



Polish
Presidency
2015-2016

Council of the Baltic Sea States

Annual Report for the Polish Presidency 2015-2016

Sustainability Creativity Safety

Synergy in Diversity

Poland enhanced coherence and synergy among various stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region, including the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, by organising three Joint Meetings.

Poland chaired the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region National Coordinators meetings from July 2015 till June 2016 and the VASAB Committee from July 2015 till December 2016. Poland also chaired the Steering Committee of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC) until September 2015 and took over the chairmanship of the Steering Committee of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL) for the year 2016.

Poland revived the political dialogue in the region by organising meetings of Deputy Foreign Ministers, Ministers for Culture and, for the first time in history of the organisation, Ministers for Science.

Poland inspired a thorough discussion on the future of the CBSS and the Baltic Sea Region as a whole.

Poland put a lot of emphasis on making the cooperation more efficient and easily accessible to all stakeholders, also by promoting video link participation in the meetings.

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Foreword of the Polish Chair

The Polish CBSS Presidency has been confronted with difficult and challenging times for the Baltic Sea Region. There are many reasons for that. Some of them originate in the region itself. Others are of external character heavily influencing our daily lives. The Council has been put to the toughest test ever, so has Baltic Sea cooperation and the organisation's achievements thus far. The CBSS fundamental responsibilities with respect to the protection of stability and prosperity, as well as its core role as a forum for all multilateral intergovernmental cooperation and dialogue in the Baltic Sea Region need to be recalled and strongly confirmed.

In the context of changes currently taking place in the Baltic Sea Region, the importance of macro-regions in a globalised world needs to be emphasised. If we want to keep our region prosperous and stable – a role-model by global standards – we should trade, co-operate and communicate even better. Having this in mind, Poland has been trying hard to underline the potential and importance of enhanced synergy, cohesion and coordination between organisations and cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region, especially with the European Union and its Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), where Poland was the Chair of the National Coordinators. We strongly believe that increased regional synergy and cohesion could be used as a powerful confidence building measure facilitating further progress of Baltic Sea cooperation.

Hence, synergy in diversity has been the main motto of the Polish Presidency. It was our deliberate decision to combine both CBSS and EUSBSR presidencies in order to pursue this synergetic thinking. In this spirit, in January 2016, the Presidency and the Secretariat met in Brussels with representatives of European Institutions to discuss how to better co-operate in the Baltic Sea Region. In practical terms we have been pursuing regional synergy through Joint Meetings on issues of common importance, improving transparency and coordination.

Looking ahead, with the aim to better prepare the CBSS for upcoming challenges, and again focusing on synergy in diversity, we organised, on 9 March in Warsaw, the informal seminar involving the CSO members and prominent researchers knowledgeable in the Baltic Sea Region, on how best to proceed in building a “Common Space of Baltic Sea Cooperation”. It is very important to continue this process of strategic internal reflection on the future of the CBSS, should the region remain prosperous, stable and integrated. Poland encourages the incoming presidencies to carry on the debate as well as to continue efforts aimed at strengthening the holistic, objective-driven, macro-regional approach to the Baltic Sea Region. We should inspire respective government institutions, regional and local authorities, business community and interested stakeholders, to make the best possible use of all existing instruments and forms of cooperation in the spirit of enhanced synergy and cohesion.

Our special attention should be drawn to the Baltic Summits, foreign ministers' meetings and meetings of line ministers.

Against all odds, after a three-year break, Poland managed to restart the high-level political dialogue in the region by organising a meeting of the CBSS Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, on 8 June in Warsaw. Under the given circumstances, it was a remarkable achievement of the CBSS Member States. We spared no efforts in stimulating the structured dialogue of the line ministers by organising high-level meetings in such areas as culture, tourism and science (the last one for the first time in the history of the CBSS). The Declaration "Baltic 2030", adopted under the Polish Presidency, paves the way for the further sustainable development of the region.

The Warsaw Declaration adopted by the CBSS Deputy Ministers, clearly confirms that the CBSS Member States, despite all the differences and difficulties, uphold their regional commitments, have a strong feeling of responsibility for the region, and are ready to build a common future by doing things together. To this end, they agreed to develop a vision for the Baltic Sea Region beyond 2020, reflecting global challenges and opportunities currently facing us. This should be done together with all relevant regional partners in the spirit of enhanced regional synergy and cohesion. Our long-term objective should be the creation of a Common Baltic Cooperation Space free of existing hindrances and limitations.

We wish the incoming Icelandic Presidency all the best in executing its demanding duties. We very much hope that in the nearest future the cooperation climate in the region will sufficiently improve, so as to enable our Icelandic partners to organise a high-level celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the CBSS next year.

Ambassador Michał Czyż

Polish Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials



Polish Presidency Outcomes

1.

‘Warsaw Declaration – Regional Responses to Global Challenges’

2.

Conclusions of the 9th Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States

3.

Declaration: ‘Baltic 2030: Renewing the Commitment to Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region’

4.

Chair’s Conclusions: ‘Baltic Science: Renewing the Commitment to Science/Research Joint Actions in the Baltic Sea Region’



5.

Declaration adopted by the 8th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum

6.

Raising the level of coherence and synergy among the Baltic Sea Region stakeholders

7.

Launch of the Baltic Science Network and Baltic Transnational Research Access in the Macro-region

8.

Accepted Hungary as the next CBSS Observer State

9.

Renewed mandate of the Expert Group on Sustainable Development - Baltic 2030

10.

Five PSF projects awarded funding



Polish Presidency Highlights

1.

Meeting of the Deputy Foreign Ministers in Warsaw

2.

9th Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States in Gdańsk

3.

1st Meeting of the Ministers of Science in Kraków

4.

Three Joint Meetings of regional stakeholders

5.

Baltic Sea Cultural Gathering in Gdańsk

6.

Warsaw Seminar on the future of the Baltic Sea cooperation

7.

8th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum in Gdańsk and Malbork

8.

14th Meeting of the Directors General for Civil Protection in Gdańsk

9.

5th Roundtable of the Baltic Sea Region Climate Change Dialogue Platform

10.

Baltic Sea Labour Forum in Gdańsk



Meeting of the Deputy Foreign Ministers in Warsaw

The CBSS Deputy Foreign Ministers and a representative of the European Union met on 8 June 2016 at Palace Belweder in Warsaw to reflect on the challenges and opportunities in the Baltic Sea Region and to discuss the directions in which the CBSS should move in the future.

The Chair of the meeting, Ms Katarzyna Kacperczyk, Undersecretary of State in the Polish MFA, summed up the Polish CBSS Presidency. She emphasised the importance of line ministers' meetings (CBSS Culture Ministers' Meeting in September 2015 and the CBSS Science Ministers' Meeting in June 2016) and the Polish efforts aimed at increasing regional synergy and cohesion. Ms Kacperczyk noted that Poland also presided over the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region National Coordinators from July 2015 until June 2016.

During the meeting, the delegates adopted the *'Warsaw Declaration – Regional Responses to Global Challenges'*, along with the Annex relating to the CBSS activities under the Polish Presidency. The delegates also took note of the Declaration entitled *'Baltic 2030: Renewing the Commitment to Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region'*, adopted by high representatives of the CBSS government institutions responsible for sustainable development.

The session marked a changeover on the position of the Director General of the CBSS International Permanent Secretariat in Stockholm. Mr Jan Lundin completed his six-year tenure and Ambassador Maira Mora from Latvia was approved as the new Director General of the Secretariat.

During the meeting the delegates approved Hungary as the eleventh CBSS observer country. The delegates were briefed by Iceland on its priorities for the forthcoming year (Children, Equality, Democracy).

The Warsaw Meeting was attended by the following representatives:

Denmark: Mr Ulrik Vestergaard Knudsen, State Secretary

Estonia: Mr Mart Laanemäe, Undersecretary of State

Finland: Mr Peter Stenlund, State Secretary

Germany: Mr Markus Ederer, State Secretary

Iceland: Mr Stefán Haukur Jóhannesson, Permanent Secretary of State

Latvia: Mr Andrejs Pildegovičs, State Secretary

Lithuania: Mr Neris Germanas, Undersecretary of State

Norway: Mr Tore Hattrem, State Secretary

Poland: Ms Katarzyna Kacperczyk, Undersecretary of State

Russia: Mr Igor Neverov, Director of the Second European Department (Regional Director)

Sweden: Ms Annika Söder, State Secretary

EU: Mr Luc Devigne, Director of the Department for Europe and Central Asia, EEAS



9th Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States in Gdańsk

The 9th Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea Region was held in Gdańsk on 16 September 2015. It was the first high-level meeting on culture since 2008, with the Ministers discussions focusing on the role of culture in building a future vision for the Baltic Sea Region, and its effects on other fields, such as education.

The meeting was opened by the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Professor Małgorzata Omilanowska. In her welcoming words Minister Omilanowska invited the delegates to give their view on the current state of play in cultural affairs and the set-up of financial instruments and frameworks for collaboration.

The meeting included presentations on the current activities of the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage, ARS BALTICA, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) Policy Area Culture and the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture. The Ministers reflected on the positive developments in the framework of cultural cooperation in the region since 2008. Continued support was expressed for the work of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC) and the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage. EUSBSR Policy Area Culture has since its establishment in 2013 become one of the central points for cultural cooperation in the region. Run jointly by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland and the Ministry of Justice, Cultural and European Affairs of Land Schleswig-Holstein (Germany), PA Culture focuses on promoting and visualising the BSR cultural and creative industries, on preserving and showcasing its cultural heritage and on improving and facilitating cultural cooperation.

The Ministers further elaborated on the value of culture and its connection to economy and sustainable development, especially in the field of creative industries, as well as the importance of bottom-up cooperation and interdisciplinary

collaboration to boost culture and innovation in the region. It was emphasised that cultural cooperation is an excellent way to establish a regional identity, through the establishment of a strong common creative sector and the continued collaboration on the project level.

The Ministers adopted Conclusions of the 9th Conference, where they welcomed recent developments in regional cultural cooperation, including the increased involvement of the CBSS in culture and where the programme Balticlub, run in cooperation with the Swedish Institute, was highlighted.

The Heads of Delegation of the meeting were as follows:

Denmark: Mr Per Nylykke, Head of Department of International Relations, Ministry of Culture of Denmark

Estonia: Mr Tarvi Sits, Undersecretary on Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture of Estonia

Finland: Ms Hanna Lehtinen, Ambassador of Finland to the Republic of Poland

Germany: Ms Cornelia Pieper, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Gdańsk

Iceland: Ms Ásta Magnúsdóttir, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Iceland

Latvia: Ms Dace Melbārde, Minister of Culture of Latvia

Lithuania: Mr Šarūnas Birutis, Minister of Culture of Lithuania

Norway: Ms Åse Vølle, Acting Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Culture of Norway

Poland: Ms Małgorzata Omilanowska, Minister of Culture and National Heritage of Poland

Russia: Ms Olga Andoniewa, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation

Sweden: Mr Per Olsson, State Secretary to the Swedish Minister for Culture and Democracy



1st Meeting of the Ministers for Science in Kraków

The 1st Meeting of the CBSS Ministers for Science took place in Kraków, Poland, on 16 June 2016, focusing on science, innovation and research across the Baltic Sea Region.

The meeting was chaired by Ms Teresa Czerwińska, Deputy Minister at the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, who highlighted the importance of science and innovation as a cornerstone for a more sustainable and prosperous region.

The Chair's Conclusions "Baltic Science: Renewing the Commitment to Science/Research Joint Actions in the Baltic Sea Region" were presented as a result of the meeting.

The CBSS Member States appreciated that the thematic priorities and recognition of the relevant policies governing science and research nationally, and on a macro-regional level, were complemented by specific actions, namely, two Interreg-funded projects, both being flagships of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) – Baltic Transnational Research Access in the Macroregion – Baltic TRAM (EUSBSR Policy Area Innovation) and the Baltic Science Network (EUSBSR Policy Area Education, Research, Employability).

The CBSS Science Ministerial was followed by the Political Kick-Off Event of the Baltic Science Network (BSN). The event highlighted how the BSN partnership is embedded in the Baltic Sea Region cooperation structures. On the one hand, it is connected to the EUSBSR. The BSN was acknowledged as a flagship of the Policy Area Education, Research, Employability at the meeting of the EUSBSR National Coordinators on 28 June 2016 in Warsaw. Therefore, in the words of Prof. Teresa Czerwińska, BSN demonstrates the political will of the EUSBSR Member States to take ownership of the macro-regional governance.

On the other hand, the BSN brings to the fore the CBSS mandate in science and research cooperation. Since the last Chair's Conclusions adopted in Riga in 2007, the CBSS has reinstated its intention to engage more actively in



strengthening science-related cooperation. The BSN serves as one of the most recent examples on how this commitment is translated into practical steps.

During the meeting in Kraków, Mr Illugi Gunnarsson, Icelandic Minister of Education, Science and Culture, presented the priorities of the upcoming Icelandic CBSS Presidency, as well as explained the Icelandic science- and research-related topicalities.

The Heads of Delegation of the meeting were as follows:

Denmark: Mr Hans Müller Pedersen, Director General, Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation

Estonia: Dr Indrek Reimand, Deputy Secretary General of Higher Education and Research, Ministry of Education and Research

Finland: Dr Paavo-Petri Ahonen, Counsellor of Education, Ministry of Education and Culture

Germany: Dr Werner Köhler Consul-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ms Katharina Fegebank, Minister of Science, Deputy Mayor of Hamburg, Ministry of Science, Research and Equalities

Iceland: Mr Illugi Gunnarsson, Minister, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

Latvia: Ms Agrita Kiopa, Deputy State Secretary, Director of Higher Education, Science and Innovation Department

Lithuania: Dr Rolandas Zuoza, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Education and Science

Norway: Dr Eivind Heder, Director General, Ministry of Education and Research

Poland: Prof. Teresa Czerwińska, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Russia: Ms Ludmila Ogorodova, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Science

CBSS: Mr Bernd Hemingway, Deputy Director General, CBSS Secretariat (Head of the Delegation)

Three Joint Meetings of regional stakeholders

Joint Meetings convened by the Polish Presidency facilitated the process of building regional synergy, by gathering various institutions and formats active in the Baltic Sea Region on one thematic meeting.

The idea behind the Joint Meetings is based on the conviction that the Baltic Sea Region requires a holistic, objective-driven, macro-regional approach. All existing cooperation formats are equally important and necessary. Interactions between them should take place in the form of a structured and streamlined dialogue based on common priorities, goals and agendas. This approach facilitates a more effective management of the regional resources. It is necessary for the region as a whole to come up with an adequate response to the global challenges.

All three Joint Meetings were chaired by Ambassador Michał Czyż, Polish Chair of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials.

The **1st Joint Meeting** on Culture took place on 16 September 2015, back-to-back with the 9th Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea Region. The members of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials discussed culture-related issues together with the National Coordinators of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, several EUSBSR Policy/Horizontal Action Coordinators (PAs Culture, Education, Health, Innovation, Secure and HA Capacity), as well as the Polish Chair of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture. The discussions amongst the stakeholders showed that there is an enormous potential in combining regional efforts in the area of culture which would lead to strengthening the Baltic Sea Region identity. The CBSS Secretariat and the Polish Presidency had prior to the Joint Meeting the non-paper "Cultural Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region" prepared on which the discussions were also based.

On 28 October 2015 the Polish Ministry of Environment hosted the **2nd Joint Meeting** of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials, the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 2030 (formerly Baltic 21), the Baltic Sea Region Climate Dialogue Platform under Horizontal Action Climate, the EUSBSR National Coordinators, the EUSBSR Policy Area/Horizontal Action Coordinators (PAs Bioeconomy, Hazards, Nutri, Safe and Ship, as well as HAs Climate, Neighbours and Spatial Planning); HELCOM represented by Executive Secretary Ms Monika Stankiewicz and the European Commission represented by DG Climate. The Sister Councils of the North were also present. The Nordic Council of Ministers (chaired by Denmark) and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (chaired by Russia) were represented by their Presidency's delegates. The Chair of the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group (USA) joined the meeting via video link.

The meeting focused on sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region, with cooperation on climate change adaptation used as a case study. The impact of climate change in the Arctic on the Baltic Sea Region was also highlighted during the meeting.

Participants of the Joint Meeting discussed ways of effective regional implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined in the UN "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

It was concluded that the Baltic Sea Region as a whole can and should play an important supporting role in implementing the SDGs. One of the instruments helping along the process could be the new sustainable development agenda for the Baltic Sea Region post 2015.

As food for thought for the discussion, the CBSS Secretariat and the Polish CBSS Presidency prepared a non-paper entitled: "Cooperation on sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region – climate change adaptation case study".

The **3rd Joint Meeting** between the Committee of Senior Officials, National Coordinators of the EUSBSR, delegate of the Commission's DG REGIO and representatives of the European External Action Service (via video link) took place on 12 April 2016 in Warsaw.

Participants of the Joint Meeting discussed how the European Union and the CBSS could work closer together, building on the potential and existing synergies. One of the focus areas of the discussion was the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, where Poland, represented by Ms Joanna Wojtkowska, chaired the National Coordinators.

The role of the CBSS Secretariat, coordinating the EUSBSR Horizontal Action Climate and co-coordinating Policy Area Secure and Horizontal Action Neighbours, was also emphasised.

The CBSS Member States which are not members of the EU presented their involvement in the EU processes relevant to the Baltic Sea Region. Iceland, Norway and Russia referred to the Northern Dimension. Moreover, Russia referred to the Strategy of Socio-economic Development for the North – West Federal Districts and its links to the EUSBSR, as well as to the process of joining the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme.

The Polish Presidency concluded that there are areas of shared interests in the Baltic Sea Region between the EU cooperation mechanisms and the CBSS that should be further developed.

It was also stressed that closer coordination between the EUSBSR and the CBSS is needed for creating synergies and a more result-oriented cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.



Baltic Sea Cultural Gathering in Gdańsk

The Baltic Sea Cultural Gathering was organised by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and hosted by the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk on 15-18 September 2015 and brought together actors from the cultural, entrepreneurial and creative sectors. Its highlight was the 9th Conference of the Baltic Sea Region Ministers for Culture and the conference 'Culture as a tool for social and economic development in the region'.

The Gathering was an opportunity for networking through workshops, exhibitions and concerts, but also a unique platform for practitioners to stimulate a dialogue with policymakers in the region and subsequently to build the best possible habitat for culture to flourish.

The meeting was opened by the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Professor Małgorzata Omilanowska and the Director of the European Solidarity Centre, Mr Basil Kerski. The former President of Poland and leader of *Solidarność*, Mr Lech Wałęsa, gave a speech on the importance of solidarity and its link to culture.

An Expert Panel, consisting of the Ministers of Culture from Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, joined by the State Secretaries for Culture from Estonia, Iceland and Sweden, gave a hands-on policy insight on the state of play on culture in the region.

During one of the seminars, Balticlub Programme Managers Mirjam Kūlm (CBSS Secretariat) and Olga Knudsen (The Swedish Institute), presented findings from the programme, noting a clear tendency towards a more sustainable, less profit-orientated mindset among the creative and entrepreneurial actors in the region.

The workshop groups of the Culture Gathering set up a first draft for a "Gdańsk Manifesto"- a list of criteria that need realisation in order for culture to take on the role as a driving force for change.



Warsaw Seminar on the future of the Baltic Sea cooperation

On 9 March 2016 the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a seminar on the future of the Baltic Sea Region cooperation, organised back-to-back with the 4th Committee of Senior Officials meeting under the Polish Presidency.

The seminar was inaugurated by the Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Ms Katarzyna Kacperczyk. She emphasised in her welcoming words that the Council of the Baltic Sea States is a leading regional organisation, which has the potential to bring all formats active in the Baltic Sea Region closer together.

Participants of the seminar included the Committee of Senior Officials and prominent experts nominated by the CBSS Member States. The discussion was moderated by Mr Josef Janning, Head of the Berlin Office of the European Council on Foreign Relations. The introduction to the seminar was made by the Polish expert Mr Olaf Osica who had prepared a food for thought paper for the meeting.

The aim of the seminar was to reflect on the current state of regional cooperation, challenges and opportunities, as well as to continue the discussion on possible ways of improving governance and coherence in the Baltic collaboration. It was emphasised that the Council of the Baltic Sea States' role is absolutely crucial in the process of building trust in the region.

Participants referred to the increasing conceptual role of macro-regional strategies and links between the CBSS and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in particular. The Russian Strategy of Socio-economic Development for the North – West Federal Districts was also mentioned in this context.

As far as the political dialogue is concerned, the participants of the seminar indicated that line Ministers' meetings, promoted by the Polish Presidency, have an enormous potential in fostering regional cooperation.

The Seminar was summarised in the following five points and approaches:

- 1.** There is a need to make a politically relevant case to acknowledge the achievements of cooperation within the CBSS. The created evidence of the CBSS achievements should be taken to the ministers, so they could have a better look at it and in the process actually approve it.
- 2.** It is necessary to develop a spelled out and compact agenda of cooperation priorities (transport, communications, science, education etc.), so everybody could see the practical value of the cooperation.
- 3.** There is a need to get more horizontal interactions into the process. It is necessary to strengthen the idea that the CBSS gives a framework in which not everything depends on a single trickled down process, so we need to develop a practice of a day-to-day cooperation around member state actors and sub-national actors.
- 4.** The approach to look at the Baltic Sea Region as the visualisation of the concept of the macro-regions. This approach would provide us with the opportunity to discuss the value of the macro-regions in the interdependent and globalised world. It could also provide us with the possibility to discuss if the macro-regional approach could give us a framework to develop instruments to better deal with our vulnerabilities and challenges.
- 5.** Merging approach - the idea of not adding up events but creating a focal point Baltic Summit, around which a range of other activities will be built. This would provide us with a degree of inclusiveness, so there would be parts of the agenda where participating member states would discuss EU-related questions, but at the same time non EU countries would be at the table participating in the same discussion. This would provide us with the opportunity to discuss questions that are specific to the EU, but at the same time give an option to the non-EU member states to, either informally or formally, participate in the discussion.



8th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum in Gdańsk and Malbork

On 22-23 September 2015, the 8th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum hosted over 180 international participants in the Polish cities of Gdańsk and Malbork. It was organised by the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism and the Pomorskie Voivodeship, in close cooperation with the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board and the Ministry of Economics, Construction and Tourism of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Among the keynote speakers were the Secretary General of the UN World Tourism Organisation Mr Taleb Rifai, Polish Minister of Sport and Tourism Mr Adam Korol and the Director General of the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Mr Jan Lundin.

Participants got the opportunity to discuss the four major topics related to the tourism industry in the Baltic Sea Region: maritime policy as a fundament for tourism development in coastal areas; demands on improved and sustainable transnational cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region tourism; impact of meetings and events for developing the Baltic Sea Region as a common tourism destination and challenges related to future trends and their effect on tourism.

The idea of establishing a Baltic Sea Tourism Center (BSTC) was presented by the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board (EUSBSR Policy Area Tourism Coordinator). BSTC should serve as a permanent service unit for improved communication and cooperation at a transnational level, by associating the key tourism stakeholders and promoting sustainable, responsible and innovative tourism in the Baltic Sea Region. The BSTC should also act as an intermediate between the tourism industry and the political and strategic bodies. The delegates adopted the Declaration of the 8th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum, which refers to the challenges in the BSR transnational tourism cooperation.



14th Meeting of Directors General for Civil Protection in Gdańsk

The Polish Presidency of the Civil Protection Network (CPN) organised a Directors' General Meeting in Gdańsk on 8 – 9 June 2016. Gen. Gustaw Mikołajczyk, Deputy Chief Commandant of the State Fire Service in Poland welcomed the participants and summarised the key initiatives of the Polish Presidency in the CPN.

The Directors General agreed to continue the Baltic Leadership Programme – a high-profile training addressed to civil security agencies management and specialists in various areas of crisis management. The programmes conducted so far have proven to be an efficient tool for strengthening agencies' capacity in international cooperation and helped to develop common approaches to hazards in the Baltic Sea Region. The programmes will be renamed Baltic Excellence Programme (BEP) and organised by the CPN Troika (three consecutive CPN Presidencies) biennially.

The Polish Presidency presented conclusions from the workshop "Baltic Sea Region civil protection capacities for international response" held in Warsaw on 7-8 April 2016. Two new initiatives emerged as the results of the workshop: setting up a calendar of exercises, meetings, seminars and workshops organised in the Baltic Sea Region in national and international formats. The calendar will be a part of the PA Secure webpage. The second initiative is to develop an interactive map of the research institutions dealing with civil security issues in the Baltic Sea Region. Both initiatives were endorsed by the CPN DGs and were seen as positive steps towards making international cooperation in the civil security area more operational and better fitting to the needs of the agencies.

PA Secure Coordinators presented conclusions from the seminar held in Kraków on 11-12 May 2016. A wide range of recommendations to further enhance the

cooperation in the civil security sector in the BSR has been reviewed. The DGs endorsed the mandate for the PA Secure to elaborate an advanced version of the recommendations along the lines outlined in the discussion paper distributed amongst the meeting participants.

During a roundtable session the Directors General presented their recent national achievements, the state of play of ongoing initiatives and the future challenges in civil protection.

The 14th Meeting concluded with the Presidency Bell Handover Ceremony: Mr Hjálmar Björgvinsson, Superintendent of the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police took over the presidential insignia from Mr Tomasz Kołodziejczyk, Director of the International Cooperation Department in the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service of Poland.



5th Roundtable of the Baltic Sea Region Climate Change Dialogue Platform

The Roundtable took place on 29 October 2015 in Warsaw and was chaired by Mr Szymon Tumielewicz and Mr Marcin Grądzki from the Polish Ministry of Environment.

The participants included members of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 2030 (formerly Baltic 21), and representatives from the Estonian Environmental Research Centre, SEI Tallinn Centre, International Baltic Earth Secretariat, the City of St. Petersburg, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, European Commission (DG Climate), European Environment Agency, VASAB and the Chair of the Adaptation Working Group of the Carpathian Convention.

The Roundtable focused on the adaptation policy development and frameworks, including the latest state of play of the EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy implementation, results of the 2nd Assessment of Climate Changes in the Baltic Sea basin, indicators and parameters used by the Baltic Sea Region countries, local actions on climate change adaptation, and on the development of the Baltic Sea Region section of EU Climate Adapt and cooperation with other EU macro-regions.

Ms Katarzyna Snyder and Ms Monika Kuśmierczyk from the Polish Ministry of Environment briefed the participants of the Roundtable on the UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations and the preparations for COP21.

The 5th Roundtable further included two interactive sessions. The first one was devoted to joint parameters and indicators on monitoring climate change in the Baltic Sea Region, stemming from a survey initiated at the 4th Roundtable of the BSR Climate Dialogue Platform meeting on 28 April 2015 in Tallinn. The second interactive session was dedicated to local actions on climate change adaptation.



Baltic Sea Labour Forum in Gdańsk

On 18 November 2015 the BHP Hall in the Gdańsk Shipyard, a cradle of the Polish Independent Self-governing Trade Union “Solidarity” (NSZZ Solidarność), hosted the Baltic Sea Labour Forum Round Table (BSLF). The meeting was chaired by Mr Mieczysław Jurek, Head of the Westpomeranian branch of the NSZZ Solidarność.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr Jan Lundin, Director General of the CBSS Secretariat, emphasised the importance of regional cooperation, aimed at creating a sustainable labour market within the Baltic Sea Region. Mr Grzegorz Poznański from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the priorities and activities of the Polish Presidencies of the CBSS and the National Coordinators of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The Round Table was preceded by a BSLF Steering Committee Meeting, where it was decided to approve two BSLF observer status applications, one coming from the Polish Business Centre Club, being a multilevel organisation supporting entrepreneurs in Poland and the other from Mr Martin French, Chair of Business, Economics and Entrepreneurship Education at the University of Rostock.

The BSLF Steering Committee adopted a Statement, entitled ‘BSLfmobINIT: New Perspectives through Vocational Mobility’. It refers to a new flagship initiative on labour mobility, being prepared by the BSLF. It will focus on three main areas: the promotion of information for employees, employers and relevant institutions; fairness in the labour market; vocational education, training and life-long learning. The BSLfmobINIT initiative was presented to the participants of the BSLF Round Table.

The meeting also included three parallel workshops: ‘HelloBaltic’: Information Centre Network in the BSR; Youth employment & vocational education; Information on EUSBSR and EU funds supporting transnational cooperation in the region.



Other Activities of the Polish Presidency





6th Cross-Regional Round Table on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Children

The 6th Cross-Regional Round Table organised by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children in cooperation with the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk was hosted by the CBSS Secretariat on 30-31 May 2016. On the first day of the event, the representatives of the regional intergovernmental organisations discussed regional and national achievements and challenges while the second day was an open event for stakeholders.

Deputy Head of the Polish Embassy in Stockholm, Mr Jacek Śladewski, representing the Polish CBSS Presidency, informed the participants about the Polish priorities, one of them focusing on the safety of children. He emphasised the Polish role in initiating the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Poland's engagement in the protection of the rights of children on the regional level. The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk was chaired by the Polish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.

The representatives underlined the strategic importance of 2016, as it marks the 10th Anniversary of the UN Study on Violence Against Children, which put in motion considerable advances towards a world free from violence against children. Moreover, in 2016, the process of implementing the post 2015 Global Sustainable Development Agenda began. The inclusion of the elimination of all forms of violence against children in the Agenda 2030 is a landmark achievement and a clear recognition of the urgency to act. Lastly, 2016 marks the 20 years since the first World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children, which was also a landmark in highlighting the many grave forms of exploitation of children. The representatives concluded by expressing their support to the High Time Movement and the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.



14th Baltic Sea NGO Forum

The 14th Baltic Sea NGO Forum took place on 10-11 June 2016 in Gdańsk at the European Solidarity Centre. The Forum brought together over 120 representatives from civil society organisations, the CBSS Secretariat, the Union of the Baltic Cities and other public authorities and officials from 11 Baltic Sea countries. The theme of the Forum was 'Solidarity as a new dimension in the Baltic Sea regional cooperation'.

The Forum participants discussed the importance of a wider and deeper inclusion to ensure possibilities for civil society organisations to engage in decision-making processes in all of the Baltic Sea Region countries.

Participants of the 14th Baltic Sea Forum worked in different formats: plenary sessions, panel discussions and workshops within three thematic sessions: 'Culture and social innovation'; 'Civic sector and social problems – self-independent youth', and 'Migration processes in Europe'. Discussions on 'Baltic Sea Region youth social entrepreneurship development' and 'The role of the Baltic Sea regional cooperation in the current political context' took place during the workshops and the Round Table during the second day of the Forum.

The 14th Baltic Sea NGO Forum highlighted the importance of solidarity among civil society actors and people-to-people cooperation.



Seminar 'Balticness – what is it?'

On 4 July 2016 the Polish Embassy in Stockholm, in cooperation with the Icelandic Embassy in Stockholm and the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, organised a seminar on regional identity titled "Balticness - what is it?". The seminar was part of the CBSS Presidency handover that took place in Visby (Gotland, Sweden) during the Almedalen Political Week.

The speakers at the seminar included Mr Kurt Bratteby, Director of the Department for International Relations in the Swedish Institute; Ms Rebecka Lettevall, Ph.D., Director of the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) at the Södertörn University in Stockholm; Mr Kazimierz Musiał, Ph.D., Deputy Director of the Institute of Scandinavian Studies and Applied Linguistics at the University of Gdańsk and Ms Anna Karlsdóttir, Ph.D., Senior Research Fellow at Nordregio (Iceland). The discussion was moderated by the Acting Director of the CBSS Secretariat Mr Bernd Hemingway.

The speakers pointed at several factors that shape regional identity, including geographical closeness, infrastructural links, trade, tourism, environment and shared history. It was emphasised that education might be the key in the process of building a common Baltic identity. The speakers agreed that regional integration and cohesion bring economic benefits, as it helps to deepen trust among partners.



CBSS Presidency Handover to Iceland

On 5 July 2016, Poland handed over the CBSS Presidency to Iceland during the Almedalen Political Week in Visby, Sweden. The event took place on the initiative of the Polish Ambassador to Sweden, Mr Wiesław Tarka and was hosted by the Governor of Gotland, Ms Cecilia Schelin Seidegård.

Among the guests were the Swedish Minister of Defence Mr Peter Hultqvist, the Swedish Deputy Foreign Minister Ms Annika Söder, the Director General of the Swedish Institute Ms Annika Rembe and Ambassadors of the CBSS Member States. The Polish Presidency was represented by Ambassador Wiesław Tarka and Ambassador Michał Czyż, Polish Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials. Iceland was represented by Ambassador Estrid Brekkan and Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson, Icelandic Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials. The CBSS Secretariat delegation was represented by the Acting Director General of the CBSS Secretariat Mr Bernd Hemingway.

Participants of the ceremony expressed their appreciation to Poland for its visionary approach and commitment to Baltic Sea Region cooperation. The role of the line ministers meetings, organised by Poland, including Culture (September 2015), Science (June 2016) and Deputy Foreign Ministers (June 2016), was emphasised. The upcoming Icelandic Presidency priorities were introduced, with both Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson and Ambassador Estrid Brekkan emphasising the Icelandic commitment to the Baltic Sea Region and the continued collaboration on all levels.



Recommendations of the Polish Presidency

→ The high-level political dialogue needs to be strengthened, should the CBSS fulfil its core role as a forum for multilateral intergovernmental cooperation and dialogue in the Baltic Sea Region, and meet its commitments included in the key documents of the organisation.

→ The potential of the CBSS remains substantial and should be fully used while facing the challenges and opportunities of the future. The CBSS must look for jointly agreed responses to these challenges at the regional level.

→ The visibility and performance of the Council should be improved through a stronger political focus on the region and result-oriented activities.

→ The enhanced regional synergy and cohesion are worth pursuing as an important confidence building measure. The CBSS should cooperate closer with the EU and other regional partners in the macro-regional framework through developing objective-driven and result-oriented projects.

→ The structured dialogue between line ministers should be further enhanced, thus providing political impetus, cohesion, and visibility for the CBSS.

