



Work Plan of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission 2019-2021

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1. Baltic Sea Commission – The United Voice of the Baltic Sea Regions

The Baltic Sea Commission is an international, independent organisation of Regional Authorities at sub-national level in the Baltic Sea Region. The Baltic Sea Commission has a strong emphasis on territorial work, and each Member Region is represented by leading elected politicians. The Baltic Sea Commission is one of six Geographical Commissions that make up the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR). Members of the Baltic Sea Commission are also Members of the CPMR.

Vision

A united voice of the Baltic Sea Regions

Cooperation within the Baltic Sea Commission is based on Members' mutual understanding of cultural differences, sensitivity for each other's interests, trust and solidarity. Regional Authorities are at the crossroads of cooperation, able to bridge efforts at local, national, pan-Baltic, EU and international levels.

The Member Regions serve as a reference point for a broad spectrum of sectoral activities. Citizens need Regional Authorities to voice their interests and perspectives to Member States and EU institutions.

United in the Baltic Sea Commission, the Member Regions voice the interests of the Baltic Sea Region.

Mission

A platform for policy-orientated cooperation

Since its foundation in 1996, the Baltic Sea Commission is a platform for policy-oriented cooperation for its Member Regions. Politicians, officials and experts from the Member Regions work for common goals. The main focuses are strengthening territorial cohesion, enhancing the European maritime dimension and boosting the accessibility of Europe's territories.

The Baltic Sea Commission regularly partners with European institutions, Member States and other key actors of importance for the development of the Baltic Sea Region as a whole.

The Baltic Sea Commission's added value as platform for policy-oriented cooperation:

- A platform to monitor, communicate and lobby matters of importance for the Baltic Sea Region and the Member Regions within the CPMR and towards other relevant Baltic Sea organisations, EU institutions and relevant European stakeholders;
- Strengthen territorial cohesion among all Regions around the Baltic Sea and boost the accessibility of the Baltic Sea Region and the Member Regions as an integrated part of the EU;
- Connect the Member Regions by sharing best practices and knowledge, increasing strategic knowledge for the regional political level within an EU context;
- Multi-level governance support and navigation within the BSC agreed prioritised areas and support in building EU projects.

Goals

To realise its vision the Baltic Sea Commission will work to achieve the following goals:

1) Increase the number of Members Regions

- a) In 2021, the BSC shall have four new Member Regions compared to 2018;
- b) In 2021, the BSC shall have Member Regions from each EU Member State within the Baltic Sea Region;
- c) In 2021, 80% of Regions with a Baltic Sea coastline shall be members of the BSC;
- d) In 2021, all Member Regions will have at least one political representative in one of the BSC's working bodies.

2) Strengthen Member Region's input into policy discussions at European level

On yearly basis:

- a) At least 50% of the BSC Members shall provide textual input to relevant CPMR papers.
- b) At least 25% of the BSC Members shall participate in CPMR Working Groups.

3) Promote sustainable connectivity and accessibility of the Regions in the Baltic Sea Region

4) Promote a globally competitive sustainable growth in the Baltic Sea Region

5) Promote the use of fossil-free energy in the Baltic Sea Region

The first two goals are mainly related to the everyday activities of the Commission and the Secretariat. The last three points are mainly related to the Commission's Working Groups. Progress and activities should be reported at each Executive Committee meeting and in annual Activity Reports to the General Assembly related to these goals.

2. The BSC Work Plan for 2019-2021

The Baltic Sea Commission will continue to improve the organisation in order to strengthen the Commission's added value for Member Regions and create conditions for other Regions to become a Member. The Commission will continue working with the areas of improvement as agreed during the 2018 General Assembly in Oulu:

- Improve the basis for Executive Committee meetings with more focus on strategic key issues concerning the development of the Baltic Sea Region and monitoring the Commission's work regarding the agreed priority areas;
- Identify and strengthen the Commission's contribution to the EU Baltic Sea Strategy and create synergies with similar platforms that have the Baltic Sea Region as a working area;
- Develop and improve tools for cross-border cooperation and support for macro-regional EU projects, which ensure that projects are based on the needs and conditions of Member Regions;
- Develop efficient working methods and a (digital) system for the reporting of on-going processes within the BSC and CPMR continuously to Member Regions;
- Develop tools for the evaluation of the Baltic Sea Commission's Working Groups' activities, collaborations, platforms etc.

Horizontal focus areas

The Work Plan is built on the needs and interests of Regional Authorities with the aim of contributing to a well-functioning European Union, where people and businesses have the best possible conditions to live and develop. Sustainability, innovation and the territorial dimension of EU Policy is closely related to the regional mandate and is therefore included in all the work of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission.

