ACTIVITY REPORT 2019-2020

(Approved by the Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly, 21 October 2020)

Table of Contents

1. Foreword from BSC President ................................................................. 2

2. BSC Statutory meetings 2019-2020 ............................................................ 3

3. BSC Member Regions .............................................................................. 6

4. State of play of BSC goals ........................................................................ 7

5. EU long term budget and Cohesion Policy .................................................... 9

6. BSC Transport and Accessibility Working Group ........................................... 14

7. BSC Maritime Working Group .................................................................... 16

8. BSC Climate and Energy Working Group ....................................................... 17

9. BSC Task Force on the revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan ........................... 18

10. BSC supports the creation of a Smart Specialisation Platform ................................ 20

11. BSC Days for Member Regions’ staff ................................................................ 21

12. BSC Secretariat ....................................................................................... 22
1. Foreword from BSC President

By Jari Nahkanen, President, Baltic Sea Commission

Dear Members,

The last year has been an intense period. Amidst the establishment of a new European Commission and the negotiations over the post-2020 EU budget, we have organised a high-level event on Transport in the presence of Catherine Trautmann European Coordinator of the North Sea – Baltic Core Network Corridor. The main theme of the meeting was how to intensify good governance and stakeholder cooperation in TEN-T policy. It was a great opportunity to make our voices heard on Transport Policy.

Throughout the year, we have also been actively engaged in the revision process of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Commission through our Task Force, whom I would like to praise for their very good work. Now, the new Action Plan of the Strategy is to be approved by the European Commission and we can be glad with the result, as there is a strong regional perspective in the new Action Plan.

This year marks also the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world and the Baltic Sea Region. The Baltic Sea Commission cancelled and postponed several meetings, including our General Assembly 2020 which should have been held in Turku in June.

Now, a few months later, we have managed to go digital. Our Working Groups have started with online meetings, and we will even have our General Assembly online.

We have managed to exchange views and make decisions even though we are digital. Being online represents an opportunity to find new ways of working. However, this new format is a challenge for inter-regional cooperation which builds to a large extent on relations. Nothing can replace direct dialogue. Therefore, I look forward to seeing you all in real life again!

Internally, our organisation has also experienced some changes, with a new Executive Secretary. Let me take this opportunity to warmly thank Åsa Bjering for all her hard work and dedication to the organisation. We wish her the very best of luck! We also welcome Lucille Ehrhart, the new Executive Secretary. I am convinced that she will continue the good work to ensure our interests are taken into account.

I wish to thank all the members and our external partner organisations and institutions for their constant efforts towards the improvement of cooperation and synergies towards sustainable development and multi-level governance in the Baltic Sea Region.

A lot has been achieved, but still efforts remain to build a prosperous Baltic Sea Region. We, at the Baltic Sea Commission, will continue to play a key role in the European Project as a whole and bring value to the Regions.

With pleasure,
Jari Nahkanen
2. BSC Statutory meetings 2019-2020

During 2019/2020, the organisation has organised the following meetings for its Member Regions:

General Assembly Meeting

- Gdansk (11 June 2019)

Executive Committee Meetings

- Brussels (1 October 2019)
- Oulu (20 January 2020)
- Online (18 May 2020)
- Online (12 June 2020)
- Online (6 October 2020)

List of BSC Executive Committee Members

**PRESIDENT**
Jari Nahkanen, Member of the Board, Council of Oulu Region

**VICE-PRESIDENTS**
First Vice-President: Annika Sandström, Member of the Regional Council, Region Stockholm

Second Vice-President: Cezary Cieslukoski, Podlaskie Regional Assembly (until June 2020)

**FULL MEMBERS**

ESTONIA: Romek Kosenkranius, Mayor, Pärnu

GERMANY: Wolf Born, Head of Unit, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

FINLAND: Talvikki Jori, Member of the Regional Board, Regional Council of Southwest Finland

SWEDEN: Tomas Mörtsell, Vice-Chair of the Regional Executive Committee, Region Västerbotten

**SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

GERMANY: Merten Barnert, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

FINLAND: Sami Virtanen, Member of the Board, Regional Council of Kymenlaakso

SWEDEN: Anders Öberg, County Council Commissioner, Region Norrbotten

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**
Åsa Bjering - until 30 June 2020
Lucille Ehrhart - from 15 August 2020
BSC 2019 General Assembly in Gdansk

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission held its 24th General Assembly on 11 June 2019 in Gdansk, which brought together representatives from its Member Regions, EU institutions as well as experts on the policy areas of concern for the BSC. More information on the event can be found here.

BSC Executive Committee on 20 January 2020 in Oulu

The Executive Committee meeting took place in presence of the Finnish Minister for European Affairs, Ms Tytti Tuppurainen. For more information, please click here.

BSC Executive Committee on 6 October, Online

The Executive Committee prepared for the BSC General Assembly.
BSC participation in CPMR activities

The Baltic Sea Commission also ensured participation in the decision-making bodies of the CPMR, participating in Political Bureau meetings and during the General Assembly in Palermo a specific meeting for the members of the Baltic Sea Commission was organised.

The Baltic Sea Commission also participated in the first ever online CPMR Political Bureau on 11 June 2020.

Members of the Baltic Sea Commission also actively contributed to the drafting of Policy Positions by the CPMR, by answering questionnaires, providing written input, and contributing during working group meetings of the Cohesion Policy meetings, the CPMR Climate Task Force meeting, the CPMR Transport Working Group Meeting and the CPMR Maritime Working Group.
3. BSC Member Regions

Region JÄMTLAND HÄRJEDALEN (SE) joined the CPMR and its Baltic Sea Commission in June 2019. The organisation now has 20 Members from four countries around the Baltic Sea Region.
4. State of play of BSC goals