→ The CBSS should start to elaborate a vision for the Baltic Sea Region beyond 2020. If conditions permit, the creation of a Common Baltic Cooperation Space should be its ultimate strategic goal.

→ A prosperous, stable and secure Baltic Sea Region represents a crucial component of the European security system. It should retain its position as a platform of trust, stability, and safety.

→ Enhanced cooperation between the Baltic Sea and other regions serves the region and Europe as a whole. Having this in mind, the CBSS should further strengthen relations with its observer states, strategic partners, and other regional organisations in Europe.

→ In order to meet new opportunities and challenges, the CBSS needs enhanced internal integrity, and effective management.

→ The CBSS needs improved project orientation and project implementation capability. The Project Support Facility served this purpose well. The idea of a Baltic Cooperation Fund should be further explored.

Committee of Senior Officials



The Polish CBSS Team:

Ambassador **Michał Czyż**,
Polish MFA, Chair of the CSO

Mr **Marcin Czaplinski**, Polish MFA
Mr **Grzegorz Marek Poznański**, Polish MFA
Ms **Joanna Wojtkowska**, Polish MFA
Ms **Katarzyna Barcikowska**, Polish MFA
Ms **Aleksandra Świergolecka**, Polish MFA
Ms **Kamila Wojsznis**, Polish MFA
(seconded to the CBSS Secretariat)

The Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) consists of senior officials appointed by each Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Member States and the European Union represented at the CSO meetings by the European External Action Service (EEAS) representative. The Director General of the CBSS Secretariat Mr **Jan Lundin** and the Deputy Director General, Secretary to the Committee, Mr **Bernd Hemingway** were both present at the meetings. Countries may appoint additional delegates as appropriate to attend specific meetings.



During the Polish Presidency the CSO Members were the following:

Denmark: Mr Kim Vinthen, MFA of Denmark

Estonia: Mr Raul Mälik, MFA of Estonia

Finland: Ms Kristina Pingoud, MFA of Finland

Germany: Mr Michael Däumer, FFO of Germany

Iceland: Mr Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson,
MFA of Iceland

Latvia: Ms Vita Zivtiņa, MFA of Latvia

Lithuania: Ms Kornelija Jurgaitienė, MFA of Lithuania

Norway: Mr Per Kjell Mannes, MFA of Norway

Poland: Mr Grzegorz Marek Poznański, MFA of
Poland (until February 2016); Mr Marcin Czapliński,
MFA of Poland (from February 2016)

Russia: Mr Sergey Petrovich, MFA of Russia

Sweden: Mr Hans Olsson, MFA of Sweden

European Union: Mr Kim Kuivalainen, EEAS



Other CBSS Member representatives attending the meetings during the year:

Ms María Mjöll Jónsdóttir, MFA of Iceland
Mr Timofey Kunitskiy, MFA of Russia
Mr Sven Mäses, Estonian Embassy in Warsaw
Ms Anna Grete Riise, Norwegian Embassy in Warsaw

The CBSS Secretariat was additionally represented by:

Ms Gertrude Opira, Head of Administration
Mr Anthony Jay Olsson, Head of Media and Communications
Ms Turid Heiberg, Senior Adviser and Head of Unit for Children at Risk
Ms Krista Kampus, Senior Adviser and Head of Unit for Baltic 2030
Ms Vineta Polatside, Senior Adviser and Head of Unit of the TF-THB
Mr Janusz Gąciarz, Senior Adviser for Civil Security
Mr Ilya Ermakov, Senior Adviser for Economic Cooperation, Maritime Policy and Energy
Ms Iris Kempe, Senior Adviser for Culture and Education
Mr Jacek Paszkowski, Adviser for EUSBSR PA Secure

The CSO held 8 meetings during the reported period.

The meetings took place on the following dates:

15 September 2015 in Gdańsk
 27 October 2015 in Warsaw
 3 December 2015 in Stockholm
 8 March 2016 in Warsaw
 13 April 2016 in Warsaw
 25-27 April 2016 in Stockholm
 19-20 May 2016 in Warsaw
 7 June 2016 in Warsaw

Additionally, 3 Joint Meetings were held on the following dates: 15 September 2015 in Gdańsk; 28 October 2015 in Warsaw; 12 April 2016 in Warsaw

External guests attending the CSO meetings during the year (including Joint Meetings):

Ms Anna Ceynowa, Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, EUSBSR PA Culture Co – coordinator and NDPC Chairmanship representative and **Ms Małgorzata Moch**, Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
Mr Marcin Grądzki, Polish Ministry of Environment
Mr Tomasz Jałukowicz, Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, EUSBSR PA Innovation Co-coordinator
Ms Monika Niemiec-Butryn, Polish Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation, Polish EGMP Chair
Mr Marek Olechnowicz, Baltic Sea NGO Forum
Ms Grażyna Sikorska-Czapnik, Polish Ministry of Infrastructure and Development
Ms Edyta Sysło, Polish Ministry of Environment, Polish EGSD Chair
Ms Aleksandra Zakrzewska, Polish Ministry of Infrastructure and Development

EUSBSR National Coordinators (if other than the CSO Members):

Finland: **Ms Erja Tikka**, Finnish MFA
Latvia: **Ms Renāte Bula**, Latvian MFA
Lithuania: **Mr Mindaugas Genys**, Lithuanian MFA
Ms Rasa Žemaitytė, Lithuanian MFA
Ms Riamonda Liutkevičiene, Lithuanian MFA
Sweden: **Mr Erik Kiesow**, Swedish PM Office
Ms Sofia Wennerstrand, Swedish PM Office

EUSBSR PACs/HACs:

PAC Bioeconomy: **Ms Vilma Daugalienė**, Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture; **Ms Jolanta Vaičiūnienė**, Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture
PAC Culture: **Mr Stefan Musiolik**, Ministry of Justice, Cultural and European Affairs of Land Schleswig-Holstein, Germany; **Ms Franziska Schindler**, Ministry of Justice, Cultural and European Affairs of Land Schleswig-Holstein, Germany
PAC Education: **Mr Anders Bergström**, Norden Association in Sweden



PAC Hazards: **Ms Maxi Nachtigall**, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

PAC Health: **Mr Marek Maciejowski**, NDPHS Secretariat

PAC Innovation: **Ms Reet Reismaa**, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Estonia

PAC Safe & PAC Ship: **Ms Ditte Henriksen**, Danish Maritime Authority; **Ms Gitte Mondrup**, Danish Maritime Authority

PAC Secure: **Ms Julia Fredriksson**, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

HAC Capacity: **Mr Anders Bergström**, Norden Association in Sweden

HAC Spatial Planning: **Ms Johanna Laurila**, HELCOM

European Commission:

Mr Odd Goddal

Ms Lina Marcinkutė

Mr Alexander Somoza

Mr Peter Schenk

Alongside the Committee of Senior Officials a number of experts participated in the Seminar on the future of the Baltic Sea cooperation (9 March 2016):

Ambassador Per Carlsen, Baltic Development Forum, Denmark; **Mr Kimmo Elo**, PhD, University of Turku, Finland; **Mr Tobias Etzold**, PhD, SWP Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit, Germany; **Prof. Stefan Gänzle**, Associate Professor, University of Agder, Norway; **Ambassador Gunnar Gunnarsson**, Directorate for International and Security Affairs, MFA of Iceland; **Mr Joseph Janning**, European Council on Foreign Relations (moderator of the seminar); **Mr Sten Luthman**, Former CBSS Senior Official (former MFA official), Sweden; **Prof. Artem Vladimirovich Malgin**, Vice-rector for academic affairs of Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Russia; **Mr Olaf Osica**, PhD, expert on international affairs (author of the discussion paper), Poland; **Ms Kinga Raś**, Polish Institute of International Affairs, Poland; **Mr Alexander Somoza**, European Commission, DG Regio

Others:

Ms Lotta Andersson, Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute; **Ms Jelena Angelis**, Technopolis Group (presenting the evaluation report for the EuroFaculty Pskov project); **Ms Anna Ballance**, European Commission (via video link); **Ms Roberta Burns**, Chair of the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group (via video link); **Ms Ilze Ciganska**, Interreg Baltic Sea Region; **Ms Sidsel Dyekjær**, Danish Environmental Protection Agency; **Prof. Piotr Głowacki**, the Institute of Geophysics Polish Academy of Sciences; **Mr Boris Iarochевич EEAS** (via video link); **Ms Baiba Liepa**, INTERACT Point Turku; **Mr Anders Lindholm**, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Sweden; **Ms Martina Karbowski**, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany; **Mr Valdur Lahtvee**, SEI Tallinn Centre, Estonia; **Ms Kati Mattern**, European Environment Agency; **Ms Anne-Cerise Nilsson**, Swedish Ministry of Environment; **Ms Margareta Nisser-Larsson**, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency; **Mr Lars Rydén**, Baltic University Programme Secretariat; **Ms Dina Silina**, Policy Officer, European Commission Climate Action DG; **Ms Anna Sosnowska**, WWF Poland; **Ms Monika Stankiewicz**, HELCOM Executive Secretary; **Mr Sandor Szalai**, Chair of the Adaptation Working Group, Carpathian Convention; **Mr Pāvēls Šarigins**, Latvian Chair of the Task Force on the Border Cooperation (BSRBCC); **Ms Ülle Vaht**, Estonian Ministry of Environment; **Mr Risto Veivo**, Union of the Baltic Cities; **Mr Ugis Zanders**, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Latvia; **Mr Ulf Wikström**, INTERACT Point Turku; **Prof. Tymon Zieliński**, Institute of Oceanology of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Key Actions Taken by the CSO during the Polish Presidency

Held the CSO Annual Consultations with the CBSS Observer States on 2 December 2015 in Stockholm, to share experiences and brief the Observers on the Polish Presidency priorities and activities, as well as the ongoing and planned projects run by the CBSS.

Adopted conclusions after the meeting with the Observer States stating that there is a need to strengthen relations between the CBSS and the Observer States through developing new ways of collaboration that will better respond to the current situation in the region and will make cooperation more tangible, effective, result-oriented and mutually beneficial.

In this context several areas of common interest were named, including: migration, climate change, trafficking in human beings, child protection, sustainable development, energy efficiency.

CSO representatives and delegates of the Observer States agreed to introduce instruments improving cooperation, i.a. through a more frequent exchange of information, organising issue-oriented meetings and conferences and a possibility of exchanging personnel between cooperating regional organisations and Observer States.

Selected Ambassador Maira Mora from Latvia for the post of the Director General of the CBSS Secretariat, after Mr Jan Lundin completed his six-year tenure.





Organisational

- Adopted the Annual Report of the Estonian CBSS Presidency 2014-2015.
- Took part in the seminar on the “Future of the Baltic Sea Cooperation” together with nominated CBSS Member States national experts, organised back-to-back with the CSO meeting in Warsaw on 9 March 2016.
- The CSO and the Secretariat took note of the discussion on the cooperation with the CBSS Strategic Partners. The CSO asked the Secretariat to establish a draft guidance note on the basis of the discussion.
- Decided to create an informal working group with the CSO representatives on a voluntary basis that would decide on the future of the EuroFaculty project. Took note of the report on the state of play of the EuroFaculty Pskov project provided by Mr Hans Olsson, Chairman of the EFP International Expert Group. Welcomed the EuroFaculty Evaluation Report prepared by Technopolis Group. Took note of the latest developments of the tender on the Evaluation of the EuroFaculty Pskov Project 2009 – 2015 and applicability of the EuroFaculty concept in the future.
- Agreed to continue discussing the idea of a single cultural hub/network as an all-inclusive project serving all countries of the Baltic Sea Region without creating new institutions or generating additional costs. Agreed that the Senior Officials Group for Culture should be invited to this discussion. While taking into account the discussion from the Joint Meeting and the Culture Minister’s discussion, it was agreed to prepare a paper regarding the progress made on the topic of a single cultural hub.
- Took note of the discussion paper about voluntary contributions to the PSF during 2016 and decided to combine the transfer of the surplus fund into the interim agreement. Confirmed the proposal of the results of the evaluation committee about the PSF project applications and decided to fund the selected PSF project applications. Welcomed the PSF Evaluation Report prepared by Technopolis Group.
- Took note of the ‘Baltic Sea Cooperation Fund’ memo prepared by the Director General of the CBSS Secretariat.
- Tasked the Secretariat with the preparation of a Council decision for the acceptance of Hungary as an Observer State of the CBSS.



Expert Groups

- Confirmed the decision reached at the meeting of the Expert Group on Sustainable Development to prolong the Group's mandate for another three years. Invited the EGSD to provide information about its activities on a regular basis.
- Endorsed the Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiological Safety (EGNRS) recommendations on common standards of radiological measurements within environmental monitoring.
- Endorsed the revised Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on Maritime Policy.
- Welcomed the presentation by the Polish EGSD Chair, Ms Edyta Sysło from the Polish Ministry of Environment, on recent EGSD activities and the process of elaborating a renewed Sustainable Development Agenda for the Baltic Sea Region post 2015.
- Welcomed the presentation and update about recent activities of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings given by Ms Vineta Polatside, Senior Adviser and Head of Unit of the TF-THB at the CBSS Secretariat.
- Welcomed the presentation and update about recent activities of Expert Group on Cooperation for Children at Risk given by Ms Turid Heiberg, Senior Adviser and Head of the Unit for Children at Risk at the CBSS Secretariat.

Cooperation with other entities

- Held three Joint Meetings (on Culture, Sustainable Development - Climate Change Adaptation and on Enhanced Cooperation with the EU) with various stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region, including National Coordinators of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, chaired by Poland.
- Took note of the presentation of Mr Tomasz Jatkowicz from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education on plans regarding the organisation of the 1st CBSS Science Ministerial Meeting in Poland (16 June 2016, Kraków).
- Took note of the presentation of Ms Anna Ceynowa from the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage on the cultural events organised within the framework of the Polish Presidency Priority 'Creativity'.
- Took note of the report given by Mr Pāvels Šarigins, Latvian Chair of the Task Force on the Border Cooperation (BSRBCC).
- Tasked the Secretariat with the preparation of a coherent concept of a Youth Round Table in cooperation with the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC), including the estimated financial costs of the planned event.



→ Took note of the presentation provided by Mr Marek Olechnowicz about the Baltic Sea NGO Forum 2016 (10-11 June 2016, Gdańsk, Poland).

→ Took note of the final report about the BALANCE project (The Baltic Law Enforcement Analysis Cooperation Flagship Project) presented by the Finnish CSO, Ms Kristina Pingoud.

→ Took note of the information on the meeting of the four Regional Councils in the North (11 November 2015, Reykjavik, Iceland).

→ Took note of the discussion on the results of the 24th BSPC Annual Conference (30 August – 1 September 2015, Rostock, Germany).

Administrative

→ Adopted the budgetary proposal of the CBSS Secretariat for the financial year 2016, including the Baltic 2030 and Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings parts of the budget.

→ Took note of the preliminary Annual Financial Report 2015 and of the financial situation of the Secretariat.

→ Took note of the Secretariat's budgetary proposal for the financial year 2017, and asked to adjust it according to the discussion at the CSO meeting.

→ Regularly received the Director General's reports and were presented with the annexes to the DG reports on selected visits, meetings and contacts of the Secretariat employees.

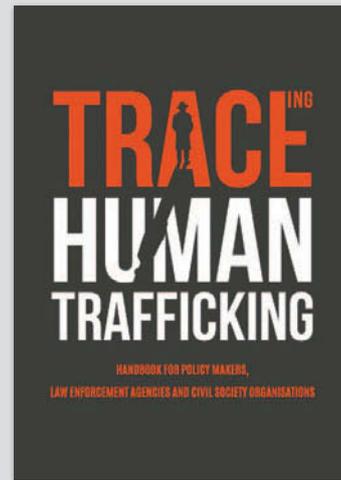
→ Regularly considered the update of the CBSS project activities presented in four different lists – PSF projects, projects with CBSS participation, CBSS project ideas, and finalised projects. Decided to include the information about the project costs and funding sources in the respective project lists.

→ Agreed to launch a selection procedure for the next Director General of the CBSS Secretariat in December 2015 and decided to hold an extraordinary meeting on 26-27 April 2016 in order to interview 7 shortlisted candidates for the post.

→ Took note of the Director General's proposal to prolong the contract of the EGSD Senior Adviser Ms Krista Kampus.

→ Approved the appointment of Ms Daria Akhutina as a new Senior Adviser at the CBSS Secretariat, replacing Mr Ilya Ermakov.

Publications of the Council of the Baltic Sea States

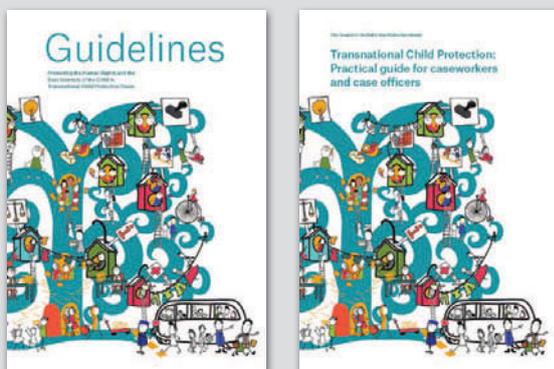


TRACEing Human Trafficking – Handbook for Policy Makers, Law Enforcement Authorities and Civil Society Organisations

The Handbook was launched in April 2016, after the successful conclusion of the TRACE project where the Task Force against the Trafficking in Human Beings was a partner. It presents the overall project findings as well as policy recommendations. The Handbook aims to support policy makers, law enforcement agencies and civil society organisations, by assessing and consolidating information about traffickers and trafficked persons, the wider criminal enterprise and its modus operandi, the role of technology, as well as the current and future trends in trafficking.