- **Sustainability:** The Baltic Sea Commission commits to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and continues to focus on responding to climate change in alignment with the Paris Agreement. The organisation is an observer in the CBSS Expert Group on Baltic2030 and HELCOM;
- **Innovation:** The Baltic Sea Commission embraces the new interregional dimension to the post-2020 S3 agenda, which will strengthen regional efforts towards successful industrial transition, and will drive innovation performance, supported by digitalisation and technology-driven opportunities. The Baltic Sea Commission remains committed to supporting the creation of a Smart Specialisation Ecosystem in the Baltic Sea Region, in close cooperation with PA Innovation of the EUSBSR;
- **Territorial dimension:** The Baltic Sea Commission supports the on-going work to renew the Territorial Agenda in 2020 as a framework to guide EU policies with a territorial dimension. The Baltic Sea Commission is committed to strengthening the role and legitimacy of regional authorities in future EU policy developments.

Baltic Sea Regions context

EUSBSR

In light of the on-going revision of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the BSC stands ready to partner with the European institutions, National Coordinators, the Coordinators of Policy Areas and Horizontal Actions and the National Focal points to discuss the role of the Regions in the future implementation of the Strategy and to develop new approaches for cooperation where needed.

The Baltic Sea Commission is liaising with key stakeholders in the EU institutions and in the Baltic Sea Region. Political representation at relevant meetings with the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Union of Baltic Cities, CBSS and HELCOM is prioritised by the Executive Committee.

The Working Groups have listed relevant organisations, stakeholders and projects/processes that they liaise with.

3. Prioritised policy areas

The Commission has three Working Groups for implementing activities within its prioritised policy areas:

- Sustainable Transport and Accessibility;
- Sustainable Blue Growth and Maritime Affairs;
- Renewable Energy and Climate.

The Working Groups are open to elected representatives and officers from all Member Regions of the Baltic Sea Commission and meet on average twice a year. Politically, they are led by a Chair and two Vice-Chairs and supported by Advisors, who are Officers from a Member Region. The Chair and Vice-Chairs are appointed by the Executive Committee.

Working Groups can also include external experts invited by the Chair. These experts may, for example, come from non-Member Regions, institutions, companies or National and Local Authorities.

All the three Working Groups have decided that they want to strengthen the cooperation between the Working Groups and a joint meeting will be organised in November 2019.

3.1 Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

Responsible: *Transport Working Group*

Main Task: *Promote sustainable connectivity and accessibility of the Regions in the Baltic Sea Region*

The Transport Working Group has identified two main concepts on which it will focus in the years 2019-2021. They are *Sustainable transport for all* and *Connectivity and accessibility*. In both of these areas the key actions will include drafting of Policy Positions, strategic joint lobby activities and sharing of experiences.

Sustainable transport for all

- Promote the development of sustainable transport infrastructure and services that are affordable to their users and reach all users;
- Build a common understanding and support for the target of zero emissions transport in the Baltic Sea Region by 2050 focusing on clean fuel development and deployment;
- Promote sustainable multimodality by directing efforts towards a modal shift from road to railway and fluent interoperability securing the first and last mile, as well as accessibility to more remote areas;
- Support seamless smart travel chains for passengers and freight with tools such as digitalisation, automation and the concept of Mobility as a Service (MaaS).

Connectivity and accessibility

- Influence the further development of the TEN-T network and make certain that the interests of BSC Member Regions are taken into account in the on-going TEN-T policy review and that the eligibility for funding is secured for prioritised projects;
- Highlight and advocate the strategic position of the Baltic Sea Region within the EU;
- Support, where possible, sustainable transport connections to third countries, due to their importance for economic prosperity through international trade and investment;
- Identify key maritime connections over the Baltic Sea within the TEN-T network to ensure connectivity between EU countries and regions;
- Ensure accessibility to all parts of the region by supporting, creating and developing sustainable aviation and by securing that ERDF-funding for infrastructure is eligible for PSO- and SGEI-airports.

Key activities, deliverables, timeline and support to specific projects relating to the above objectives are to be decided upon by the Regions participating in the Working Group at their meetings.

During 2019-2020, the Working Group will:

- Be dedicated to close cooperation with the BSR Access- Interreg BSR Project Platform, as well as PA/HA Transport, Spatial Planning and Climate;
- Continue and enhance collaboration with the North Sea Commission Transport Working Group as well as with the BSC Working Group on Climate and Renewable Energy;
- Implement specific projects such as monitoring the impact of the Sulphur Directive in case the price of diesel oil would rise;
- Further develop direct contacts with various EU actors that are relevant to the goals of the Transport Working Group, e.g. by organising joint events;
- Encourage the staff of the Member Regions located in EU offices to engage in the work and support the foreseen lobby activities.

