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The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission is a leading network of regions in the Baltic Sea Region, committed to promote a resilient, sustainable, well-connected and vibrant Baltic Sea Region. The organisation supports the main goals of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Established in 1996, it serves as a forum for policy-oriented cooperation and lobbying amongst regional authorities. The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission promotes the specific interests of Baltic Sea regions towards EU institutions.

The Baltic Sea Commission is one of six Geographical Commissions that make up the CPMR, alongside the Atlantic Arc, North Sea, Intermediterranean, Islands, and Balkan and Black Sea Commissions. Since 1973, the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR), has worked as the united voice of peripheral and coastal regions towards EU decision-makers.
Dear BSC Member Regions, partners and Baltic Sea friends,

Last September I had the pleasure, together with Mr Richard Sjölund, 1st BSC Vice-President, to welcome you in Umeå and Vaasa, for the 28th CPMR Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly hosted jointly by Västerbotten and Ostrobothnia. Crossing the Baltic Sea on the Aurora Ferry with all BSC Members was a fantastic experience and a significant symbolic gesture as our organisation was established on a ferry journey more than two decades ago.

Since our gathering, tensions have increased globally. The instability in the Middle East, combined with the on-going war in Ukraine, has made security high on both Europe and the Baltic Sea Region agendas. The geopolitical situation makes clear that Europe needs to be more united and self-sufficient. The regions have a key role to play in building a strong and prosperous Europe. This was a key message arising during the 50th anniversary of the CPMR, in St Malo. In my view, the Baltic Sea regions have a specific contribution in that regard, since they lead the way in Europe's decarbonisation with innovative and fossil-free solutions.

Together this year, we have advanced our proposal towards EU and national representatives. The BSC Executive Committee met with several Members of the European Parliament during a visit at the European Parliament in Strasbourg conveying key messages from the BSC Resolution 2023.

From a series of exchanges to the organisation of political seminars, the BSC Working Groups have been active in preparing the new EU mandate period, as EU elections will take place in June 2024. Let me share few highlights.

Hosted by Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, the BSC Transport Working Group, together with Scandria Alliance, held a seminar to discuss with the EU Coordinator for the Scan Med Corridor Pat Cox, the need to strengthen investments in transport infrastructures for dual use purpose to enable a more resilient transport system in light of the new geopolitical context. This message was also shared with the European Coordinator for the North Sea Baltic Corridor, Catherine Trautmann, in January in Strasbourg.

Protecting the Baltic Sea while enabling competitive and sustainable maritime industries is at the core of the Baltic Sea Commission. At the invitation of EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginijus Sinkevičius, I was invited to represent the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission at the Ministerial Meeting and Conference “Our Baltic” in Palanga to share the view on how to best develop Sustainable Blue Economy in the Baltic Sea.

Tomas Mörtsell  
President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission,  
Region Västerbotten (Sweden)
The green transition requires increased production of electricity and also hydrogen for industry and transport. The BSC Energy and Climate Working Group explored these topics and developed a policy position paper addressed to EU representatives.

I was delighted to join the high-level seminar organised by the BSC Arctic Task Force at the Parliament of Finland to discuss with EU and national representatives the topic of the Arctic, as a hotspot of the green industrialisation and geopolitical tensions.

Dear colleagues, we are now entering a turning point for Baltic Sea Region cooperation with the revision of the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. I believe the Strategy is an important framework of cooperation, but still the role of regions should be reinforced. Seizing the opportunity of the revision of the Action Plan, the BSC Executive Committee has decided to re-establish a Task Force to provide a regional view during the revision process. The BSC will take an active role during the upcoming EUSBSR Annual Forum in Gotland at the end of October, and I hope to see many of you there!

The strength of our organisation is the active involvement of the Member Regions at both political and technical levels. This year we have the honour to welcome two new Members, Västernorrland (Sweden) and Central Ostrobothnia (Finland), that will strengthen our regional collaboration and our joint lobbying work.