Guidelines Promoting the Human Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Transnational Child Protection Cases

The Expert Group on Children at Risk's Guidelines Promoting the Human Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Transnational Child Protection Cases (in English) explore challenges and opportunities in safeguarding the human rights of the child in transnational child protection work. The accompanying Practical Guide on transnational child protection for caseworkers and case officers (in Estonian, English, Finnish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Russian) presents an overview of measures to safeguard the human rights and the best interests of children in cross-border situations. It is an easy and accessible tool for case officers such as social workers, immigration officials and law enforcement officers as well as lawyers, guardians and other professionals working with and for children on the move.





Energy efficiency in the Baltic Sea Region. Policy and Project Review

This publication launched in March 2016 gives a glimpse of the state of play and work done within the field of energy and resource efficiency in the Baltic Sea Region between the years 2012 – 2015. As a result of the EFFECT – Dialogue Platform project in cooperation with NORDREGIO, the report gives a holistic approach to the term “low carbon economy”, provides an overview of existing policy approaches on different governance levels and maps and forms a collection of good practices on possible ways to transition to a low carbon economy.

Assessing the status of sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region: a macro-regional perspective

The Report was carried out by the Centre for Sustainable Development at Uppsala University and published in cooperation with the Expert Group on Sustainable Development-Baltic 2030. Based on the analyses of the national and regional sustainability strategies, the Report provides an overview on sustainable development governance and narratives in the BSR countries. The publication also defines how the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals can reinforce cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region post 2015 and defines the most relevant Sustainable Development stakeholders at the Baltic Sea Region level. Special studies were done for the sectors climate change and sustainable consumption and production to complete the picture.

Guidelines for Municipalities: Stepping up Local Action against Human Trafficking

The STROM project of the Task Force against the Trafficking in Human Beings concluded with the launch of Guidelines for Municipalities in March 2016. The innovative guidelines offer concrete measures on what municipalities can do to map out the local situation and identify citizens at risk, as well as improving assistance to victims and enhance prevention efforts at the local level. The Guidelines are available in English and nine additional languages.



**Polish
Chairmanship
of the
EUSBSR
National
Coordinators**







Simultaneously to the CBSS Presidency (1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016) Poland volunteered to chair the meetings of the National Coordinators (NCs) of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). Chairing two Baltic Sea Region cooperation formats (CBSS and EUSBSR) gave an opportunity to build synergies and join forces in coping with common challenges in the region.

After a joint effort of reviewing and updating the Action Plan of the EUSBSR which was completed in June 2015, the Polish Chairmanship, represented by Ms Joanna Wojtkowska from the Polish MFA, proposed to concentrate on the most crucial and recurring challenges of the EUSBSR. The Chair wanted to respond in practice to *“a need to develop a perspective whereby the Strategy is not viewed in terms of its structures, but rather with the perspective of the value and effectiveness of its actions as relevant to its targets and objectives”*. Therefore the Polish Chair suggested concentrating on the improvement of governance, facilitating the implementation and better visibility through promotion of the results and relevance of the EUSBSR.

Main achievements and highlights:

Governance

- Improved dialogue among the main stakeholders (NCs, European Commission, Policy Area and Horizontal Action Coordinators - PACs/HACs).
- Continuation of the dialogue within the European Social Fund - Baltic Sea Network.
- Closer cooperation between the NCs and the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme.
- Setting the procedure for assuming the role of a new PAC/HAC.

Implementation

→ Exploring and identifying the methods of effective implementation during the seminar ‘A Positive Change in the Baltic Sea Region. How far have we gone and why do we want to go on?’ which was held on 10 December 2015 in Warsaw, Poland.

→ A step forward towards better coordination and support with regard to the implementation of the EUSBSR – meeting of NCs and Managing Authorities/line ministries managing the European Structural and Investment Funds programmes which led to the kick-off of the European Regional Development Fund Managing Authorities’ Network (ERDF MA Network).

Visibility

- Completing the EUSBSR Communication Strategy.
- Promoting the achievements and relevance of the EUSBSR at the seminar ‘A Positive Change in the Baltic Sea Region. How far have we gone and why do we want to go on?’ in Warsaw, Poland.
- Promoting the EUSBSR at other Baltic events.

Governance

1. Improved dialogue among the main stakeholders (NCs, EC and PACs/HACs)

The need for closer cooperation among key stakeholders has been identified. The Polish Chair organised three meetings between PACs, HACs and NCs together with the European Commission (EC) and Interact (15 September 2015 in Gdańsk, Poland; 29 October 2015 in Warsaw, 11 December 2015 in Warsaw). PACs/HACs were grouped and invited according to the three thematic blocs: Increase Prosperity, Save the Sea, Connect the Region. Participants of the meetings exchanged information, identified challenges in the implementation process and discussed how to improve internal communication. All PACs and HACs presented their ambitions as reflected in the new version of the EUSBSR Action Plan.

Main reflections:

- A dialogue of NCs, EC, PACs/HACs and Interact should be continued. PACs/HACs should be invited to the NCs meetings on a regular basis. To communicate the EUSBSR successfully, NCs have to learn directly from PACs/HACs about the current developments. PACs/HACs are interested in constant, working contacts with the NCs.
- The dialogue should involve relevant Directorates General of the EC.
- NCs should be more engaged in ensuring their country's participation in the steering groups/committees (identification of Focal Points). NCs could help in getting more attention from the Member States when not all the countries are engaged in a given PA/HA.
- NCs could help Focal Points and PACs/HACs to mobilize stakeholders in Member States and to initiate contacts in order to engage in the processes going on in MSs that PACs/HACs are not aware of.
- NCs could be more supportive when it comes to the cooperation with external partners (non-EU, like Belarus, Iceland, Norway or Russia).
- NCs and the EC should support PACs/HACs in their efforts to pave the way for project recommendations to reach and influence the policy/decision-making level.
- More cooperation among PACs and HACs is needed (discussions on funding, conferences to change policies in the region, the criteria to grant a flagship status).

→ There is a need to regularly organise synergy seminars and meetings with policy coordinators and experts to solve problems faced by PACs/HACs.

→ There is a need to engage the societies into actions within the EUSBSR.

→ The idea of cooperation between all macro-regional strategies should be explored.

2. Meeting of the informal Baltic Sea Network, which uses the European Social Fund to promote transnational activities that allow the implementation of the EUSBSR objectives

A Baltic Sea Network-European Social Fund (BSN-ESF) meeting was organised by the Polish Ministry of Economic Development and took place on 1-2 October 2015 in Gdańsk.

The BSN-ESF has been established in order to strengthen transnational cooperation between projects funded by the ESF and different stakeholders in the EU Member States and regions in the Baltic Sea Region. The additional aim of the BSN-ESF project is to analyse and emphasise the relation between the ESF and the EUSBSR. It also promotes actions encouraging ESF projects to include implementation of the social dimension in the EUSBSR and constitutes a common platform for information and communication within the network and among project promoters and stakeholders in order to disseminate relevant news and perform policy impact activities.

The network involves ESF Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies from the Member States and regions concerned – Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, Åland Islands and the German Land Hamburg. Joint activities include: conferences, partner search fora and learning seminars.

The main aim of the meeting in Gdańsk was to discuss the schedule of transnational ESF calls for proposals for 2015 and 2016 and the possibilities for calls' synchronisation, as well as to confirm a set of common themes for cooperation (employment, social inclusion, youth employment, learning & skills and social economy).

The participants also shared their experiences of implementation of the EUSBSR. Representative of the Marshal Office of the Region Pomorskie elaborated on the process of matching the goals of the EUSBSR with the goals of the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020, funded both by the ESF and European Regional Development Fund.

The Swedish Association for Local Authorities and Regions gave an update on the implementation of the EUSBSR flagship School2Work. The idea of this project was developed within the Baltic Sea Network. The project focuses on early school leaving and NEETs (young people not being in employment, education or training).



3. Closer and better established cooperation of the NCs with the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme (IBSR)

The links between the EUSBSR and IBSR have been steadily growing, especially with the current funding period 2014-2020. The Programme takes an active part in the implementation of the EUSBSR and its Action Plan. For the funding period 2014-2020 the thematic priorities 1-3 of the Programme have been very much aligned with the objectives of the Strategy. The Programme offers support to the Strategy implementation by financing flagships and their preparation (seed money). In addition, the Programme provides direct support to the coordination activities of the EUSBSR (thematic priority 4 'Institutional capacity for macro-regional cooperation' and specifically objective 4.2 'coordination of macro-regional cooperation'). Under 4.2 the Programme provides co-financing for support to the PACs and HACs and targeted support and communication activities related to the implementation of the EUSBSR. During the Polish Chairmanship the following developments took place:

→ **Support to the PACs/HACs** – debate on the basis of the Swedish proposal to differentiate the level of support (higher level of funding for PACs/HACs of more demanding character). The NCs worked out a compromise solution which for the first time required a voting procedure of the NCs. It was agreed that most of the PAs/HAs get a basic 'level A' financing and two PAs, with broader scope and responsibility after the last revision of the Action Plan (PA Bioeconomy and PA Innovation), will get an additional 'level B' financing.

→ **Targeted support and communication activities.** The NCs identified the needs for the targeted support and communication activities related to the implementation of the EUSBSR, agreed on a joint position and informed

the IBSR Programme. Based on this information the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (MA/JS) drafted a call announcement. Subsequently the NCs evaluated the relevance of the proposals – the results of the discussion were sent to MA/JS and the Monitoring Committee (12 April 2016 the NCs participated for the first time in the assessment of the applications submitted to the IBSR). All NCs participating signed the declaration of confidentiality and impartiality. The topic of targeted support and communication activities has been regularly discussed during the NCs' meetings on: 15 September 2015, 29 October 2015, 11 December 2015; 12 April 2016 and 28 June 2016.

As a result, a good working relationship with the MA/JS of Interreg Baltic Sea Region has been established.

4. Setting the procedure for assuming the role of a new PAC/HAC

NCs for the first time went through the procedure of accepting the change in the function of PAC Innovation (the Nordic Council of Ministers and Estonia agreed to replace Sweden). Currently PA Innovation is coordinated by Estonia, Poland and NCM. The procedure of accepting the new PAC foresees a strong participation of the steering group of a given PA.

Implementation

1. Exploring and identifying the methods of effective implementation during a seminar 'A Positive Change in the Baltic Sea Region. How far have we gone and why do we want to go on?', held on 10 December 2015 in Warsaw, Poland.

The one - day seminar looked at good practices currently using the EUSBSR to highlight potential ways forward.

The participants discussed amongst other topics concrete examples of what has already been achieved within the EUSBSR, what are the ambitions for the future, the best ways of making the achievements work on the policy level, how to enhance support to the EUSBSR by the European Structural and Investment Funds programmes, what are the bottlenecks and what solutions could be found to overcome those.

The seminar brought together the EUSBSR stakeholders (European Commission, NCs, PACs/HACs, Flagship Leaders and cooperating partners, INTERACT, Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, Focal Points), as well as potential new stakeholders and European Structural and Investment Funds programme managers.

The first panel 'The EUSBSR and its achievements: What is the recipe for success? How to ensure sustainability of results?' showed some concrete examples of the achievements and ambitions for the future. The added value and success factors for maximizing and sustaining results have been discussed.

2. A step forward towards a better coordination and support with regard to the implementation of the EUSBSR – meeting of the NCs and Managing Authorities/line ministries managing the ESIF programmes which led to the kick-off of the European Regional Development Fund Managing Authorities' Network (ERDF MA Network).

The EUSBSR has no dedicated funding sources for financing the implementation of its projects (flagships). However, with the new financial period (2014-2020), new opportunities emerged in this regard. The EUSBSR was one of the main strategic factors, together with the EU 2020 Strategy and domestic socio-economic strategic frameworks, to be taken into consideration while preparing programming documents for cohesion policy 2014-2020 – Partnership Agreements and operational programmes (OPs).

The idea of a more efficient financial support to the EUSBSR implementation by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programmes has been further taken up during the EUSBSR Seminar 'Positive Change in the Baltic Sea Region', on 10 December 2015 in Warsaw. The aim of the panel 'Cooperation and coordination across programmes in the Baltic Sea region: How to better implement the EUSBSR?' was to discuss the gaps that need to be addressed, but also to focus on defining concrete actions and identifying possible solutions for closer coordination among ESIF programmes in the region. The discussion between NCs and Managing Authorities or line ministries managing the ESIF programmes was continued

on 11 December 2015 in Warsaw. One of the ideas was to establish the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Network across the Baltic Sea Region.

A pilot **ERDF MA Network focusing on Innovation in the EUSBSR** was launched on 19 May 2016 in Warsaw. Participants of the meeting included: representatives of interested Managing Authorities (MAs – from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Poland and Sweden), line ministries and agencies (from Lithuania, Poland and Sweden), EUSBSR National Coordinators (Estonia, Poland and Sweden), representatives of the European Commission (DG REGIO), Coordinators of the Policy Area Innovation (PA INNO) and the Interact Programme.

Main issues raised during the discussion:

- The cooperation within the pilot ERDF MA Network should be demand-driven.
 - At the outset, we need to focus on small-scale initiatives.
 - The need to identify and 'advertise' concrete examples of support to EUSBSR implementation by the ESIFs.
 - The Network must be beneficial to all participating stakeholders (PA INNO, as well as Operational Programmes).
 - Since joint actions may be very difficult in many aspects, we should look for more coordination among programmes.
 - Perhaps at some stage there will be a need to consider formalising the cooperation within the Network (by a declaration or an agreement)
 - In the long term perspective – the need to screen the priorities and indicators in the relevant OPs (in which indicators the transnational cooperation is needed) in order to match them with the PA INNO's targets and indicators.
 - The role of the National Coordinators in the Network should be limited to support and exchange of information with relevant stakeholders.
- ### Participants of the first meeting of the pilot ERDF MA Network focusing on Innovation in the EUSBSR agreed to:
- Explore the possibility to launch a pilot initiative in connection with the "Cleaner Growth" project – PAC INNO will prepare an invitation/proposal for relevant MAs to cooperate on cleantech (it will be presented to PA INNO Steering Committee for approval).

→ The Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation will lead the ERDF MA Network for the upcoming year (July 2016 – June 2017).

→ Network leader will contact the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) to explore other possible themes for cooperation that are identified by the Baltic Sea Region Member States and regions in their Smart Specialisation Strategies.

In the longer run, the Network might help relevant stakeholders to use the EU funds better, meeting the long-lasting demand of better and coordinated use of existing resources. The success of the Network may be a game changer in terms of funds supply and an inspiration for other macro-regional strategies. The Network may help in strengthening the implementation of the EUSBSR.

Visibility

1. Completing the EUSBSR Communication Strategy

NCs discussed this topic on 15 September 2015 in Gdańsk, Poland, and contributed to the works of the Task Force on Communication, led by Interact Point Turku. The EUSBSR Communication Strategy was finalised in December 2015. It offers simple methods and tools, helping to raise awareness of the EUSBSR and its results and to attract new stakeholders. The Strategy is available at www.balticsea-region.eu.

2. Promoting the achievements and relevance of the EUSBSR at the seminar 'A Positive Change in the Baltic Sea Region. How far have we gone and why do we want to go on?'

During the seminar on 10 December 2015 in Warsaw some of the achievements of the EUSBSR were presented. It raised the visibility of the EUSBSR amongst around 150 participants. Additionally, one of the panels was devoted to communication aspects ('Communicating the EUSBSR: How to reach out and promote our achievements? How to attract newcomers and improve internal communication and knowledge exchange?'). The speakers discussed how to communicate the benefits the Strategy brings to the Member States and the public. Enhancing information exchange among EUSBSR stakeholders was also brought up. The main elements of the EUSBSR Communication Strategy were presented.

3. Promoting the EUSBSR at other Baltic events

The Polish Chair participated in a number of Baltic Sea events promoting the EUSBSR, including the 6th Annual Forum of Euroregion Baltic Stakeholders on 2 November 2015 in Gdańsk, Poland; Polish Stakeholder Seminar about PA Education, Research and Employability in the EUSBSR on 16 November 2015 at the University of Warsaw, Poland; HA Capacity workshop for PACs based in Warsaw on partnership building and multi – level governance in practice on 17 November 2015 in the Polish MFA in Warsaw; PA Innovation Steering Committee Meeting on 25 February 2016 in Warsaw; Conference 'INTERREG changes the Baltic Sea Region. Stories that inspire' on 24-25 May 2016 in Gdańsk, Poland; PA Nutri seminar 'Reducing nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea – how to strengthen project partnerships in the region' on 14 April 2016 in Gdańsk, Poland and 'Baltic Leadership Programme. Bioeconomy' on 16 June 2016 in Warsaw.

