



## CPMR BALTIC SEA COMMISSION 23rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

16 May 2018, Oulu, Finland

The regions of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission met in Oulu (Region, Finland) on 16 May 2018 for the 23rd General Assembly. In light of the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and EU policies for the post-2020 period, in anticipation of a revision of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and on behalf of its Members, the Baltic Sea Commission, wishes to convey the following messages to EU decision-makers.

### For a strong post-2020 EU budget delivering sustainable regional growth

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission:

1. ***calls on*** the European Parliament and the Member States to agree on a post-2020 MFF reflecting the ambition of the EU and its priorities, while providing regional and local authorities with sufficient flexibility to realise the ambition of the European Union on the ground.
2. ***welcomes*** the stronger focus of the MFF proposal on climate change, migration, youth, digitalisation, research and innovation.
3. ***regrets*** that the European Commission's MFF proposal for 2021-2027 is not anchored in a long-term European Strategy based on an integrated view of sustainable development and competitiveness.
4. ***is concerned*** that Cohesion Policy is presented in the MFF proposal in a fragmented way, with the European Social Fund (ESF) being presented separately to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund.
5. ***regrets*** that the MFF proposal for 2021-2027 presents a substantial decrease of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) budget despite the tangible added-value that ETC brings to European citizens.
6. ***emphasises*** the importance of Cohesion Policy post-2020 based on the principles of partnership and multi-level governance to ensure the involvement of local and regional authorities in the implementation of the policy.

7. **welcomes** the reference to Blue Investment among the objectives of Cohesion Policy set out in the Commission's legislative proposal on the EU budget for 2021-2027.
8. **regrets** that the European Commission is proposing to reduce the Connecting Europe Facility despite the need to improve the accessibility and connectivity of Baltic Sea regions and the EU as a whole.

## For a more resilient EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

### ► For a reinforcement of the multi-level governance of the EUSBSR

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission:

9. **reaffirms** its support for the main goals of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: Save the Sea, Increase Connectivity and Prosperity of the Baltic Sea Region.
10. **stresses** the need for a stronger implementation of multi-level governance within the EUSBSR concerning the regional level.
11. **calls on** the European Commission to involve regions in the upcoming revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan, which should be based on sound territorial needs analysis. This will enhance the ownership of the strategy at local and regional level.
12. **stresses** the importance of a better embodiment of the EUSBSR in EU policies for the post-2020 period to improve the effectiveness and impact of the Strategy.
13. **recognises** the synergies between the EUSBSR and other macro-regional strategies, sea basin strategies and emerging strategies. The exchange of experiences, best practise and knowledge enable a more integrated and coherent European Union.
14. **reaffirms** the messages included in the BSC policy position [Connecting the Baltic with the Arctic](#) to further bridge the EUSBSR and the EU Integrated Policy for the Arctic.
15. **underlines** the need to maintain cooperation and dialogue with non-EU countries under the umbrella of the EUSBSR

### ► For stronger synergies between the EUSBSR and Cohesion Policy

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission:

16. **is concerned** about the rationalisation exercise carried out by the European Commission of the current European Territorial programmes and **underlines** the need for maintaining Baltic Sea Cooperation Interreg programmes, including maritime cross-border cooperation programmes as they respond to functional areas and territorial needs.

17. **recognises** the success of Baltic Sea maritime cross-border cooperation programmes which have enabled the needs of the regions to be met and have ensured the high level of participation of local and regional stakeholders as applicants and beneficiaries, hence following the subsidiarity principle in both governance and implementation.
18. **calls on** the European Commission to involve regional and local authorities in discussions on the future governance of ETC and on possible changes in the architecture of ETC programmes in the Baltic Sea Region.
19. **urges** the European Commission to further support the existing ERDF Managing Authorities' networks and to continue exploring opportunities for innovative forms of transnational cooperation, together with regions.

### **For a reinforcement of connectivity & accessibility in the Baltic Sea Region**

#### The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission:

20. **calls for** the extension of the Scandinavian-Mediterranean corridor and an extension of the North Sea-Baltic corridor along the Gulf of Bothnia in Northern Finland and Northern Sweden. It also supports the extension of the Scandinavian-Mediterranean corridor to include Oslo-Stockholm. It also supports the development of Via Carpathia - a trans-European corridor connecting the Baltic States and Greece, thus providing a link between the Baltic Sea Region and the south of the continent. The BSC also calls for measures to better connect comprehensive networks, and territories outside the Core Network Corridors to the Core Network Corridor hubs.
21. **strongly supports** the ambition of Policy Area Transport of the EUSBSR to facilitate sustainable and efficient transport systems in the Baltic Sea Region. It is important that the EUSBSR framework connects to EU Transport Policy as well as focusing on third country connections and clean transport.
22. **fully commits** to working in close cooperation with the transport project platform 'Access to clean, efficient and multimodal transport corridors in the Baltic Sea Region' of the Interreg BSR programme and to actively contribute with its knowledge, capacities and network.
23. **considers** that improving accessibility by air is a priority for citizens and companies in the Baltic Sea Region, and therefore welcomes the developing mobilisation of the CPMR in the field of aviation.

### **For increased prosperity in the Region by fostering interregional cooperation in the field of Smart Specialisation Strategies**

#### The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission:

24. **recognises** that Smart Specialisation Strategies have been a successful bottom-up methodology for local and regional development by exploiting each region's specific place-based strengths and potential.
25. **welcomes** the European Commission's ambition to develop this concept further for 2021-2027, as mentioned in the EU budget proposal, and **calls for** the national level to support the stimulation of innovation-based growth in the regions with adequate means.
26. **welcomes** a cross-policy approach of place-based innovation and smart specialisation.
27. **fully commits** to the establishment of a Baltic Sea Region Smart Specialisation Platform and to actively contribute with its knowledge, capacities and network to develop an innovation ecosystem for the Baltic Sea Region.

## For a stronger maritime dimension in EU policies

### The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission:

28. **recognises** the need for high quality professional skills and conditions for education and training in the maritime sector and to further develop the attractiveness of maritime careers among young Europeans.
29. **stresses** the important potential of maritime industries and marine energies in the Baltic Sea Region as highlighted in the Baltic Blue Growth Agenda. The region needs more investments in environmental technologies, shipping and ports.
30. **calls for** EU legislations such as the Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning to be implemented in full cooperation with the regions, and for this, to give full consideration to the issue of land-sea interaction.
31. **asks** for the EMFF to be maintained as a specific fund to support the Common Fisheries Policy as a priority, and to support the Integrated Maritime Policy. Regions should play a stronger role in the implementation of the fund.

### THE CPMR BALTIC SEA COMMISSION

**WHO WE ARE:** The [CPMR Baltic Sea Commission](#) is the united voice of the Regions of the Baltic Sea. Founded in 1996, we are a platform for policy-oriented cooperation with 18 Members from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Poland, and Sweden. The Baltic Sea Commission is one of the six Geographical Commissions that are part of the umbrella organisation, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions ([CPMR](#)) made up of 160 Regions from across Europe and beyond. The Baltic Sea Commission benefits from cooperation with other CPMR Geographical Commissions on common issues.

**WHERE WE ARE:** Based in Brussels, the Secretariat of the Baltic Sea Commission has a strategic location that offers the biggest added-value to liaise with the EU institutions and key stakeholders. The Secretariat also has a strong presence in the Baltic Sea Region which enables contact to be maintained with relevant organisations in the Baltic Sea Region.