Early in 2024, we were affected by the loss of Mr Jari Nahkanen (Member of the Board of Oulu Region) and Mr Erik Bergkvist (Member of the European Parliament), two dear friends and pillars of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission. Both were former Presidents of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission and have significantly contributed to the development of our organisation.

This Activity Report highlights the activities and work of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission from September 2023 to April 2024. I warmly thank all Members and partners for their active contribution and fruitful cooperation in a spirit of trust and mutual understanding, and for paving the way forward together.

I wish you a pleasant reading!

Tomas Mörtsell
CPMR BSC President
Region Västerbotten

Executive Committee at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, January 2024
21 BSC Member Regions

AECM - Association of Estonian Cities and Rural Municipalities (Estonia)
CENTRAL OSTROBOTHNIA (Finland)
HELSINKI-UUSIMAA (Finland)
KYMENLAAKSO (Finland)
LAPLAND (Finland)
OSTROBOTHNIA (Finland)
OULU Region (Finland)
PÄIJÄT-HÄME (Finland)
SOUTHWEST FINLAND (Finland)
MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN (Germany)
GÄVLEBORGH (Sweden)
GOTLAND (Sweden)
JÄMTLAND HÄRJEDALEN (Sweden)
NORRBOTTEN (Sweden)
ÖREBRO Region (Sweden)
ÖSTERGÖTLAND (Sweden)
SKÅNE (Sweden)
STOCKHOLM Region (Sweden)
VÄRMLAND (Sweden)
VÄSTERBOTTEN (Sweden)
VÄSTERNORRLAND (Sweden)

150 CPMR Member Regions
Therefore, collaboration and cooperation with partner regions in the surrounding regions as well as across the EU is fundamental and necessary. It creates new channels and critical mass for our messages to different levels, as well as new alliances and partnerships that contribute to the sustainable development of our region.”

“In Västernorrland we are very pleased to be new members of the CPMR and the Baltic Sea Commission. Our region is currently facing major investments contributing to the green transition, which substantially can shift our future. At the same time being a sparsely populated region means challenges to make our voice heard at national and EU level.

Learn more about Västernorrland on the Region’s website

Mr Jonny Lundin, Chair of the Regional Development Committee of Västernorrland
Beyond its dedication to sustainability, Central Ostrobothnia fosters a spirit of innovation. Research and development in battery chemistry flourishes here, propelling the region’s technological advancements.

Central Ostrobothnia boasts a captivating blend of natural beauty and cultural richness. From the refreshing coastline and lakes to the vibrant towns of Kokkola and Kannus, Central Ostrobothnia offers a diverse experience for visitors.

Steeped in tradition, the region is renowned for its strong sense of community and its deep appreciation for music, particularly the UNESCO-recognised Kaustis violin playing tradition. Whether you seek outdoor adventures, cultural immersion, or a glimpse into charming Finnish life, Central Ostrobothnia promises an unforgettable experience.

With the largest lithium reserves in Europe, the Region is well-positioned to become a hub for battery production. This, coupled with its commitment to wind, solar, and other renewable energy sources, positions Central Ostrobothnia as a leader in the global energy transition.
BSC Organisational Structure

President

Vice-Presidents

Executive Secretary

Executive Committee

Working Groups

General Assembly

Working Groups

Task Force

Transport & Accessibility

Energy & Climate

Maritime Affairs

Arctic

Revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan
At the invitation of BSC President Tomas Mörtsell and BSC Vice-President Richard Sjölund, regions Västerbotten (Sweden) and Ostrobothnia (Finland) jointly hosted the 28th CPMR Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly on 19-20 September 2023 in Umeå and Vaasa.

The highlight of the event was a ferry journey crossing the Kvarken bay from Sweden to Finland. The Assembly gathered more than 60 representatives from BSC Member Regions, as well as guest speakers from the EUSBSR Policy Areas Transport and Innovation, CBSS Finnish Presidency, and VASAB Secretariat.

Discussions focused on the consequences faced by regions due to the geopolitical context, the future of the EU budget and Cohesion Policy post-2027, regional innovation collaboration, and building resilient transport and energy systems in the Baltic Sea Region.

During the session on internal matters, the BSC Activity Report 2022-2023, and the BSC Work Plan 2023-2025 were presented and discussed by Members. Lastly, Tomas Mörtsell presented the BSC Resolution 2023, and it was unanimously approved.

The BSC Resolution 2023 was later shared with EU institutions and presented to the Members of the European Parliament in January 2024 by the BSC Executive Committee.

A comprehensive report of the BSC General Assembly 2023 is available here.

The photos of the event are available here.
Documents adopted
At the BSC General Assembly 2023

- BSC Resolution 2023
- BSC Activity Report 2022-2023
- BSC Work Plan 2023-25
Executive Committee
List of Executive Committee Members for 2022-2024

PRESIDENT
Tomas MÖRTSELL, Region Västerbotten (Sweden)

VICE-PRESIDENTS
First Vice-President
Richard SJÖLUND, Region Ostrobothnia (Finland)
Second Vice-President
Romek KOSENKRANIUS, Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities (Estonia)

FULL MEMBERS
ESTONIA
Romek KOSENKRANIUS, Pärnu

GERMANY
Wolf BORN, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

FINLAND
Otto MERI, Helsinki-Uusimaa

SWEDEN
Gustav HEMMING, Region Stockholm

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS
ESTONIA
Kristiina MARIPUU, Saaremaa

GERMANY
Merten BARNERT, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

FINLAND
Pekka KOMU, Päijät-Häme

SWEDEN
Pontus LINDBERG, Region Skåne
On 16-17 January 2024, Members of the BSC Executive Committee met in Strasbourg to exchange with five Members of the European Parliament on topics related to the future of Cohesion Policy, infrastructure and transport connections, and energy security in the Baltic Sea Region.

The meeting was also an opportunity to visit the European Parliament in Strasbourg and become familiarised with the EU parliamentary work.

Moreover, BSC Members met with Mr Mathieu Mori, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to discuss the role of municipalities and regions in the administrative reconstruction of Ukraine.

During a meeting with the EU Coordinator for the North Sea Baltic corridor, BSC Members highlighted to Ms Catherine Trautmann the growing importance of military mobility in the Baltic Sea Region, the need for further investments in transport infrastructure and better cross-border connections in the future. They called for a strong CEF III.

The BSC Executive Committee gathered online on 15 March to discuss the preparations for the upcoming BSC General Assembly in Kotka, Kymenlaakso. During the meeting, the BSC Executive Committee appointed Ms Tanja Joona, Deputy Board Member of Region Lapland, as the new Chair of the BSC Arctic Task Force.

In addition, the Executive Committee approved the nomination of Ms Johanna Ekman from Region Päijät-Häme as new Vice-Chair of the BSC Transport Working Group.

Finally, it was agreed that the BSC Secretariat will launch an Open Call for interest to establish a brand new BSC EUSBSR Task Force, aimed at influencing the revision of the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).
BSC Transport WG Action Plan priorities for 2023-2024:

- Including a Baltic Sea regional perspective in policy-making and infrastructure planning
- Phasing out fossil fuels and accelerating clean fuel development in transports
- Innovative transport solutions – for people and goods

The BSC Transport Working Group discussed the EU Drone Strategy 2.0

On 18 October 2023, the BSC Transport Working Group met online to discuss the EU Drone Strategy 2.0 and the opportunities that the initiative can provide for peripheral maritime regions.

The meeting was an opportunity to explore the content and next steps of the EU Drone Strategy 2.0, as well as for drones to foster further regional development.

Led by Vice-Chairs Mr Jan Owe-Larsson (Region Östergötland) and Mr Pekka Komu (Region Päijät Häme), the meeting brought together BSC regional representatives and civil servants with European Union officials (from DG MOVE) and local stakeholders such as UIC2 and CITYAM Finland.

“BSC member regions are cooperating for a more connected, sustainable and efficient transport system for people and goods within the Baltic Sea Region. The new geopolitical context highlights the importance of cross-border connectivity and we call for further funding of infrastructure in the TEN-T network.”

Magnus Lagergren
Chair of the BSC Transport Working Group, Region Örebro
During his intervention, BSC Transport Working Group Vice-Chair Mr Pekka Komu, stressed Finland's new position on the world scene due to its recent NATO membership, and pointed out the importance of increasing investment R&I for the development of new innovative technologies. Highlighting the significance of the North and the European Arctic, the gathering underlined the need for continued cooperation to navigate the changing environment.

The joint efforts of the Scandria Alliance and the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission reflect a commitment to strengthen transport systems amid geopolitical shifts and foster sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region.

Key message arising from the event was the need to accelerate decarbonisation efforts within the transport sector. Aligning with EU climate objectives and the Green Deal, participants recognised the urgency of adapting transport infrastructure to be both sustainable and resilient. The event also shed light on the economic challenges faced by Finnish regions bordering Russia due to the border's closure. Ensuring traffic and robust connections in these areas emerged as a critical priority.

The European Coordinator of the ScanMed TEN-T Corridor, Mr Pat Cox, emphasised the growing strategic importance of the ScanMed corridor, particularly in light of Finland and Sweden's NATO memberships and the region's abundant rare earth materials and biomass.

On 6-7 November, Helsinki-Uusimaa hosted an event, together with the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Transport Working Group and Scandria Alliance, to highlight the impact of the new geopolitical context on the Baltic Sea Region transport system.

The event, gathering about 50 participants, resulted in a Joint Resolution calling for EU and national support to improve cross-border connections and transport infrastructures. Additionally, both organisations advocated for a robust Connecting Europe Facility (CEF III) in the post-2027 EU budget.

The BSC and Scandria Alliance call for strengthening resilience of Baltic transport systems (November 2023)
On 12 March, the BSC Transport Working Group met online to discuss the provisional agreement on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation reached in December 2023.

The Working Group Chair, Mr Magnus Lagergren (Region Örebro), congratulated BSC members for their active engagement in the Regulation's revision, referring to 6 BSC amendments integrated into the agreement. These amendments notably include the Oslo-Stockholm link addition in the Scan-Med Corridor, enhancing connectivity between capitals and surrounding regions.

In addition, Vice-Chair Mr Pekka Komu (Päijät-Häme) emphasised the significance of TEN-T corridors with regard to the new geopolitical context and the rising importance of military mobility.

Finally, the Vice-Chair, Mr Jan Owe-Larsson (Östergötland), stressed the importance of ensuring enough CEF III funding in the future EU budget.
BSC Maritime WG Action Plan priorities for 2023-2024:

- Promoting sustainable coastal tourism in the Baltic Sea Region
- Promoting competitive and sustainable maritime industries
- Restoring and protecting the Baltic Sea

Moreover, promoting sustainable locally-based fishing for marine environment protection was highlighted by Mr Gustav Hemming (Region Stockholm), while Mr Michael Hagström (Alliance for Fisheries Associations in the Bothnian Bay) addressed fisheries and offshore wind power deployment and Ms Mari Pohja-Mykrä (Southwest Finland) emphasised maritime spatial planning’s role in fostering a sustainable blue economy.

On 25 March, the BSC Maritime Working Group met online to discuss how to promote a Sustainable Blue Economy to protect and restore the Baltic Sea environment.

Under the direction of Chair Ms Sari Nurro (Oulu Region) and Vice-Chair Mr Harry Bouveng (Region Stockholm), the event focused on the harmonious development of offshore wind along the Baltic Sea Coasts, and small-scale fisheries, with Maritime Spatial Planning as a crucial tool.