Other initiatives

→ NCs signed two letters of support for Germany (12 April 2016) and Estonia (28 June 2016) to aid granting the funds necessary to organise the Annual Forum in Germany in 2017 and Estonia in 2018.

→ NCs had the opportunity to participate in a training on KEEP, explaining how to use it in the context of the EUSBSR. KEEP is an online database of territorial cooperation projects and beneficiaries. More at: www.keep.eu.

→ Key EUSBSR stakeholders (European Commission, EUSBSR National Coordinators, Policy Area and Horizontal Action Coordinators, together with ESPON/HELCOM/VASAB/Interact/IBSR) participated in a Participatory Workshop on Monitoring of the EUSBSR on 27 June 2016 in the Polish MFA in Warsaw. The participants made an effort to take stock of developments and identify needs for a tailor-made monitoring system for the EUSBSR. It was considered how monitoring results and findings can be used for possible evaluation needs or to feed into relevant policy processes. The ESPON cooperation programme has offered to develop custom-made territorial monitoring systems to all European macro-regions. Based on past experiences gained with the territorial monitoring system named "ESPON TeMo" (<http://bsr.espon.eu/>), developed together with VASAB stakeholders, ESPON intends to develop it further to cover the needs of the EUSBSR stakeholders.



A person with grey hair, wearing a dark tank top and shorts, is sitting on a rocky ledge in the foreground, looking out over a vast mountain valley. The valley is filled with green forests and a large, vibrant blue lake. The mountains in the background are rugged and covered in green vegetation, with some rocky peaks visible. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is a beautiful, scenic view of a mountain landscape.

Regional Identity





Creativity was named one of the three priorities of the Polish Presidency of the CBSS, focusing specifically on culture and the creative sectors. In the field of culture Poland was active as the CBSS Presidency, EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Culture co-coordinator and, until September 2015, as the Chair of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture. All events under this priority were coordinated by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The agenda of the Polish CBSS Presidency 'Creativity' priority focused on the following:

1. Cooperation on the political and expert level:

- The 9th Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States
- The 1st CBSS Joint Meeting on Culture with the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials
- Meetings of key platforms of cultural cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

2. The key cultural events:

- The Baltic Sea Cultural Gathering
- The Conference "Mastering the Game. Business and Legal Issues for Video Game Developers"
- The Conference "Extended Collective Licensing" which focused on copyrights

3. Project "Baltic" by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (IAM), comprising of 36 cultural projects implemented in the countries of the region.

4. The ministerial granting programme, supporting cultural projects in the Baltic Sea Region: 'The promotion of the Polish culture abroad'. Priority: Baltic Sea Region, editions 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.

5. Special initiatives:

- The international archaeological symposium "Boats and ships in archaeology"
- Postgraduate studies in the Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the Baltic Sea
- A special edition of the Herito Magazine entitled: "Balticum"
- Promotional materials and tools, including a cultural map of the Baltic Sea Region and a website on Baltic cooperation run by the Polish Ministry of Culture and the National Heritage, promoting various activities in the Baltic Sea Region.

Cooperation on the political and expert level and key cultural events:

The 9th Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States and the 1st CBSS Joint Meeting on Culture, both held on 16 September 2015, were part of the Baltic Sea Cultural Gathering, a three – day event hosted by the city of Gdańsk, Poland on 15 – 18 September 2015.

To read more on these events please check the section 'Polish Presidency Highlights'.

Within the framework of the Gathering, meetings of the following formats also took place:

- EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) National Coordinators with the participation of the Co-ordinators of the Policy Area Culture (Poland and Land Schleswig-Holstein, Germany),
- ARS BALTICA Organising Committee,
- EUSBSR PA Culture Steering Committee,
- The Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC),
- The Cultural Committee of the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC).



Senior Officials Group for Culture meeting

The meeting of Senior Officials Group for Culture was held on 15 June 2016 in the Royal Palace Łazienki in Warsaw, back – to – back with the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Policy Area Culture of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The meeting of the Senior Officials Group for Culture of the Baltic Sea States was held as a joint meeting, with the participation of representatives of other regional culture – related platforms, as recommended in the Conclusions of the 9th Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States, adopted in September 2015 in Gdańsk.

The meeting was attended by delegates from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture, ARS BALTICA network, the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage of the Baltic Sea States, coordinators of the Policy Area Culture of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the Polish National Coordinator of the EUSBSR.

Participants of both meetings had the opportunity to visit the creative spaces of Soho Factory, located in the district of Praga and attend a public space design workshops, organised within the EUSBSR Policy Area Culture in the Museum of Praga in Warsaw.

Conference “Mastering the Game. Business and Legal Issues for Video Games Developers. Baltic Sea Region Perspective”

The conference, organised by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the National Centre for Culture and the Kraków Technology Park, was held in Kraków, Poland on 4-5 November 2015.

It gathered representatives of the gaming industry, mainly producers and lawyers dealing with the intellectual property, coming from Baltic Sea Region, but also from other countries, including Austria, UK and the United States.

The main goal of the conference was to present the legal and commercial issues concerning the global gaming market. The conference also aimed at discussing the gaming sector in the Baltic Sea Region, focusing specifically on improving its competitiveness and innovation.

The conference included the following panels:

- The video games market – business models existing throughout the world, with special focus on the Baltic Sea Region.
- Legal regulations in the region concerning the video games market.
- The most important aspects of intellectual property law.
- Case studies on legal matters based on examples from Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia.
- Signing the agreement - legal aspects.
- The main challenges concerning copyrights, using the example of big corporations.
- Editor-developer relations.
- Digital distribution.
- The mobile games market.

The conference was preceded by a meeting of experts on the cultural and the creative sectors of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture.

The participants of the conference had the opportunity to listen to a compilation of music from well-known video games, prepared especially for the event in Kraków by a Polish DJ.

Participants could also visit the Wieliczka Salt Mine Museum, where they attended a concert of the band Percival, creator of the music for Poland’s most-recognised video game “The Witcher 3”.



Conference on “Extended Collective Licensing”

The conference, organised by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, was held on 16-17 March 2016 in the headquarters of the National Audiovisual Institute in Warsaw. The Institute and the World Intellectual Property Organisation were the partners of the conference.

The main goal of the event was to analyse a specific model of managing copyrights and related rights – extended collective licensing (ECL), developed in the Nordic countries in the sixties and being gradually introduced to legal systems of other European countries.

ECL is a licensing agreement maintaining the rule of the freedom of agreements among collective management organisations (CMO) and users of copyrights or related rights. It is assumed that ECL is one of the most effective mechanisms of purchasing copyrights which is of great importance for creative industries. It responds to the challenges concerning the massive exploitation of rights, including in the digital environment.

Within the framework of the conference, participants visited the exhibition in the Modern Art Centre Zamek Ujazdowski and attended a concert of the Polish singer Mika Urbaniak.



Project “Baltic” of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute

The aim of the project “Baltic”, announced by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (IAM) in January 2015, was to establish a long - term cooperation with partners from the Baltic Sea Region focusing on cultural projects.

Since the launch of the programme, dozens of projects were carried out, including an exhibition of the Polish contemporary art “Halka/Haiti” in the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius, a festival of movies of Krzysztof Kieślowski at the Danish Film Institute in Copenhagen, an exhibition of Polish photography and workshops promoting Polish cuisine and culinary traditions in Denmark and a performance by Opera Wroclawska at the Saaremaa Opera Days Festival in Estonia.

In summer 2015, IAM, the Pomeranian Film Foundation in Gdynia, the Gdynia Film Festival, and the Gdynia Film School organised a short - film competition about the Baltic Sea, entitled “Common Baltic”, focusing on the cultural identity of the region. The award ceremony was held at the 40th Film Festival in Gdynia, Poland. The three best movies, coming from Finland, Poland and Sweden were also presented during the Baltic Sea Cultural Gathering in Gdańsk in September 2015.

The Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage has also set a new priority in its programme ‘**Promotion of the Polish culture abroad**’, focusing specifically on the Baltic Sea Region. The programme aims at promoting Polish theatre, film, music, visual arts, design and literature in the region. It included projects like: “2016 – year of the Polish film in Iceland” and “Plays by Krzysztof Warlikowski” at festivals in Helsinki and Vilnius.



Special initiatives organised within the framework of the priority 'Creativity'

The international archaeological symposium "Boats and ships in archaeology"

The event was held on 21-25 September 2015 in the Polish National Maritime Museum in Gdańsk. It included a panel on underwater archaeology in the Baltic Sea which is one of the focal areas for the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States. This was the 14th edition of the conference addressed to maritime and underwater archaeologists and at the same time the 2nd organised by the National Maritime Museum in Gdańsk.

Educational project – one-year postgraduate studies on the cultural heritage of the Baltic Sea Region.

The studies were conducted by the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections and the University of Gdańsk. The Polish National Maritime Museum was the initiator and partner in the project.

Special edition of the "Herito" Magazine entitled "Balticum"

The special edition of the magazine, published by the International Cultural Centre in Kraków, focused explicitly on the Baltic Sea Region, reflecting upon various aspects of the Baltic Sea Region cultural identity: Can the Baltic Sea be named the Mediterranean of the North? Does it connect or separate the nations living around it?



What do we associate with the concept of 'Baltic-ness'? Can these factors shape regional identity? To what extent is Poland a Baltic State? The project was implemented in cooperation with the Adam Mickiewicz Institute.

Moreover, the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage launched a special webpage devoted to the Baltic Sea Region cooperation (www.mkidn.gov.pl/baltyk).



Balticlab

Balticlab, the innovation and leadership programme for creatives and entrepreneurs, run in partnership by the Swedish Institute and the Council of the Baltic Sea States, has entered its 4th year of programme. With 80 participants from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, Balticlab 4.0 launched with a Networking Weekend on 12-14 December 2015 and continued with a 3-module Ideation programme in spring 2016, to explore interdisciplinary collaboration and how to improve the societies we live in.

The Ideation programme began in Vilnius, 24-27 March 2016. During four days the 44 selected participants of the Ideation programme met, formed six project groups and started working on ideas linked to regional branding, sustainable lifestyles, artistic expression in everyday life, entrepreneurship education in rural areas, nature, festivals and the concept of home in the 21st century.

The programme continued with the second module in Kiev, Ukraine, 9-12 June 2016, where the project groups further developed their project prototypes with the help of experts from KaosPilot Business School (Denmark) and Bergs School of Communication (Sweden), in the field of prototyping, group dynamics, marketing and social media. The participants also received an introduction to the local cultural and entrepreneurial scene, with visiting speakers from Kiev, as well as the Balticlab AfterHour meetups.

This year Balticlab is collaborating with new partners. For the first time there are German participants joining the Ideation programme through a new collaboration with the Goethe Institute on creative entrepreneurship. Balticlab is also working with the Strelka Institute in Moscow, with whom the final module of the programme is organised. Balticlab 4.0 hence concludes 8-12 September 2016 at the Strelka Institute premises in Moscow, with the final team meetups, as well as an open seminar and a presentation of this year's participants projects and trends, which they find important for the development of societies in the Baltic Sea Region.

See an intro to the 4.0 projects:

THE NATURE PROJECT aims to reconnect people with nature through multi-sensory experiences. They are looking into the past and present environments of human inhabitation, whilst developing a scalable event model to draw attention to the problem of disconnectedness, spark conversation, and inspire confidence in its participants to try and reconnect with nature.

LOCAL UP is an initiative created to encourage decentralisation of culture and activities and to celebrate existing social activities outside of the big cities. The first project they plan to realise, is the Local Up Prize, which will be given to local activists from small cities and villages. Communication of the project is based on collaboration with network organisations that are already working with local communities. The creation of a web platform to share the submitted stories is also an important part of the project.

HOME wants to help people feel home. Grounded in their background as movers and through artistic research, they are exploring the concept of home and the creation of feeling at home when moving. Over the last half-year they have been collecting, interpreting and sharing stories, which they are eager to share with you.

NEW BALTICS is a public relations project, which aims to highlight the unique character of the countries in the Baltic Sea Region by using state of the art technology. Their mission is to improve the image of the region and to make it an attractive destination to visit.

PROJECT-370 is an initiative by a group of forward thinking and nature-friendly people, who believe in healthier communities and a greener environment. From independent research to consulting scientists, Project-370 is collecting all available data on how to set up urban gardens, how to adapt permaculture in cities and how to encourage people in cities to grow their own food.

LIT is an interactive light installation project with a fusion of online and offline interactions, LIT provides a medium to break social barriers and spark proactive conversations.



Creative Ports

Creative industries and start-ups are a force for growth and innovation in the Baltic Sea Region and in Europe as a whole. With 11 countries involved, Balticlab has so far offered mentorship and personal development opportunities for more than 300 young creatives and entrepreneurs. Hence this year the CBSS and Swedish Institute have combined forces with the Goethe Institute on working to support creative entrepreneurship. The Goethe Institute has a broad experience in educational and cultural projects and with its institutes in every country in the Baltic Sea Region holds a strong network of cultural actors. Together the three institutions have agreed to explore further collaboration through the project Creative Ports.

The project seeks to foster skills, instruments, training programmes and networking opportunities for the conveyance of international market access strategies for creative entrepreneurs in the Baltic Sea Region. The network of co-organisers from the Baltic Sea Region countries will form a testing platform, sharing their expertise and merging top down and bottom up approaches to foster communication between creative clusters, established institutions, international festivals and public bodies, to increase the support frameworks for creative collaborations and start-ups in the region.

Creative Ports is currently a EUSBSR Seed Money Facility project and PA Culture flagship with the Goethe Institute, Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, the Swedish Institute, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Schleswig-Holstein, Gdańsk Entrepreneurship Foundation, TSEBA/Tallinn University of Technology as partners and the Union of the Baltic Cities and Helsinki Design Week as affiliated partners. With 6 inter-linked brainstorming workshops in Munich (18-20 April 2015), Tallinn (25-26 April 2016), Helsinki (27-28 April), Kiel (2-3 May 2016), Gdańsk (12-13 May 2016) and Visby (September 2016), the project aims to develop an Interreg project application for January 2017.



EuroFaculty

EuroFaculty Pskov (EF-Pskov) was an educational development project running between 2009 – 2015 in the region of Pskov in Western Russia, close to the border of Estonia and Latvia. The aim of the project was to upgrade university education in business economics and business administration at the Pskov State University (Pskov SU). The idea was to link Pskov SU with European methods and techniques of education and the project focused on issues related to teaching, university capacity building, student activities and university-business-collaboration.

The themes of EuroFaculty Pskov were the following:

- Bachelor degree quality and sustainability
- Baltic Sea Region Business Master programme design and launch
- Innovation and Regional Development support
- Faculty Development: languages, pedagogy, research
- Mobility
- Library and infrastructure

Pskov SU has gained valuable and positive experiences in development and implementation of networking educational profiles, the organisation of academic and scientific collaboration, co-teaching and building up effective communication channels with partners representing the Baltic Sea Region.

Continuous professional training for Pskov SU teachers provided opportunities to learn from the international experience of foreign partners and to get acquainted with modern and innovative teaching and examination methods. This collaboration, along with other types of joint activities, provided a remarkable increase of English language proficiency among the Pskov SU staff involved in the project activities. Communication in English is no longer seen as a challenge for the majority of the faculty,

which is a strong asset and a competitive advantage of the faculty. Pskov SU students have also received several opportunities to get involved in the international activities through the project both at their home university as well as abroad. Representatives of partner universities gave lectures and organised seminars for the students with many individual and group activities dedicated to the development of student entrepreneurship. For those purposes, some students also got the opportunity to travel to partner universities. The participation of business representatives brought even more value, as it is important for providing real-life experience and perspective.

Another significant achievement was the improvement of the university's infrastructure, which affected the general quality of teaching and learning. Modernised library facilities and funds, computer classes and a language lab supported the educational process and acted as a tool for sustainable provision of educational services fully correspondent to modern standard.

The quality assessment at the Faculty of Finance and Economics was set up in order to examine the status and quality of the university activities. The results of the assessment will be used to make necessary improvements to sustain the quality of educational services correspondent to international standards. The quality assessment process also revealed that the Pskov SU already meets many of the standards and requirements of the criteria of the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS). The implementation and experience of the quality assessment process raised interest among other faculties, and can now be applied across the university.

The launch of the MSc programme Business in the Baltic Sea Region can be added to the achievements of the EF-Pskov project. It was launched in September 2014 at Pskov SU. The MSc programme provides numerous possibilities to get thoroughly acquainted with the business environment of the Baltic Sea Region and to learn about perspectives of developing one's business abroad, including financial, legal, cultural, organisational and other aspects in various countries of the Baltic Sea Region.

The project consortium was composed of University of Turku (project leader); Stockholm School of Economics, Russia (branch in Saint Petersburg); Trondheim Business School; Roskilde University; University of Tartu; University of Latvia; Saint Petersburg State University of Economics (UNECON) and Viadrina University in Frankfurt (Oder).

More information on the EF-Pskov project:

<http://efpskov.org/>



Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue

The Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue can be considered as a good example of public-private partnership between the Körber Foundation and the CBSS. Its main objective is to provide a platform for the countries of the Baltic Sea Region to share knowledge, form a better understanding of the shared historical background and to explore how its history affects the present - especially in terms of cultural diversity and cultural relations. Hence, "Understanding differences – overcoming divisions" was the philosophy on which the programmes have been based on so far.

