Inside this newsflash

- Discover an interview with Tanja Joona, Member of the Board of the Regional Council of Lapland and Mika Riipi, Regional Mayor of the Regional Council of Lapland.
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Dear Member Regions and Partners,

In this Newsflash, you will get an update on recent activities of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, related to its key areas of work, namely transport, maritime affairs, energy and climate, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, and Arctic issues.

We thank Member Regions and partners for their active participation in the work and wish you a resting Summer!

Lucille Ehrhart, Executive Secretary
Clare Booth, Policy Assistant
Guglielmo Migliori, Policy Officer
On 21 April 2023, members of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission’s Working Groups met to discuss policy priorities and lobbying activities for the period 2023-2024. The virtual event gathered about 30 representatives from the 20 BSC Regions as well as officers from the CPMR General Secretariat who presented an update on the latest EU policy developments linked to energy, transport, and maritime affairs.

**BSC Transport Working Group**

The new Chair of the BSC Transport Working Group, Mr Magnus Lagergren (Region Örebro), highlighted the key topics identified together with the Vice-Chairs, Mr Jan Owe-Larsson (Region Östergötland) and Mr Pekka Komu (Region Päijät-Häme). Mr Lukas Andreasson, EU Policy Officer and supporting officer to Mr Jan Owe-Larsson, also informed participants about an upcoming BSC Transport Working Group meeting co-organised with Helsinki-Uusimaa and Scandria Alliance in Helsinki on 6 and 7 November 2023.

**BSC Maritime Working Group**

The new Chair of the BSC Maritime Working Group, Ms Sari Nurro (Region Oulu), illustrated the key topics identified together with the Vice-Chair, Mr Harry Bouveng (Region Stockholm). The upcoming activities of the BSC Maritime Working Group also include a physical meeting on 1-2 November in Stockholm, aimed at discussing sustainable coastal tourism and workforce.

**BSC Arctic Task Force**

Finally, the newly elected Chair of the BSC Arctic Task Force, Mr Jari Nakhanen (Region Oulu), illustrated the priorities and actions envisioned in the Action Plan. The meeting was concluded by remarks from BSC President Mr Tomas Mörtsell (Region Västerbotten), who praised the quality of the Draft Action Plans produced by the Working Groups and underlined the importance of cooperation across policy areas. All four Draft Action Plans 2023-2024 were presented at the BSC Executive Committee on 24-25 May in Rostock, hosted by Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and submitted for approval to the BSC General Assembly that will be held between Umeå and Vaasa on 19-20 September 2023.

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**BSC Working Groups identify their priorities of work for 2023-2024**

Chair of the BSC Energy and Climate Working Group, Mr Markku Markkula (Helsinki-Uusimaa Region), presented the priority areas identified together with Vice-Chair Mr Pontus Lindberg (Region Skåne) for 2023-2024.

Ms Britt Karlsson Green, supporting officer to Vice-Chair Mr Pontus Lindberg (Region Skåne), also informed participants about an upcoming session (‘Securing energy supply and promoting clean energy transition in the BSR’) that will take place during the BSC General Assembly in Umeå and Vaasa on 19 and 20 September 2023.

Discover the new CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Action Plans for 2023-2024

- **Maritime Working Group**: [HERE](#)
- **Energy and Climate Working Group**: [HERE](#)
- **Transport Working Group**: [HERE](#)
- **Arctic Task Force**: [HERE](#)
Mr Magnus Lagergren, Chair of the BSC Transport Working Group highlighted that Örebro Region was working for both a faster rail connection between Oslo and Stockholm as well as better connections to northern Sweden along the Bothnian Corridor and to the south towards the port of Gothenburg and central Europe.

Ms Katja Koskinen from Oulu City stressed that the ongoing green industrialisation in the north of Europe creates an increasing demand for well-functioning infrastructure, logistics and public transport services. She showcased the ongoing initiatives and challenges to reinforce cross-border mobility of the Bothnian Arc region, between Finland and Sweden.

