Dear Members, colleagues, and friends,

I would like to deeply thank you for your commitment and close cooperation over the past year, which maintained the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission as an active and influential network at the forefront of the European agenda.

I wish you warm and happy holidays with your loved ones and a healthy and successful new year.

I am looking forward to pursuing our activities in 2022.

All the best,

Mr Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

The December Newsflash includes news about:

- CPMR/BSC Energy-Climate Working Group discussion on offshore wind energy in the Baltic Sea Region
- CPMR/BSC Maritime Working Group discussion on Small-scale Fisheries, and also the new HELCOM Action Plan
- News about meeting of the CPMR BSC Executive Committee in Stockholm
- CBSS Expert Group for Sustainable Development celebrates its 25th anniversary
- A calendar of future CPMR and BSC events

Do you wonder what’s at stake when it comes to Cohesion Policy? Mr Francesco Molica, CPMR Director for Regional Policy, tells us everything in our latest video interview. He raises key issues such as the delays in the programming period, the fragmentation of EU funds and the preparation of the post-2027 period...and much, much more! Watch it to find out [HERE](#).
In December 2021, the European Commission published its proposal for a TEN-T regulation.

SAVE THE DATES:

25 January 2022 (online): CPMR Transport Working Group dedicated to discussing the CPMR’s first reaction to the TEN-T regulation proposal.

1 February 2022 (online): Joint seminar CPMR North Sea and Baltic Sea Commissions Transport Working Groups to discuss how the TEN-T can contribute to sustainable and economic growth in northern Europe, in the presence of representatives of the EU institutions. A BSC Policy Position to react to the European Commission’s proposal on TEN-T will be developed in January with the input of Member Regions and presented at the event on 1 February.

Registration here. More information to follow.

BSC ENERGY AND CLIMATE WORKING GROUP: OFFSHORE WIND

On 8 December, the BSC Energy and Climate Working Group met online to discuss, together with a representative of the European Commission, the EU approach to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future in the Baltic Sea Region. Chaired by Mr Markku Markkula (Helsinki-Uusimaa) and Mr Pontus Lindberg (Region Skåne), the meeting was an opportunity to point out the substantial potential of offshore wind in the Baltic Sea. Representatives of Baltic Wind and the company Örsted, and also BSC Member Regions, including Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Helsinki-Uusimaa, Ostrobothnia and Estonia shared their plans regarding offshore wind.

All the presentations can be found here.
Chaired by Ms Tiina Perho (SouthWest Finland) and Mr Harry Bouveng (Region Stockholm), the BSC Maritime Working Group gathered on 16 December to discuss the topic of Small-scale Fisheries in the Baltic Sea Region.

In light of the importance of fishing for the identity of coastal and archipelago communities, and also for jobs, entrepreneurship and the tourism industry in the often small local communities, Mr Gustav Hemming (Region Stockholm) and Mr Jan Lahenkorva (Gävleborg) presented to the Working Group the Swedish Network on “Sustainable and locally based commercial fishing with faith in the future”, gathering 11 Regions.

Among key messages, the network calls for:

- Taking a clear stand for small-scale coastal fishing and lake fishing to be preserved and developed.
- Adapting rules and administration with greater proportionality, so that small-scale commercial fishing can survive.
- Paying special attention to and remove obstacles to generational shifts and new recruitment to the profession.
- Reinforcing cooperation across national borders regarding small-scale commercial fishing.

The messages were positively received by Members of the Group. The BSC Maritime Working Group but also CPMR can play an important role to further promote these messages to EU decision-makers.

The European Parliament’s Committee on Fisheries is currently preparing an initiative report on the topic of the small-scale fisheries situation in the EU and future perspectives.

During the second part of the meeting, Mr Rüdiger Strempel, Executive Secretary of HELCOM presented the new HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, adopted by the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2021 that was held in Lübeck, Germany, on 20 October 2021.

Despite significant progress in the past decades, the Baltic Sea remains heavily polluted and affected by human pressures. Addressing biodiversity, eutrophication, hazardous substances, and sea-based activities such as shipping and fisheries, the updated HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan contains about 200 concrete actions for achieving good environmental status of the sea, ultimately leading to a Baltic Sea in a healthy state.

Arctic related issues

On 10-11 November in Brussels, the President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Mr Jari Nahkanen participated in the EU Arctic Forum and Arctic Indigenous Peoples’ Dialogue, which was co-organised by the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The highlight of the event was the presentation of the new EU Arctic Policy, by Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius, EU Commissioner for Environment and EU High Representative Mr Josep Borrell. The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders that had the opportunity to comment on the new EU Arctic Policy that was overall welcomed by participants.