Furthermore, the Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue intends to support the individual development of the participants in terms of their intercultural competences and media skills. The programme seeks to create a network of young Europeans in the Baltic Sea Region, who share common democratic values and practice active citizenship. Generating and fostering a mutual sense of regional identity in the Baltic Sea Region is therefore the overall goal of the Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue project.

2nd Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue Homeland reconsidered – new loyalties and redefined identities in Europe

On 2-9 September 2015, the Polish city of Olsztyn welcomed 50 young Europeans from 19 countries to the 2nd Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue. "Homeland reconsidered – new loyalties and redefined identities in Europe" was the topic of the second edition, in which the Körber Foundation and the CBSS continued their successful cooperation from the 1st Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue in Estonia and Russia in 2014. With additional funding from the EUSBSR, the programme in Olsztyn was run in partnership with the Warmian-Masurian Voivodship and implemented by the Borussia Foundation of Olsztyn. 70 years after the end of World War II, the aim of the Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue was yet again to bring together young Europeans in border areas of the Baltic Sea Region to develop a sense of shared belonging and identity, based on a critical approach of the national and regional past.

CBSS Summer University

In 2016 three Summer Universities took place: in Stockholm, Sweden (15 – 23 June 2016), Agder, Norway (28 June – 5 August 2016) and St. Petersburg, Russia (17-29 July 2016), with participants coming from all over the region.

At the moment, the CBSS Secretariat is serving as a contact platform, without any financial contribution. In this respect, the CBSS logo is provided to the participating universities and the Secretariat offers support with regard to the communication (information on the website, newsletters) and contacts to relevant Baltic Sea regional stakeholders, including EUBSBSR PA Education.

The future concept of the summer universities was elaborated at two stakeholder meetings. Participants of the meeting considered establishing a “CBSS Summer University Network” – comprising a list of academic institutions and contact persons interested in participating in future summer universities. The first network meeting will potentially take place in October 2016, back-to-back with the Baltic Sea Region University Annual Forum.

The Summer University organized by the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) at Södertörn University in Stockholm on 15 – 23 June 2016, referred to the cultural memory in Europe.

The course gathered 23 PhD and MA students from the Baltic Sea Region, offering 16 lectures and seminars. It was concluded that regional identity depends on joint values and common history. However, identity is among the most ambiguous terms in social and cultural sciences in general, and in the case of the Baltic Sea Region can be linked both to the turbulent past and to present developments. Culture, politics, membership in international organisations, economics, or research cooperation are among many factors that are shaping the identity of the Baltic Sea Region countries.





The Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage

Professor Małgorzata Rozbicka, Chairwoman of the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage and the Director of the Polish National Heritage Institute, presented activities of the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage at the Conference of Ministers at the 'Baltic Sea Cultural Gathering', organised by the Polish Presidency of the CBSS on 15-18 September 2016 in Gdańsk.

During the Polish Chairmanship, the Monitoring Group had two meetings, one in autumn 2015 in Oslo, Norway, and another on 18-20 April 2016 in Zakopane, Poland. During this period, the three appointed BSR Expert Working Groups in the framework of the Monitoring Group, *20th Century Built Cultural Heritage*, *Underwater Heritage* and *Coastal Heritage*, held two regional meetings each.

The Monitoring Group's priorities during the Polish Chairmanship were the implementation of the agreed long-term targets of the group; the preparation of the 6th Baltic Sea Region Cultural Heritage Forum (28-30 September 2016 in Kiel) and the enhancement of the Monitoring Group's EUSBSR PA Culture flagship on integration of the Baltic Sea Maritime Heritage to the regional approach of the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP).

At the meeting in April in Zakopane, Poland, the Monitoring Group became familiar with heritage management in Poland, focusing on the case of Zakopane, a popular tourist destination in the Polish Tatra Mountains.

The preparation of the initiative "Sharing Heritage – European Cultural Heritage Year 2018" was discussed. The Monitoring Group meetings agenda also included the Council of Europe (CoE) Enlarged Partial Agreement of Cultural Routes (EPA) and the Council of Europe Cultural Routes Advisory Forum in Vilnius, 26-28 October 2016, where the enlargement of the EPA member states and CoE Cultural Routes will be in focus, and where Baltic Sea Region common heritage will be highlighted.

EUSBSR PA Culture Flagship Baltic Sea Region Integrated Maritime Heritage Management

The flagship initiative 'BSR Integrated Maritime Heritage Management' was prepared within the internal strategic Pro BSR project in 2014-15 and co-funded by the Project Support Facility (PSF) of the CBSS. While mapping the current regional operative environment for heritage cooperation, the *'Monitoring Group Strategy for 2015-2020'* stressed the necessity of integrating heritage concerns and awareness of other regional approaches. The BSR Action Plan of Maritime Heritage in the framework of the Monitoring Group, based on this Monitoring Group Strategy, highlighted the regional process of creating best policies and practices for the implementation of the EU Directive of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) by 2021. The work is led by a Joint Working Group of the CBSS, VASAB and HELCOM.

With this in mind, the Pro BSR project in the framework of the Monitoring Group created the EUSBSR PA Culture flagship initiative *BSR Integrated Maritime Heritage Management*, with its flagship status approved at the meeting of National Coordinators of the EUSBSR on 15 September 2015 in Gdańsk, Poland.

The EUSBSR Seed Money application was developed, which together with the regional network of MSP-experts (SUBMARINER) will prepare a cross-sector project application to the BSR Interreg programme.

More information on the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage: <http://mg.kpd.it/>



ARS BALTICA

Speaking up for culture as the driving force for social well-being and a sustainable society

The cultural initiative ARS BALTICA has focused on the following during the past year:

- Activating cross-sectorial potential of cultural cooperation in the region
- Increasing the online and offline visibility for cultural projects in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond
- Supporting the development of cultural projects with great prospects
- Participating in innovative international cultural projects
- Supporting the EUSBSR Policy Area Culture (PA Culture) in communication
- Hosting workshops for PA Culture and drafting proposals, maintaining close links to regional decision makers and stakeholders while sharing its expertise
- Attending international gatherings and hosting ARS BALTICA Creative Dialogues

Most recently, ARS BALTICA joined the partner consortium of the British-led initiative Creative Climate Leadership (CCL), which was granted Creative Europe Funding for 2016 – 2019. CCL seeks to make international cultural leaders aware of their ability and responsibility to develop a more sustainable society together with “green” actors and policy makers. It was chosen from among 404 applications for the small Creative Europe Program and has seven partners in total from Great Britain, France, Belgium, Slovenia and Serbia. As the only actor within the CCL partner-consortium from the Baltic Sea Region, ARS BALTICA will be working on integrating cultural actors from the whole region into the project, communicating the project’s proceedings into the region and actively promoting developed strategies. Similarly to the involvement in CCL, ARS BALTICA aims at supporting the next steps of the projects Culturability and Creative Ports. Moreover, the innovative project Baltic Warriors, facilitated by ARS BALTICA which engages people in saving the Baltic Sea from pollution via interactive online and offline gaming, is currently developing a follow-up project with a new and wider approach with actors from the ecological sector.

ARS BALTICA is putting more effort in providing media-upscaling. In order to increase the international visibility of the projects, ARS BALTICA has teamed up with two online platforms for a trial partnership: Scandinavia Standard and Up North.

Since the establishment of the EUSBSR Policy Area Culture in 2013 ARS BALTICA has also been a strong partner in carrying out initiatives together with the Ministry for Culture and National Heritage of Poland and the Ministry for Culture and European Affairs of Land



Schleswig-Holstein. ARS BALTICA supports PA Culture communication activities both online and offline, and has contributed with its expertise to making the PA Culture workshops and seminars successful. Most recently, ARS BALTICA hosted and organised two PA Culture Strategic Project Development Workshops in Rendsburg, Germany in May 2015 and in Copenhagen in December 2015. ARS BALTICA has introduced the PA Culture Newsletter and the PA Culture social media presence on Facebook. For the next EUSBSR Forum in Stockholm in November 2016, ARS BALTICA has in cooperation with the PA Culture co-ordinators drafted a session on “Cultural Diversity”, which intends to highlight the integrative potential of cultural projects in the Baltic Sea Region.

ARS BALTICA has started a new format “AB-Creative Dialogue” in order to create an ongoing dialogue with local cultural players about their ambitions and ideas in their respective countries. By establishing these platforms for dialogue, local projects can grow into international ones.

At the most recent CBSS Senior Official Group of Culture meeting in Warsaw in June 2016, ARS BALTICA reported about recent developments and announced the roadmap ahead.

More information on ARS BALTICA: www.arsbaltica.net

European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) Horizontal Action Neighbours

During the Polish Presidency Horizontal Action Neighbours (HA Neighbours) continued promoting dialogue and cooperation between multilevel stakeholders in the EU and Iceland and Norway as well as Belarus and the North Western territories of Russia.

On 7 October 2015, the CBSS Secretariat Director General Mr Jan Lundin, participated together with representatives from the HA Neighbours co-coordinator city of Turku, in a workshop in Oslo, explaining the EUSBSR and the CBSS to Norwegian stakeholders involved in the Baltic Sea cooperation. One of the outcomes of the meeting was an increased Norwegian interest in engaging in the Baltic Science Network project of the EU Interreg BSR Programme. On 12 May 2015 a similar workshop took place in Reykjavik, with Icelandic stakeholders.

On 19-20 October 2015 the CBSS Secretariat co-organised two workshops at the yearly Strategic Forum conference in St. Petersburg. One of the presentations by Policy Area and Horizontal Area Coordinators highlighted issues relevant in the EUSBSR from the Russian perspective, such as climate, civil security, spatial planning. In addition, a representative from the BSR

Interreg Programme explained the modalities of the first call of the programme, as well as the potential possibilities for Russian stakeholders ahead of the second call. The second workshop discussed interfacing between the Russian Strategy for Socio-economic Development of the North-West Federal District, and the EUSBSR.

On 23 March 2016 the second HA Neighbours workshop on 'common ground between regional strategies' was held during the Baltic Sea Days Conference in St. Petersburg, gauging the progress made since the October event, and ahead of the second call of the Strategy. A third workshop, presenting the Russian North West Strategy for EUSBSR stakeholders, has been planned for the Stockholm EUSBSR Conference on 8-9 November 2016.

During the Baltic Sea Days Conference in St. Petersburg, HA Neighbours also co-organised a seminar on Environmental Education with the Baltic Sea Challenge.





**Sustainable
and
Prosperous
Region**





Science Cooperation – Baltic Science Network and TRAM

For almost a decade, since the 2007 CBSS Latvian Presidency Chair's Conclusions adopted in Riga at the High Level Meeting on Education and Science, the CBSS has reinstated its intention to engage more actively in strengthening science-related cooperation. Consequently, this commitment was brought to the fore by the Polish CBSS Presidency, which set out under its sustainability priority to promote Baltic Sea Region wide cooperation in the field of science, research and innovation.

On 15 – 16 June 2016 the Chair's efforts resulted in the first CBSS Science Ministerial, which took place in Kraków, Poland. It was the first time when CBSS Member States focused specifically on science, research and innovation across the Baltic Sea Region. Participants reflected on the existing EU and national level collaboration tools, as well as on enhancing awareness of the specific topics that could be addressed in joint initiatives in the future. The Ministerial served as a timely occasion to reflect on the current CBSS science agenda and the recently launched macro-regional scale cooperation projects, namely, *Baltic Transnational Research Access in the Macroregion* (Baltic TRAM) and the *Baltic Science Network* (BSN).

The meeting was concluded with remarks to the Polish Chair's Conclusions "*Baltic Science: Renewing the Commitment to Science/Research Joint Actions in the Baltic Sea Region*". The document declared an updated cooperation agenda, including steps to be taken in order to provide new impetus to the Baltic Sea Region-wide science, research and innovation potential.

The CBSS Science Ministerial was followed by the Political Kick-Off Event of the **Baltic Science Network**. The project aims at developing and implementing transnational strategies, incentives and programmes to

support higher education, research and innovation infrastructures to become better transnationally interconnected and to develop research and innovation excellence.

The BSN Political Kick-Off Event highlighted how the BSN partnership is embedded in the BSR cooperation structures. It brings together not only regional and national authorities, but also a list of Baltic Sea Region-wide experienced actors such as the Baltic Sea Region University Network, Baltic University Programme, BONUS, and the STRING partnership. The CBSS Secretariat, as one of the most established Baltic Sea regional actors, contributes to the BSN communication, focusing its strategic efforts on facilitating internal communication among the 20 BSN partners and associates, as well as ensuring awareness of the project and tools to be developed by the BSN among wider audiences.

BSN was also acknowledged as a flagship of the Policy Area Education, Research, and Employability by the National Coordinators of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), on 28 June 2016 in Warsaw, Poland. Therefore, BSN serves as a good example of how the CBSS science, research and innovation agenda feeds into other cooperation structures and complements various multilateral collaboration efforts.

The other major project of the CBSS science, research and innovation agenda is the Interreg-funded **Baltic TRAM**. It seeks to strengthen the relationship between analytical research institutions and business, by establishing structures for cooperation between companies and researchers and linking expertise to concrete industrial needs. The project will establish national Industrial Research Centres to serve as interfaces between analytical research institutes and companies. Baltic TRAM builds on the findings of the previous project Science Link, which is also a EUSBSR flagship under the Policy Area Innovation.

The project involves 16 project partners, as well as five associated organisations. The project partners are

DESY (Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron), University of Latvia, University of Turku, Kainuun Etu, Invest in Skåne, University of Southern Denmark, Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht Zentrum für Material- und Küstenforschung, Heinrich Hertz Institute, Jagiellonian University (JU) in Kraków, Polish Academy of Sciences, Foundation of Innovative Initiatives from Poland, Baltic Development Forum, University of Tartu, the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, Skåne Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology and Innovation.

During the Polish Presidency, the CBSS took part in Baltic TRAM meetings and provided updates on the ongoing research of national smart specialisation implementation structures, as well as informed project partners on the latest developments of the CBSS science, research and policy agenda. TRAM held its kick-off on 7-8 March 2016 in Zeuthen/Berlin and the Opening Conference of Baltic TRAM will take place in October 2016 in Hamburg. The CBSS Secretariat will host a partner meeting in September 2016.

The Expert Group on Maritime Policy (EGMP)

Following the decision of the Committee of Senior Officials on the prolongation of the EGMP mandate until mid-2018, the Expert Group on Maritime Policy revised its Terms of Reference in order to reshape its ability to serve as a value-added tool for regional cooperation. Key tasks will focus on keeping maritime issues on the member-states policy makers' agenda, including initiating meetings of Ministers of Transport, exchanging information on the member-states' national maritime policies and strategies, and promoting clean shipping in the Baltic Sea.

Three regular meetings and a thematic seminar have been held under the Polish EGMP Chairmanship, where amongst others Norway, Poland and Sweden presented their newly adopted national maritime policy documents. The Expert Group was present at the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Transport Ministerial Meeting in Arkhangelsk, Russia on 21 June 2016. The meeting in Arkhangelsk was attended also by Mr Bernd Hemingway, Deputy Director General of the CBSS Secretariat.

The EGMP will continue positioning the CBSS as a valuable partner in Baltic Sea Maritime Dialogue, taking full account of the activities within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (PA Ship and PA Safe) and the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics. Within the frame of the Dialogue, the EGMP together with HELCOM Maritime Working Group organised the workshop *Partnerships for Green Shipping* during the European Maritime Day 2016 in Turku, Finland, which aimed at promoting blue growth in shipping through partnerships, both public-private and business-to-business, whereas



the business-to-business partnership was addressed by Zero Vision Tool (Sweden) and Napa Oy (Finland).

During the Polish CBSS Presidency the EGMP accepted the invitation to become an observer to the Reference Group of Zero Vision Tool (ZVT) - a collaboration method and tool for a safer, more environmental-friendly, energy efficient as well as more profitable transport at sea. The ZVT, developed in 2011, has its roots in Sweden, when in 2009 the Swedish Shipowners' Association committed to the goals of the European Maritime Policy, as well as to the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The ZVT Reference Group consists of representatives from government agencies and administrations, as well as industry representatives. Two other institutions that currently have the observer status are the Swedish Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communication and the Swedish Ministry of Environment.

The Expert Group's project orientation has been pursued through its participation in the International Steering Committee of the EUSBSR PA Ship, as well as by pre-selecting and suggesting relevant projects to be financed through the CBSS Project Support Facility (PSF). The "Small and medium-sized ports development challenges" project, lead by Turku University, was approved for PSF funding during the Polish CBSS Presidency.



Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF)

BSLF is a tripartite Forum for Social Dialogue in the Baltic Sea Region, which was established in 2011 as one of the main results of the BSLN project. It consists of 28 member organisations (social partners) and observers from around the Baltic Sea Region and promotes cross-border cooperation in the labour market.

The BSLF serves as a platform for exchange of experiences and communication between social partners and other key labour market actors in the Baltic Sea Region. This is realised through member meetings, projects and the Annual Round Table Meeting. The main focus areas are youth employment and mobility of labour.