The Work Plan of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission 2019-2021, states that the Baltic Sea Commission will work to achieve five goals. While the final assessment of these goals will be addressed in the 2021 BSC Activity Report, you can find in the section below, a state of play of the process to achieve the goals. It should help Member Regions to monitor to what extent the BSC work has contributed to achieving the goals set up in the Work Plan 2019-2020. The table presents an overview of the main contribution of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission to achieve the five goals since 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BSC GOALS SET UP IN THE WORK PLAN 2019-2021</th>
<th>BSC CONTRIBUTION STATE OF PLAY (October 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1: Increase the number of Members Regions</strong>&lt;br&gt;a) In 2021, the BSC shall have four new Member Regions compared to 2018;&lt;br&gt;b) In 2021, the BSC shall have Member Regions from each EU Member State within the Baltic Sea Region;&lt;br&gt;c) In 2021, 80% of Regions with a Baltic Sea coastline shall be members of the BSC;&lt;br&gt;d) In 2021, all Member Regions will have at least one political representative in one of the BSC’s working bodies.</td>
<td>a) Compared to 2018, the BSC has three new member regions (Värmland and Satakunta joined in 2018, Jämtland Härjedalen joined in 2019). However, one Member Region left the organisation in 2020, Region Podlaskie.&lt;br&gt;b) As of today, there is no Member Regions from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Denmark. However, in Lithuania and Latvia, there are no counter-part Regions. The BSC has had direct contact with the association of local authorities in Latvia and Klaipeda.&lt;br&gt;c) As of today, 15 regions with a Baltic Sea coastline are member of the BSC from a total 30 which means that 50 % of regions with a Baltic Sea coastline are members*).&lt;br&gt;d) For now, out of 20 Member Regions, 14 Regions have political representatives in one of the BSC working bodies.&lt;br&gt;*) The Baltic States are counted as one region due to a political system with no regional elected councils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2: Strengthen Member Regions’ input into policy discussions at European level on a yearly basis:</strong>&lt;br&gt;a) At least 50% of the BSC Members shall provide textual input to relevant CPMR papers.&lt;br&gt;b) At least 25% of the BSC Members shall participate in CPMR Working Groups.</td>
<td>a) More than 50% of the BSC Member Regions provide textual input to relevant CPMR papers.&lt;br&gt;b) More than 25% of the BSC Member Regions participate in CPMR Working Groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3: Promote sustainable connectivity and accessibility of the Regions in the Baltic Sea Region</strong></td>
<td>The BSC contributes to goal number 3 through its Transport Working Group. Throughout the past year, the Working Group has been implementing its Work Plan that contributes to this goal. With regard to the objective to 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</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
on-going TEN-T policy review, the Working Group organised a high-level event in Helsinki on TEN-T in the presence of experts and Catherine Trautmann, European Coordinator of the North Sea – Baltic Core Network Corridor to exchange about good governance and stakeholder cooperation in TEN-T policy. The Transport Working group also produced a comprehensive report gathering concrete examples of transport projects, where BSC regions were involved on freight, land use and transport planning, new structure for sustainable travel, infrastructure, and decarbonisation of the transport sector and alternative fuels. This work should increase the capacity of BSC Regions when it comes to the development and implementation of transport projects and overall to achieve goal number 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 4: Promote globally competitive sustainable growth in the Baltic Sea Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The BSC contributes to this goal via its Maritime Working Group. The Working Group has focused its work on maritime industry and sustainable tourism, and both these areas relate to supporting the implementation of the blue growth agenda and the sustainable development goals. The Working Group has worked on influencing the European industrial strategy, especially with a focus on maritime industries. The Working Group, together with Region Stockholm, also organised a seminar for tourism actors around the Baltic Sea to promote sustainable tourism and overall contributed to promoting sustainable growth in the Baltic Sea Region. Furthermore, the BSC has been contributing to achieve this goal through its Task Force on the revision process of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The BSC has provided valuable input to ensure the future Action Plan of the Strategy meets territorial needs, and overall contributed to promoting sustainable growth within the Baltic Sea Region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 5: Promote the use of fossil-free energy in the Baltic Sea Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The BSC contributes to this goal via its Energy and Climate Working Group. The Working Group has contributed to this goal by promoting it within the work of the CPMR Climate Task Force. The Working Group has developed a Policy Position gathering policy messages to promote fossil-free energy in the Baltic Sea Region, that was presented to the General Assembly. In accordance with its Work Plan, the Working Group has also worked on smart specialisation through the LARS project, as well as the organisation of a workshop in March 2020 together with BSC Member Regions and representatives of the European Commission to discuss the green deal agenda, Regions’ energy policies and smart specialisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. EU long-term budget and Cohesion Policy

Cohesion Policy is the main EU investment policy which aims at reinforcing economic, social and territorial cohesion in all regions. The Baltic Sea Commission does not have a specific Working Group on Cohesion Policy, instead, the Members work in direct contact with the CPMR General Secretariat and the dedicated technical working group.

CPMR actions undertaken throughout the year related to Cohesion Policy post-2020, the EU long-term budget and the EU recovery plan and EU budget.

The CPMR published several analyses, that can be found on the [CPMR website](https://www.cpmr.org).

---

**CPMR discussed the recovery plan with Commissioner Hahn ahead of the EU summit**

On 13 July 2020, a delegation of Presidents of regions from the CPMR met with the European Commissioner for Budget and Administration, Johannes Hahn, to discuss the EU Recovery Instrument and the MFF 2021-2027. The meeting was intended to highlight a number of key issues from the perspective of the regions on the future of the EU budget ahead of a crucial EU summit scheduled for 17-18 July.
The delegation was composed of: Mr Enrico Rossi (President of Tuscany Region), Mr Cees Loggen (Regional Minister of Noord-Holland), Mrs Annika Annerby Jansson (President of Region Skåne), Mr Loïg Chesnais-Girard (President of the Regional Council of Brittany), Mr Lorenz Caffier (Deputy Minister President Mecklenburg-Vorpommern).
On 4 December 2019, the Baltic Sea Commission, together with the Atlantic Arc Commission and the North Sea Commission adopted a joint statement on the future of European Territorial Cooperation after Brexit. CPMR regions have a long history of cooperation involving partners in the United Kingdom (UK) and fear the damage to their own economies, and the subsequent knock-on effects to other parts of Europe. In light of the on-going negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021–2027 and in view of the on-going preparations for the future European Territorial Cooperation programmes, the CPMR Member Regions have therefore developed a policy statement.
BSC Regions discuss the EU Recovery Plan and Multiannual Financial Framework