The meeting started with a presentation by Mr Rüdiger Strempel, HELCOM’s Executive Secretary, about the status of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.

The Working Group also discussed with EUSBSR Policy Area Tourism on how to reboost the cruise industry in light of the new geopolitical context in the Baltic Sea Region.

“Protecting the Baltic Sea while enabling competitive and sustainable maritime industries is at the core of the activities of the BSC Maritime Working Group. This year, our members have shared experience and had dialogue with EU representatives about measures to increase the maritime sector’s resilience and security of supply in BSC regions in view of the security political situation. For example, we addressed the topics of ports both as strategic and clean energy hubs. We also prepared for the new work programme of the European Commission and European Parliament.”

Sari Nurro  
Chair of the BSC Maritime Working Group, Region Oulu
On 29 September, BSC President Tomas Mörtsell participated in the "Our Baltic" Ministerial Conference at the invitation of EU Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius. In his intervention, Mr Mörtsell emphasised the Baltic Sea as a unifying element for coastal regions, stressing joint responsibility to improve the state of the Baltic Sea. Mr Mörtsell also noted regional contributions to a sustainable blue economy, including promoting coastal tourism, decarbonising maritime transport, ports, deploying offshore wind energy, and supporting blue skills development.

On 11 October, the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum organised by Policy Area Tourism of the EUSBSR discussed promoting sustainable tourism despite post-COVID-19 and geopolitical issues. BSC Executive Secretary, Ms Lucille Ehrhart, emphasised the importance of coastal tourism for regional development, highlighting the need for cooperation and EU support in addressing issues such as safety, digitalisation, season extension, skills development, and sector recovery.
Energy & Climate Working Group

BSC Energy & Climate WG Action Plan priorities for 2023-2024:

- Increasing renewable energy production in the Baltic Sea Region
- Increasing sustainable and smart use of natural resources for climate transition
- Promoting the adaptation of regions to the foreseeable effects of climate change

BSC Regions discuss requirements for electrification in the Baltic Sea Region

The BSC Energy and Climate Working Group met online on 23 April to explore electrification in the Baltic Sea Region.

Chair Mr Markku Markkula opened the seminar by emphasising the importance of electrification strategies for replacing fossil fuels across sectors.

Divided into two sessions, the first focused on grid electrification, featuring presentations by Mr Anders Karmehed (Energiföretagen) and Mr Tommi Asp (Fingrid) who addressed current and future challenges in Sweden and Finland, respectively. The second session explored transport electrification.

Ms Maria Jalvemo (Svenska Kraftnät) presented the "Fossil-free Upper Norrland" programme, showcasing its regional impact. Mr Ville Uusi-Rauva (HSL Helsingin Seudun Liikenne) discussed Helsinki’s electrification experience, including challenges, opportunities, and considerations of complementary technologies.

Mr Mikko Veikkolainen (Kempower) concluded by highlighting the company’s role in expanding charging capacity and technology for EVs in Europe.

Finally, Vice-Chair Mr Pontus Lindberg (Region Skåne) closed the meeting by stressing the importance of regional cooperation for effective electrification in the Baltic Sea Region.

"Our working group has convened throughout this year with a commitment to advocacy and peer learning. Our discussions have concentrated on sustainability, particularly exploring hydrogen and electrification. We have tackled both the challenges and opportunities these technologies present within the Baltic Sea region. Notably, we have developed a position paper on hydrogen aimed at influencing EU policymakers. The group has benefited from high-level discourse, significantly enhancing our grasp of critical issues that will shape the future of our region."

Markku Markkula
Chair of the BSC Energy and Climate Working Group, Region of Helsinki-Uusimaa
On 7 December, the BSC Energy and Climate Working Group met online to explore hydrogen’s potential in the Baltic Sea Region’s green transition. Through engaging presentations, attendees learned about Sweden’s hydrogen initiatives from Mr Pawel Seremak (Vätgas Sverige) and the EU’s hydrogen strategies and funding from Ms Ruta Baltause (European Commission, DG ENER).

