BSC.COUI220058

Dear Minister Dahlgren,

We are pleased to address this letter as Members of the Executive Committee of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, a policy driven platform of cooperation for regional authorities from Sweden, Germany, Finland and Estonia. Since 1996, we have been cooperating across borders for a more sustainable and prosperous Baltic Sea Region, on areas linked to EU policies such as transport, Cohesion Policy, maritime affairs, energy and climate, and Arctic issues.

In a few months, Sweden will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In that respect, Sweden will have a major role to play to promote recovery, resilience and the green and digital transitions of the EU. We welcome the five general political directions of Sweden’s Presidency of the Council of the EU.

As upcoming Presidency of the Council but also Chair of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region until June 2023, we believe that Sweden can have a driving role to strengthen Baltic Sea issues and cooperation on the EU agenda. Therefore, in view of these important milestones, we would like to underline that we stand as a partner of cooperation and dialogue with the upcoming Swedish Presidency of the Council. We therefore share below some key issues to consider, linked to the five general political directions that were set by Sweden.

We call on the upcoming Swedish Presidency of the Council to pay specific attention to ensure:

1. **A stable and reinforced cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region in the framework of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.** The illegal aggression of the Russian Federation to Ukraine has seriously affected the long-standing cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. In light of this situation, we reaffirm our will to maintain and reinforce close cooperation at regional and national levels across borders to build a resilient, sustainable, and prosperous Baltic Sea Region. A good Baltic Sea cooperation creates conditions for security for EU citizens and strengthens the EU’s role in the world.

2. **A better connected Baltic Sea Region.** We consider the revision of the TEN-T regulation to be of the utmost importance to reinforce territorial accessibility and connectivity in the Baltic Sea Region, while promoting a climate neutral transport system to achieve the Green Deal. Therefore, we ask you to take into consideration the messages included in “the BSC Position Paper reacting to European Commission proposal for a TEN-T regulation” and the concrete demand for changes as indicated in the Annex.
3. **A greater emphasis on Arctic issues in EU policies** to unlock the potential of the green re-industrialisation in the Arctic and to maintain the Arctic as a low tension area. We recall messages included in the “**BSC Position Paper reacting to the European Commission and EEAS joint Communication for a stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic**”, urging a successful implementation of the EU Arctic Strategy.

4. **A Baltic Sea Region leading the EU Green Deal.** Baltic Sea Regions have enormous territorial strengths related to sustainability and clean energies. The Baltic Sea Region can play a major role to help accelerate Europe’s green and energy transition, as well as to reduce the EU’s dependence on Russian fossil fuels, and critical raw materials and bio-based products. However, it is essential to have adapted EU regulations that can support further the Baltic Sea Region’s territorial strengths.

5. **A Baltic Sea Region with a healthy Sea.** We underline the importance of fostering a sustainable blue economy of the Baltic Sea Region as an opportunity for a cleaner Baltic Sea, territorial development, support to coastal communities while preserving marine ecosystems.

6. **An ambitious Cohesion Policy to strengthen territorial development in the Baltic Sea Region.** We stress the importance to keep engaging in the debate on the future of Cohesion Policy post-2028, launched under the French Presidency of the Council. The Cohesion Policy is of importance to strengthen the EU’s competitiveness for the jobs of the future. A strong territorial cohesion within the EU is also an important condition for safeguarding the EU’s fundamental values.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to a fruitful cooperation soon, in the framework of the upcoming EU Council Presidency of Sweden in 2023.

Yours sincerely,

**CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Executive Committee**

**Jari Nahkanen**, Member of the Board, Council of Oulu Region (FI), President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission  
**Tomas Mörtsell**, Vice-President, Regional Development Committee, Region Västerbotten (SE), 1st Vice-President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission  
**Romek Kosenkranius**, Mayor of Pärnu, Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities (EE), 2nd Vice-President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission  
**Wolf Born**, Ministry of Science, Culture, Federal and European Affairs, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DE)  
**Sami Virtanen**, Member of the Board, Kymenlaakso Region (FI)  
**Pontus Lindberg**, Member of the Regional Council, Region Skåne (SE)  
**Andrei Novikov**, Deputy Mayor of Tallinn, Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities (EE)  
**Merten Barnert**, Representation of the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern at the European Union, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DE)  
**Otto Meri**, Member of the Board, Region Helsinki-Uusimaa (FI)  
**Gustav Hemming**, Vice-President of Region Stockholm Executive Board, Region Stockholm (SE)

**Annex**

- **BSC Position Paper reacting to the European Commission proposal for a TEN-T regulation**
- **BSC Position Paper reacting to the European Commission and EEAS joint Communication for a stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic**