the years 2014-2020.

In today's Europe we need more cooperation, not less. Our task is to ensure the rightful architectural and financial demands for the territorial dimension of the EU cohesion policy further towards the achievement in the Multiannual Financial Perspective 2014–2020.



Prof. Danuta Hübner, Ph.D.

Chair of the Committee of Regional Development in the European Parliament, Member of European Parliament

Danuta Hübner, Poland's first-ever European Commissioner, is one of her country's foremost economists and policymakers and has played a key role in the enlargement of the EU. Since July 2009 Ms. Hübner is a Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Committee on Regional Development as well as a member of the Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis and the Delegation for Relations with the United States. In addition she is a substitute member of the Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee, the Special Committee on the Policy Challenges and Budgetary Resources for a Sustainable European Union after 2013 and the Delegation for Relations with Switzerland, Iceland and Norway and to the European Economic Area. In 2004 Professor Hübner was entrusted as Commissioner with the regional policy portfolio. Earlier, during the past decade, her roles in Poland's Government have included Minister for European Affairs, Head of Office of the Committee for European Integration and Secretary of State for Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade and Minister Head of the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland. In 2000–2001 Professor Hübner was Under-Secretary-General of the UN and Executive Secretary at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva. She studied at the Warsaw School of Economics where she obtained an MSc (1971) and a PhD (1974). In 1988–1990 Professor Hübner was a Fulbright scholar at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1992 she was conferred with the scientific title of Professor of Economics by the President of the Republic of Poland. She has been awarded with five doctorates honoris causa by European universities.



The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region. 3 years in existence – achievements and challenges

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is making good progress. Born as an initiative from the European Parliament with strong backing from the Member States, the Strategy offers an innovative framework for addressing key challenges in the Baltic Sea Region – challenges that cannot be solved by the efforts of one country alone, though are too regionally specific to be adequately dealt with on the level of EU-27.

The first macro-regional strategy for Europe is pioneering this new approach and its experience is being closely watched by others who may want to copy it. National Contact Points provide general guidance and overall coordination in the Member States. Priority Area Coordinators and Horizontal Action Leaders ensure the goals of the Strategy are met on the ground. The Annual Forum brings stakeholders and interested parties together to discuss progress, challenges, and the potential for the future. As with any new organisation, some adjustments need to be made along the way, as we all learn from experience.

The idea is that Member States implement the Strategy with no new legislation, no new institutions, and no new money. These restrictions highlight the imperative that if the Strategy is to work, regional cooperation must be improved.

Cooperation has flourished under the new framework, fostering the development of new, inclusive networks by providing the numerous actors and organizations in the region with a common reference point. In some cases, the EUSBSR promoted the visibility of existing actors and networks in the region.

**The first
of its kind**

**Successes
to date**

For the Nordic Council of Ministers, increased profile led the Council to expand its cooperation with its neighbours, Germany and Poland. For HELCOM, increased profile improved the programme design and implementation for its hazardous substances and clean shipping initiatives. With more cooperation and better networks, the Region has a more integrated division of labour and a more efficient process for initiating and funding strategic projects than before.

As the Strategy has expanded cooperation in the Region, ministries in the Member States have begun consulting each other in a more comprehensive way than before. This has led to numerous benefits, including increased policy alignment in the Region. For example, transportation policy coherence was improved when the Baltic Sea States worked together during the TEN-T negotiations to deliver a joint Baltic Sea Region position. The Strategy has ensured thematic concerns are reflected in policies on all levels. For example, in the European Council, the eight Member States coordinate input during EU-27 wide discussions, and the macro-regional perspective is discussed in the thematic councils.

The momentum in increased cooperation did not stop at the EU borders. After a series of consultations aimed at improving coordination with our Russian partners, the European Commission and Russia are now establishing working groups addressing a selected range of issues of joint interest for which Russia's participation is particularly important. Topics include maritime safety, the environment, youth and education, transportation and border crossings, innovation and research, and energy efficiency.

Project work has been strengthened by the Strategy. Increased cooperation reinforced the work of existing projects and initiatives. For example, EfficienSea, which is working to ensure efficient, safe, and sustainable traffic at sea by establishing e-navigation zones, has received increased high-level political attention. The Strategy also cleared the way for new initiatives, for example, Baltic Deal, which supports farmers in reducing nutrient losses from farms while maintaining competitiveness. Today, a number of flagship projects have either already been completed or are close to completion, leaving space for fresh ideas to come forward.

As is often the case with innovation, the EUSBSR encountered a few challenges along the way to implementation. Those which are most critical to the success of the Strategy, as outlined below, were formally recognized by the Council during the recent review of the Strategy. The Commission has made progress in addressing the Council's points and outlined the way forward in the Communication it adopted earlier this year.

As is often the case with innovation, the EUSBSR encountered a few challenges along the way to implementation. Those which are most critical to the success of the Strategy, as outlined below, were formally recognized by the Council during the recent review of the Strategy. The Commission has made progress in addressing the Council's points and outlined the way forward in the Communication it adopted earlier this year.

Funding

Among the three "No's", the most challenging to overcome has been 'no new money.' 3 years into the Strategy, there is still progress to be made in improving the alignment of funding sources. A number of funding programmes – but not enough – have amended their project selection process criteria to include the macro-regional perspective, while others give priority to Strategy

Among the three “No’s”,
the most challenging to
overcome has been
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Lessons learned

projects. The European Parliament also granted the Strategy €2.5 million for the past two years, following €20 million in 2010. This money has been used to support the work of the implementing stakeholders. For instance, Priority Area Coordinators and Horizontal Action Leaders have been better able to fund coordination activities with their relevant partners and to support their increased workload.

However, the Region still needs to address funding issues in a more comprehensive way. In the current economic climate, the Region can do more with less by working together. The Commission and the Member States are now close to deciding on how to implement a 'seed money facility.' By making the necessary funding available, this facility will help small ideas to become serious, potential projects. It is essential, as all actors begin to plan for the financial period 2014-2020 that alignment of funds includes not only territorial co operation funds, but also bilateral funding including through the European Regional Development Fund.

Defining and measuring success

Though it contributes to progress in the Baltic Sea Region, the Strategy's specific contributions were initially difficult to measure. The Strategy needed to become more clearly result oriented. A task force determined a realistic set of targets and indicators which would make clear the specific contributions of the Strategy. This group took note of existing targets and indicators for other initiatives in the region in order to avoid duplication.

The proposed targets and indicators are framed around three main objectives: to save the sea, connect the region, and increase prosperity. The recent Council conclusions took note of the result of the task force's work. The new targets and indicators will strengthen the monitoring of the Strategy and be used to evaluate the Strategy's progress. It will also make it easier to communicate the success of the Strategy to a wide audience.

Communication

In order to improve the visibility of the Strategy, stakeholders needed a more natural and streamlined outlet for sharing progress, experiences, and good practices. For this reason, the Commission along with INTERACT Turku recently launched a dedicated EUSBSR website along with a visual identity for the Strategy. Behind the scenes, the current communication plan for the Strategy was recently evaluated. The Commission is currently reviewing the resulting suggestions for improvement and aims to implement them soon.

While the review of the Strategy is complete, there is still more work to be done. The Europe 2020 strategy was introduced after the EUSBSR had already begun its implementation phase. The EUSBSR is a place-based interpretation of Europe 2020 goals in that its actions and goals support smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in the Baltic Sea Region. With this in mind, the Commission is working to embed the EUSBSR firmly in the Europe 2020 agenda. This includes ensuring the values of Europe 2020 are clearly reflected in the revised Action Plan, and that the 2014–2020 multiannual financial framework reflects

Ensuring full implementation

a macro-regional perspective where possible. These efforts will not only better align the policies but also help to align funding for EUSBSR projects.

A review of the Action Plan is currently on-going. The revised Action Plan hopes to address a number of issues by rethinking how many of the Priority Areas are organized without disrupting what is working well. Issues include goals which were too diverse or too ambitious, or where there were too many coordinators assigned to be efficient.

We need to further explore ways to expand regional cooperation with certain actors. The Strategy's stakeholders can support increased inclusion of local actors and the private sector by better communicating ways and reasons to be involved. The Commission and Strategy stakeholders are investigating ways that can help facilitate expanded cooperation in these aspects.

Conclusion

Wide political support on the EU, national, regional, and local levels for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is the key to ensuring the Strategy reaches its full potential. The Commission is committed to helping our partners secure the political commitment they need to remain effective. Along with the Strategy's stakeholders, the Commission will continue to work for more effective delivery of projects and initiatives in the interests of the citizens of the region but ultimately it is the Member States and managing authorities who will determine the success of the Strategy. Their decisions to commit the resources in terms of staff and money necessary to ensure the full implementation of the Strategy – will be decisive.



Dr Walter Deffaa

Walter Deffaa studied Economics at the Universities of Tübingen and TU Berlin. PhD in economics (University of Stuttgart-Hohenheim), he has been working since 1983 at the European Commission in Brussels where he is since February 2012 Director General for Regional Policy. He has previously served as Director General for Taxation and Customs Union (2009-2012), as Director General of the Internal Audit Service (2004–2009), as Finance Director in the Regional Policy DG (2003–2004), as Director in the Secretariat General (2001–2003), as Director in DG BUDGET (1999–2001) and as chef de cabinet for Commissioner Wulf-Mathies (1997-1999). He was a visiting Professor at the College of Europe in Brugge, Belgium (1999–2009) and has published many articles on the EC budget and audit.

Northern Dimension can do more for the Baltic Sea Region

The Northern Dimension (ND) has its roots in the accession of Finland and Sweden to the European Union in 1995. As a result, the EU expanded beyond the Arctic Circle and to just a few kilometres from the Barents Sea and got a long border with the Russian Federation. With the initiative, our aim was to get more attention in the EU to the Northern parts of Europe, to support development of northern regions, to protect the environment, promote health and to ensure the requirements for the region's economic development. In addition, we aimed at strengthening cooperation with Russia in practical terms. We succeeded in "selling" the idea and the Northern Dimension was established as an EU policy in 1999.

A lot has happened after that. The Northern Dimension has in its 13 years of existence developed into a well-functioning framework for concrete cooperation in different fields that are important to the Northern regions in Europe. In 2006, the Northern Dimension found its present shape as it was defined a common policy of four equal partners: the EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland. The Northern Dimension covers a broad geographic area. Activities at present focus on cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and in the Barents region. Most visible work has been done in the field of the environment, where the most significant projects have included the construction of the St. Petersburg Southwest Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Neva Programme.

The Northern Dimension is often described as pragmatic and result-oriented cooperation. Partnerships are a concrete way of putting the Northern Dimension policy into practice. They differ in nature and modes of operation, but all of them combine policy-making, the work of experts and practical-level project activities. There are now four partnerships. I already named the Environmental

Partnership. In addition to that, we have a Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being, on Transport and Logistics and on Culture.

In 2009, the European Union adopted the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), which is an internal strategy defining the EU's objectives in the Baltic Sea and the Barents regions. A review of the Strategy was recently completed summing up the results of the first years of its implementation. Among the main findings in the review process was that, in order to achieve the goals of the

EUSBSR, the EU needs not only to intensify action and improve management at all levels, but also to improve cooperation with countries outside the EU.

Russia, for its part, adopted its own Strategy of social and economic development of the North-Western federal district up to 2020. This means that both the EU and Russia have now their own strategies for their adjacent northern regions.

The fact that both the EU and Russia are stepping up their efforts in the region provides a good basis for strengthened cooperation. This is where the Northern Dimension, as a common policy between the EU and Russia, can play a major role. The Northern Dimension has well-established cooperation structures available for defining joint priorities for the development of the Baltic Sea region.

We do not need new cooperation structures in the Baltic Sea region. Instead, we should focus more on the efficient division of labour between the present actors. The Northern Dimension offers a joint platform to the EU, Russia and other partners for dialogue and cooperation. We see it as the main channel for implementing concrete activities. The intergovernmental Baltic Sea cooperation structures, in particular the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and HELCOM as well as the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation, also have an important role to play. In order to get the most out of the existing structures and available resources, we need to increase synergies and avoid overlapping. This will be one of the key themes of Finland's upcoming presidencies in the CBSS and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

The Northern Dimension is often described as pragmatic and result-oriented cooperation.



Soili Mäkeläinen-Buhanist

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Ms Mäkeläinen-Buhanist has long experience in cooperation with Russia. She has held various positions in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and has worked for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in London. Her diplomatic career includes postings to the Finnish Embassy in Moscow and the Consulate General in St. Petersburg.

MARIA LAAMANEN



Climate change is transforming the Baltic Sea: are the agreed measures to save the marine environment enough?

Solving the global economic crisis has employed the global leaders to such an extent that at moments it has felt as though they have forgotten about climate change. This summer faced the worst drought in 56 years in the U.S. Midwest, causing reduced crop yields and sky rocketing food prices. It gave the world leaders a brief reminder of the fact that climate change with its extreme weather events is reality.

Global mean temperature has increased by 0.8 degrees Celsius during the past one hundred years. July 2012 was the fourth warmest July since the record keeping began in 1880, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NOAA. July was also the 329th consecutive month with a global temperature above the 20th century average. In the Arctic, July 2012 sea ice extent was the second lowest on record.

Two degrees Celsius has been referred to as the critical limit of warming and the EU has agreed on the two degrees increase in average temperature to be the maximum acceptable warming compared to pre-industrial times. After that things threaten to get out of hand. Climatic feedback loops, involving melting of the methane hydrates buried under the ocean floor or release of methane from the permafrost of arctic wetlands, will kick in, further enhancing the warming. Methane is a greenhouse gas even stronger than carbon dioxide. Already, the reduction of the ice cover in the Arctic has reduced the reflection of solar irradiation back into space of solar irradiation.

We are already living in a changing climate

**The Baltic Sea
is warming up
and turning
murkier**

In 2012, climate change was among the top ten global risks mentioned in the annual assessment of global risks of the World Economic Forum (WEF). WEF estimates both the likelihood of the climate change risk to occur as well as its impact to be high (WEF, 2012).

The Baltic Sea region has in recent decades warmed up faster than the global average. It seems that there has been a warming trend in the sea water since the 1950s compared with the first half of the 20th century (BACC 2008).

During recent winters the waters have no longer cooled down as much as before and since the 1980s the minimum temperature of water has increased by 1.5 degrees Celsius (BACC 2008). The length of the ice season has decreased by up to 40 days over the past century, mainly due to an earlier break-up of the ice (HELCOM 2007). This is good news for shipping and maritime activities but bad news for organisms such as the ringed seal which is dependent on ice for the survival of its offspring.