On 2 September 2020, Baltic Sea Member Regions, together with Erik Bergkvist, Member of the European Parliament, and the CPMR Secretariat, discussed the implications of the EU Recovery Plan for Baltic Sea Regions. The online meeting was also an opportunity to scrutinise July's agreement between the Member States on the Multiannual Financial Framework.

If BSC Regions welcome the essence of the deal reached by the European Council on the Recovery Instrument and the MFF 2021-2027, to help Europe on its path towards recovery and long-term sustainability, there are some negative aspects for regional authorities in the deal. BSC President Jari Nahkanen shared concern regarding the reduction of the budget lines for the Just Transition Fund (being cut from EUR 40bn to EUR 17.5bn, and the research and innovation programme.

Guest speaker Erik Bergkvist, Member of the European Parliament, gave participants an insight of on-going discussions in the European Parliament on the July agreement. In his opinion, some cuts proposed to the MFF are not acceptable. “We are talking about cuts to health, research programmes in a situation of global pandemic. In addition, cuts to Cohesion Policy, education and digital transformation and innovation may jeopardise the future of Europe”, stressed Erik Bergkvist. He stressed the COVID-19 outbreak has revealed how much EU countries are interdependent, therefore, there is a strong need to take common action to rebuild Europe in a sustainable, green, climate-friendly way, whilst enabling the digitalisation of Europe.

Nicolas Brookes and Francesco Molica from the CPMR Secretariat presented the CPMR analysis on the Member States agreement on the MFF and EU recovery plan produced in July to the BSC Member Regions. They stressed the risk of a weak territorial dimension in the Recovery and Resilience Facility, as regions may not be involved.

For more information, please consult the BSC background document on the MFF and Recovery Plan or read the news article.
BSC Working Groups in action

Physical working groups meetings...

ENERGY WORKING GROUP
- 3 March 2020 (Brussels)
- 8 September 2020 (online)

MARITIME WORKING GROUP
- 18 November 2019 (Brussels)
- 10 March 2020 (Stockholm)
- 14 September 2020 (online)

TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP
- 20 February 2020 (Karlstad)

...Even online, the work still continued!
6. BSC Transport and Accessibility Working Group

TEN-T Guidelines Expert Meeting and Open Forum

In October 2019 we organised a very successful TEN-T Guidelines Expert Meeting and Open Forum in Helsinki, with several high-level representatives attending. The main theme of the meeting was how to intensify good governance and stakeholder cooperation in TEN-T policy.

Catherine Trautmann, European Coordinator of the North Sea – Baltic Core Network Corridor, was very active in the discussions and gave her compliments to the work within the corridor. We also had a very productive discussion about how to achieve a more process-led development from the Flagship projects in the EU, between Malla Paajanen, Chief Adviser, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Thomas Erlandsson, EUSBSR PA Transport Coordinator.

At the Open Forum, representatives from European Commission DG MOVE were present, as well as high-level representatives from the Ministry of Transport and Communications Finland. We had a great chance to give input directly to the Commission on the impacts of TEN-T on European Cohesion Policy. Several cases from the Baltic Sea Region were presented.

The meeting was organised back-to-back with the Digital Transport Days, hosted by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, in cooperation with the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

For more information on the event, please click here.
Call for Experience Sharing of Transport Projects

The Transport Working Group of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission has produced a comprehensive report, gathering concrete examples of the transport projects but also the lessons learnt from their involvement in projects. The report is based on the consultation of 15 Members from Sweden, Finland and Poland. This sharing of experiences helps regions to strengthen their knowledge and capacity building, as well as providing evidence for political conclusions in the field of transport, sustainability and logistics to promote at European level.

Member Regions of the Transport Working Group have shared experiences in five transport areas: Freight, Land use and Transport Planning, New structure for Sustainable Travel, Infrastructure, and Decarbonisation of the Transport Sector and Alternative Fuels.

Based on the evidence they gathered, Members of the Transport Working Group also drew political conclusions. Improving multi-modal connections as well as further developing EU-wide infrastructure standards are important steps in meeting the challenges of the future for Europe’s common transport infrastructure policy. The Working Group also consider that it is crucial that EU Transport Policy focuses more clearly on priorities in peripheral areas with great potential for increased European added value.

Perspectives in the coming months

This autumn, the BSC Transport Working Group will continue to closely follow the process of developing the TEN-T. Members will also continue to learn from each other through experience sharing. On 27 October 2020, a webinar will be organised where some of the projects within the BSR Access will be presented. The objective is to bring together owners of the international cooperation projects and capitalise on the accumulated good practice in first mile interoperability solutions – and learn more on how this can contribute to the TEN-T Core Network.
The BSC Maritime Working Group has been very active during the year. The group with its Chair, Tiina Perho, has been influencing the LeaderShip2030 process and the European Industrial strategy, especially with a focus on maritime industries. The competitiveness of European maritime industries has to be ensured in global competition, and the European strategies has to take the matter seriously and into account.

Seminar on Sustainable Tourism, Stockholm

Another policy area the Working Group has worked on, is maritime tourism. The group, together with Region Stockholm, organised a seminar in March in Stockholm for tourism actors around the Baltic Sea. The timing was really good since the actors had more or less the last chance to come together before the COVID-19 pandemic really hit the area, and especially the tourism industry.

Perspectives in the coming months

In the coming months, the Working Group will focus on supporting the implementation of the EUSBSR and its updated action plan. The Working Group will continue to bring politicians and officials to the same table to tackle our common challenges. Maybe the most acute at this time is the future of tourism enduring the crisis with COVID-19.
8. BSC Climate and Energy Working Group

New Vice-Chairs of the Working Group
The capacity of the ECWG was considerably strengthened during the past year as two Vice-Chairs were appointed, 1st Vice-Chair, Pontus Lindberg, Region Skåne, Sweden, and 2nd Vice-Chair Kaarin Taipale, Helsinki-Uusimaa, Finland. The two Vice-Chairs together with civil servants from their Regions have enabled the Working Group to enlarge the scope of its activities. On 7 January 2020, the Presidency with civil servants and BSC’s Executive Secretary met for a planning meeting in Brussels. The meeting can be seen as a new, fresh start for the Working Group now focusing on climate issues and the mitigation of climate change.

Workshop on the Green Deal
On 3 March the ECWG arranged a workshop involving the regions in the BSC area. The purpose was to discuss the Green Deal but also to benchmark the climate roadmaps produced by the regions. Seven regions presented their best energy and climate policy tools. Highly interesting presentations were given by Mr Eero Ailio DG Energy speaking on Energy transition and Mr Dimitri Corpakis on the necessity for Smart Specialisation in implementing the Green Deal.

Perspectives in the coming months
Implementing the Green Deal is a huge challenge for the regions, the BSC and CPMR have an unprecedented mission to fulfill. The three Working Groups within the BSC will cooperate more closely with joint efforts to achieve the climate targets. The ECWG will more actively take part in the activities organised by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The role of the forest and forestry in the BSC countries – numerous new aspects on forestry are to be taken into account.
9. BSC Task Force on the revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission has, ever since the establishment of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), worked to strengthen the role of regions in the implementation and governance of the Strategy.

During its meeting in Bialystok on 25 September 2018, the Executive Committee decided to set up a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in order to support the revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan planned during 2019/2020. All BSC activities related to the revision process have been coordinated by the Task Force.