At the conference, Mr Jari Nahkanen stressed the importance of including the regional level in the implementation of the EU Arctic Policy, and asked Ms Charlina Vitcheva, Director General for DG MARE (European Commission), about the potential of Smart Specialisation Strategies in further supporting the sustainable economic development in the Arctic. The two-day conference also focused on inclusion, research, sustainable development, and the green transition in the Arctic. In closing the EU Arctic Forum, Mr Michael Mann, EU Special Envoy for Arctic matters stressed “We want more Arctic in the EU, and we want more EU in the Arctic”.

On 16-17 November, Mr Jari Nahkanen, together with representatives of the CPMR, attended the Arctic Spirit Conference in Rovaniemi in Finland. The conference discussed current and future developments in the Arctic with a focus on European Arctic regions. The themes included the international public launch of the Finnish Presidency of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Arctic security and regional cooperation with a focus on Barents, Finland and the European Union in the Arctic.

CPMR representatives discussed with Mr Raphël Goulet, Head of Unit at DG MARE, about the role of local and regional authorities in delivering the new EU Arctic Policy.

In the photo: John Kostet, Senior Advisor at North Sweden EU Office, Raphaël Goulet, Head of Unit, DG MARE (European Commission), Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Nicolas Brookes, CPMR Executive Director, Lucille Ehrhart, BSC Executive Secretary
On 18 November 2021, Ms Lucille Ehrhart, Executive Secretary of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission met in Lahti with representatives of Päijät-Häme Regional Council, including Ms Riitta Nieminen, Development Director, Ms Niina Pautola-Mol, Regional Mayor, Mr Pekka Komu, Chairperson of the Regional Council, Ms Mari Kuparinen, Director for International Affairs and Mr Harri Kuusela, Project Manager.

Discussion covered Interreg Europe Next2Met project in which Päijät-Häme is lead partner and CPMR a partner, as well as the revision of Päijät-Häme’s Smart Specialisation Strategy, with a new focus on sports, food & beverages, manufacturing and sustainable design as a cross-cutting theme.

The meeting was an opportunity to discuss EU policy priorities for the Region linked to CPMR/BSC EU lobbying support, as well as the actions of the Region to foster a green transition and promote sustainability in all aspects of regional policies. Lahti as European Green Capital 2021 was presented (see here).

Watch a video of Päijät-Häme here: https://youtu.be/4lqDDvxPH1k

In November 2021, CPMR BSC President Mr Jari Nahkanen exchanged with CPMR Secretary General Ms Eleni Marianou about key issues at stake for Member Regions of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission linked to the EU agenda, and the role of the CPMR to support lobbying and cooperation activities, from transport, energy-climate, Cohesion Policy to Arctic issues.

Discussion also focused on the CPMR’s current activities, such as the participation of the CPMR in the Interregional Innovation Investment instrument (I3) Expert Group. The Commission has recently launched the first Call for Projects for the new I3, worth €145 million and will cover the years 2021 and 2022.

More information here.
On 9 November, Members of the Executive Committee of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission gathered in Stockholm for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. At the invitation of Region Stockholm and Mr Gustav Hemming Regional Chair for Growth, Regional Planning and the Archipelago of Region Stockholm, the meeting took place at the Baltic Sea Science Center in Skansen.

The day started with a guided tour of the Baltic Sea Science Center, where Member Regions could see the aquariums, and discover underwater environments from the coastal archipelago to the open sea. The exhibition also highlighted the three main environmental challenges faced by the Baltic Sea: eutrophication, environmental toxins and overfishing.

During the meeting, the Chairs of the BSC thematic Working Groups provided an update on activities and Mr Martin Tollèn, Vice-Chair of the Regional Development Committee of Östergötland, which is a new CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Member, presented the Region’s priorities regarding EU policies and linked to the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission lobbying work.

During the meeting, a session was dedicated to the Baltic Sea challenges for sustainability on land and sea. In a first presentation, Mr Konrad Stralka presented the work of Baltic Waters 2030, focusing on political advocacy and dissemination of information for a healthy and vibrant Baltic Sea. In a second presentation, Ms Charlotta Solerud presented the activities of ports of Stockholm in terms of onshore power supply, which is an important tool for reducing the environmental impacts of shipping at berth. In a third presentation, Mr Håkan Hägström from the County Administrative Board of Stockholm presented the Interreg BSR project “Retrout” which promotes sustainable fishing tourism in the Baltic Sea Region and should help to improve the ecological status of the Baltic Sea rivers.