Sea level rise is apparent especially in the southern Baltic Sea area where it can be at a level of 1.7 mm per year, while in the northern shores the rise is dampened by post-glacial rebound. The sea level rise of the Baltic is linked to the global sea level rise of the oceans.

Water salinity levels have decreased in the Baltic Sea. During the 1980s and 1990s, salinity of the Baltic Sea was lower than before but similar decreases had taken place also in the 1920s and 1930s (BACC 2008). Decreased salinities are linked to an increase of precipitation and freshwater input to the Baltic which are predicted to further increase with the climate change.

Swedish observations from the previous 15 years indicate decline of pH of sea water from the Kattegat in the south to the Bothnian Bay in the north. Acidification of the marine environment causes decline of calcareous species from phytoplankton to benthic invertebrates. Ocean acidification is a result of increased CO₂ influx from the atmosphere to the sea caused by increased levels of the gas in the air and shown to occur worldwide.

Temperature, salinity, pH and oxygen conditions are factors that strongly control the habitat of organisms. With its brackish water, the Baltic Sea is a harsh environment for organisms to live in and many of them are under continuous physiological stress caused by the low salinity. Freshening of the water favours freshwater species at the cost of marine species, such as the bladder wrack and blue mussel, and the ranges of marine organisms will withdraw towards the North Sea, while those of freshwater species will expand.

Oxygen is vital to life in the sea and oxygen conditions of the Baltic Sea are controlled by climate too. First of all, there is the sheer physical fact that solubility of atmospheric oxygen decreases in warmer water. This means that colder water is capable of containing larger quantities of the oxygen gas. As the water warms up, part of the oxygen is lost.

Much of the bottom of the Baltic Sea and water body in the deep basins currently faces the condition of hypoxia, but it is also prevalent in coastal areas (Conley et al. 2011). The hypoxic bottom area has increased from less than 10,000 km² in the beginning of the 20th century to more than 60,000 km² in

2010 (HELCOM, in preparation). The current size of the hypoxic area in the Baltic Sea is nearly the size of Latvia and larger than Denmark.

Hypoxia means oxygen concentration of less than 2 mg per litre. This concentration is too low for most living organisms. Large areas of the deepest basins of the Baltic Sea also suffer from complete anoxia and are burdened by hydrogen sulfide toxic to organisms. Those animals which are able to escape from these areas, and the hypoxic and anoxic bottoms become devoid of fish and larger organisms.

The trend of oxygen decrease in the Baltic Sea Proper is exceptional. The volume specific oxygen debt, describing shortage of oxygen content in the water compared to a fully saturated condition, increased from close to zero in the beginning of the 20th century to around 4.0 mg per litre in the 1980s to attain the present level of about 3.0 mg per litre (HELCOM, in preparation).

The Baltic Sea is almost a closed basin but the North Sea breathes in new oxygen containing water at infrequent intervals through the Danish Straits. In normal conditions it takes about 25–30 years for all the waters of the Baltic Sea to change. These water renewal processes are dependent on weather patterns and since the late 1970s weather has not favoured inflow events. Whether the lower frequency of inflows has something to do with climate change is not clear to scientists.

Eutrophication is another great contributor to the increasingly poor water quality and it has contributed to a continuous decline of oxygen levels since the 1950s. Human made eutrophication also distinguishes the current hypoxic conditions from previous naturally induced hypoxic situations.

Eutrophication refers to the increase in biomass of algae, plants and animals due to excess availability of the nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen. Since the Baltic Sea is nearly a closed system and water renewal is poor, all biomass degrades within the Baltic Sea and the remnants are deposited to the sea floor. Remineralisation of organic material by bacteria consumes oxygen. In balanced conditions oxygen is replenished through natural water exchange processes and remineralisation products, such as nutrients, are buried in the sea bottom sediments. But when there are excess nutrients this balance breaks down. Degradation consumes more oxygen than is being replenished and burial processes are not fast enough to handle the nutrients. Nutrient accumulation and hypoxia take place.

There are also reinforcing feedback loops within the sea and eutrophication is accelerated by the release of phosphates from anoxic bottom sediments.

Again, climate change enhances eutrophication through increased precipitation and consequently increased run-off and loss of nutrients from the drainage area. In addition, warming of the water is thought to accelerate microbial remineralisation processes making larger quantities of nutrients available for production.

HELCOM, the Helsinki Commission, implementing the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea, has been the forum for political decisions of the Baltic Sea countries and the EU to protect Baltic Sea for the past four decades.

HELCOM has strategic goals and ecological objectives which focus on eutrophication, impacts from hazardous substances, loss of biodiversity and environmentally friendly maritime activities. The ultimate vision is to reach a Baltic

**The vision is
to reach
a healthy Baltic
Sea by 2020**

Sea in good environmental status by 2021, and the EU Marine Strategy Directive brings this year even one year closer, to 2020.

In fact much good progress has taken place despite the great challenges. Nutrient loads to the sea, especially those of phosphorus, have been declining since the 1980s. This is observed in many areas also as a decline of nutrient concentration levels. The use of harmful toxic substances such as the pesticide DDT, PCBs and dioxins have been banned and releases of heavy metals and dioxins strictly managed and this has resulted in the recovery of the seal populations and white tailed eagle. The great cormorant which is today almost too common in the Baltic region was still a protected species about 15 years ago because it had been hunted near to extinction in the Baltic Sea region.

To ensure the reaching of the ambitious target of a healthy Baltic Sea, the Baltic Sea coastal states and the EU agreed in 2007 on the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. Today, about one third of the 114 actions contained in the Plan have been implemented and HELCOM's 2013 Ministerial Meeting will scrutinize the effectiveness of implementation and the need for additional measures.

In order to provide information on how far the current state of the Baltic Sea stands from HELCOM's goals and objectives HELCOM employs indicators. HELCOM's large set of indicator reports ranges from indicators on seal health to nutrient loads into the sea. It is supported by monitoring carried out by the Contracting States and coordinated by HELCOM.

HELCOM is the platform where the Baltic climate scientists and policy makers can act in concert to ensure that the impacts of climate change don't undermine conservation efforts.

In 2007, HELCOM in cooperation with the Baltic Sea Experiment, BALTEX, produced a thematic assessment of climate change in the Baltic Sea. This report presented to a wider audience the main scientific findings of the text book "Assessment of climate change for the Baltic Sea Basin" (BACC 2008) and enhanced the communication of climate change related information in the Baltic Sea region to decision makers.

In 2007, HELCOM ministers at their Krakow meeting agreed that they were "fully aware that climate change will have a significant impact on the Baltic Sea ecosystem requiring even more stringent actions in the future" (HELCOM 2007, BSAP).

In 2010, the HELCOM Moscow Ministerial Meeting agreed on the need for supplementary actions and admitted that climate change may have profound consequences both for the environmental status of the Baltic Sea as well as for the scope of the measures adopted by the Contracting Parties until now.

What these more stringent and supplementary actions are is yet to be specified in HELCOM.

Scenarios of climate change effects on the Baltic Sea ecosystem during the 21st century were recently published by a group of scientists (Meier et al. 2011, 2012). The scenarios were produced using physical-biogeochemical models which build on global predictions of increases in greenhouse gases.

"Our study suggests that the future Baltic Sea ecosystem may unprecedentedly change compared to the past 150 years", concluded Dr. Markus Meier of the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute and Stockholm University.

Decision makers have noted that climate change is impacting the Baltic Sea

New scenarios suggest that there is yet more to come

The warming of the annual mean air temperature in the region during the course of the 21st century has been predicted at 3–5 Celsius degrees (HELCOM 2007). Water temperature is projected to increase by approximately 2-4 degrees by the end of the century (Döscher & Meier 2004, Meier et al. 2011).

Depending on the climate model used, precipitation in the region will increase by 12-18% at the end of this century. The annual mean river run off to the Baltic Sea is projected to increase between 15 and 22 % (Meier et al. 2011). Increased river run off has been connected to an increased loss of nutrients from the drainage area.

Under the impact of the warming climate hypoxic and anoxic areas will very likely increase during this century compared to the present conditions. If the external nutrient loads to the sea will remain at today's level or increase due to intensified agriculture in the drainage basin, the losses of oxygen in the bottom of the Baltic Proper can be up to 4 ml per litre (Meier et al. 2011). The projected decreased oxygen concentrations are caused by increased nutrient loads due to augmented runoff, reduced oxygen flux from the atmosphere to the ocean, higher temperature and intensified internal nutrient cycling (Meier et al. 2011).

Greater precipitation and increased runoff will lead to decreases of salinity by 1.7 g per kg in the scenarios presented by Meier et al. (2011).

Scenarios with 15% lower salinity compared to today suggest that the Baltic will still be able to support a cod population which can sustain a fishery, but biomass and yields will be lower (McKenzie et al. 2011). Climate change affects cod recruitment, especially the survival of eggs and larvae through the decrease of salinity. The authors note however that continued eutrophication and warming of the Baltic Sea could reduce cod productivity even further than they have estimated due to reduced oxygen concentrations in cod spawning areas.

Sprat which has increased significantly since the 1980s is foreseen to further increase in the 21st century (Meier et al. 2012).

At the end of the century sea-ice volume in the Baltic Sea is projected to be reduced by 83% on average (Meier et al. 2004). Climate change seems to be a major threat to all populations of the Baltic ringed seal (*Phoca hispida botnica*) in the southern fringes of its Baltic Sea distribution. The only fairly good winter sea-ice habitat is expected to be confined to the Bay of Bothnia (MacKenzie et al. 2011).

It is needless to say that realization of the scenarios presented above would result in great changes in the distribution of many other species in addition to the cod and ringed seal.

Climate change will undermine the reaching of the good environmental status of the Baltic Sea. Nutrient load reduction targets of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan were designed to guarantee the reaching of a good environmental status in relation to eutrophication in the current climatic conditions.

In the conditions described for the end of this century in the above scenarios, the Baltic Sea Action Plan nutrient load reductions will only be enough to safeguard current oxygen conditions and surface nitrate levels (Meier et al. 2012). This is a rough scenario, almost like a scene of the Red Queen and Alice in the Wonderland “you run as fast as you can and you stay in the same place”. Especially, knowing the resources and efforts it takes to reduce loads to the sea to the level expected by the Action Plan.

How will the current marine environment policies perform in the changing climate?

For phosphorus concentrations the future is slightly brighter. The Action Plan level phosphorus reductions in the changing climate of this century would yield a slight decline of phosphorus concentrations, resulting in levels comparable to those of the 1970s or 1980s (Meier et al. 2012).

The study by Meier et al. (2012) also presents reference scenarios, where no progress of nutrient load reductions is foreseen compared to today. Current nutrient load levels combined with increased temperature and decreased salinity would produce an unpleasant result during the 21st century. Oxygen levels would decrease along with increased eutrophication and turbidity caused by increased organic material in the water. Reduced salinity combined with the above factors may contribute to reduced biodiversity. In addition, acidification due to increased atmospheric concentration of CO₂ is predicted to increase (Meier et al 2012).

It seems that the vision of a healthy Baltic Sea is slipping out of our hands if the scenarios of the changing climate are to become reality.

It is time to look more critically into the political decisions, specify them and put them to work

HELCOM as an organization is not targeted to take decisions to affect the root cause of the problem, the greenhouse gas emissions. But the decision makers of the HELCOM Contracting Parties can take political decisions which ensure that climate change impacts on the marine environment will be efficiently countered by protection measures.

The key question in the warming climate is: What is a sustainable level of nutrient loads and eutrophication that the Baltic Sea can tolerate in the future climate so that we can still reach the HELCOM vision of a healthy Baltic Sea?

HELCOM is currently reconsidering its eutrophication status targets. These targets will be used as the basis for recalculating the nutrient reduction requirements of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The objective is that the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in 2013 will agree on the revised nutrient load reduction scheme of the Action Plan.

Scientists involved in HELCOM's TARGREV project have proposed oxygen conditions to be the primary indicator of eutrophication along with water transparency (HELCOM, in preparation). For oxygen, dual targets have been proposed, those that take into account the warmer water of today compared to the early 20th century and those that don't. Reaching the targets that take into account today's warmer water would require a greater amount of nutrient loads to be reduced to counteract the effects of temperature increases. Further scientific work is currently being carried out by the Baltic Nest Institute to also estimate the future climate change impacts on eutrophication and nutrient load reduction needs.

The HELCOM 2013 Ministerial Meeting provides a good opportunity to start specifying the supplementary actions and scope of the measures mentioned in relation to climate change in the Declaration of the 2010 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting.

HELCOM is the forum for ensuring that pressures on the Baltic Sea are managed to reach the good environmental status of the Baltic Sea and it should fulfil this role also when the baseline conditions change. With new research data currently mounting up it is possible to better anticipate the future changes and start preparing for them.

Ian E. Wilson said “No amount of sophistication is going to allay the fact that all your knowledge is about the past and all your decisions are about the future.” In our case, we not only rely on knowledge about the past but also have sophisticated predictions of the future and hence should also make sophisticated decisions about the future.

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Maria Laamanen



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DIETRICH SEELE
ILYA ERMAKOV

The Baltic Sea Region as a maritime model region – The contribution of the CBSS-Expert Group on Maritime Policy

Mandate and aim

By adopting the Declaration on the reform of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in Riga 3 June, 2008, the CBSS has defined for itself five long-term, broad priority areas: Environment, Economic Development, Energy, Education and Culture, Civil Security and the Human Dimension. It was decided that the aforementioned priorities will be implemented by expert groups, including governmental and non-governmental experts, as appropriate, with clear and time-limited mandates and tasks.

After the dissolution of its Working Group on Economic Development the CBSS decided on a new working body which would be represented in the respective priority area. The idea, to have an expert group in the field of maritime policy, has finally gained support from not only the CBSS member countries but also its strategic partners BSPC and BSSSC, both having their own working groups on integrated maritime policy.

With the adoption of the Terms of Reference (ToR) drafted by Germany, the EGMP was established by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) on 2 June 2009. Following this, the 15th CBSS Ministerial Session in Elsinore 4 June 2009, decided “to welcome the decision to set up an Expert Group on Maritime Policy, intended to contribute to sustainable growth and employment in the maritime sector, to combine and better coordinate all sea related activi-

ties and tasks, as well as to strike an appropriate balance between economic, social and ecological aspects." Accordingly, the EGMP has started its work on the basis of an integrated approach to maritime policy, including all relevant sector policy fields and taking into account their mutual impacts.