Alongside Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Member Regions Helsinki-Uusimaa, Norrbotten, Ostrobothnia, Päijät-Häme, Southwest Finland, Stockholm and Västerbotten with the support of Skåne and Podlaskie (which has left the CPMR in the course of 2020) worked together in the Task Force.

The objective of the Task Force was to develop a local and regional perspective for the revision of the governance and the thematic scope of the EUSBSR Action Plan.

For this purpose, the Task Force provided analytical insight and relevant arguments to the drivers of the revision process in the form of:

- a Baseline Report which provides an analysis on the involvement of these regions in the EUSBSR implementation process. It covers both aspects, the involvement in the governance structures - like working with the National EUSBSR Coordinators and the Policy Areas – and the operational involvement in the Flagship format.

- an Input Paper in which recommendations were given for a holistic approach to the process and on how to better involve regions in the coordination and operational level in the implementation process of the strategy. In addition, it described four parameters of regional involvement for consideration.

The major claims were summed up in the Policy Paper on the EUSBSR which was adopted by the BSC General Assembly in Gdańsk on 11 June 2020, back-to-back with the EUSBSR Annual Forum. All documents are available for download on the BSC website.

In addition, forces were joined with the UBC and the BSSSC, with whom a Stakeholder Seminar on the involvement of regions and municipalities in the EUSBSR was jointly organised on the same day.
On 9 September 2020, the Task Force had its final session. Together with the Chairs of the BSC Working Groups on Maritime Issues and Transport, Tiina Perho and Bosse Andersson respectively, the German Chair of the National Coordinators Group, Simon Stermann, and several EUSBSR Policy Areas Coordinators attended the online meeting. In his opening speech, the President of the Baltic Sea Commission, Jari Nahkanen, underlined the importance of the EUSBSR for the work of the BSC and thanked the members of the Task Force for their work. Bringing together 35 participants, the meeting provided the opportunity to draw conclusions from the role of regions in the revision process of the Action Plan and to develop a regional perspective for the implementation process.

The involvement of regional actors in the further implementation process of the EUSBSR was discussed by using the cases of four Policy Areas where a big interest from the regional side is given. As one result of the session, it can be stated that there is a great openness among the Policy Area Coordinators to involve (regional) stakeholders. Different approaches have been developed like the establishment of a stakeholder platform in Policy Area Bioeconomy, the more or less targeted exchange of the BSC Working Groups on Transport and Maritime Issues with the Policy Areas Transport and Tourism respectively. For Policy Area Innovation, the Coordinator expressed his readiness to admit a regional representative to the Steering Group.

Summing up, in order to have regional actors involved in the implementation process of the EUSBSR, the situation differs from one Policy Area to another. Pan-Baltic organisations like the BSC can make a difference by offering a platform for cooperation and exchange for their Member Regions. At the same time, they are an appropriate interface to work with the EUSBSR Policy Areas, either on the project or a policy level. Individual regions like Västerbotten may find a priority access though their leading role in EU-funded projects. They may also show ways for interested Member Regions to get involved.

On the same day, Wolf Born, Chair of the Task Force, presented the work of the BSC Member Regions during the CPMR Task Force meeting on Macro-regional Strategies, bringing together all CPMR Geographical Commissions. The meeting was the opportunity to exchange with representatives of the European Commission (DG REGIO) about the future development of Macro-Regional Strategies in light of the new programming period post-2020 but also to discuss the CPMR Technical Paper on the main challenges for macro-regions in post-2020 period.

After two years, with some delay, the revision process and thus the work of the Task Force have come to an end. The final draft of the Action Plan is in the process of approval by the European Commission which is expected to be closed in October 2020.
10. BSC supports the creation of a Smart Specialisation Platform

At the 2017 General Assembly, the Baltic Sea Commission Members decided that supporting the creation of a Smart Specialisation platform, with the purpose of aligning existing funding sources that will support the development of cross-regional Smart Specialisation areas in the BSR, was a priority for 2017-19. In May 2019, the Monitoring Committee of Interreg BSR approved a Project Platform - BSR S3 Ecosystem. BSR S3 Ecosystem provides a much-needed platform for creating a better understanding on the best practices and opportunities for smart specialisation in the BSR. The Interreg-funded platform will be for a two-year period and aims to build capacity for the involved Regions prior to the next programming period. The Baltic Sea Commission is an Associated Partner in the platform.

Seminar at the European Parliament

On 19 November 2019, the Baltic Sea Commission organised a seminar at the European Parliament on Smart Specialisation Strategies.

During the event, MEPS Jan Lewandowski and Mia Petra Kumpula, and Lena Pench Andersson mentioned the BSRS3 platform as an interesting project example. President Jari Nahkanen stressed the importance of maintaining Interreg maritime cross-border programmes. The European Commission’s DG REGIO emphasised regions should have a cross-border perspective when developing their S3 strategies.
11. BSC Days for Member Regions’ staff

For the first time, the BSC Secretariat organised an interactive seminar for BSC staff from the Member Regions and from the Working Groups to jointly reflect on how to enhance the impact of the CPMR and its Baltic Sea Commission. The event was a lunch-lunch session in Brussels, on 4-5 February 2020.

During the two day event, representatives from the CPMR Secretariat were also invited to provide a policy update and more detailed information of the activities the CPMR are planning.

Members of the European Parliament, Erik Bergkvist (Sweden, S&D) and Nils Torvalds (Finland, Renew Europe) attended the meeting and presented participants with information about on-going discussions in the European Parliament.
12. BSC Secretariat

According to the CPMR BSC Work Plan 2019-2021, at the General Assembly 2020 the Executive Committee should present:

- a Region or Regions to host the BSC Secretariat for the 2021/2022 mandate period.
- a mandate for the recruitment of an Executive Secretary for the 2021/2022 mandate period based on an open and competitive recruitment process.

→ The Executive Committee approved on May 2019 that Region Västerbotten takes on the role as Hosting Region July 2020 – December 2022.

→ During autumn 2019, the Executive Committee tasked the Presidium to initiate the process of recruiting a new Executive Secretary. After an open and competitive recruitment process starting in March 2020, the Executive Committee of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission appointed in June 2020 Lucille Ehrhart as new Executive Secretary of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission for the time period of June 2020 – December 2022. The Executive Committee informed in June BSC Member Regions about the recruitment process and the decision to appoint Lucille Ehrhart.

President of the CPMR BSC, Jari Nahkanen, was pleased to welcome Lucille Ehrhart to lead the BSC Secretariat: “The Executive Secretary is the backbone of the Baltic Sea Commission, ensuring the link between our Members to the EU institutions and the CPMR General Secretariat. We are happy to welcome Lucille and hope that with her experience and expertise in European affairs, she will strengthen our advocacy and lobbying actions towards the European Parliament and the European Commission”.

Lucille Ehrhart has a Masters’ Degree in Administration and Politics in European Affairs at the College of Europe. She has experiences working with Regional Authorities in Brussels. After an internship at the European Commission, she started her career as representative of the Cornwall EU Office. She then worked as a Policy Analyst at the CPMR General Secretariat, and supported the BSC Executive Secretary in arranging both the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Berlin and the BSC General Assembly in Oulu. She has a profound understanding of the thematic policy areas of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission. Since October 2018 she has worked as Parliamentary Assistant of a Member of the European Parliament enabling her to have a strong understanding of the functioning of EU institutions and knowledge of EU policies.
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.

Contact person: Lucille Ehrhart, CPMR BSC Executive Secretary
Email: lucille.ehrhart@crpm.org

Rond-Point Schuman | 1040 Brussels, BELGIUM
info@crpm.org | +32 (0)2 612 17 00
6, Rue Saint-Martin | 35700 Rennes, FRANCE (siège)
info@crpm.org | +33 (0)2 99 35 40 50