Mr Kaarel Kose from the Union of Harju County Municipalities presented the vision towards a borderless transport flow between Tallinn and Helsinki. He also updated participants on the Rail Baltica project aiming at a unified Baltic States via a single railway infrastructure and also restoring the missing link between the Baltics and the rest of Europe.

All the presentations shown during the meeting are available here.

On 14 June, the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Working Groups on maritime, transport and energy & climate had a joint online meeting to discuss from a regional perspective how to promote better sustainable logistics chains in the Baltic Sea Region and improve cross-border mobility of people and goods.

The meeting was opened by Mr Markku Markkula, Chair of the BSC Energy & Climate Working Group (Helsinki-Uusimaa Region) who stressed the importance of a well-connected Baltic Sea Region, and the current bottlenecks. Mr Lucas Bosser, CPMR Director for Transport, highlighted the work of the CPMR and its regions in the revision of the TEN-T regulation, that indeed aimed to reinforce territorial accessibility in the Baltic Sea Region. See the CPMR note here.

Mr Jorgen Bjerre (Deputy Head of Unit, Ports and Inland Navigation, DG MOVE, European Commission), presented the EU policy framework to promote sustainable mobility, and especially the role of ports.

He recalled the EU Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy from 2020 and the goal set of zero emissions for ports. He highlighted the multiple roles of ports in improving the sustainability of the transport sector. He also presented the new maritime dimension of the TEN-T regulation, currently being revised by the EU decision-makers. He pointed out the different EU funding possibilities for ports in the current programmes: CEF, Interreg, RRF, Horizon Europe etc.

Ms Sari Nurro, Chair of the BSC Maritime Working Group highlighted the role of ports in the decarbonisation of the transport sector and the challenges related to it. Representatives from the ports of Gävle (Sweden) and Raahe (Finland) presented to participants how these ports are enablers for a green transition.
On 31 May, the CPMR launched its new Energy Working Group. Hosted by the Representation of the Basque Country to the EU, regional representatives gathered in Brussels to discuss energy-related work plans and priorities. If you are interested to join the CPMR Energy Working Group, please contact the BSC Secretariat.

Read HERE the CPMR note on the ‘Fit for 55’ package.

On 9 March, the CPMR Transport Working Group held a seminar session on “the Role of Maritime Ports at the crossroads of energy transition” during the CPMR Political Bureau hosted by Region Murcia, Spain. Read the main outcome here.

Read HERE the CPMR note on the TEN-T Regulation.

On 10 May, the CPMR CORE Group on the future of Cohesion Policy met at the Delegation of Brittany to the EU to discuss the CPMR proposals to simplify EU Cohesion Policy and develop a Position Paper on the future of Interreg.

Read HERE the CPMR Position Paper on simplification, adopted by the Political Bureau in March 2023.

CPMR Secretariat is currently exploring the blue dimension of regional Smart Specialisation Strategies and their alignment with the objectives of the EU Mission restore our ocean, seas and waters by 2030, through its involvement in the project PREP4BLUE. The analysis of the S3 will support the development of recommendations on the use of funding mechanisms, including the ERDF I3 instrument, to boost the development of future demonstration projects and interregional partnerships, to achieve the Mission objectives on the preservation and restoration of marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity. To contribute, fill in the questionnaire via this link.

Read HERE the latest CPMR Technical Note on the Common Fishery Policy.
BSC Executive Committee | May

On 24-25 May, the Executive Committee met in Rostock (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) to discuss the contribution of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission to current EU policy developments of interest for Baltic Sea Regions. The new BSC Work Plan for 2023-2024, as well as the new Action Plans of the Working Groups were also discussed.

Chaired by President Tomas Mörtsell (Västerbotten), the meeting was opened by Minister for Science, Culture, Federal and European Affairs Bettina Martin (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), who provided an overview of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern’s strategy for cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.

During the meeting, Ms Marta Slezak-Warszycka from the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat) presented the state of play in the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme for the period 2021-2027. She stressed the programme is already well advanced, as well as that the next call for projects is likely to be launched in Spring 2024. Presentation available here.

Read the full article HERE.

CPMR Political Bureau | June

On 8-9 June, CPMR regional politicians gathered in Florence for the summer meeting of the CPMR Political Bureau, hosted by Tuscany Region (Italy).