It was decided that the EGMP Chairmanship will follow the CBSS Presidency. The EGMP's three-year mandate is calculated from the constitutive meeting, which was held on 24 November, 2009 in Vilnius.

The overall aim of the group is determined by ToR as follows:

- Improvement of the Baltic Sea region's international competitiveness. The region already has a competitive advantage due to its comparatively high degree of integration in comparison to other sea regions, which is worth expanding and utilising.
- Positioning of the Baltic Sea region as a European model region for maritime best practice and for a balanced co-existence of a successful maritime economy and adequate protection of the marine ecosystem.

The Council of Baltic Sea States has in its declaration from 9 June 2011 appreciated the work of the EGMP.

Geographically the EGMP is composed of representatives from all the 11 CBSS Member States, and the European Commission (DG Mare). The EGMP is being provided with a Secretary Function from the CBSS Secretariat.

Administratively the Expert Group is composed by representatives from Prime Ministers' Offices and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Regional Development, Transport & Infrastructure, Industry & Trade and Maritime Administrations. According to the CSO regulations, the agreement of the government representatives is required for decisions based on consensus, while NGO representatives attend in a capacity as guests.

As stipulated by ToR, "other organisations and initiatives from around the Baltic Sea with a substantial maritime policy interest will be invited as guests. Representatives of CBSS Observer States will be invited as guests if they so request. Sector players and stakeholders in the different maritime sectors may be invited as guests on an ad hoc basis".

The following guiding lines by Riga Declaration and ToR are also generally applicable to the EGMP activities:

- overlapping mandates with bodies under CBSS umbrella and outside the CBSS are to be avoided (in such a division of labour, for example, HELCOM deals primarily with issues of marine protection, while the EGMP works in the fields of maritime economy);
- the Group cooperates closely and exchanges information with the relevant CBSS Strategic Partners (including not least the BSSSC) and other stakeholders;
- the Group takes full account of the work conducted in the Northern Dimension Policy Framework and of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region.

As a general rule, the group meets 3 times a year. Each CBSS presidency and respective EGMP chairmanship suggests its working plan together with

Tasks and Working Methods

specific priorities to focus on within the list of the group's key tasks as per its ToR. A tradition has been established to have a central event in the form of seminar/workshop organized by the Presidency and devoted to the topic/area prioritised by the Chairmanship.

During the last three years nine regular meetings took place.

The Anticipated Tasks of the group are determined by ToR under point 4) as follows:

- Compile an inventory of regional stakeholders – whose interests need to be taken into consideration – and of existing regional structures and networks of maritime cooperation – who could contribute to future CBSS activities in maritime policy.
- Develop a virtual communication platform on maritime policy in the Baltic Sea region, presenting model integrative projects and programmes, naming examples of good governance and strengthening the exchange of technical information in the region.
- Initiate a maritime economy cluster in the Baltic Sea region to combine regional interests, strengthen their visibility and enable a regional maritime policy dialogue between business and political decision-makers.
- Initiate a network for marine science, research and development in the Baltic Sea region, which seeks to increase know-how for the participants through the exchange of knowledge and experience, and can serve as a contact point for dialogue with political decision-makers. Such a network may be expanded into a virtual research association at a later date.
- Propose and accompany cross-sector pilot projects in maritime policy within the framework of transnational cooperation in the Baltic Sea region (Baltic Sea Region Programme, INTERREG IV B, which allows for participation of Russian, Belarus and Norwegian partners).
- Examine and propose measures to raise awareness of model maritime projects and products, e.g. through awards and/or certification (labels).
- Consider and propose regional maritime public relations campaigns for the promotion of collective maritime consciousness and shared Baltic Sea identity, e.g. on the annual European Maritime Day (20 May) and/or the annual Baltic Sea Days in St. Petersburg (mid March).
- Undertake, when and where feasible, other measures conducive to the overall aims, while avoiding overlapping and taking advantage of other ongoing projects in the Baltic Sea Region.

Results

In accordance with the ToR, the EGMP is to compile “an inventory” of regional stakeholders and of existing regional structures and networks of maritime cooperation. This work was started during the Lithuanian chairmanship and as a result a databank including collection of relevant information, i.e. documents and links on maritime policy in the region has been established. The platform is located on the CBSS website <http://www.cbss.org/Economic-Development/expert-group-on-maritime-policy> and is available for the general public.

During Lithuanian Presidency a Maritime Cluster Workshop has been held to facilitate communication and best practice exchange related to maritime

clusters in the region. One of the conclusions of the workshop is that a more intense cooperation between maritime clusters in the Baltic Sea region, enabling mutually beneficial learning processes, is necessary.

Special importance has been given to issues of “Clean Shipping”.

The Norwegian Presidency was particularly aiming at creating better conditions for establishing regional cluster cooperation in the field of LNG in shipping. Due to the expected growth in maritime transport and the related environmental challenges, as well as new emission regulations from 2015/2016 onwards, there is a need to examine alternative fuel solutions.

This was in line with the EGMP's tasks anticipated by its ToR as well, as it was in compliance with the BSPC Working Group Integrated Maritime Policy political recommendation in the context of its 4th session in Tallinn in November 2010: “to promote the use of alternative marine fuels such as LNG in the Baltic Sea Region by creating incentives for investments in the development of the necessary port infrastructure with a well developed network of filling stations and uniform industry- and usage standards”.

The seminar was attended by more than 90 participants with a broad geographical and institutional distribution representing governmental agencies, industries and maritime clusters.

In the same context a workshop was held in Berlin under German Presidency: “Marine environmental protection on the Baltic Sea – political obligation, industrial opportunities. Aim of this workshop was to present the broad range of technological possibilities to reduce ship emissions (you can find the contributions of the workshops on the website: www.cbss.org).

The EGMP has taken the leading role in initiating a closer cooperation between a steady broadening circle of organisations and initiatives from around the Baltic Sea with a substantial maritime policy interest. I.e.: Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC), Helsinki Commission

HELCOM, Vision and Strategies around the Baltic (VASAB), Baltic Sea Forum, Baltic Sea Commission, Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics and Baltic Organizations Network for Funding Science (BONUS).

The EGMP hopes that this will make it possible to better pool the common interests of the Baltic Sea region in the future and to further improve the transparency and effectiveness of the architecture of the Baltic Sea cooperation as a whole.

On the occasion of the European Maritime Day 2011 in Gdansk and 2012 in Gothenburg the maritime working groups of the Baltic Sea organizations (the Stakeholders) held joint events aiming at defining joint activities in the future to make the Baltic Sea region a maritime model region in Europe. In Gothenburg “Clean shipping” has been confirmed as the first cross-cutting priority area where all the stakeholders together can make a difference.

Strengthening cooperation between the strategic partners of the CBSS was appreciated by the Council's Oslo Declaration of 2011, as well as by the political recommendations for the 20th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. The 21st BSPC Resolution stated that “cooperative initiatives such as the “Maritime Joint

Event” in 2011 and 2012 should be promoted as a role model for other subject areas”.

To make it possible for the Experts Group on Maritime Policy to achieve sustainable results, integrative cross-sectoral projects that serve as examples to demonstrate the added value of the Baltic Sea cooperation are initiated and supported politically.

It is crucial that concrete measures and projects that generate a concrete added value for the Baltic Sea region as a whole are jointly identified.

Accordingly the following projects have been politically supported:

Several projects and project applications have been presented to the EGMP

in its meetings. On the EGMP meeting in March 2010 in Copenhagen two project applications for the BSR Programme 2007–2013 3rd Call sought for the support of the EGMP: “Sub-Mariner: sustainable uses of Baltic marine resources” and “CleanShip”. The EGMP unanimously found that the goals of these projects coincide with the goals of the EGMP and decided to enter into a regular and constructive dialogue with these projects and consider whether it could provide political support, such as in raising project results to the political level, as appropriate.

It is crucial that concrete measures and projects that generate a concrete added value for the Baltic Sea region as a whole are jointly identified.

In May 2010 the Group has started the exchange of information with Baltic Organizations Network for Funding Science (BONUS), which brings together 10 research funding organisations around the Baltic Sea. The BONUS-169 programme will also act as a model for the protection of the other regional seas in Europe – the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the North Sea.

The EGMP was invited to take participation on BONUS Advisory Board meetings in the future. The Group will continue this exchange of information with the aim to develop it into an active mutually beneficial concrete cooperation.

From 23–27 April 2012 the German Government carried out the Baltic Sea Days with a broad range of events presenting concrete initiatives and projects which reflect the challenges, the advantages and the richness of Baltic Sea cooperation.

The EGMP supported these Baltic Sea Days actively organizing workshops on “clean shipping” and on a better coherence of the Baltic Sea organizations with maritime policy competence.

Finally, the EGMP expects the measures and projects to result in a concrete added value which could be described as follows:

- improved data and knowledge basis und improved availability of the existing databases,
- improved gearing of the structures of the Baltic Sea region to the cross-cutting subject of the “sea”,
- use of synergies,
- more effective representation of common interests at the European and the international level.

The EGMP was possibly the first CBSS expert group established “from scratch” in compliance with the new requirements set up by Riga Declaration of 2008. One can argue about the efficiency of an expert group based on its composition, competence level, and funding. Still, the work is ongoing and the results after the first three years of activity are quite promising in a number of the key-task areas as reported above. Some areas or concepts like being project oriented might be more challenging and time and resources consuming.

The Committee of Senior Officials approved the proposal of the EGMP prolonging the mandate of the EGMP by 2–3 years.

CBSS rotating presidency principle allows each member country, chairing the EGMP to demonstrate – and to invite the members to do so – its forefront achievements, as well as to promote its visions on the maritime issues and provide political support to the projects of common interest throughout the Baltic Sea region and beyond by reporting to the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials, consequent Ministerial meetings and Summits.

As of 1 July 2012 the Russian Federation has the Presidency in the EGMP.

Concluding remarks

Dietrich Seele



Dietrich Seele studied Political Science, Philosophy and European Ethnology at the universities of Göttingen and Marburg. From 1984 – 1988 he worked as Scientific Assistant in the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasburg. In 1987 he taught “Policy of the European Union” at the college of Fulda. From 1988 – 1991 he represented the Land Schleswig-Holstein at the European Commission in Brussels. From 1991 he was advisor of the EU-Commissioner van Miert covering consumer-protection and competition matters. From 1995 he worked in the government of the Land Schleswig-Holstein in Kiel as Head of Division and Deputy Head of Department. He was responsible for Maritime Policy and interregional/transnational cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. Since 1 January 2008 he has been Expert on „Integrated Maritime Policy” in the division „Maritime Policy, Planning and Strategy“ in the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, Germany.

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LARS ALMKLOV

Promoting Green Shipping for a Blue Baltic

Shipping is a major contributor to global trade and prosperity. Shipping – which transports 90% of global trade – is, statistically, the least damaging mode of transport to the environment. According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), set against land-based industry, shipping is a comparatively minor contributor, to marine pollution from human activities.

Over the last decades shipping has a positive track record in terms of accidents, oil spills and others emissions to the sea. The most important current challenge relates to air emissions from shipping.

The maritime industry and shipping in the Baltic Sea region constitutes a substantial part of the trade and the economic activity in the region. According to Helcom there are around 2,000 ships at any given time in the Baltic Sea and the number of ships entering and leaving the area has increased with 20% from 2006 to 2010.

Among the environmental effects from shipping, local emissions such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and sulphur are particularly harmful for the public health as well as local flora and fauna. According to the journal *Environmental Science and Technology* in 2007, the global marine sector could be responsible for 60,000 deaths annually. Given that 11% of the worlds shipping is concentrated in the Baltic Sea, emissions from shipping has a significant health impact in the area.

To address these challenges, United Nation's maritime organization, the IMO, revised its Marpol Annex VI. A part of this revision was the establishment of the Baltic Sea as a sulfur emission control area (SECA) from January 1, 2015. This means that the sulphur level on marine fuel in the area cannot exceed 0,1%. Furthermore a proposal to introduce stricter regulations on NO_x-emissions is also under consideration among Baltic Sea states.

Maritime policymakers are however aware of the possible modal back shift to other transport modes. If regulations will be too tough and expensive for the maritime sector, transport of goods will find other and other and cheaper ways, such as road transport. Given the mentioned environmental benefits of shipping, it is important to maintain shipping as an attractive transport form.

The EU Commission has launched a set of solutions for minimizing the compliance costs in regards to the new regulations on sulfur content in marine fuel more known as a “sustainable waterborne transport toolbox”. The measures of the toolbox are both short term, such as various funding schemes, state aid measures and facilitating for international dialogue and technical co-operation. Among the long term measures are regulations, implementation of green technology and infrastructure and research and innovation.


It is important to understand that these binding regulations are necessary to make shipping in the Baltic greener. Of course, green shipping is good for the environment, but it is often overlooked that green shipping is also good for the industry. Green solutions entail more energy-efficient shipping, lower operating costs and also, rising demand for green solutions will function as an incentive for innovation and development of new technology and services.

During the Norwegian chairmanship in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) from 2010 to 2011, maritime policy and green shipping were main points on the agenda. We wanted to find the best possible ways of making shipping more environmentally friendly and cost-efficient.

In general, Norway supports all technological solutions which will meet the new requirements for the maritime industry in the Baltic region. However, during our CBSS-chairmanship we wished to explore one of the most effective alternatives: Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) as fuel for ships. LNG eliminates sulphur- and particle emissions. It reduces NO_x-emissions by 90 percent compared to conventional bunkers, and, as an added bonus, CO₂-emissions are reduced by around 20 percent.

Since 2000 the Norwegian Maritime Industry has gained substantial experience in operation LNG fueled ships. Currently 27 LNG-fuelled vessels are operating in Norwegian waters. This has been promoted by government policies and tools such as government procurement, research grants and a proactive maritime industry. One important contributor to this has been the Norwegian NO_x-fund. The Fund is a cooperative effort where Participant enterprises may apply for financial support for NO_x reducing measures. Payments made to the Fund shall replace the governmental NO_x tax for Participant enterprises. The maritime sector is the main recipient, and around 20% of the funding has financed LNG driven vessels. In this context it is important to say that the added investment of choosing LNG fuel for new ships is around 20% higher than conventional ships. This is expected to decrease in future given developments in fuel prices, lower maintenance costs and LNG engine technology.