At regional level, Ms Jatta Jussila presented the BalticSeaH2 project, the first inter-regional hydrogen valley. Ms Jenny Sackner Christensen (Trelleborgs Energi) shared how Trelleborg Municipality (Region Skåne) is integrating hydrogen into its energy plans, while Mr Glenn Berggård (Region Norrbotten) showcased Norrbotten’s green investments, including on hydrogen.

The BSC ECWG developed a BSC Policy Position on hydrogen to voice regional perspectives and demands to EU and national decision-makers, especially with the upcoming European elections in June.

For this purpose, on 27 February, the Working Group met to review the initial draft of the Paper.

The Policy Position is currently under development by the Working Group’s coordinating regions and is set for approval at the General Assembly in Kotka (Region Kymenlaakso) on 22 May.

The Paper will be enriched by an Annex showcasing pioneering hydrogen projects and initiatives in the Baltic Sea Region.

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Read the consolidated BSC Policy Position on Hydrogen

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Markku Markkula
Chair of the BSC Energy and Climate Working Group, Region Helsinki-Uusimaa

Pontus Lindberg
Vice-Chair of the BSC Energy and Climate Working Group, Region Skåne
During the 51st CPMR General Assembly in Saint-Malo, the Arctic Working Group of the Baltic Sea Commission gathered on the morning of 16 November to address pressing issues affecting the Arctic and Baltic regions.

Chaired by Ms Sari Nurro (Oulu Region), the session featured elected politicians and civil servants from Oulu Region, Helsinki-Uusimaa, Västerbotten, Norrbotten, Lapland, Jämtland Häradalen, Central Ostrobothnia, Brittany Region, and Québec. In a Tour de Table, each participant provided an update on recent regional developments related to the Arctic.

Among the issues raised were the on-going potential and challenges relating to the green industrialisation in the European Arctic, skills supply, climate change, and the need to reinforce transport accessibility in the Arctic.

The reorientation of Arctic cooperation structures in light of the new geopolitical context and the need to reinforce regional cooperation for a safe and prosperous Arctic were highlighted. Member Regions discussed the Arctic Task Force Action Plan for 2024, including the development of a new Policy Position to highlight the potential and challenges in the European Arctic faced by regions. The objective is to raise awareness on Arctic matters during the upcoming EU elections and with the future renewed European Parliament and College of Commissioners. Participants also agreed to reinforce dialogue on Arctic matters with national parliamentarians.

“As a researcher living in the Arctic, I will be committed to promote in particular the green transition in a just manner. This requires expertise in local culture and world views and a holistic understanding. As the Arctic has become the centre of attention of major destabilising powers, it becomes imperative for our local and regional authorities’ voices to be heard and understood. The future of the European Arctic should be designed by and with the people living in the Arctic.”

Tanja Joona
Chair of the BSC Arctic Working Group, Region Lapland
On 9 April, the Council of Oulu Region and the BSC Arctic Working Group held a joint seminar entitled “Harnessing the potential of the green transition and securing the stability of the European Arctic for an attractive and resilient Europe”. The event was hosted at the Parliament of Finland in Helsinki in collaboration with the Finnish Delegation to the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.

Moderated by Mr Ilari Havukainen (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities) and opened by Ms Olga Oinas-Panuma, Finnish MP and Chair of the Finnish Delegation to the CPAR, the seminar continued with a keynote speech by Mr Raphaël Goulet (European Commission - DG MARE) on harnessing the full potential of the European Arctic in the green transition. In the first session, a panel discussion made up of Mr Eric Palmqvist (Swedish MP), Ms Tanja Joona (Region Lapland), and Mr Glenn Berggård (Region Norrbotten) discussed the question of a just green transition in the Arctic.