One year ahead of the European elections, regional leaders reflected on their contributions to bring back prosperity to the continent in a context of recovery, and on how to put Regions at the heart of a sustainable and resilient future of Europe.

Learn more about the meeting HERE.
CBSS Baltic Offshore Wind Forum

Held on 9 May, the Baltic Offshore Wind Forum in Berlin gathered national representatives to discuss the deployment of renewable energies in the Baltic Sea Region. The event resulted in the adoption of the Berlin Declaration, addressing Russian energy dependence, emphasising renewables for security and job growth, and exploring cross-border energy systems.

The Kiruna Declaration

On 28 April, during a meeting of the Committee of the Regions in Kiruna (Norrbotten), local and regional EU leaders released the Kiruna Declaration, emphasising the need to consider remote areas in the EU budget. Remote regions, including the Arctic, face unique challenges and opportunities. The Declaration calls for cooperation and Cohesion Policy reforms to unlock the region’s potential for the green transition.

BSC endorses new VASAB vision for 2040

During the 9th VASAB Ministerial Conference in Wismar on 2 June, Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region and pan-Baltic organisations, endorsed the VASAB Vision 2040 for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea Region. During the event, BSC President Tomas Mörtsell (Västerbotten) welcomed the vision and highlighted the need to improve cross-border connections for a well-connected Baltic Sea Region. Read more HERE.

BSC Secretariat meets BSSSC Youth

On 26 April, The Baltic Sea Commission hosted a study visit in Brussels for youth representatives from the BSSSC Board. Discussions focused on the future of the Baltic Sea Region, energy transition challenges, and the role of youth in promoting sustainability. The BSSSC Youth Forum emphasised the need for youth involvement in decision-making through their CBSS Youth Declaration.
Register for the 2023 EUSBSR Annual Forum

The 2023 Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) will take place on 4-5 October in Riga, Latvia. The event will bring together the EUSBSR community to address safety and sustainability in the Baltic Sea Region. On 4 October, the BSC is co-organising with Västerbotten and Southwest Finland regions, and Policy Area Innovation, a workshop on macro-regional approach to the new Regional Innovation Valley concept.

Registration for the workshop: [Registration (zef.fi)]

Draft programme of the EUSBSR Annual Forum: [https://www.eusbsr.eu/annualforum2023](https://www.eusbsr.eu/annualforum2023)

Welcome to new CPMR/BSC Policy Officer Guglielmo Migliori

Mr Guglielmo Migliori has started to work since April 2023 for the CPMR and BSC Secretariats. He will work on energy and Arctic issues. Guglielmo is based in the CPMR offices at 14 Rond point Schuman in Brussels. Read more [HERE](https://www.eusbsr.eu/annualforum2023).
Invitation to the 28th General Assembly of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

19-20 September 2023
Umeå (Västerbotten) and Vaasa (Ostrobothnia)

Navigating to a sustainable, resilient and well-connected Baltic Sea Region

This year, the event will be co-hosted by Västerbotten and Ostrobothnia to showcase the strong cross-border boundaries that unite the two regions. The programme will include a journey across the Baltic Sea on the Aurora Botnia, one of the most environmentally friendly ferries in the world.

Watch the video from Ostrobothnia and Västerbotten: Two countries - one world natural heritage summer nature

Click here for more information (agenda and practical information)
SPOTLIGHT ON LAPLAND
New Member of the CPMR BSC

Ms Tanja Joona is a Senior Researcher and Member of the Board of the Regional Council of Lapland. With a background in public international law, Ms Joona holds the title of Docent and currently serves as a Senior Researcher at the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland. Her extensive knowledge and experience make her a valuable contributor to discussions on regional cooperation in an international context.

Why did the Regional Council of Lapland decide to join the CPMR and its Baltic Sea Commission?

Previously, the possibility of Lapland becoming a member of CPMR and is Baltic Sea Commission had been mentioned but was not deemed relevant at the time. However, given the significant global changes over the past year, it was crucial to reassess our membership options.