The Norwegian LNG fleet shows that the technical solutions shipping are available and well proven through experiences we have made. Within three years, over



Green shipping is good for the environment, but it is often overlooked that green shipping is also good for the industry.

60 LNG-fuelled ships will be in operation on an international scale, among them the new Viking Line-ferry which will operate between Stockholm and Helsinki.

We hope that this will contribute to a “critical mass” of LNG-ships as well as necessary distribution infrastructure which will in turn improve availability and lower the LNG-price to ships.

Distribution and availability of LNG-fuel can be regarded as a chicken and egg problem. Distributors will probably not develop a broad LNG-supply unless there is a demand. And vice versa: There will be slight demand for fuel without the necessary infrastructure.

To examine this, Norway, together with several countries, organizations and maritime companies contributed to a Danish-led feasibility study on LNG in Northern Europe which was published earlier this year. The aim of the project was to set up recommendations on the establishment of a marine LNG infrastructure encompassing a “hard one” on filling stations and a “soft one” on regulations and industry standards. The geographical scope of the study included the Baltic Sea as this area will be covered by the mentioned new regulations on sulphur content in ship fuel from 2015.

The study is relevant for stakeholders, ports, LNG providers, industry organizations, countries, EU and IMO, etc. The recommendations span from supply to aspects such as economy, safety and technology. The study shows that LNG as a fuel alternative, is highly viable to comply with the sulphur regulations from 2015.

However, to unleash a critical mass of users of LNG as fuel, efforts are needed across borders and through cooperation between countries in the Baltic region.

In matters such as maritime sustainability and green shipping in the Baltic Sea, organizations such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and The Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) are playing an important role.

We believe that the Baltic Sea has the potential to develop to become a pilot area for LNG as ship fuel in Europe for many reasons:

- First, this is a region with strong maritime industries and traditions.
- Second, the distances in the Baltic Sea are optimal for short sea shipping – with several fixed routes for cargo- and passenger traffic.
- Third, the environment requires new and greener solutions.
- And last, but not least, cooperation between the Baltic Sea Nations is strong and productive in maritime matters.



Lars Almklov

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He led, during the Norwegian chairmanship of the CBSS 2010-2011, the Expert Group on Maritime Policy. (EGMP)

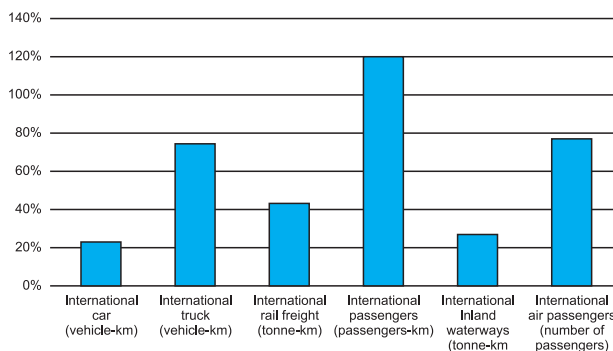


Baltic Transport Outlook 2030

The Baltic Sea Region (BSR) is a macro-region that differs somewhat from other European regions – population density is quite different, especially in the northern parts of the region, where large heavy industry – for example iron ore, steel, paper and pulp – is situated – far away from the European centre, where their products are being offered to the European market. This means that they need a well-functioning transport system, in order to reach their markets. At the same time, all citizens should be offered mobility, also those living in scarcely populated areas, where the transport network is much less dense, than in other part of Europe.

One of the flagships in the EU Baltic Sea Strategy is a project called Baltic Transport Outlook 2030 (BTO2030), an important step towards a shared view on the common transport system in the Baltic Sea Region. The project looked into the BSR transport system now and until 2030 for both passengers and freight. The project started in the summer of 2010 and was finalised at the end of 2011, putting forward recommendations for stakeholders to implement and a number of key issues to address.

In the following some of the Baseline Scenario results of BTO2030 are presented. For further details please consult the Baltic Transport Outlook 2030 reports, www.baltictransportoutlook.eu.



Baseline Scenario for 2030 compared to 2010

Source: BTO2030

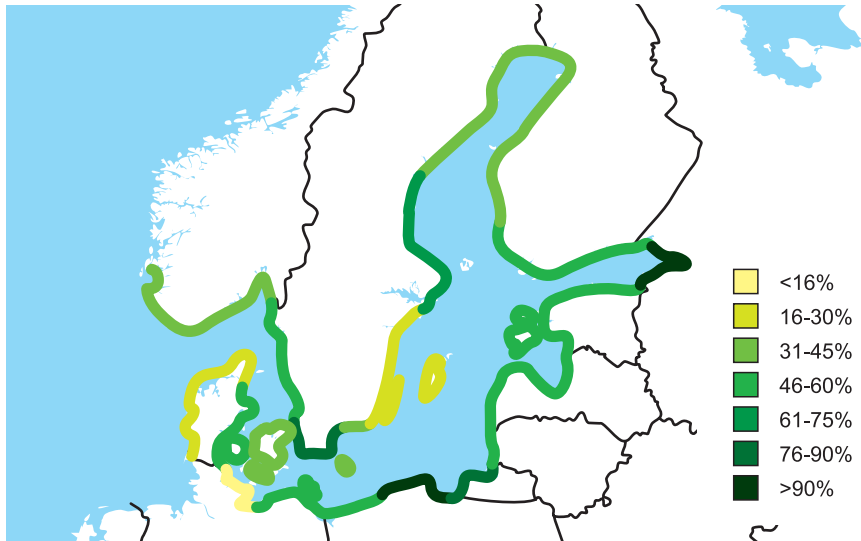
The total maritime volume in the BSR is forecast to grow by 228 million tonnes between 2010 and 2030. The increases by country are shown in the table below. The figure below shows the changes in maritime volumes, split up per coastal region, the darker the colour, the larger the increase.

Forecast port volumes per country (only international cargo)

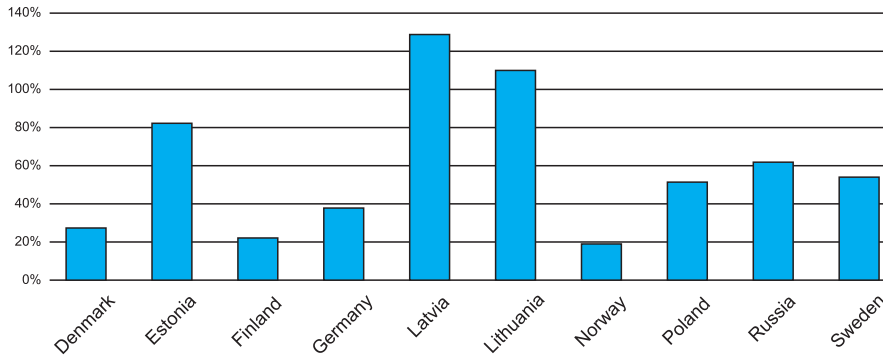
Country	Volume 2010, (M.tonnes)	Volume 2030, (M.tonnes)	Volume change 2010–2030, (M.tonnes)	Volume change 2010–2030 (%)
Finland	98,4	125,3	26,9	27,4
Estonia	37,1	38,7	1,6	4,4
Latvia	61,5	75,4	13,8	22,5
Lithuania	38	44,7	6,8	17,9
Russia	171,6	243,8	72,2	42,0
Poland	48,8	73,0	24,3	49,9
Germany (Baltic Sea)	56	68,1	12,1	21,6
Denmark	69,6	86,4	16,8	24,2
Sweden	154,8	201,9	47,0	30,4
South Norway	21,5	27,5	6	27,9
Total	757,1	984,8	227,5	30,1

Source: BTO2030 Forecast

Relative cargo volume changes in the coastal regions of BSR until 2030, excl. liquid bulk

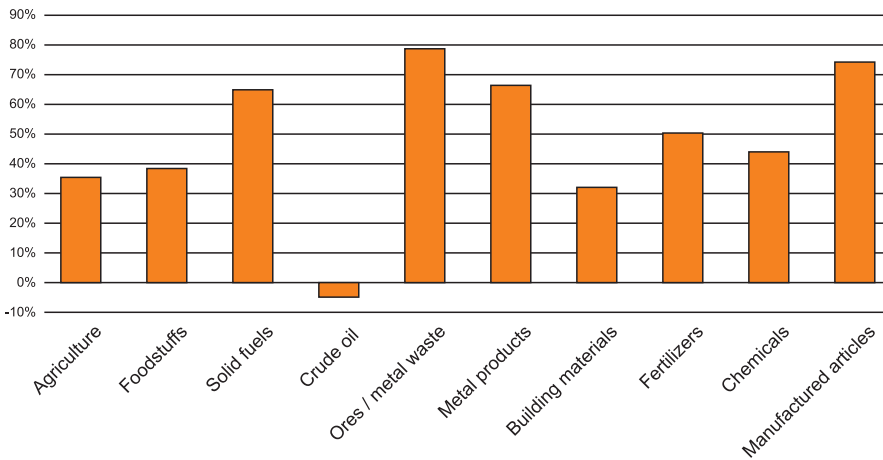


When looking at the land-based transport flows, the number of truck vehicle-km are estimated to increase by 73 percent from 2010 to 2030 (3% annually), and international rail freight transports by 43%, (1.9% annually). The following figures show the split per country, as well as on commodity group level, from 2010 to 2030.



Increase in land-based freight transport volume by 2030

Source: BTO2030



Increase in freight transport volume by commodity group by 2030

Source: BTO2030

The result of the BTO2030, apart from the scenario briefly presented above, is 4 prioritised recommendations and 16 key issues to further address.

Recommendation 1: Establish a process of joint infrastructure planning of the Strategic BSR Transport Networks for both short-term and long-term horizon, comprising the institutional framework with full planning and monitoring (implementation, operation and maintenance) capabilities with clear strategies for border-crossing planning management.

Much of the border-crossing road and rail infrastructure may be developed as bilateral projects of two or more neighbouring countries. However, the BTO2030 approach widens the perspective. In order to develop trade among BSR countries and of BSR countries with the rest of Europe and overseas, the Strategic Network needs to be planned and implemented jointly by all the countries. In order to overcome the intraregional disparities, it is vital for the BSR countries to speak with one voice. There is also a need to establish joint planning management and strategies for border-crossing infrastructure projects, in order to ensure the best-possible utilisation of resources and funding.

Recommendation 2: Develop a transport model that takes into account the specificities of the BSR, including the Baltic Sea and the vital connections across the sea. Ensure continuous data collection in order to obtain accurate results.

During the BTO2030 study it has proven difficult to fully rely on the results of the TRANSTOOLS model, as there are certain aspects and attributes that

BTO2030 Recommendations

aren't covered sufficiently by the model. The quality of the model at sub-country level within the BSR was not sufficient for detailed analysis and this problem should be addressed. The maritime transport mode is only partly covered in the model and there is a lack of visualisation of maritime flows. The ferry links are included in the road and rail networks respectively, which makes the analysis of maritime transport very difficult. Further, the rail capacity is not covered by the model. This is an important issue, especially regarding the heavy freight flows from the north of the region towards the south and the rest of the EU. A good transport model for the BSR Region could possibly be achieved through development of the TRANSTOOLS model, but other transport modelling work in the BSR should also be taken into account.

Throughout the main part of the BTO study, data collection was made by both the consortia and the Steering group, with support of national experts. This and the TENtec¹ data is a first attempt in collection of data, but this needs to be further developed. The data should be continuously updated in a systematic and comparable manner, in order to ensure compatibility with the data collected in all the different BSR countries. The missing data should also be collected, from the BSR countries where it was difficult to obtain data. Further, due to their importance especially for the Baltic States, data should also be collected for Belarus and parts of Russia.

Recommendation 3: Improve efficiency of cross-border movements of cargo on the external EU-borders by tackling administrative and fiscal barrier.

There is lack of capacity especially at many of the borders to non-EU countries and this is related to infrastructural, fiscal and administrative bottlenecks. At some crossings, this is mainly due to the operations on the eastern neighbour's part of the border crossings. Focus should be on the reduction of administrative and fiscal burdens ie. different VAT rates for maritime cargo operators, and different, complicated customs clearance procedures. The Schengen area borders (i.e. to Russia, Belarus and Ukraine) should be made more efficient and in order to considerably reduce delays eg. by using ICT for monitoring of cargo movements and processing of documents There is a need to invest in the infrastructure and operation of the border crossings in general. On the infrastructure side it is necessary to build new border crossings and modernise the infrastructure of the existing crossings. The infrastructure investments should focus on the border crossings where the largest growth in volumes is expected. On the operational side there is a need to improve and harmonise import/export regulations and border control procedures, to make transport more efficient and dependable. It is also important to make enforcement and administration more transparent to eliminate instability in the letter of law and bribery. There is further a need to cooperate and create partnerships between the bordering regions in order to improve the infrastructure and operations on the border crossings. This is especially important on the eastern side of the borders where there is an excessive need for funding to make cooperation and partnerships possible.

Recommendation 4: Establish a "BTO Forum" for increased cooperation and interaction between the different stakeholders in the BSR, with annual or bi-annual meetings, discussing updates on the issues stemming from the BTO2030 study.

BTO is an important step taken by the BSR region together. However, there has to be a structure for regular follow-ups of the results, or the BTO2030 will just be a shelf warmer. A BTO forum could ensure this follow up and also be platform for good interaction between the different logistics stakeholders and the concerned authorities. A “BTO Forum” could ensure that the views of the major transport and logistics actors is communicated to all transport ministries and other authorities in the BSR countries, eg. an active dialogue with the major container operators and airlines in order to ensure that the hub structure will be sufficient in the future. The “BTO Forum” would discuss and update the findings of the BTO2030 study and other similar studies, in order to focus on the common interests, cooperation and interaction between all concerned parties in the BSR.

The first step should be to screen for existing structures and cooperation forms, in order to build on the experiences so far. The Northern Dimension Partnership for Transport and Logistics has established a forum, and this might give interesting input.

Further to the recommendations above, the BTO2030 has made a list of key issues to commonly address by the BSR countries. Certain issues make sense only if they are developed at the EU level; and here the BSR countries, most of which are EU member states, can play a role as a group to put pressure and accelerate regulatory and other policy measures. Needless to say that bilateral co-operation is as important as multilateral initiatives.

1. Develop and promote the BSR Strategic Network, especially when it goes beyond the TEN-T to obtain funding from the EU Commission, showing the special needs of the region and to also develop further funding in order to secure the fast development of the BSR Strategic Network.
2. Enhance railway links in the BSR Strategic Network by implementing the ETCS on busy lines, where economically justified and by investing in cost-efficient transfer facilities to interconnect railway lines with different gauges.
3. Implement Via Baltica and Rail Baltica projects as EU priority projects.
4. Promote Baltic Motorways of the Sea and Short Sea Shipping, while simplifying customs procedures for vessels crossing international waters within the Baltic Sea.
5. Bridge maritime channels by fixed links and connecting hinterland infrastructure as economically and environmentally suitable, e.g. Fehmarn Belt or Gulf of Finland (between Helsinki and Tallinn).
6. Promote the relevant sections of the BSR Strategic Network within the Bothnian corridor, CETC and other projects also in the north-south direction.
7. Develop regional hubs – multi-modal transport nodes and sufficient port- and intermodal terminal capacity together with sufficient hinterland network.
8. Jointly integrate the Green Corridor concept in the Strategic BSR network, i.e. set-up and implement green corridors for the BSR, including development of strong hubs and innovative logistics solutions.

**Key issues –
infrastructure**

**Key issues –
policy**

9. Promote road safety measures through experiences from Sweden and Finland to organise road safety campaigns in the Baltic States and Poland.
10. Strengthen the competitive position of the BSR in applying innovative ICT applications in transport, eg. through BSR cross-border pilot projects.
11. Implement as fast as possible the Single European Sky initiative in all BSR countries and its neighbouring partners.
12. Accelerate technology shift towards cleaner vehicles including electric vehicles in connection with the replacement of imported carbon fuels by renewable fuels, eg. through BSR cooperation projects on new vehicle technologies etc.
13. Provide broader evidence for the Member States in favour of complete liberalisation of cabotage and the introduction of a European modular system (EMS) should push EU institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council) to allow tests with conclusive results and shift of EU policies accordingly.
14. Promote the development of landbridge railway connections between the BSR and Asian economies to enhance the gateway function of the Region in serving transcontinental flows.
15. Ensure reasonable air transport services to low population-density areas, peripheral areas as well as populated areas with insufficient transport connections, in order to ensure their accessibility and integration in the BSR transport system
16. Establish concrete initiatives and projects for soft measures focussing on more efficient use of the infrastructure.

ENDNOTES

¹ TENtec is the information system of the European Commission to coordinate and support the TEN-T Policy.



Helena Kyster-Hansen

Helena Kyster-Hansen is senior adviser, transport and development at Tetraplan A/S in Copenhagen since 2008, and was project manager for BTO2030, leading the international consortium that conducted the study. She has more than 28 years of experience from the European transport sector, mainly as regards rail freight and intermodal transports, and has been a consultant for more than 15 years.

During the latest years Helena has worked in a number of projects on development of scenarios for freight and passenger transport towards 2030 mainly throughout the Baltic Sea Region.

Helena has also gained experience in foresight processes towards the 2030 and 2050 horizon throughout the last years, in the projects Freightvision and TransBaltic.



Engaging Russia in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: an Institutional dimension

Both European and Russian experts acknowledge the fact that the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) was mainly designed as an EU-internal strategy and largely ignored the non-EU regional actors, such as Russia, Iceland and Norway.¹ However, three out of the four pillars of the Strategy – environmental protection, attractiveness and accessibility and safety and security heavily depend on external actors, including Russia.

It should be noted that Russia lacks a special strategy for the BSR.² Moscow did not react formally to the EUSBSR. There was a feeling in Russia that the country has not been included into the BSR integration process as much as it could. Russian strategy makers prefer to deal with the Baltic issues either on the bilateral (country-to-country) or multilateral (the Northern Dimension partnerships, CBSS, BSSSC, UBC, HELCOM, Nordic institutions, etc.) basis rather than on the EUSBSR platform. However, despite the predominantly inward-looking nature of the Strategy it suggests some venues for Russia's participation in the macro-regional cooperation:

To support and facilitate the development of the EU-Russia trade and economic cooperation, to combat customs fraud and enhance security and safety of the supply chain in trade a series of practical measures is planned. The first step to be taken would be to reach an EU-Russia agreement on good governance in the tax area (including inter alia gradual approximation of excise rates for cigarettes which are much cheaper in Russia).

Trade

The EUSBSR flagship project 6.5 aims at improvement of the EU and Russian customs and border procedures by a) implementation by Russia of legislative, administrative and procedural measures to improve the situation at the border; b) implementation of a pilot project on EU-Russia information exchanges, and c) implementation and development of border-crossing and customs infrastructure. According to the flagship project 6.6, the so-called “Laufzettel” project should be re-launched with the objective of measuring border crossing/clearance times and identifying bottlenecks as well as opportunities to improve control procedures at the EU-Russian border.³ With Russia’s accession to the WTO in August 2012 (which was strongly supported by the EU) the implementation of these projects can be facilitated.

Energy cooperation

Moscow also is involved in the EUSBSR flagship project 5.2 “Implement fully the EU–Russia Energy Efficiency Initiative”, particularly in the annual work programs of the Joint EU–Russia Thematic Group on Energy Efficiency of the EU–Russia Energy Dialogue.

An obstacle to further progress consists of Moscow’s unwillingness to ratify the European Energy Charter (EEC), signed by Russia under President Yeltsin but later viewed as discriminatory in character. The separation between production, reprocessing and transportation of gas, as called for by the EEC, is not acceptable for Russia. A ratification of the Charter would in practice also necessitate the reorganisation of the Russian energy monopolists such as Gazprom, Rosneft, Transneft, and would also provide foreign companies with a far better access to the energy sector of Russia’s economy. These remain, once seen from a Russian perspective, problematic and challenging issues.⁴

Still another obstacle to further EU-Russia energy cooperation in the BSR is Russia’s plan to build a nuclear plant in the Kaliningrad Region (KR) by 2016.⁵ This intention runs against the dominant anti-nuclear attitudes that are especially strong in countries like Germany and Italy, which are among the key Russian partners in Europe.

Improvement of the BSR transportation system

Moscow and Brussels plan to further develop pan-European transport corridors to increase the BSR’s potential as EU’s gateway to Asia. According to the EUSBSR priority no. 11, special focus should be given to removing non infrastructure-related bottlenecks including those associated with border-crossing. The Strategy also foresees Kaliningrad’s involvement in the modernization of the regional transport infrastructure. For example, there are plans to include the Kaliningrad into the Baltic Functional Airspace Block Initiative that has been launched by Poland and Lithuania in 2004. This may radically improve the quality of management of flight in the region.⁶ The EUSBSR has also a priority with a title “Cooperate for smarter transport” that aims at improving safety, freight logistics efficiency, shifting freight from road to rail and sea, and minimising environmental impact of transport in the region (e.g. the Green Corridor project from ports of Sweden, Denmark and Germany to ports of Lithuania and Kaliningrad).⁷

Maritime safety

The increasing trend towards transport of oil and liquefied natural gas by tankers via the BSR brings risks for the environment, especially in difficult winter conditions (iced sea). Under the EUSBSR priority no. 13, the EU and Russia plan to develop a system of joint measures on maritime safety.

Russia takes part in the Baltic Sea Action Plan (adopted within the HELCOM by the CBSS and EU in 2007) which is an ambitious programme to restore the good ecological status of the Baltic marine environment by 2021.⁸ In addition, many actions and projects in water, wastewater, solid waste and energy efficiency with Russia are implemented in the framework of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP). Together with Belarus, Russia also partakes in the comprehensive regional pollution risk assessment in the context of the EUSBSR flagship project 1.5.⁹

EUSBSR priority no. 12 outlines an environmentally-friendly tourism strategy in the region that aims at the harmonisation of standards, the development of similar projects in different regions, joint marketing of the region and cooperation on projects.¹⁰

The ongoing Erasmus-Mundus and Tempus-Tacis programs are quite helpful in developing student mobilities, inter-university cooperation and the reform of the Russian higher education system in line with the Bologna process standards. According to the EUSBSR flagship project 12.13, a Baltic youth resource centre should be established to include Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and potentially Caucasus into cooperative schemes.¹¹

It should be noted, however, that some of these projects remain only on paper. The issues such as the energy cooperation or trade, customs and border regimes are basically discussed and solved either at the EU-Russia top level or country-to-country basis rather than in the EUSBSR framework.

Despite the above-mentioned criticism of the Strategy the EU did not revise the EUSBSR radically in case of Russia. The Commission's communication (23 March 2012) and Council conclusions (26 June 2012) on the completion of the review of the EUSBSR simply mentioned that cooperation with Russia should be intensified through the already existing platforms such as the Northern Dimension, the CBSS, the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM), the HELCOM, the Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea network (VASAB), the BSSSC, the UBC and BONUS – Baltic Sea Research and Development Program.¹² More specifically, the Commission's communication suggested a closer cooperation with Russia for the Strategy's goals of more efficient and compatible maritime surveillance, as well as prevention, preparedness and response to disasters at sea and on land. It was also suggested that the good example of joint surveillance in the Gulf of Finland should be extended to cover the entire Baltic Sea.

As the BSSSC position paper emphasizes, the exclusion of Russia in the developing process of the EUSBSR remains a severe deficit of the Strategy.¹³ Given the fact that Brussels did not develop any specific plan how to integrate Russia to the EUSBSR, the role of other regional and sub-regional organizations and programs as well as sub-national actors becomes more visible and important.

First of all, the Northern Dimension (ND) partnerships are promising venues for cooperation with Russia in the BSR. Under the NDEP a number of important projects are being implemented: St Petersburg South West Wastewater Treatment Plant and ten suburban WWT plants; improvement of the Leningrad Region, Gatchina, Kaliningrad, Novgorod, Petrozavodsk, Pskov, Sosnovy Bor and Tikhvin water and wastewater services; St. Petersburg Northern Sludge

**Environment
protection**

Tourism

**Education,
youth**

**The Northern
Dimension**

Incinerator; St. Petersburg Flood Protection Barrier; St. Petersburg Neva Program; Kaliningrad District Heating Rehabilitation; Petrozavodsk Solid Waste Management, etc. These projects are supported by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) and Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO).¹⁴

The ND Partnership on Transport and Logistics aims at developing the regional transport network. The so-called Northern Axis is one of the five Trans-European transport axes defined by the High Level Group in 2005. The Northern axis connects the northern EU with Norway to the north and with Belarus and Russia and beyond to the east and consists of several road and rail corridors which are directly linked to the TEN-T networks. Six of them involve Russia: (a) Narvik-Haparanda/Tornio-St. Petersburg; (b) Helsinki-St. Petersburg-Moscow; (c) Tallinn-St. Petersburg; (d) Ventspils-Riga-Moscow; (e) Kaliningrad-Vilnius; (f) Berlin-Warsaw-Minsk-Moscow.¹⁵

The ND Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being has two main priorities: (1) to reduce the spread of major communicable diseases and prevent life-style related non-communicable diseases and (2) to enhance peoples' levels of social well-being and to promote socially rewarding lifestyles.¹⁶

There is also the ND Partnership on Culture which is currently under the development.

Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Council of Ministers is one more important regional actor. According to the Guidelines for the NCM's cooperation with North-West Russia 2009–2013, Council's priority areas include: (a) education, research and innovation, including creative industries; (b) the environment, climate and energy; (c) promotion of conditions for economic co-operation and trade, including legislative co-operation, anti-corruption measures and the protection of intellectual rights and patents; (d) the Northern Dimension's partnerships – especially the Partnership for Public Health and Social Well-being and NDEP; (e) promotion of democracy and civic society through co-operation on local government and good governance, co-operation between parliamentarians, co-operation between the media and journalists, and co-operation between NGOs.¹⁷

The NCM has several information offices in north-western Russia. For example, the Kaliningrad NCM office (opened in 2010) has contributed to the regional energy efficiency dialogue in many ways. One of the outcomes of the NCM work is the established network of energy managers from 11 regions of north-western Russia and municipalities of the Kaliningrad Region, as well as energy experts within involved regions.¹⁸ Rotating summer schools on energy planning and energy efficiency are regularly organized in cooperation with the CBSS. The Kaliningrad part of the 'Rotating summer schools' project has been completed through the event "Baltic Sea Region Rotating Energy Planning Academy (BALREPA) – Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy – 23rd to 26th May 2011, Kaliningrad, Russia."¹⁹

The problem with the ND partnerships and NCM is that they have a multi-focused agenda as their activities cover not only the BSR but also the neighbouring areas such as the Barents and Arctic regions. Both institutions should avoid unnecessary duplications and need to establish a more efficient division

of labour between their programs and projects. This is especially important in view of the global financial crisis and scarcity of resources available to the regional actors.

The HELCOM which is specially designed for the BSR is the leading institution in the sphere of the European-Russian cooperation on environment in the region. Among the recent projects, the HELCOM BALTHAZAR Project (2009–2011) in the KR that aimed at implementing on-farm pilot projects to the environmental benefit of the Baltic Sea should be mentioned.²⁰

Two joint HELCOM/EU projects titled “Sub-regional risk of spill of oil and hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea” (BRISK and its Russian ‘branch’ - BRISKRU, 2010-2012) aim at increasing preparedness of all Baltic Sea countries to respond to major spills of oil and hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea. The work included overall risk assessment of pollution caused by shipping accidents (including the impact of oil, environmental vulnerability, effect of different investigated scenarios for each sub-region, effect of existing response measures for each sub-region) covering the whole Baltic Sea area; identifying gaps in existing emergency and response resources and preparing a list of needed additional resources and elaborating corresponding investment plans for sub-regions; facilitating the development and conclusion of sub-regional agreements between neighbouring countries to ensure efficient joint response operations.²¹

The CBSS is another BSR-focused multilateral institution. It is particularly helpful in areas such as economy, trade, environment, tourism, youth and education. For example, to provide the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernization (PfM) with a regional ‘flavour’ the Council has established a program of modernization as to the South-Eastern Baltic Area (SEBA) with a special focus on the Kaliningrad region and its neighbourhood. Project development, the dialogue with stakeholders as well as improved communication constitute central parts of this regional partnership. It has a two-year time-frame and focuses on sustainable development, public-private partnerships, tourism and university cooperation. The SEBA will conclude with a conference in Kaliningrad in 2013.²²

To complete the SEBA project successfully a fundamental difference in the Russian and European conceptual approaches to the very notion of modernization should be overcome. While Russia insists on European investment and high-tech transfers as main priorities for SEBA (and other modernization projects), the European side tries to develop a more general vision of modernization (including implementing by Russia a program of profound legal and socio-political reforms).

The CBSS is also the main venue for cooperation in the field of education and youth. For example, the EuroFaculties are an education project launched by the CBSS with the aim of adapting university education in the Baltic Sea States and Russia to modern research and teaching standards (the Bologna process). Successful projects have been run in Kaliningrad (2000–2007). The Kant University in Kaliningrad suggested establishing a Baltic Network Institute of Law as a follow-up of the EuroFaculty project. A new EuroFaculty is under construction in the Pskov State University.

As far as the youth cooperation is concerned a concept of the “Baltic Artek” youth camp was introduced by the Administration of the KR in December

HELCOM

Council of the Baltic Sea States

2009. In autumn 2010 the CBSS started a working process in order to add an international aspect to the newly established Baltic Artek Youth Camp in the KR. In August 2011 CBSS representatives travelled to Kaliningrad to visit the Baltic Artek Youth Camp. The CBSS supported the international workshop session at the Baltic Artek Youth Camp focusing on Regional Identity, Democracy and Sustainable Lifestyles (July–August 2012).

It should be mentioned that the Council is successfully overcoming its identity crisis caused by the 2004 round of the EU enlargement. Since almost all CBSS member-states (except Iceland, Norway and Russia) joined the EU, the Council had to redefine its strategic goals and missions and strengthen its institutional basis. In line with the Riga Declaration of 2008 and the ‘Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020’ (2010) both the conceptual and institutional reforms of the Council are underway. Moreover, Moscow believes that the CBSS - being too dependent on external sources of funding – needs strengthening the financial basis of its own by creating a special facility that should be funded directly by the Council’s member states.

The BSSSC, UBC, City Twins Association, etc., are also extremely important in engaging Russia in the EUSBSR as they operate at the sub-regional and sub-national level which is a missing link in the Strategy. The latter mostly aims at the macro-regional level and does not pay a proper attention to the development of cooperation between the EU and Russian sub-national units. In meantime, establishing collaboration between European and Russian regions, municipalities and towns is crucial for successful completion of integration projects. For this reason, the BSSSC’s objective “to encourage more regions from Russia, Baltic States and other countries to join the BSSSC family in order to make the voice of the regions loud and clear”²⁴ should be mostly welcome and supported by all regional players.

Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation

Particularly, the BSSSC is especially useful in developing and implementing joint projects with Russia in areas such as maritime policy (e.g., the Clean Baltic Shipping project); climate policies and energy security; science and education (the Baltic University, Erasmus-Mundus and Comenius regio programs); youth policy; public health and quality of life; transport and infrastructure (integrated TEN-T system, environmentally friendly transport and “TransBaltic – Towards an integrated transport system in the Baltic Sea Region” projects). The current BSSSC focus on cooperation with Russian regions could be broadened from St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad to other adjacent regions such as Novgorod and Pskov Regions as well as the Republic of Karelia.

To sum up: in order to properly integrate Russia to the EUSBSR:

- the EU strategic vision and philosophy with regard to Russia should be radically changed: Russia should be treated as a real partner rather than a regional actor of secondary importance;
- some regional organizations (e.g., CBSS) should complete their institutional reforms;
- other institutions should properly redefine their missions and focus (e.g., ND partnerships and NCM);

- international organizations that aim at sub-regional and sub-national levels should be more actively involved in the EUSBSR development and implementation;
- better division of labour should be established between various regional and sub-regional organizations and programs involved in the Strategy with the aim to exclude unnecessary duplications and parallelisms;
- financial conditions surrounding activities of various regional organizations and EUSBSR-related projects should be clarified (especially, in view of preparing a EU Cohesion Policy for 2014–2020).

ENDNOTES

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² It is expected soon in the context of Russia's Presidency in the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

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⁸ Action Plan, p. 6.

⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 56.

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- ¹⁵ Northern Axis <available at: <http://www.ndptl.org/northern-axis>>.
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- ¹⁷ Guidelines for the Nordic Council of Ministers' co-operation with North-West Russia 2009-2013. Pp. 2-3 <<http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-of-ministers/ministers-for-co-operation-mr-sam/russia/documents/guidelines-for-the-nordic-council-of-ministers-co-operation-with-northwest-russia>>.
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- ²⁰ Commission Staff Working Paper in the Implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, 13 September 2011, p. 10.
- ²¹ Grove A. Op. cit., p. 19.
- ²² SEBA: Modernization Partnership for the South Eastern Baltic Area. 2011 <available at: <https://www.cbss.org/seba/context/>>
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- ²⁴ BSSSC Work Plan 2011-2012. P. 2 <http://www.bsssc.com/upload/dokumenty/f_166.pdf>



Alexander Sergunin

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ARNE GROVE



Contributions to integration of Russia in the Baltic Sea Region cooperation related to energy cooperation, sustainable business development, creative industries, environment and cross border cooperation.

The priorities of the activities of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) in the Baltic Sea Region are described in the Guidelines for the Nordic Council of Ministers' cooperation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania 2009–2013 and the Guidelines for the Nordic Council of Ministers' cooperation with North-West Russia 2009-2013. The priorities are implemented through the NCM Offices in Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad. The five NCM offices together with the networks of NCM in the Nordic Countries form a unique network in the Baltic Sea Region. The offices contribute to implementation of the Northern Dimension Policy and the EU Baltic Sea Strategy.

Since the establishment of the Information office of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Kaliningrad in 2006 the Office has contributed to the development of network between actors from Kaliningrad and other regions of Northwest

Russia and the Nordic Countries. From the beginning the focus has been made on regional authorities, municipal authorities and NGOs.

The Office has developed close cooperation with The Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), BASREC (Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation), Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) Energy, Baltic Development Forum, and from 2012 with Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Activities are closely coordinated with the Northern Dimension Partnerships on Environment (NDEP), Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) and the newly established Partnership on Culture (NDPC).

The activities are financed by seed money from financial instruments of NCM, which include Knowledge Building and Networking Programme for the North-West Russia and NGO programs. Local co-financing as well as co-financing from the EU, BASREC are used.

The areas for cooperation include social well-being and health, environment, energy planning, energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate, framework conditions for SME-development, sustainable business cooperation and creative Industries.

Examples include the following:

Energy

- Study visits to Nordic countries and seminars in Kaliningrad and NW Russia on energy planning on municipal and regional level. Using Nordic experience for meeting requirements of the Russian legislation on energy saving from 2009.
- Facilitation of identification, development and implementation of the project on changing of street lightening in the city of Gurievsk, using credit facility from The Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO).
- BALREPA: Baltic Sea Region Rotating Energy Planning Academy. Developed and implemented in Kaliningrad May 2011, Vilnius November 2011, Riga October 2012. A concept for three year program is under development.

Environment

- Facilitation of Russian participation in the EU BSR Flagship project BRISK on mapping and reduction of risks for big oil spills in the Baltic Sea in cooperation with HELCOM Response.

Municipal libraries

- The project component “New role of libraries in the society” brought to changes in the concept of Kaliningrad city libraries

SME-support centers

- Representatives of municipal authorities who took part in the program on municipal support to SME and entrepreneurship have established SME support centers in the municipalities. The Coordination center for these SME support centers provides training for their staff, who in the future will organize trainings in municipalities for young entrepreneurs with support from the Regional Government in Kaliningrad.

Clusters:

- Within the NCM financed project “Sustainable Business Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region” a mapping of a potential for business clusters in Kaliningrad was done in 2011 in cooperation with the local government

and local authorities. The mapping identified promising areas for the development of cluster initiatives including: tourism, IT, furniture, food and agriculture and automotive assembling.

- A conference within the project organized in cooperation with the Regional government and local stakeholders in Kaliningrad resulted in a “tourism cluster initiative”, and a similar initiative is under way for IT. This cluster initiative has already established contacts and cooperation with partners-clusters in the Nordic countries.
- Within the NCM financed project “Creative Industries in the Kaliningrad Region” a mapping of a potential for the development of creative Industries in Kaliningrad has been carried out as basis for further development of creative industries in Kaliningrad and cooperation within BSR on creative industries.

In January 2012 the NCM Information Office in Kaliningrad signed an agreement with the secretariat of CBSS for the implementation of the project “Partnership for modernization of South East Baltic Sea Region (SEBA)”. Within this project a project coordinator is appointed to identify and develop project proposals to be presented for CBSS/CSO. The project is initiated by the German and Russian presidencies of CBSS 2011–2013.

Creative Industries

Partnership for modernization of South East Baltic Sea Region (SEBA)

Arne Grove



Arne Grove, head of the Information office of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Kaliningrad, Honorary consul of Denmark in Kaliningrad.

The basis for Mr. Grove's first assignment in Kaliningrad, Russia in 1995 was a strong international, experience and network in industrial environment and energy monitoring and management. Since 1995 assignments has been undertaken for EU, WWF and Danish MFA in European Russia. From May 2006 Mr. Grove was appointed as head of the Information office of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Kaliningrad with the task to establish the office, represent the Nordic Council of Ministers in Kaliningrad and to develop activities in cooperation with local partners. As head of the Office in Kaliningrad Mr. Grove has given high priority to integration of Kaliningrad in Baltic Sea Region cooperation, including cooperation with strategic partners as HELCOM, BASREC, CBSS, EU and BDE.



KONRAD NIKLEWICZ

Support for cities in the new programming period: new tools, new approach

This is already settled: cohesion policy to be implemented within the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020 shall be strictly related to cities, because we all agree that the European cities are the centers of economic development, and catalysts of innovativeness and creativeness. However, they also have to cope with some specific problems which have to be addressed effectively.

A lot of challenges to be tackled by the cities in the coming years are shared all over Europe. Cities' development has been constrained by transport infrastructure which seems incapable of addressing the needs and expectations of the urban dwellers. Certain districts of the biggest cities accumulate negative social and economic phenomena which are the consequences of physical degradation of buildings as a result of e.g. sudden economic changes, such as transfer of industrial plants to different locations. In many European countries uncontrolled suburbanization process has been observed. Also, the negative effects of demographic changes are common in the entire European Community – the cities must invest more and more money in adjusting public services (healthcare, social care, public transportation etc) to the needs of aging population.

Finally, one must not forget about the consequences of climate change. European cities must reformulate their policies of supplying quality drinking water, they must modernize drainage systems, sewage systems, and waste treatment systems; they must rethink the issues of how to supply electricity and heat. Our cities must be greener, more economic and self-sufficient in terms of energy supply.

These are only a few urban issues which are not questionable any more nowadays.

There is only one conclusion: that our European cities need a new approach and tailored intervention measures to suit their unique needs. And also that it is the EU cohesion policy than can be one of key sources of support for the cities.

We appreciate the fact that this view is not challenged any more by anyone. A year ago, when Poland held the Presidency of the EU, we put a lot of effort in promoting the concept of strengthening the urban dimension of the cohesion policy.

A lot of proposals which we discussed together at that time, have been reflected in draft regulations concerning a new and revamped cohesion policy. A few measures proposed by the European Commission deserve special attention, namely:

- allocating 5% of a national ERDF envelope for integrated actions in urban areas, to be implemented by means of Integrated Territorial Investment;
- earmarking 0,2 % of ERDF envelope for innovative actions in the scope of sustainable urban development – to fund pilot projects concerning durable urban development;
- establishing Urban Development Platform – a new platform for European cities to share experience and liaise;
- establishing Community-led Local Development tool, thanks to which more concrete projects benefiting from support could be selected at the lowest local level.

When I am writing those words, the work over a final shape of cohesion policy for 2014–2020 is still under way. Intensive work has been going on, with the participation of all the governments, the European Parliament and the European Commission; discussions focus on the modalities of the measures proposed. However, we can assume with quite considerable probability, that the role of cities in the EU cohesion policy is going to be significantly reinforced.

Before the conclusions from the ongoing discussion on the European forum will have been drawn, the Polish government, already now is underlining, in its strategic documents, the importance and the need to implement special types of intervention, so as to guarantee their stable development. We emphasize that that support must be addressed to all urban centers – both the biggest and the smaller ones.

Especially in countries like Poland, middle-sized cities, sub-regional centers, play a big role. No one negates the importance of big cities – their development is a natural phenomenon, desired in many cases. It is also natural that new challenges appear to be faced by the big cities. Intervention at the regional level is required in order to reinforce e.g. metropolitan functions within economic, social, tourism, scientific, educational and cultural domains.

When designing urban policy, one must also, however, take account of specific problems concerning small towns. Intervention is needed in order to aug-

ment public services in small towns, transfer certain services there (e.g. cultural ones) from regional centers, from outside the region, and to reinforce their economic role.

These basic assumption can be found in the “National Strategy of Regional Development”, „National Spatial Development Concept 2030” and most of all in the “National Urban Policy” which is being prepared now.

„National Urban Policy” – which is being worked out by the Polish Government at the moment – is a complete set of territorially-oriented actions to be undertaken by the state, NGOs and the private sector, for the development of cities and their functional areas. A strategic goal of “National Urban Policy” is to reinforce the ability of cities and urban areas to create economic growth and jobs and to improve the quality of life for the inhabitants of those areas. Cities are to be a good place for living, for the inhabitants to identify themselves with, and a place where they will settle down unforced.

We want that the „National Urban Policy” be implemented not only by central and local state institutions, but also by inhabitants themselves, by businessmen and NGOs. The cooperation of all these stakeholders will bring the best results for the cities and their future.



Konrad Niklewicz

Konrad Niklewicz, Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Regional Development, appointed on 23 January 2012.

Before taking this position he was the Spokesperson for Poland’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union and Vice Director of the Government Information Centre.

He graduated from the Institute of International Relations at the University of Warsaw.

Since 1996, a journalist at “The Warsaw Voice” and a collaborator in the “Prawo i Życie” (“Law and Life”) weekly. Between 1998 and 2011 he was a journalist of “Gazeta Wyborcza”, a foreign correspondent in Brussels and Paris and editor of the economic section. He has authored hundreds of publications about European Funds and broadly-understood EU issues.

The winner of numerous awards, including the Władysław Grabski Prize for the best economic journalist and the “European Pen of the Year” award.

In the Ministry of Regional Development, Under-Secretary of State Konrad Niklewicz is responsible for matters connected with the certification of expenditures within the framework of the 2007-2013 perspective, and also for issues related to spending budget resources. Furthermore, he is responsible for the Ministry’s foreign cooperation and information policy; he represents the Minister in the Committee for European Affairs.






Youth cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

A distinctive feature of cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region is its intensity and its diversity of forms and subjects, while being loosely formalised on the macro-regional scale. It simultaneously represents a great asset and a limitation of this cooperation.

It is no different in the field of youth cooperation – if we assume this is about common structures and legal frameworks, and not only youth exchange or incidental projects. Baltic youth cooperation lacks a strategic document such as the Baltic Sea Strategy, and it is also difficult to find a policy document referring to the problems of Baltic youth. Still, youth affairs and the participation of young people in Baltic cooperation structures is a constant element in this cooperation, ensuring, to some extent, a dialogue between the young generation of the Baltic Sea Region and the decision makers in developing and implementing sectoral policies. Individual Baltic organisations keep this dialogue running, each in a unique way, and there are as many models of dialogue and youth participation as there are organisations. No form of Pan-Baltic youth organisation is currently in place, and the voice of Baltic young people is heard mainly, if not exclusively, at events held by Baltic organisations during annual conferences, summits, general meetings, etc.

Nonetheless, in many Baltic organisations youth affairs and participation of young people in the decision-making process hold an important place in debates. There are active working groups and youth projects, and young people take part in structures managing organisations. A listing of forms of youth participation in organisations is presented in the following table.

Organisation name	Structure name and members	Forms of action	Objectives Thematic areas
	<p>The Expert Group on Youth Affairs. Representatives of Ministries responsible for youth policy and representatives of the Schleswig-Holstein Regional Youth Council.</p>	<p>Youth projects. The Baltic Artek summer youth camp in Kaliningrad. A youth Parliament within the framework of the German Presidency of the CBSS.</p>	<p>Increased youth exchange and mobility. Young people's participation in the region's political and social life. Promotion of youth affairs in the inter-sectoral approach.</p>
	<p>The Working Group on Youth Policy. Youth Team. Regional administration employees and youth representatives.</p>	<p>Two youth representatives becoming members of the Board of BSSSC. Conferences, e.g. GREEN in Lillestrøm. Projects, e.g. Integrated Youth Policy in the Baltic Sea Region.</p>	<p>The participation of young people in the organisation's decision-making processes. Voluntary service, social cohesion, environmental protection, particularly that of the Baltic Sea.</p>
	<p>The Commission on Youth Issues. Partner cities administration employees and youth representatives.</p>	<p>Conferences. Projects, e.g. Different History – Common Future.</p>	<p>Active participation of young people in the life of local communities. Organising a dialogue between young people and the authorities of their cities.</p>
	<p>The Youth Board. Young people – representatives of partner regions.</p>	<p>Mainly projects, e.g. Cross-border Youth Cooperation and Communication – Yc3.</p>	<p>Creating opportunities for young people to exchange ideas and increase their influence on the actions of politicians. Cross-border cooperation. Activities, increasing the participation of young people in EU programmes such as EVS.</p>

Structure name and members	Forms of action	Objectives Thematic areas	Organisation name
No separate structure, but youth participation is guaranteed by the provisions of the Resolution on FPSBS.	Youth participation in the process of creating Forum documents. Youth projects, e.g. Youth, Region, and the Parliament.	Dialogue between young people and Members of the Parliament. Participation in the process of creating the Forum's recommendations and resolutions.	Southern Baltic Sea Parliamentary Forum
The Youth Parliament Cooperation of school youth and partner cities.	The conferences and debates of the Youth Parliament.	The involvement of young people in the life of local communities. Establishing ties with the place of residence.	
No separate structure, cooperation within the People to People group.	Projects, e.g. B7 Youth Camps, Art & Culture.	Exchange of experience. Organising discussions on the problems of young people living on islands in the Baltic Sea Region.	

The forms of youth cooperation are as diverse as the Baltic organisations. To provide an insight into the specifics of work with young people in respective organisations, we can outline a few example projects and undertakings from recent years.

In 2010, during the “B’Young” youth meeting, as part of the CBSS Summit in Vilnius, young people passed a resolution, which was then communicated to the authorities of the Baltic countries present at the summit. The resolution includes a number of interesting suggestions showing that the position of young people on many issues, such as the role of informal education as compared to formal education, differs from the position of EU and State institutions.

In their petition, young people express the conviction that the formal system of education should support and promote non-formal learning. This should take place within the framework of non-formal education under formal education, cooperation with non-governmental organisations, lessons in schools on non-formal learning and its importance for personal development.

To this end, young people suggest establishing a foundation to support formal and informal youth exchange, and to create an academy of non-formal learning in the Baltic Sea Region and a Baltic portal about non-formal education opportunities. The current trends apparent in eliminating the autonomy of the Youth in Action programme, and also the content of the Europe 2020 strategy, indicate that non-formal education is positioned as auxiliary to formal

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education, which is there to prepare young people to enter the labour market. Other suggestions related to facilities for the movement of young people, such as the creation of a Baltic Youth Visa, a youth Baltic travel card, and increasing entrepreneurship among young people and participation in the process of making political decisions in the Baltic Sea Region. The text of the petition can be found here: <http://balticsea-youth.org/content/documents/documents.php>

**Baltic Sea States
Subregional
Cooperation**

Youth participation in the work of BSSSC takes place in a systematic and relatively well-organised way, despite the lack of constant financing (the organisation does not collect contributions from its members). The Working Group on Youth Policy gathers young people and youth workers from the Baltic Sea Region and is led by a politician – a member of the Board of BSSSC. Young people choose two representatives to perform the function of Member of the Board of BSSSC by rotation. They participate in decision-making and have the same authority as other Members of the Board.

Youth meetings are organised before every annual BSSSC conference, referring thematically to the conference – the attending young people prepare their own positions regarding the issues discussed by the BSSSC.

In 2010 in Hamburg the conference on the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region took place, as part of EU public consultations. At that meeting more than 80 young representatives of Baltic regions not only got acquainted with the Strategy, but also discussed their expectations with regard to it.

Young people pointed to the shortcomings in ensuring equal access to the labour market, at the insufficient funds allocated to preventing a brain drain and the outflow of highly-qualified human resources from the Baltic Sea Region, and suggested that the current decisions will have a much greater influence on the generations to come than on their generation.

**The Union of
the Baltic Cities**

Youth conferences are organised every two years and they touch upon subjects important to young people living in Baltic cities.

The most recent of them, in Liepaja in Latvia, in 2011, was entitled “Your Lifestyle – your choice for happy life in our World” and was attended by more than 80 young people from 18 UBC member cities. Young people had the chance to learn about the mentality, culture, and values through the presentation of everyday chores and activities, as well as ways of spending free time.

**Southern
Baltic Sea
Parliamentary
Forum**

Since the very beginnings of the Parliaments Forum the participation of young people in its work has been the priority of regional Local-Government authorities. In subsequent Parliamentary meetings, young people were invited to actively participate in inter-Parliamentary cooperation. From the 1st Forum in Gdańsk, in 2004 the representatives of young people from 4 and later 6 partner regions took part in conferences, working-group meetings, preparatory meetings, and youth projects, such as “Youth, Region, and Parliament” and “A step towards democracy”.

An important element in this cooperation was participation in the subsequent stages of drafting documents passed by the regional Parliaments at e.g. the Forum in Kiel in 2006. Not only could young people participate in the proceedings on the “Integrated Maritime Policy”, but they could also discuss the youth policy and refer to the provisions of the proposed resolutions of the 4th

Forum the day before the conference. Young people concluded that the document of the Integrated Maritime Policy “was too limited with regard to Baltic awareness, i.e. perceiving your place in life, professional, social, and cultural in relation to maritime issues.”

In 2007 the Euroregion Baltic Council established the ERB Youth Board. In 2008 and 2009 the Youth Board created a well-functioning structure with its own website and logo, it became an organisation to effectively promote youth-related issues at various seminars and conferences, both within and without the Euroregion. From 2009 to 2011, within the framework of the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme, the Board implemented the project “Youth Cooperation and Communication – Yc3”. It was aimed at developing the Youth Board existing in the Baltic Euroregion, and the project partners were the Euroregion’s member regions. In each region there were meetings of young people dedicated to various subjects, such as the environment and energy, intercultural dialogue, tourism, transport, entrepreneurship, voluntary work, and informal education. There was also a youth summit concerning youth participation in politics and the implementation of EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Youth cooperation in this organisation is structured at the level of secondary schools supported by teachers and the administration of partner cities/regions. Currently, preparatory work is under way to organise a youth Parliament for the Four Corners, i.e. Świnoujście, Bornholm, Rügen, and Ystad.

From the presented, necessarily short, listing of activities of Baltic organisations in the field of creating youth policy, it may be concluded that their common feature is facilitating young people’s participation in discussions on subjects important to the region. In each of the above-mentioned organisations this process is organised in a different way, which makes it difficult to speak of a uniform Baltic youth policy. Just as in other areas characteristic of Baltic cooperation, we are dealing with a diversity of aims, priorities, methods and forms of implementation.

Recently, we have seen attempts at creating a wide forum or platform for cooperation among Baltic youth. In the resolution of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, which took place in St. Petersburg in August 2012, the Parliaments of the Baltic States are welcoming the organisation of the first Youth Parliament within the framework of the CBSS Baltic Days in Berlin and encouraging the following Presidencies to continue this undertaking. It is, however, important that this initiative should not remain a top-down action, and that the dialogue on the future of the Baltic Sea Region be joined by young people from various environments and organisations. The decision on choosing the youth-cooperation model is also important. We have at least two options to choose from:

One of them is the widest possible involvement of young people in the organisation of joint projects – youth projects, conferences, exchange – this is the current situation. Its benefit is that there is a broad spectrum of forms and subjects taken up by young people and great involvement by non-organised youth. Its downside is that the voice of young people is barely heard because the actions are dispersed and there are no mechanisms to implement the recommendations of young people.

**Euroregion
Baltic**

**South Baltic
Four Corners**

Summary

The second possible solution would be to create a representative Forum of Baltic Youth, as is the case of cooperation between EU States, where the European Youth Forum is active. Such a structure would gather young people from Baltic States, also those not being EU Member States, and could become a forum for debate, shaping and expressing opinions on subjects important to the future of young people in the Baltic Sea Region. Regardless of the model of cooperation, it should be emphasised that the inclusion of young people in authentic dialogue and participation is of fundamental importance in the development of democratic structures and for shaping a sense of regional identity. In times of globalisation and pressure for mobility, which is connected with changing the place of work and residence, and the variety of life options, encouraging young people to take an interest in regional issues, to take part in public consultations, and, finally, to actively participate in decision-making processes related to the region is a great challenge for all social-activity participants in the Baltic Sea Region. It is comforting, however, that, as evidenced in the examples above, young people are partners with plenty of interesting ideas to offer, a lot of constructive criticism and readiness to cooperate.



Małgorzata Ludwiczek

She graduated in psychology at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. She was a lecturer at the University of Szczecin, a teacher – advisor and teacher trainer and an employee of the regional Government administration.

She completed postgraduate the European Studies in the National School of Public Administration in Warsaw and at the Pułtusk Academy of Humanities and, as the Regional Coordinator for EU Programmes for Education, she managed the process of implementing the first European school cooperation projects in the Westpomeranian Region.

From 2005 she has worked in Regional self-government administration – she was a member of work groups for interregional cooperation in the field of education and youth policy. She was an organiser of seminars, conferences, and international youth trainings. She also organised the only Polish regional office for youth issue, which acts for the activation and development of pro-social attitudes among the young.

Currently, she is the Managing Director of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation Secretariat and coordinates the BSSSC's Working Group on Youth Policy.



Mobility trends of students in the Baltic Sea Region

Mobility of students and staff of universities is at the heart of the 47 countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) – in terms of social, economic, cultural and academic dimensions. In particular the economic interdependency of the European countries as well as of the labor markets require graduates and researchers from and in universities who are open minded for working with and in other countries and who are as far as possible experienced in dealing with different cultures. This is also true for certain areas in Europe like the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

1. Ministers of the 47 EHEA member states in 2009 set a target for increasing the mobility of students by the year 2020: at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a study or training period abroad. The overall concept of the EHEA uses several tools for fostering mutual trust which is essential for improving mobility of students: common European standards and structures like the two-cycle study structure, qualification frameworks, European Standards and guidelines for quality assurance.
2. When dealing with mobility of students it is necessary to differ between the types and to define them: What do we mean by “mobility of students”?
 - a. When students study abroad for a time (one or more semesters) or go abroad for an internship and come back for graduating in their country of origin, it may be called “credit mobility”. They only study abroad for a part of their whole study. This case has to be separated from the second possibility: Students go abroad for a full study (Bachelor, Master or PhD). This shall be “degree mobility”.
 - b. Furthermore and following the OECD one can differ between “international” and “foreign” students: The “international students” leave their country of origin and move to another country to study, whereas “foreign students” are not citizens of the country in which they are

studying, i.e. immigrants. „Foreign students“ are not necessarily mobile students. Therefore by definition only “international students” should be taken into account.

- c. Finally there are “outgoing” and “incoming” students corresponding with outward /outbound and inward /inbound mobility.

These descriptions are being used in this article.

3. The structures and standards of the EHEA should both motivate and enable students to studying abroad at comparable quality as at home without losing time while gaining international experience. This is the idea. When it comes to the reality and to figures also other aspects have to be taken into account, that have an impact on individual decisions whether or not to study abroad:
 - a. The economic situation in the home country will have influence. The possibility of getting scholarships as well as portable grants and loans may be essential. The conditions insofar are different in the Baltic Sea countries.
 - b. The policy of European countries and the views in the universities referring to the possibility of studying abroad might also be influential. Some countries are worrying that students who study abroad will not come back which would cause a brain drain in the long run. This may still be true for some eastern countries in the Baltic Sea region. But in general all countries in the BSR are strongly motivating their students to go abroad for studying.
 - c. Students need information on the study situations abroad. Although the websites make nearly all information available students are as a rule still dependent on the support of their home universities. This support does not always have a sufficient quality. For example in Germany students sometimes are criticizing a lack of support of their university when it comes to the decision of studying abroad. But also in other countries of the BSR students see a deficit of information on studying abroad (Denmark, Estonia, and Latvia). The percentage of those, who had problems in getting recognized their studies abroad, is lower.
 - d. Students sometimes prefer to stay at home with their family or their friends. This is noticeable specifically in Poland, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden, compared to other countries. In some cases students do not want to replace their comfortable living situation with the potentially uncomfortable and challenging conditions abroad. In addition, to work in a foreign language can cause fears of losing too much time, but this is not true for the countries in the Baltic Sea region.
4. Taking into account these aspects it may be easier to understand the developments as well as differences of the inward and outward mobility in the different countries of the BSR. The available data elaborated by different international institutions like Eurostat, Eurydice, Eurodata and the OECD are mainly not fully comparable with each other because of different definition they are using or because of different areas they are including. In some countries certain groups of data are not available, for example on credit mobility. The process of improving the data on this is under way. But

for the time being it is necessary to focus on existing reliable data at the European level, like the Implementation Report on Higher Education that has been presented to the Ministerial conference of the Bologna Process in Bucharest in April 2012. There we find data on outgoing and incoming students in terms of degree mobility from and into the countries in the BSR. The figures in the following graph are describing

- a. in columns 1 and 3 the degree mobility rates in tertiary education of students from abroad from inside the EHEA studying (absolving a degree) in the country as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled respectively coming from a country of the EHEA graduating inside the EHEA,
- b. in column 2 the rates of incoming students from countries outside the EHEA also in terms of degree mobility,
- c. in column 4 the rates of outgoing ERASMUS students to other European countries.