The BSLF aims to promote social dialogue, tripartite structures and cooperation as crucial elements of sustainable growth and social development in the Baltic Sea Region.

BSLF and the BSLFmobINIT organised a BSLF Round Table Meeting on 18 November 2015 in Gdańsk, Poland within the framework of the Polish CBSS Presidency, back-to-back with the BSLFmobINIT final meeting. For more information on the Round Table, please check the 'Presidency Highlights' section.

The Baltic Sea Labour Forum is a EUSBSR flagship under the action social inclusion of the Priority Area Education – Developing innovative education and youth.

The future activities of the BSLF, including labour mobility, were discussed in March 2016 at a meeting at the CBSS Secretariat, with stakeholders such as Föreningen Norden (EUSBSR Policy Area Education Coordinator/PAC Education), the Swedish Institute, the Council of Nordic Trade Unions/BASTUN, and representatives of the Swedish Foreign Ministry as organisers of the 7th Strategy Forum of EUSBSR in Stockholm in November 2016, when the next BSLF Annual Round Table will also take place.

The BSLF was presented by the CBSS Secretariat at the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Standing Committee Meeting in Liepāja, Latvia on 27 May 2016.



VASAB

The aim of the VASAB Polish chairmanship was to support an integrated territorially oriented approach (place-based approach) in the programming and implementation of public policies at different spatial scales and thematic areas.

VASAB contributed to the development of the EU Urban Agenda - Pact of Amsterdam. The VASAB opinion on establishment of an EU Urban Agenda was prepared and delivered to the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the EU on 15 March 2016.

In addition, VASAB organised a workshop on urban revitalisation in Łódź, Poland, on 28 October 2015 and elaborated an overview of national approaches to the urban revitalisation in the Baltic Sea Region countries in spring 2016.

The VASAB conference "Achieving Good Living Environment: territory matters. What's beyond 2030 for macro-regions?" was organised in Warsaw, Poland, on 7 June 2016. The conference summarised the strategic processes and activities taking place in Europe, with particular emphasis on the Baltic Sea Region, and presented progress in the implementation of the territorially oriented approach made since the last VASAB Conference "Integrated Approach to the Spatial Development of Europe - Meaning of Territorial Cohesion" held in February 2011 in Warsaw. During the conference a VASAB publication on the development of cities within the Baltic Sea Region was presented.

The Polish chairmanship ensured continued work of the Baltic Sea countries in developing coherent maritime spatial planning.

On 24 February 2016, the VASAB Workshop on Assessment of Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2013-2020 was held in Gdańsk, Poland. The workshop assessed the introduction of maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region and



identified the interests and future needs beyond the current Roadmap. Taking note of the findings of the workshop, VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region (CSPD) and HELCOM agreed on the extension of the mandate of the joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group.

Two meetings of the joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG took place, focusing on the approximation of a shared vision for the Baltic Sea and the definition of the consistent rules for cross-border spatial planning. The Working Group agreed on the 'Guideline for the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach in MSP in the Baltic Sea area' and on the 'Guidelines on transboundary consultations, public participation and co-operation'. Additionally, four meetings of the Baltic Sea Region Maritime Spatial Planning Data Expert Subgroup were carried out.

Baltic Sea States cooperation on spatial planning was promoted as a role model at a number of conferences, including the Baltic Landscape Forum in September 2015 in Riga, the All-Russian Forum "Strategic Planning in the Regions and Cities of Russia" in October 2015 in St. Petersburg, the European Open Days in October 2015 in Brussels, the ESPON Seminar "A world without borders - Refugees, cooperation and territories" in December 2015 in Luxembourg and the European Maritime Day in May 2016 in Turku.

During the Polish chairmanship VASAB has strengthened the coordination with other important pan-Baltic organisations like the Union of Baltic Cities, as well as within the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

VASAB together with HELCOM is the coordinator of the Horizontal Action Spatial Planning within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

During the Polish chairmanship several new projects have been launched in the field of coherent cross-border maritime spatial planning, renewable energy planning, urban campus development and integration of maritime cultural heritage in MSP processes.

The VASAB Polish chairmanship will continue till 31 December 2016.



Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation – BASREC

BASREC was initiated at the 1st Meeting of the CBSS Energy Ministers in 1998 under the umbrella of the Council of the Baltic Sea States as an intergovernmental network.

The main topics pursued by BASREC are energy efficiency and renewable energy measures as well as clean-tech solutions in order to support green growth.

Following the decision on revision of the BASREC format after 2015, the involved parties will meet on an *ad hoc* basis, based on mutual interest on regional energy issues. The new initiatives post-2015, which require dedicated financing, will be discussed and decided on a case-by-case basis.

The Polish Presidency of BASREC focused on activities related to energy efficiency, usage of the electric cars in the context of energy security of the region, development of the regional gas market and Carbon Capture and Storage technologies (CCS).

The 3rd Regional CCS Conference was hosted by the Polish Ministry of Economy on 29-30 October 2015 in Warsaw. Around 40 participants discussed the challenges and opportunities for the CCS development in the Baltic Sea Region.

On 17 November 2015 the Polish National Energy Conservation Agency (KAPE) together with the Polish Ministry of Economy organised the conference “Increasing energy efficiency through public-private partnership projects in the BASREC-countries”. The opening session was dedicated to the European policy and the current outlook of the PPP projects in Poland. A database with more than 100 PPP projects in Denmark, Finland and Germany was presented to the participants.

On 30 June – 1 July 2016 the Energy-Efficient Construction Centre (MCBE) in Małopolska, Kraków, Poland, hosted a meeting of BASREC Group of Senior Energy Officials.



Expert Group on Sustainable Development –Baltic 2030 (EGSD – Baltic 2030)

One of the three priorities of the CBSS Polish Presidency, Sustainability, referred among other things to the development of a new, regional agenda for sustainable development post 2015, as a regional expression of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; climate change adaptation and enhanced cooperation with other regional formats, dealing with sustainable development, in order to ensure effective management on sustainable development in the region.

Renewal of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development Mandate

The new Mandate of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development - Baltic 2030 was approved on 13 April 2016. The overall mission of Baltic 2030 is to support the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region and facilitate the translation of sustainable development policies into actions on a regional and national level. With its multi-stakeholder network, Baltic 2030 is building purpose-oriented partnerships, commissioning studies, conducting trainings, facilitating projects and providing policy input. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015 form the general basis for Baltic 2030 future cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.

The main tasks of the EGSD:

- Developing a new Sustainable Development Action Plan (“Baltic 2030”) for the Baltic Sea Region.
- Supporting the implementation of Sustainable



Development Goals (SDGs) by fostering coordinated Sustainable Development governance and related activities of stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region, taking into account the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and other relevant regional strategies and action plans.

- Strengthening sustainable development governance in the Baltic Sea Region by exchanging and dissemination of best practices, also through the instrument of voluntary peer reviews.

During the Polish CBSS presidency, three EGSD meetings were organised.

The 13th meeting was held on 28 October 2015 in Warsaw, an informal meeting on the EGSD - Baltic 2030 mandate took place on 17 February 2016 in Warsaw and the 14th meeting of the EGSD was held on 11 March 2016 in Warsaw.

The main discussions were related to the further implementation of the CBSS long term priority 'Sustainable and Prosperous Region', activities relevant to the EGSD and the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals in the Baltic Sea Region.

At the **13th EGSD Meeting**, Poland introduced the CBSS Polish Presidency proposal on a new sustainable development agenda post 2015 for the Baltic Sea Region and future plans for sustainable development cooperation within the CBSS. The CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) approved the prolongation of the EGSD Mandate in a meeting on 3 December 2015, and invited the Expert Group to provide information on their activities on a regular basis, in particular during the coming year of priority setting. The informal EGSD meeting focused on the finalisation of the new Mandate of the Expert Group and agreed to change the name of the Expert Group from "Baltic 21" to "Baltic 2030" to adequately reflect its link-

ages to the latest UN decisions in the field of sustainable development.

The **14th meeting** focused on drafting the CBSS Declaration "Baltic 2030: Renewing the Commitment to Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region". Moreover, the countries discussed the preparation of the Political Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals organised within the 7th EUSBSR Strategy Forum on 9 November 2016 and agreed to initiate a new Seed Money project to prepare a project on SDGs capacity building, awareness rising and the establishment of an online learning and information exchange platform to support the implementation of the SDGs in the Baltic Sea Region.

Declaration "Baltic 2030: Renewing the Commitment to Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region"

On 6 June 2016, the high level representatives of the CBSS government institutions responsible for sustainable development adopted the CBSS Declaration "Baltic 2030: Renewing the Commitment to Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region".

With the Declaration, the Baltic Sea Region countries reaffirmed their commitment to take "*bold and transformative steps, which are urgently needed*" and to jointly realise the vision of sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region, in alignment with the UN 2030 Agenda. It was also decided that an Action Plan of Cooperative and Synergistic Work on Sustainable Development – Baltic 2030 should be elaborated, to identify the thematic areas and collaborative actions, where complementary or supplemental dialogues are needed. The Baltic 2030 Declaration paves the way for a more coherent, systematic and better coordinated cooperation in the field of sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region.



The document also provides recommendations for future implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region that will be used during the future discussions on drafting “Baltic 2030” activities:

- The regional level could serve as a platform for monitoring the implementation of activities in selected Baltic Sea Region Sustainable Development areas in order to facilitate a more coherent progress in relation to shared Sustainable Development goals.
- More frequent interactions and communication between macro-regional stakeholders is needed to reduce possible overlaps, and to increase the coherence of Sustainable Development activities.
- Macro-regional entities should be viewed as legitimate governance stakeholders. Their position should be acknowledged to a greater extent, especially by national Sustainable Development stakeholders.

The Baltic 2030 network is open to stakeholders, who are active throughout the region, have competence in a field that is relevant to sustainable development, and would like to contribute to the overall mission of Baltic 2030. Beside the government representatives from nine CBSS countries, twelve Pan-Baltic and international organisations and other Baltic Sea Region stakeholders, such as the Nordic Council of Ministers, HELCOM, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Union of the Baltic Cities, VASAB, Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation, Baltic Development Forum, Nordregio, Baltic University Programme, Coalition Clean Baltic, European Environment & School Initiatives and IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute, have joined the EGSD-Baltic 2030 as full members.

Activities

The CBSS Baltic 2030 Report “Assessing the status of sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region: a macro-regional perspective”.

To read more about the Report please check the section ‘Publications of the Council of the Baltic Sea States’.

Clean and Safe Baltic Sea

On 30 June 2015, during the Almedalen Political Week in Visby, Sweden, the Polish CBSS Presidency organised the seminar “Clean and Safe Baltic Sea”. The seminar presented an important aspect of regional safety – a clean environment and quality of the Baltic Sea waters. The seminar was organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in cooperation with the European Commission Representation in Sweden. The representatives of the Polish Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, the European Commission Representation in Sweden, the CBSS Secretariat, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute and the Polish Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, were among the speakers.

European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) Annual Conference “Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the EU and national level: Designing effective governance architectures and strategic frameworks”

Baltic 2030 was invited to introduce its work at the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) Annual Conference, organised by the ESDN Secretariat and the EU Luxembourg Presidency on 8-9 October 2015 in Luxembourg. The main aim was to discuss how the 2030 Agenda and SDGs will be implemented at the EU and the national level in Europe, which governance architecture and strategic frameworks need to be set up, and how the different stakeholder groups can be involved in the implementation process.

Seminar “Water: Today’s Challenges and Future Solutions”

On 25 November 2015, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Stockholm in cooperation with the Swedish Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), the CBSS Secretariat and the Suecia Polonia Bro Association organised the seminar “Water: Today’s Challenges and Future Solutions”. The aim of the seminar was to present Polish and Swedish efforts aimed at improving the state of the Baltic Sea environment through effective wastewater treatment.

Facilitating the BSR actions during the second European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW), 30 May – 5 June 2016

The ESDW is a European-wide initiative to stimulate and visualise activities, projects and events that promote sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It takes place every year from 30 May until 5 June. The CBSS Baltic 2030 is an official partner of the ESDW by distributing information and encouraging the Baltic Sea Region countries and organisations to join the ESDW. In total 1280 events from the region were registered as a part of the ESDW.

Benelux Union and the Council of the Baltic Sea States Joint Workshop on Macro-regional Cooperation on Climate Change Adaptation

On 9 May 2016 the Benelux Union and the Council of the Baltic Sea States had their first Joint Workshop on Macro-regional Cooperation on Climate Change Adaptation hosted by the Benelux Union in Brussels. The workshop aimed at defining the role and added value of macro-regional cooperation on Climate Change Adaptation in Europe. It focused particularly on governance aspects. All participating macro-regional organisations expressed their commitment to organise similar workshops to develop the cross-regional cooperation and address the challenges of Climate Change Adaptation. The findings and discussions

from the workshop, which took place a day prior to the EU Conference on Climate Adaptation Futures Conference in Rotterdam, have been presented to the European Commission.

Baltic 2030 Cooperation with Russia and Belarus

Thanks to additional contribution from the Swedish Ministry of Environment, the EGSD-Baltic 2030 implemented the following activities:

The seminar **“Competence-building and Involvement of Belarusian and Russian NGO Stakeholders in Baltic Sea Region Cooperation on Sustainable Development”** was held on 15-16 December 2015 in Stockholm. The seminar aimed to increase capacity and competence of environmental NGOs from Belarus and the North-West part of Russia in developing successful projects and to establish contacts with NGOs from other BSR countries for future initiatives related to sustainable development. The representatives of the Swedish Institute, Forum Syd, the Baltic Sea Conservation Foundation from Germany, SWEDES Uppsala University, and Swedish Environmental NGOs, mapped the needs and interests of the participants and discussed potential future projects.

The seminar **“Green Solutions and Technologies of Success for Sustainable Regional and Local Development of the North West Russia”** was organised on 21 December 2015 in Pskov, Russia, in cooperation with the Leontjef Centre from St. Petersburg and the Pskov Region Info NGO. The seminar focused on green approaches in municipal service management, greenways and eco-mobility strategies and Urban-Rural Partnerships for sustainable regional and local development in North-West Russia (as a follow up of the NCM’s financed project “Rural innovations”).

**European
Union
Strategy for
the Baltic
Sea Region
(EUSBSR)
Horizontal
Action
Climate**







Horizontal Action Climate, coordinated by the CBSS EGSD-Baltic 2030, focuses on low emissions development and climate adaptation.

HA Climate aims at:

- Facilitating integrative cross-sectorial policy discussions and alignment of policies, including mainstreaming of climate change into sector policies.
- Promotion of low emission and climate resilient development.
- Initiating regional cooperation on implementation of the EU climate and energy policy goals.
- Promoting sustainable production and consumption-oriented measures.

Projects

In October 2015 the following new project applications have been submitted for the EUSBSR Seed Money Facility:

- CO₂ Geological Storage in the Baltic Sea Region (CGS Baltic), led by the Geological Survey of Finland.
- Baltic Expert Network for Greenhouse Gas Inventory (BENGGI), led by the Latvian Ministry of Environment.
- Development and adaptation of landslide monitoring methods (SLOPE), led by the Union Geo-Dynamica, Latvia.
- Sustainable Urban Mobility and Commuting in Baltic Cities (SUMBA), led by the Baltic Environmental Forum, Germany.
- Sustainable and Ethical Adaptation to Rising Mean Sea Levels SEA-RIMS, led by the KTH, Sweden.
- Capacities for Building Innovative Ecosystem of Local Food PRO-LOCAL, led by the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics.
- Baltic Smart Cities Towards Energy Efficiency and Zero CO₂ Emission Baltic Zero, led by the City of Tartu, Estonia.

Several new projects were initiated by the stakeholders with the support of HA Climate:

- Baltic Regional Cooperation on Urban Waste to Biogas – RECO W2B, led by the Swedish Environmental Research Institute IVL.

- Enhancing the use of biogas for urban transport Urban Biogas Hubs, led by HOG Energi, Norway.

- Effective Financing Tools for implementing Energy Efficiency in Buildings EFFECT 4 buildings, led by the County Board of Dalarna, Sweden.

- Developing Utilities and Abilities in Low Carbon Logistics for Entrepreneurial Baltic Sea Ports DUAL PORTS Baltic, led by the Municipality Frederikshavn, Denmark.

- Sustainable and Ethical Adaptation to Rising Mean Sea Levels SEA-RIMS, led by the KTH, Sweden.

- Capacities for Building Innovative Ecosystem of Local Food PRO-LOCAL, led by the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics.

- Baltic Smart Cities Towards Energy Efficiency and Zero CO₂ Emission Baltic Zero, led by the City of Tartu, Estonia.

A large flock of birds, likely geese or swans, is captured in flight against a warm, golden sunset sky. The birds are silhouetted against the bright light, creating a sense of movement and natural beauty. In the foreground, a body of water reflects the light, and a line of reeds or tall grasses is visible. The overall atmosphere is serene and peaceful.

HA Climate flagship project - Baltic Sea Region Climate Dialogue Platform

The BSR Climate Change Dialogue Platform is a strategic action initiated by Baltic 2030 (formerly Baltic 21) to facilitate coordination and knowledge exchange among the member states and to support the development and implementation of the national climate policies and advance joint climate actions in the Baltic Sea Region. In June 2015, it was decided to include the Platform as a new flagship under the EUSBSR HA Climate.