Security and stability in the Arctic region was addressed in the second session of the seminar, which was opened by a keynote address by Ms Clara Ganslandt (EU Special Envoy for Arctic Matters) and enriched by a stimulating panel discussion with Ms Tytti Tuppurainen (Finnish MP), Ms Alexandra Anstrell (Swedish MP), Ms Pirita Näkkäläjärvi (President of the Sámi Parliament of Finland), and BSC President Mr Tomas Mörtsell (Region Västerbotten). The conference concluded with Ms Mari-Leena Talvitie, Finnish MP and Chair of the Council of Oulu Region, who outlined the path forward on the critical issues facing the European Arctic.
BSC support to the EUSBSR

BSC seminar during the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2023

The EUSBSR Annual Forum 2023 took place on 5 October in Riga and discussed safety and sustainability in the Baltic Sea Region. Together with Regions Västerbotten, Southwest Finland and PA Innovation, the BSC co-organised a workshop to explore the concept of a macro-regional innovation valley, leveraging the innovation strengths of the Baltic Sea Region.

Ms Sari Nurro (Oulu Region), Chair of the BSC Maritime Working Group was part of the panel and highlighted the potential of the BSR in transnational cooperation in the field of innovation in the Baltic Sea Region.

BSC cooperation with PACs

The BSC is actively cooperating with several coordinators of Policy Areas, who are regularly attending BSC Working Group meetings:
- Policy Area Transport;
- Policy Area Tourism;
- Policy Area Innovation.

BSC contributes to PA Innovation seminar about Ukraine-Baltic Sea Region innovation cooperation

The BSC, represented by its Executive Secretary, spoke in April 2024 at the Ministry of Science in Poland about the cooperation opportunities between BSC regions and Ukraine partners in the field of Smart Specialisation.

Re-establishment of the BSC Task Force for the EUSBSR Revision

The revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan started in April 2024 and should finish early in 2026. In order to ensure a strong regional voice in the revision process, the BSC has re-established a Task Force gathering interested BSC Regions to contribute by providing input to this revision process. Region Lapland will lead the work for the BSC. The Task Force will work for a greater involvement of regions in the governance of the Strategy, and for a better consideration of Arctic issues in the Action Plan.

Save the date: 29, 30, 31 October | EUSBSR Annual Forum 2024, Visby (Gotland, SE)

During the Annual Forum, the BSC will co-organise a series of seminars:
- Paving the way to sustainable aviation in the Baltic Sea Region
- The European Arctic - a driver for a more sustainable and resilient Baltic Sea Region
- The place of regional innovation collaboration in the future Cohesion Policy post-2027
On 22 March, the CPMR held its Political Bureau in Patras, Greece. The Political Bureau meeting featured discussions on a wide range of topics, including the future of Cohesion Policy and the challenges facing coastal regions in areas like climate change and maritime affairs.

Ms Elisa Ferreira, the European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, underlined the event's aim to promote collaboration and partnership in addressing common challenges and maximising growth and development opportunities in peripheral maritime regions.

The success of the meeting and the participation of high-level policy-makers such as Commissioner Ferreira demonstrates the ability of the CPMR and the Baltic Sea Commission to influence EU policy and legislation.

As a matter of fact, the CPMR is actively shaping the debate on the post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and Cohesion Policy.

A series of reflection papers recently published by the CPMR marks the beginning of this process. These papers, informed by technical analysis and the realities of CPMR member regions, aim to feed into discussions and guide future policy direction. For more information on the CPMR’s work on Cohesion Policy, click on the document icons below.
The CPMR has recently conducted an in-depth study examining how different enlargement scenarios might affect funding for various regions across Europe. The EU is contemplating enlarging its membership, which raises concerns about the financial sustainability of EU initiatives, particularly given the economic challenges faced by potential new member states, such as Ukraine. The CPMR’s study addressed the financial implications of expansion for Cohesion Policy, assuming no accompanying reforms.