The overall figures of students studying abroad are higher when including short term students who are absolving only a part of the study programme (credit mobility). But these figures are not precisely available for all respective countries.

To/from Countries	1 Incoming students from EHEA in % to the country	2 Incoming students from outside the EHEA in % to the country	3 Outgoing students to EHEA-countries in % from the country	4 Outgoing ERASMUS students in % from the country
Denmark	4,0	1,2	1,9	5,1
Estonia	1,4	0,2	5,6	9,0
Finland	1,8	2,5	3,5	10,4
Germany	4,3	4,0	3,4	6,1
Lithuania	0,3	1,1	3,1	7,6
Latvia	1,0	0,2	3,1	7,4
Norway	3,5	2,7	6,1	4,0
Poland	0,5	0,3	1,3	2,3
Russia	0,3	1,0	0,3	
Sweden	1,8	3,4	4,0	5,2

Sources:

- EACA, Eurostat, Eurostudent, Eurydice: The European Higher Education Area in 2012: The Bologna Process Implementation Report, figures in columns 1, 2, and 3 refer to 2008/09;
- Erasmus – Facts, Figures & Trends, The European Union support for students and staff exchanges and universities cooperation in 2010-2011, figures in column 4 refer to 2010/11

This graph allows several conclusions:

- The outgoing mobility of students within the EHEA of the countries of the Baltic Sea region like Estonia, Norway and Sweden is quite remarkable. Students from other countries show a rather low tendency of mobility like Poland and Russia. Taking into account the outbound mobility of these countries within the European ERASMUS programme it confirms these tendencies. The two figures on outgoing students clearly demonstrate the inconsistencies of data from different sources.
- Outgoing mobility to countries outside the EHEA shows very figures below one percent. The only countries with higher numbers are Norway (1,5 %) and Sweden (1,1 %).

- Some countries did enlarge their part of outbound mobility within the ERASMUS programme to quite a remarkable extent like Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Sweden and Norway. Also the other countries around the Baltic Sea could enlarge their percentage of outgoing students within ERASMUS.
 - Following the figures some countries are more attractive than others for incoming students from EHEA countries like Denmark, Germany and Norway. Students from countries outside the EHEA prefer mainly Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden as far as the Baltic Sea countries are concerned. This has probably to do with the expected infrastructure of the universities in these countries, but also with economic expectations: The labor markets in some countries may be more promising to students than in others. This development and trend may vary from time to time dependent on the economic situations.
 - The comparison between incoming and outgoing mobility shows that some countries have an imbalanced mobility: Many more students are outgoing than students from other countries come in. This is the case in Estonia in the relation 1:4. Lithuania even has a relation 10 to 1, Latvia 3 to 1, Sweden round about 2 to 1. Although Denmark and Germany try to motivate their students to studying abroad, there are more incoming students rather than outgoing. The figures also demonstrate that the imbalanced mobility is not only a problem of eastern countries.
5. Compared with the stream of students to countries like the UK, Spain and France the incoming mobility-rates are of course lower in the BSR. But summing up: all in all the student mobility from and to the countries of the BSR is developing well and is in general increasing. The main part of students study in other European countries rather than in countries outside the EHEA. Nevertheless it will be still necessary to motivate more students to study for a while or even to graduate in other countries of the EHEA.



Dr Birger Hendriks

Birger Hendriks was Director General for higher education and Deputy State Secretary between 1993 and 2010 in the State (Land) of Schleswig-Holstein. He retired at the end of the year 2010. He is still representing the German states in the European Bologna Process as a member of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFuG). He is also heading the national BFuG for years. In the General Assembly of EQAR, the European Register for Quality Assurance Agencies, as well as in the Europe-Asia Ministerial Conference (ASEM) he represents the German states. Before 1993 he worked in the office of the Head of the Government of the Land Schleswig-Holstein and during the 1980s with the North German Radio and Television. Both at national and international level he published many lectures, articles and presentations including contributions to several books. He was also involved in further developing the Baltic Sea Region.

MAREK MACIEJOWSKI
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The importance of health and social well-being for the prosperity and sustainable economic development of our region

Issues such as ageing society, growing burden of non-communicable diseases and antimicrobial resistance are among the biggest social and economic challenges of the 21st century. As far as the first of the three is concerned, it is estimated that the growing proportion of older people in Europe will increase the public spending by 5% of the GDP during next 50 years due to a higher share of retired people and a higher number of people with chronic non-communicable diseases. It is more important than ever to promote healthy ageing as well as efficiency and quality of health and social care services. The demand for health care is rising and will continue rising faster than the number of doctors, meaning that modern technologies are needed to fill in the gaps in the labour force. Investments in finding innovative approaches to health care, such as telemedicine, are urgently needed.

The raising burden of non-communicable diseases is another pressing issue that requires urgent action. In the 21st century, non-communicable diseases became the leading causes of morbidity, disability and mortality among the working population. Employers carry a burden of absenteeism, presenteeism, decreased productivity and high employee turnover, while individuals and their families face reduced income, early retirement, increased reliance on welfare support and a burden of health care costs. The World Economic Forum has identified non-communicable diseases as the second most severe threat

New health-related developments pose global challenges

to the global economy in terms of likelihood and potential economic loss. It is widely known that main risk factors of non-communicable diseases are preventable – namely, tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, low physical activity and unhealthy diets. However, only a small proportion of health expenditure is spent on prevention. At the same time, at least 66 billion EUR are lost every year in the Baltic Sea Region countries due to premature loss of life of preventable causes.

One more example is the problem of antimicrobial resistance. The discovery of antibiotics was a revolution in modern medicine, which significantly reduced the mortality from bacterial diseases. However, a number of factors

have led to the emergence of resistant bacteria. The situation is very serious and lack of effective microbial agents in the future is a possible scenario. As a result, the treatment of many medical conditions is becoming more expensive, less effective or even impossible. A number of actions are required, including investment in research of new effective antimicrobial agents.

Investment in health is not only about containing costs. Health and social well-being have broader implications for the economy. Sufficient labour supply,

high labour productivity and a highly qualified workforce are the key elements of economic growth. Health and social well-being are of direct relevance to all of these. Individuals enjoying good health and favourable social background are better fit to acquire the necessary skills; to enter the labour market and to work longer or at least not retire prematurely due to their declining or poor health condition or other social factors. When it comes to labour productivity, healthy individuals are more efficient and adaptable to change and persons with favourable social background are more likely to pursue lifelong learning. On the other hand, poor health inevitably leads to a lower productivity at work.

New challenges require adaptation: we cannot keep using old strategies to address new problems. We are increasingly obliged to find new solutions to new problems. This requires creativity, cooperation, political will, financial investment and urgent action. With economic and other, more visible issues on the top of the European political agenda, decision makers may choose to postpone prioritizing health. However, the aging of society, the growing epidemic of diabetes and lack of effective antibiotics cannot be postponed. These are only a few concrete examples of growing problems. If we postpone addressing them now, the consequences will affect every member of the society in the forthcoming decades and can seriously hamper our region's potential for growth in the coming decades.

The main health-related challenges that the European countries are currently facing, are the same. Consequently, common initiatives and exchange of experience benefit all countries in the region. It is important to pool the resources and expertise and exchange ideas and knowledge on effective and less effective solutions. This helps bridge gaps and speed up innovation processes, avoid duplication of efforts and resources and allows for a well-informed policy and

Investment in health is not only about containing costs. Health and social well-being have broader implications for the economy.

Regional cooperation in health: common response to shared challenges

decision making. As a result, we are not scattering resources on a fragmented approach and duplication of efforts in addressing shared challenges that we are all facing.

Moreover, the Baltic Sea Region is an area of considerable disparities in health and social conditions. It features places where social and economic problems lead to high levels of mortality due to non-communicable diseases, violence, alcohol- and drug- abuse and the spreading of infectious diseases. As communicable diseases do not respect national borders, this is a regional problem and, therefore, needs to be addressed through close collaboration between the countries.

In recognition of the need for stronger cooperation in the field of health, a Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) was established in 2003 as a platform for advancing the work in this sector. The NDPHS operates within the framework of the Northern Dimension policy and comprises seven of the eight EU countries bordering on the Baltic Sea, as well as Iceland, Norway, Russia, the European Commission and eight international organisations. The activities of the Partnership include, but are not limited to monitoring and evaluating situation in the region, identifying challenges and addressing them through policy- and project-based activities. The NDPHS also engages and supports regional initiatives and coordinates some of them.

At the political level, important documents were adopted by the Partnership, covering areas such as occupational safety, health care in prisons, control of communicable and non-communicable diseases and the role of health on the regional cooperation agenda. One example is the NDPHS "Health at Work" Strategy adopted at the ministerial level. The Strategy is one of its kind merging international and EU occupational health and safety strategies into one regional strategy adapted for the region. The annual monitoring of the indicators is showing stable progress in the implementation of the strategy. If gaps are revealed in the implementation or new issues are identified, the professionals within our network assist each other in addressing those challenges.

Political documents are important, since, when adopted at the ministerial level, these documents confirm commitment to regional cooperation in the field of health and pave the way for closer cooperation at the level of officials and experts. At the same time, when it comes to concrete problems project activities must complement the development of strategies and policies in order to provide tangible results and demonstrate solutions and ways to address challenges.

Among the projects initiated by the NDPHS is a regional project "Improvement of public health by promotion of equitably distributed high quality primary health care systems" (ImPrim) which addresses gaps in the primary health care quality through training of professionals, development of transnational strategy for professional development of primary health care professionals and piloting new quality indicators and payment schemes, which provide incentives for primary health care providers to increase focus towards health promotion and disease prevention in the community. Another regional NDPHS

project, aimed at alcohol and drug prevention among youth, is expected to commence very soon.

The above named regional projects are also among the flagship projects of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), which aims at reinforcing regional cooperation to tackle several common challenges, including those related to health. Concerning the health area, the challenges identified by the EUSBSR are consistent with those that the four Northern Dimension policy partners have agreed to address within the framework of the NDPHS Strategy. As in some areas the success of the EUSBSR depends (to an extent) on close and fruitful cooperation with neighboring countries, this coincidence provides a good basis for a joint work of all the countries in our region in addressing these challenges.

As the lead partner for the health component in the EUSBSR Action Plan, the NDPHS is pleased to note that the Strategy starts demonstrating first tangible results and that it is already contributing positively to enhanced regional cooperation in the health area. Main achievements in the implementation process so far include, but are not limited to fostering macro-regional cooperation in health and making it more integrated and inclusive and development, facilitation and support of regional flagship projects contributing to the implementation of the EUSBSR. However, further efforts are needed to involve other relevant regional stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategy and to align the funding for the implementation of the EUSBSR Action Plan and its health part in particular.

The way forward: more health on the regional agenda

Timely investment in health and social well-being is an important precondition for economic growth and transnational cooperation is important for an effective response to health and social well-being challenges. Yet, only a few funding programmes currently operating in the Baltic Sea Region have explicitly included health and social well-being among their priorities. As a result, health and social well-being related projects received considerably less funding than other sectors that are more visibly included among programmes' priorities.

There are several factors behind the comparatively low profile of health and social well-being in the 2007-2013 cooperation programmes. Firstly, it is only during this financial programming period that health has been visibly included among the priorities of the EU regional policy. Secondly, the programmes have usually been designed by non-health and social well-being actors, who may be not fully aware of the health and social well-being implications. The area of health promotion is a typical example where sectors such as finance, education, agriculture, food industry and mass media have all important role consistent with the "health in all policies" approach.

Even though the key role of health and social well-being in economic development is increasingly recognised, this recognition has so far not been sufficiently reflected when it comes to defining the strategic priorities. One example is the EUSBSR Action Plan. Whereas other sectors are included as separate priorities, health has been listed as a sub-priority (along with education, tourism and culture), thus undermining the value, visibility and importance of health vis-à-vis other sectors.

The EUSBSR Action Plan is currently being reviewed. Following a proposal by the NDPHS, on its latest draft the European Commission has included health and its social aspects as a separate priority area, thus giving health a status adequate to its role and importance in the region's societies. It has been acknowledged with appreciation that many regional stakeholders, among them the BSSSC, had supported the NDPHS proposal.

Surveys indicate that individuals place health among the top priorities in their life. The priorities and concerns of our people should be properly reflected on the regional cooperation agenda. Our Partnership will continue taking actions to ensure that health is visibly exposed among the funding priorities during the next EU financial period. We hope that other stakeholders will support the NDPHS in our efforts to make the Baltic Sea Region a better place to live.

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The Chairmanship of the
**Westpomeranian
Region 2011–2012**
in BSSSC

The Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) is a political network for decentralised authorities (subregions) in the Baltic Sea Region. The organisation was founded in Stavanger, Norway, 1993. Its participants are regional authorities (level directly below the national level authorities) of the 10 Baltic Sea littoral states: Germany, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Russia.

The BSSSC is a political network whose main organisational bodies are: The Chairperson (elected by the Board on a rotational basis for a two-year period), the Board consisting of two representatives of each of the BSR countries, the Secretariat, which follows the Chairperson and ad hoc Work groups. The main BSSSC event is the annual conference held each year in early Autumn. The presidency of the BSSSC rotates between member regions every two years. From the 1st of January 2011 the organization is chaired for the first time by the Westpomeranian Region, Poland.



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