



LOOKING AHEAD:

Preparing the Baltic Sea Region for the future

CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Since its foundation in 1996, the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission has established itself as a forum for policy-oriented cooperation and a platform for cooperation amongst Regional Authorities in the Baltic Sea Region.

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is a tool for solving common challenges and for the region to reach its full potential. The Baltic Sea Commission (BSC), together with its Member Regions, supports the main goals of the strategy: **Save the Sea, Increase Connectivity** and **Prosperity of the Baltic Sea Region**.

The BSC contributes to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region by promoting multi-level governance and supporting regional stakeholders in engaging in the governance and implementation of the strategy

The BSC believes that the common framework of the strategy furthers integration in the region, but stresses the importance of tangible results in order to sustain and increase its legitimacy in the coming period.

Introduction

It is our strong belief that an on-going dialogue and process to develop the EUSBSR in line with global themes will help make the strategy more resilient and adapt it to future opportunities and challenges.

- The EUSBSR offers an appropriate framework to promote progress and to overcome and utilise traditional patterns of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.
- Regions at sub-national level play a pivotal role in the macro region (BSR) in the further management and implementation of the strategy, as they are the centre of cooperation patterns.
- It is essential to underline that the BSR as a whole will be better prepared to meet regional, European and global challenges, in contrast to fragmented or exclusive cooperation, e.g. among the Nordic Countries. Therefore, the involvement of Norway and Russia is also indispensable.
- Being close to the citizens, the CPMR and its member regions have also an important role in promoting subsidiarity and multilevel governance. Including civil society in regional development on national and EU level brings also European Union and its citizens closer to each other.

Proposed Action – CPMR Baltic Sea Commission:

Based on trends identified in the Report ‘Looking Ahead: Preparing the Baltic Sea Region for the Future,’ the BSC proposes a broad discussion on each Policy Area and Horizontal Action in order to assess the possible repercussions of these themes, as this may indicate the need to redefine our actions. This could help increase joint awareness of common resources and challenges.

- The BSC is ready to actively support such a process by involving regional stakeholders.
- Starting in January 2017, the Baltic Sea Commission and its working groups on Maritime Affairs, Transport and Accessibility, and Energy will enhance discussions on how to build resilient cooperation that meets the challenges we face up to 2030 and beyond. During the EUSBSR Strategy Forum in Berlin, June 2017, we will present a report on this process.
- Capacity building at regional level to work on this issues is necessary. We hope to continue a good cooperation with HA Capacity in this field.

In parallel with this process, necessary discussions, addressed by the CPMR and the Baltic Sea Commission, are underway with the European Commission to reform EU Territorial Cooperation and its programmes (ETC) within Cohesion Policy. In particular, the relationship between ETC programmes and the development of macro-regional strategies.

There is also a wider discussion on the future role of the European Union in promoting cooperation and supporting investment, and on recognising the potential of local and regional authorities as fully-fledged actors.

- CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, as the voice of the Baltic Sea Regions, and a platform for cooperation, will be involved in the above discussions, both on a macro-regional level and in a pan-European context.

Below are our first thoughts on the Report ‘Looking towards 2030: Preparing the Baltic Sea Region for the Future’:

Regarding Democratic Decision-making: The BSC will continue to promote the involvement of regional players which are key for development within the region. This process must be built on concrete actions and provide added value for individual regions and their stakeholders.

Regarding Demographic Pressures: The BSC will continue to promote discussions between metropolitan areas, surrounding regions, small and medium-sized cities, and more rural and peripheral areas, particularly regarding key issues such as sustainable transport, supply of energy and further resources. In parallel, metropolitan areas could help smaller cities and rural areas to understand and benefit from the “4th industrial revolution of production” (3D-printers; transporting data instead of products).

Regarding renewing industries and innovation: The BSC is aware that innovations, driven by market needs, occur spontaneously in Europe’s most advanced economies. But in more peripheral regions there is a need for policy development in order to have integrated, inclusive development and driving change through cooperation. Due to the wide-ranging and insecure trends highlighted in the report, increased flexibility is required, as well as a more strategic approach to using the available funds. The BSC will explore how regional development and international cooperation can be more utilised for the benefit of stakeholders within our regions.

Regarding Environment: The BSC welcomes a deepened dialogue in relation to the environment and understands the importance of enabling multi-sector and multi-level collaboration across national borders.

The BSC is aware that protecting the BSR ecosystem is a horizontal issue for most of the trends identified and requires a holistic and sustainable approach to policy development. The sea itself is not the problem, the challenges to it also come from activities taking place on land. Addressing these issues in order to protect good environmental status of marine waters is the objective of the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The implementation of this Directive, as well as the implementation of the Marine Spatial Directive, which is about how to organise coexistence of human activities taking place at sea, is a key challenge in the Baltic Sea Region.



Contact person: Åsa Bjering, Executive Secretary of the Baltic Sea Commission
Email: asa.bjering@crpm.org

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) brings together some 160 Regions from 25 States from the European Union and beyond.

Representing about 200 million people, the CPMR campaigns in favour of a more balanced development of the European territory.

It operates both as a think tank and as a lobby group for Regions. It focuses mainly on social, economic and territorial cohesion, maritime policies and accessibility.

www.cpmr.org

CONTACT:

6, rue Saint-Martin, 35700 Rennes
Tel: + 33 (0)2 99 35 40 50

Rond-Point Schuman 14, 1040 Brussels
Tel: +32 (0)2 612 17 00

Email: Secretariat@crpm.org; Website: www.cpmr.org

Ref: BSCDTR160010 A0