The study found that enlargment would not necessarily increase the cost of the policy compared to the current situation. Instead, the budget would likely decrease regardless of whether expansion occurs. Several factors contribute to this outcome. More specifically, the study highlights that the current method of distributing funds is not optimal and fails to align with the objectives of the European Union or the needs of its regions. Moreover, the budget for Cohesion Policy should not decrease at a time when regional disparities are widening.

Presenting the findings at the Committee of Regional Development (REGI) of the European Parliament on 9 April 2024, Mr Filip Reinhag, Member of the CPMR Political Bureau and the Regional Council of Gotland (Sweden), emphasised the importance of prioritising the needs of regions and focusing on areas where European cooperation can make a difference. He expressed the ambition to make Europe the most prosperous and livable continent globally.

“Together with my CPMR colleagues across Europe, we believe that we need to put the needs of the Regions at the forefront, put focus on what we need European cooperation for, and unleash the potential to make Europe the most livable and prosperous continent in the world.”

Filip Reinhag (Region Gotland)

Read the CPMR study: “Furthering Cohesion in an Enlarged Europe”
The CPMR held its 51st General Assembly in Saint-Malo, marking its 50th anniversary. The event, hosted by Brittany Region, served as a platform to reflect on past successes, articulate a future vision, and deliver a powerful CPMR Manifesto, outlining the organisation’s key priorities. The document was adopted and will be addressed to the new EU institutions set to take up office in late 2024.

The General Assembly also provided an opportunity for the BSC to hold a plenary session and a meeting of the BSC Arctic Task Force. Region Lapland was presented during the plenary, and Västernorrland officially joined the BSC as a new member region. The Political Bureau elected Mr Loïg Chesnais-Girard, President of Brittany Region, as the new CPMR President.
Advocacy, visibility, impact & cooperation

Active contribution in the CPMR network to nourish analysis and Policy Positions to provide a Baltic Sea perspective

One report on regional experiences regarding hydrogen

Regular meetings with representatives from the EU institutions

Meetings with representatives of Baltic national governments

One BSC event organised at the Parliament of Finland with high-level representatives

Close contacts with the EUSBSR community, such as National Coordinators and Policy Area Coordinators

Organisation of meetings and events connecting the BSC with speakers from non-governmental organisations from the Baltic Sea Region community

Adoption of a political declaration on transport
In Memoriam

Jari Nahkanen

We were deeply saddened about the passing of our dear friend, Jari Nahkanen, early in 2024.

Genuinely pro-European, Jari Nahkanen was an active Member of the CPMR and promoted Oulu Region and Finnish issues across Europe and to European institutions.

Jari was a loved and respected politician within the CPMR family.

Jari Nahkanen was President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission from 2018 to 2022.

He was strongly committed to promoting regional cooperation across the borders and to improving the life of people in the northern parts of Finland and the whole Baltic Sea Region.

Since 2023, he chaired the BSC Arctic Task Force, a group promoting Arctic issues and interests in European policies.

His legacy, kindness and diplomatic abilities, together with his warm and unique personality will be remembered and deeply missed.

Erik Bergkvist

It is with great sadness that we learn that our friend Erik Bergkvist passed away early in 2024.

Member of the European Parliament, former Member of the CPMR and its Baltic Sea Commission, he was a driving force of our organisation. A pillar of the CPMR, he held the Vice-Presidency for Transport in 2018-2019 and he was the President of the Baltic Sea Commission from 2010 to 2012.

Erik Bergkvist was profoundly attached to his territory, Västerbotten, and a genuine and convinced pro-European. Building a better and more just future for his fellows was at the heart of his local action and European engagement.

Active, respected and loved politician within CPMR for many years, he acted as an ambassador of the north of Sweden to the European institutions.

As fervent supporter of European integration, he bravely continued his political battles in the European Parliament. Forward thinking in his ideas, he brought wisdom and optimism to the political debate.

He will be missed dearly by the CPMR family, and always remembered for his kind, compassionate heart.
BSC communication

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Thank you to all BSC Members and Partners!

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