Finland, and particularly Lapland, recognise the importance of actively participating in European and Western cooperation in all possible ways. We are confident that this collaboration will unlock numerous new opportunities across various fields.

What are the key strengths the Regional Council of Lapland will bring to the cooperation?

The Regional Council of Lapland offers a comprehensive perspective on the development of Lapland and the Arctic region. We possess valuable expertise and have the potential for extensive cooperation with educational institutions and companies within our region.

This knowledge-based foundation ensures that our collaboration with the CPMR is enriched, empowering the voices of local residents who contribute significantly to the area’s progress.

What is your vision for the results of the cooperation in five years?

In the coming years, our foremost aspiration is for the voices of Lapland and the Arctic region to resonate even more powerfully in the decision-making processes that shape our future.

Through our partnership in the CPMR and its Baltic Sea Commission, we can amplify our advocacy on matters of great significance to us. Historically, as a small country, Finland has faced challenges in asserting its position. As interest in the Arctic and Northern Regions grows – particularly regarding the green transition and the utilisation of natural resources – it becomes imperative for our message to be heard and understood.
LAPLAND’S STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO THE CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND GREEN TRANSITION

Mr Mika Riipi, the County Governor at the Regional Council of Lapland, plays a vital role in shaping regional policies and initiatives. His experience in governance and his dedication to sustainable development make him a key figure in driving the green transition and international cooperation agenda in Lapland.

Lapland has always been an international region, thanks to its central location in North-Calotte and extensive borders with Sweden, Norway, and Russia. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, all collaboration with Russia came to a halt.

Additionally, the entire geopolitical situation underwent a transformation. With Finland’s NATO membership and the increasing importance of the northern regions of Sweden, Finland, and Norway in terms of European security and the green transition, Lapland’s role has gained prominence not only from a military perspective but also in the context of ensuring the continuity of vital supplies.

Lapland has a long history of cooperation within North-Calotte and the Arctic, and in recent years, we have actively engaged in thematic collaborations with different regions within the European Union. Given the new geopolitical reality, we have thoroughly evaluated our strategy.

In this evolving landscape, we recognise the pivotal role of strong alliances such as the Baltic Sea Commission and the CPMR. Our focus lies particularly in the fields of transportation, logistics, cohesion, and Arctic policy, where we believe that united efforts can yield greater strength and impact.

With Lapland’s membership in the CPMR, the region’s commitment to the green transition aligns seamlessly with the CPMR’s green vision and emphasises the importance of involving Regional Authorities in implementing sustainable practices.

Regions, including Lapland, play a pivotal role as key actors on the ground, often leading the way in delivering the green transition.

This membership offers an invaluable opportunity for Lapland to engage in cooperation with other European regions, sharing best practices and driving collective progress towards a sustainable and ecologically responsible future.
BSC & CPMR UPCOMING EVENTS

6 JULY 2023 | BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
CPMR 3rd Seminar – “Territories Matter”: Moving ahead EU investment instruments to accelerate economic, social and territorial development (more information here)

19 -20 SEPTEMBER 2023 | UMEÅ, SWEDEN & VAASA, FINLAND
28th General Assembly of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission (more information here)

29 SEPTEMBER 2023 | PALANGA, LITHUANIA
Our Baltic 2.0 Ministerial Conference

4-5 OCTOBER 2023 | RIGA, LATVIA
14th EUSBSR Annual Forum (more information here)

11 OCTOBER 2023 | TALLINN, ESTONIA
Baltic Sea Tourism Forum (more information here)

1 -2 NOVEMBER 2023 | STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
BSC Maritime Working Group
Skills supply in the coastal tourism sector

6-7 NOVEMBER 2023 | HELSINKI, FINLAND
BSC Transport Working Group
Co-organised with Scandria Alliance

15-17 NOVEMBER 2023 | SAINT MALO, FRANCE
51st General Assembly of the CPMR

22-23 MAY 2024 | KOTKA, KYMENLAAKSO
29th General Assembly of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

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CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

cpmr-baltic.org

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 20 Regions from Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Germany.

For more information on the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, please contact Lucille Ehrhart, BSC Executive Secretary (lucille.ehrhart@crpm.org)