The Executive Committee Members welcomed representatives from the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) to discuss avenues of further cooperation with the CPMR BSC. Mr Grzegorz Marek Poznanski, Director General of CBSS Secretariat presented the 3 long-term priorities of CBSS, (Regional Identity, Sustainable & Prosperous Region, and Safe & Secure Region), the work to localise SDGs, but also the priorities of the Norwegian Presidency and Vilnius II Declaration, recently adopted by CBSS Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives. Ms Daria Akhutina, CBSS Senior Advisor, presented the Expert Group for Sustainable Development, in which the CPMR BSC is an observer.
CPMR BSC cooperation with other pan-Baltic organisations

Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS)

On 24 November in Stockholm, the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission was invited to the 25th anniversary of the Expert Group for Sustainable Development (EGSD) of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Chaired by a representative of the Norwegian Presidency of CBSS, Senior Official, Olav Berstad, the meeting gathered representatives of CBSS Member States and pan-Baltic organisations to strengthen collaboration to promote the green transition and industrial symbiosis of the Baltic Sea Region.

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission has been an Observer of CBSS EGSD for several years, to facilitate multi-level cooperation with CBSS Member States on questions related to sustainable development, including topics such as climate change, sustainable urban and rural development etc. The current Norwegian Presidency of CBSS EGSD builds on continuity with the Lithuanian Presidency on the topic of a green transition for a sustainable and prosperous Baltic Sea Region. The focus is in particular on the importance to accelerate cooperation on the green transition and the goal of creating sustainable and resilient cities and communities, with an emphasis on innovation and best practice in industry, sustainable transport, clean energy and the circular economy.

A strong wish of the Norwegian Presidency is to strengthen cooperation between the national, local and regional levels in the framework of the CBSS EGSD. Therefore, at the meeting, CPMR BSC Executive Secretary, Ms Lucille Ehrhart, was invited to present the work and contribution of CPMR BSC Member Regions regarding sustainable development. As coastal and peripheral regions, CPMR BSC Member Regions have a long-standing commitment to foster sustainable development.

Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) Board Meeting

On 1 December, the CPMR BSC Executive Secretary was invited to present an update about recent BSC activities to the BSSSC Board meeting, held in Brussels in hybrid format. It was the occasion to thank, on behalf of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, the current Chairman of BSSSC, Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship Mr Mieczysław Struk, who will end his mandate in 2021. The new BSSSC Chairmanship as from 2022 will be taken by Zachodniopomorskie.

Short update about the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

The 2022 Annual Forum of the EUSBSR will be organised in Lappeenranta in Finland (South Karelia). The Interreg BSR project “Let’s communicate” will be extended until September 2022. In 2022, an Interreg BSR call will be launched to support the establishment of a new Baltic Sea Strategy Point, providing administrative and technical support for EUSBSR management, development and communication.
“In Glasgow, during COP26, I was glad to share the concrete action that CPMR Members are delivering on the ground for a resilient and climate neutral future. If we are to achieve our climate ambition, the key role of regions must be recognised” said Mr Richard Sjölund, CPMR Vice-President for Climate and Energy, Member of the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia (Finland).

CPMR Member Regions are actively contributing to the Paris Agreement goals with their mitigation and adaptation strategies as evidenced by “Regions Act!”, an initiative launched by the CPMR showing its Members’ climate ambition and action.

If CPMR welcomes the recognition of the important role of regional governments in delivering the Paris Agreement in point 88 and the urgent need for multi-level and cooperative action in the preamble of the Glasgow Climate Pact. However, it stresses that a concrete involvement of regions is needed to deliver a resilient and climate neutral future.
### BSC/CPMR UPCOMING EVENTS

#### SPRING 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 JANUARY 2021</td>
<td>CPMR Transport meeting, online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 February 2021</td>
<td>Joint NSC/BSC Transport seminar on TEN-T (online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 March 2021</td>
<td>BSC Executive Committee meeting (hybrid, Brussels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 March 2021</td>
<td>CPMR Political Bureau, Catalunya,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CPMR BSC SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission...

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- [https://cpmr-baltic.org](https://cpmr-baltic.org) (website)

### Merry Christmas from the Secretariat of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Lucille Ehrhart, BSC Executive Secretary
(Lucille.ehrhart@crpm.org)

Clare Booth, BSC Policy Assistant
(clare.booth@crpm.org)

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The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) represents more than 150 regional authorities from 24 countries across Europe and beyond. Organised in Geographical Commissions, the CPMR works to ensure that a balanced territorial development is at the heart of the European Union and its policies. One of these Commissions is the Baltic Sea Commission, made up of 19 Regions from Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Germany.