3.2 Sustainable Blue Growth and Maritime Affairs

Responsible: *Maritime Working Group*

Main Task: *Promote a globally competitive sustainable growth in the Baltic Sea Region*

The BSC Maritime Working Group has identified two main thematic areas which it will focus on in the years 2019-2021. They are *Maritime Industry* and *Sustainable Tourism*, and both these areas relate to supporting the implementation of the Blue Growth agenda and the localisation/regionalisation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In these two areas during 2019-2021, the Maritime Working Group has the objectives to:

Regarding Maritime Industry

- Seek to ensure a stronger focus on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in the implementation of EU strategies relating to the Blue Growth Agenda of the EU;
- Seek to influence, and better align, EU funds for the 2021-2027 programming period to better support small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Aim to support stronger cooperation between the Regions and regional stakeholders.

Regarding Sustainable Tourism

- Support the development of mechanisms that enhance the possibility for tourism stakeholders in maritime cross-border programmes in the Baltic Sea to develop project ideas and cooperation in the field of sustainable tourism;
- Aim to support stronger cooperation between the Regions and regional stakeholders in the field of sustainable tourism.

During 2019–2021, the Maritime Working Group will seek cooperation with the following actors in the Baltic Sea Region:

- HELCOM – maintain observer status for the high-level meeting;

- CBSS – attend the EGSME (Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy) as an observer;
- Seek closer cooperation with the Working Groups and Joint Programming Committees during the preparation process for the Interreg programmes;
- Seek closer cooperation with:
 - PA Tourism of the EUSBSR;
 - The Interreg BSR Platforms:
 - [The Blue Platform](#);
 - The BSR S3 Ecosystem;
 - Capacity4MSP.

The Working Group will prepare Policy Positions relating to this Work Plan. It will also organise specific stakeholder meetings relating to the objectives.

Key activities, deliverables, timescale and support for specific projects relating to the above objectives are to be decided upon by the Regions participating in the Working Group at their meetings.

3.3 Renewable Energy and Climate

Responsible: *Energy/Climate Working Group*

Main Task: *Promote the use of fossil-free energy in the Baltic Sea Region*

The BSC Energy/Climate Working Group has identified two areas which it will focus on in the years 2019-2020. They are *Energy, Low-carbon Economy and Circular Economy* and *Industry 4.0*. In both areas, the key actions are directed to enhance the role of regions in the current changes and developments. This objective is fostered by interaction between regions with the objective to gain information on on-going trends. Communication and dissemination on trends are made with the purpose of increasing the regional commitment and ownership of the issues.

Energy, Low-carbon Economy and Circular Economy

- Support the processes of large emission reduction through resource efficiency and increased production and use of renewable energy, changed consumption patterns as well as increasing the carbon uptake;
- Promote a strong dialogue and collaboration between different stakeholders, within and between regions to share experiences in terms of regional innovation policies and smart specialisation connected to Energy/Low-carbon Economy and Circular Economy. Particularly the role of the forest in mitigating climate change will be on the agenda;
- Find new and innovative solutions and processes in the field and the source of innovation lies in the granularity of local and regional solutions;

Industry 4.0

- Support learning processes concerning the opportunities and threats due to technological changes, play a supportive role for the regions in the learning processes concerning the opportunities and threats due to technological changes.

During 2019-2020 the Working Group will:

- Organise seminars, particularly the role of the forest and forestry in mitigating climate change, ecology and conflicting economic interests. These topics have been on the agenda of the Working Group participants. The Working Group will also participate in and organise specific stakeholder meetings relating to the objective of low-carbon economy;
- Communicating the findings of the LARS project where the Working Group is represented in the Project Steering Committee;
- Participate in strategic forums linked to the objectives of the group when the opportunities occur;
- Taking part in the activities organised by the CPMR Climate Task Force as well as the activities organised by the CBSS.

Key activities, deliverables, timescale and support to specific projects relating to the above objectives are to be decided upon by the Regions participating in the Working Group at their meetings.

4 Organisational Issues

Regarding a strong Secretariat operating in Brussels for the CPMR BSC, this Work Plan recalls the decisions made by the 2018 General Assembly.

- In 2019 and 2020, the Secretariat shall be jointly hosted by Region Norrbotten and Region Västerbotten;
- The Secretariat of the CPMR BSC should remain located in Brussels;
- The BSC Member Regions subscribe to the principle that a higher share of the costs of the BSC Secretariat should be covered by BSC membership fees in the future. For the mandate period 2021/2022, the aim is that the cost of BSC Secretariat staff would be covered by this revenue source. As an alternative to the respective increase in membership fees, this target may be also reached, or at least partly reached, through the adhesion of new CPMR BSC Members.

At the 2020 General Assembly, the Executive Committee should present:

- a Region or Regions to host the BSC Secretariat for the 2021/2022 mandate period;
- a corresponding draft budget which, on the basis of the expected cost for the BSC Secretariat, aims to have the BSC Secretariat staff costs covered by the BSC membership fees;
- a mandate for the recruitment of an Executive Secretary for the 2021/2022 mandate period based on an open and competitive recruitment process.



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**CPMR BALTIC SEA
COMMISSION**

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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.

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