5th Climate Change Round Table was organised on 29 October 2015 in Warsaw. The meeting was co-chaired by the Polish Ministry of Environment and focused on adaptation policy development and frameworks. The European Commission introduced the summary of the Baltic Sea Region country fiches of the EU Adaptation Preparedness Scoreboard. The Secretariat of the Baltic Earth Programme provided an overview of the results of the 2nd Assessment of Climate Change in the Baltic Sea basin. Estonia introduced the results of the survey on indicators and parameters, while Poland informed the group on local actions on climate change. The meeting also exchanged information on preparations for COP21 and discussed the cooperation with other EU macro-regions. To read more about the Round Table, please check the 'Presidency Highlights' section.

On 28 October 2015 a **Joint Meeting on Sustainable Development** with the focus on climate change adaptation was organised by the Polish CBSS Presidency. To read more about the Joint Meeting, please check the 'Presidency Highlights' section.

Safe and Secure Region





Safe & Secure Region is one of the three long-term priorities of the CBSS and is dedicated to enhancing societal security and safety. The portfolio covers a variety of issues, ranging from child protection, combatting human-trafficking to emergency preparedness, prevention, response and recovery in man-made and environmental disasters and nuclear safety. A multidisciplinary and cross-border approach is applied to strengthen societal resilience and regional capacity-building. Several specialised CBSS-related networks of border guard, civil protection institutions, police networks and prosecutors support the regional cooperation and connect all relevant stakeholders.

The Warsaw Declaration, adopted by the Deputy Foreign Ministers on 8 June 2016, states the continuous commitment of the CBSS to addressing the long-term stability and prosperity of the Baltic Sea Region, and further proposed increased focus on issues such as the fight against trafficking in human beings, child safety, organised crime, as well as border management and nuclear and radiation safety. The Warsaw Declaration also emphasises the Polish Presidency's successful efforts in enhancing the cooperation in civil protection, as a means to strengthening resilience in the region against emergencies, crisis and disaster.



Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB)

In line with its Strategy for 2015-2017, the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) continued to engage in the endeavour to counteract all forms of trafficking in human beings in the CBSS Member States by preventive and protective activities.

Three TF-THB meetings were held under the Polish Presidency. The 1st meeting was hosted in the Reception Estate of the Ministry of the Interior and presented a large variety of ongoing anti-trafficking efforts in Poland. The 2nd meeting highlighted the extensive anti-trafficking training efforts implemented in Poland and other member states. The 3rd meeting focused on strategic actions and priorities of the TF-THB and discussed future directions and ways forward in counteracting trafficking in human beings in the Baltic Sea Region.

During the reported period the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings focused on actions that facilitate and strengthen partnerships, exchange of knowledge and capacity building between key actors at different levels in the region, identifying instances of exploitation and to assisting victims of all forms of human trafficking. The TF-THB participated in various anti-trafficking events together with the Nordic Council of Ministers, the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator Office, DG Home, the Dutch EU Presidency, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, the OSCE Special Representative on Trafficking in Human Beings, the Alliance Expert Coordination Team, and the International Organization for Migration. The TF-THB also further intensified its cooperation with CBSS Observer States in their counter-trafficking activities by training foreign consular officials and concluding the joint project “Trace – Trafficking as a criminal enterprise”.

Main achievements

STROM – Strengthening the Role of Municipalities in the Work against Trafficking in Human Beings

In January 2016 the CBSS TF-THB in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia, finalised the transnational STROM-project. It aimed to strengthen the capacity and role of municipalities in the work against trafficking in human beings in the Baltic Sea Region, which is especially important in the context of the current migration situation. Migrants can be exploited for many different purposes: e.g. for sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced begging and forced criminality. All these forms of exploitation have specific implications for the local communities, cities and municipalities.

The project was funded by the CBSS Project Support Facility, the Swedish Institute and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia. The project concluded with the launch of *Guidelines for Municipalities: Stepping up Local Action against Human Trafficking* in 10 languages. The innovative guidelines offer concrete measures on what municipalities can do to map out the local situation and identify citizens at risk, as well as improving assistance to victims and enhancing prevention efforts at the local level. Additionally, the guidelines include several promising practices and models to encourage municipalities to use innovative means to counteract human trafficking at the local level, e.g. the ‘Tampere cooperation model’ and a Latvian project, which involves librarians in the work against trafficking. The guidelines emphasise the mapping of the trafficking situation, as the key action from which local priorities and all anti-trafficking actions should be set. By assigning clear roles for different actors, it is then possible to save resources, target measures and minimise overlaps in the system. Further, indicators of different forms of exploitation are provided, as well as a detailed assistance scheme to ensure rights-based and victim-centred assistance to trafficked persons.

A follow-up project **STROM II** was developed to focus on the concrete implementation of the *Guidelines for Municipalities*. The project aims to develop a local referral mechanism and to provide local stakeholders with expert knowledge and tools to efficiently deal with human trafficking cases. Moreover, STROM II seeks to improve preventive work in the municipalities, specifically targeting the groups at risk of being trafficked. The project is financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Swedish Institute, and will be implemented in 2016-2017 in eight chosen municipalities in the Baltic countries and North-West Russia in cooperation with Nordic trafficking experts. The project partners include the Ministries of Interior of Latvia and Lithuania, the NGO ‘Living for Tomorrow’ from Estonia and the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Red Cross.



TRACE – Trafficking as a Criminal Enterprise

TRACE was a two-year project financed by the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7). The project aimed to support stakeholders in combating trafficking in human beings by assessing and consolidating the information surrounding perpetrators and the wider trafficking enterprise, in order to make policy recommendations for disrupting this activity. The second half of the project focused on the organisation of several stakeholder workshops across Europe, and delved into the current and future trends in the modus operandi of traffickers, including travel routes to and within Europe; the profiles of traffickers; use of technology related to human trafficking as a criminal enterprise and the social, political and economic environment in which the business of trafficking thrives.

The TF-THB organised a workshop presenting the results of the TRACE-project and the policy implications of future trends in human trafficking on 29 February 2016. Stakeholders from law enforcement, civil society, international organisations, policy makers and practitioners, and the TF-THB delegates gathered in Stockholm to discuss new and emerging trends in human trafficking, the impact of migration on the trafficking situation and new and innovative means of trafficking prevention. The overall goal of the workshop was to collect and discuss recommendations on human trafficking as a criminal enterprise.

The TRACE-project was concluded at the end of April 2016 with the final conference taking place in Brussels and the launch of the report "TRACEing Human Trafficking – Handbook for Policy Makers, Law Enforcement Authorities and Civil Society Organisations". The Handbook presents the overall project findings and policy recommendations: *"Human trafficking as a criminal enterprise continues to evolve as a high*

profit-low risk business for perpetrators and challenges policy makers, law enforcement agencies and civil society organisations working to prevent human trafficking."

The Handbook aims to support policy makers, law enforcement agencies and civil society organisations, by assessing and consolidating information about traffickers and trafficked persons, the wider criminal enterprise and its modus operandi, the role of technology, as well as the current and future trends of trafficking. The Handbook furthermore offers concrete policy recommendations based on solid research.

All TRACE reports are available at <http://trace-project.eu/>

Trainings for diplomatic and consular personnel

Pursuant to its objective to involve diplomatic and consular missions of countries of trafficking origin, transit and/or destination in the CBSS Member States, the TF-THB commenced a second round of tailor-made training seminars for diplomatic and consular personnel in order to increase efforts to assist victims of trafficking and eradicate trafficking in human beings in the Baltic Sea Region. The seminars are designed to meet the specific needs of the countries and composed to provide a platform for sharing of best practices, challenges and knowledge to improve early identification and primary support for victims and potential victims of all forms of human trafficking. The seminars aim to strengthen the role of personnel responsible for consular affairs in combating human trafficking. In autumn 2015, the training seminars for the foreign diplomatic and consular officials and liaison officers were organised in Stockholm and Helsinki on 21 September 2015 and 30 November 2015. More than 130 persons from over



50 countries participated in these training seminars. The training in Stockholm was organised in close cooperation with the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and opened by the Swedish State Secretary, Ms Pernilla Baralt. The seminar in Helsinki was hosted by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and organised in cooperation with the IOM Helsinki office and National Assistance System for Victims of Trafficking.

ATES – Addressing Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in Sweden

The TF-THB has teamed up with the County Administrative Board of Stockholm in the ATES-project “*Addressing trafficking for labour exploitation in Sweden*”, which aims to increase the level of awareness of labour trafficking in Sweden. Two study visits were organised to Finland and Belgium for representatives of the Swedish Task Force against Trafficking, with a study visit planned to the United Kingdom in the autumn. The project is financed by the County Administrative Board of Stockholm and will be continued throughout 2016 under both the Polish and Icelandic CBSS Presidency.

Expert Group on Children at Risk (EGCC)

The Polish Presidency of the CBSS coincided with the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals include, for the first time, a specific target (16.2) to end all forms of violence against children. Ending the abuse, neglect and exploitation, including trafficking, of children is also mainstreamed across several other violence-related targets. The Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk (EGCC) contributes to these goals by expressing support at relevant conferences and events, by keeping the Ministries responsible for children’s issues in the region informed and aware of the initiatives at global and regional level, and by leading several projects that are relevant to SDG 16.2.

The long-term objective of the Children at Risk Expert Group within the CBSS is to promote comprehensive and sustainable child protection systems that prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children through increased cooperation among relevant ministries, stakeholders and professionals in the Baltic Sea Region. The priorities for cooperation on children at risk include a focus on early intervention and prevention; the protection of children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation; the protection of migrant children and child victims of trafficking - and support for the rights of children in residential care and other forms of alternative care (out-of-home care). To these ends, strategic activities are identified to support effective child protection systems, innovation, cooperation, policy development, and child participation.



Main achievements

6th Cross-Regional Round Table on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Children - Regional Cooperation on the Global Level.

To read more about the 6th Cross-Regional Round Table please check the section 'Other activities of the Polish Presidency'.

Warsaw Round Table on Deinstitutionalisation and Foster Care

On 20 April 2016, the Polish Presidency hosted the Warsaw Roundtable on Deinstitutionalisation and Foster Care. Members of the EGCC and experts from Poland discussed the progress made by the Member States since the Tallinn Recommendations and Action Plan on Alternative Care and Family Support for the Baltic Sea Region. The meeting was opened by Mr Bartosz Marczyk, Undersecretary of State in the Polish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, who presented the policies and priorities of the new Polish government which refer to supporting the families and strengthening the position of a child.

The experts exchanged best practices in achieving deinstitutionalisation. The governments and implementing agencies have made progress by adopting a strategic approach to continuing deinstitutionalisation and encouraging foster care. Legal and policy reforms combined with additional resources for capacity building and early intervention are also helping to reduce the need for alternative care. Ongoing challenges include the increased need for foster care in several of the member states, including those where many unaccompanied

children are arriving, and the ability to monitor how the foster system works for the individual child. Investments are needed to increase the opportunities for children to voice their concerns and to be part of strengthening the child protection system.

PROMISE

The PROMISE project aims at promoting child-friendly, multi-disciplinary and interagency services supporting child victims of violence, providing them with rapid access to justice, avoiding re-victimization and ensuring high professional standards for recovery. The project refers to the Barnahus (Children's House) model, and similar models, embracing cooperation between social services, police, prosecutors, judges, pediatrics and child/adolescent psychiatry in one place. The Barnahus model is a leading European multi-disciplinary and interagency practice model responding to child victims and witnesses of violence. Today, the model is applied in Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, with Estonia and Lithuania planning to initiate it in 2016. The vision of PROMISE is to see the model applied in as many European countries as possible. The project has identified ten pilot countries as having the interest and potential to transform their current services for supporting child victims and witnesses of violence into a multidisciplinary and interagency cooperation. Through a series of exchanges, reports and tools, the pilot countries will learn from existing *Barnahus* and similar models and also exchange experiences amongst themselves in order to support national level capacity-building and multi-disciplinary and interagency implementation strategies. The PROMISE project gathered 42 participants in Reykjavik, Iceland from the 14-16 June 2016 for the 2nd Exchange Meeting to discuss implementation. Iceland, home of the first *Barnahus* model, continues to be the



inspiration for other *Barnahus* in the Nordic counties, as well as for the pilot countries. The Exchange Meeting included a study visit to the *Barnahus*, followed by training in the *Barnahus* procedures to ensure children's access to justice and quality care, and concluded with the pilot countries sharing of challenges and recent development and achievements in implementing the *Barnahus* model at the national level.

PROTECT Children on the Move

PROTECT Children on the Move is an ongoing project, which aims to identify child rights standards and key agencies for better transnational cooperation. The work is based upon five expert meetings with more than 250 key experts from Europe and beyond. During the Polish Presidency, *Guidelines Promoting the Human Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Transnational Child Protection Cases* were published, which explore challenges and opportunities in safeguarding the human rights of the child in transnational child protection work. The Guidelines provide a synthesis of the experience, knowledge and evidence shared by key officials and professionals in the expert consultation series in the framework. The work of governments, organisations and agencies is another important reference for the Guidelines. The Guidelines are inspired by an understanding of the principle of the best interests of the child that is holistic, child-centered and rights-based. The accompanying *Practical Guide on Transnational Child Protection for Caseworkers and Case Officers*, available in several languages, translates the existing international standards into step-by-step guidance for the assessment and decision-making processes in transnational situations. It is an easy and accessible tool for caseworkers and case officers, such as social workers, immigration officials and law enforcement officers, as well as lawyers, guardians

and other professionals working with and for children on the move.

Lastly, the project developed a portal on Wikipedia on transnational child protection, which includes exploitation, child trafficking, unaccompanied children and all cross-country issues involving children. Wikipedia ranks high in search results and the information is being widely referenced.

The Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of the Baltic Sea States are continuing the project by training stakeholders from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Russia and Sweden in the prevention of exploitation and trafficking of children. The trainings aim to build capacity by providing relevant tools and cross-national good practices that are rooted in international and European standards. The training series also aims to foster networking and cooperation between officials and professionals from the Baltic, Nordic countries and Russia. The training modules are based on the Guidelines developed by the PROTECT project.

AudTrain II

Quality of care for children is at the centre of the AudTrain II project. Launched in autumn 2015, the project revives the AudTrain System Based Audit of Child Welfare Facilities project from 2011-2013. The new project aims to increase the capacity and skills among professionals who audit and monitor the situation for children in alternative care. It also aims to enhance children's rights to be heard, to be safe and secure and to be supported in their development while in care. The main goal of the system-based audit is to make sure that the management of the institution complies with laws and regulations. The focus is on the management system, and how the management system is set up to protect the child – and not on how the single employee performs. During the Polish Presidency, the original training material was updated and used to train new auditors. Weeklong trainings were held in Riga on 10-13 May 2016, and Zagreb on 19- 22 April 2016. The course covers each step of the monitoring process, from the initial inspection and planning to the system-based audit and final report, using a mix of coaching, group work and role playing. A module to educate AudTrain Trainers will be developed and new trainers will be trained. The project will also develop a monitoring tool based on international standards and arrange an advocacy conference.



The Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (EGNRS)

The EGNRS is chaired by Russia (2014-2017), represented by Mr Andrey Stepanov from the V.G. Khlopin Radium Institute in St. Petersburg.

The EGNRS Russian Chairmanship Programme has set the following priorities:

- Establish effective cooperation in nuclear forensics in terms of setting a legal and operational framework.
- Enable an exchange of environmental monitoring data between national agencies and developing cooperation between gamma spectrometry laboratories.
- Develop cooperation with regional networks of law enforcement agencies to strengthen protection against illicit trafficking of radioactive materials and radioactive contaminations.
- Develop educational activities and public awareness campaigns related to nuclear and radiation safety.
- Strengthen emergency preparedness by exploring opportunities for cooperation at the level of operational centres and emergency services.

Recently initialised works within the EGNRS may become an important contribution to developing effective ways of addressing challenges related to combating illicit trafficking of radioactive and fissile materials. To this end, the questionnaire on key modalities for the cooperation framework in this area has been distributed amongst the EGNRS Member and Observer States. On the basis of the survey the EGNRS will elaborate details of the cooperation framework within the Baltic Sea Region.

Establishing the mechanisms for an exchange of data from national environmental monitoring systems was another issue analysed within the EGNRS. Significant progress has been achieved in defining data standards and technical options for transmitting it amongst involved partners.

EGNRS events:

EGNRS Regular Meeting in Warsaw on 3-4 November 2015, hosted by the Polish Atomic Energy Agency (PAA). The participants discussed recent developments in their countries regarding new legislative implementation in the area of nuclear and radiation safety; further cooperation between gamma spectrometry laboratories and development of a regional environment monitoring system (including a proposal of a pilot project by Bundesamt für Strahlenschutz, Germany).

Topical Day on Nuclear Forensics held in Warsaw on 5 November 2015, organised by the PAA, with international experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (Vienna), the JRC Institute for Transuranium Elements ITU (Karlsruhe), ROSATOM Central Institute for Continuing Education and Training (Russia), Central Laboratory for Radiological Protection CLOR (Poland), and representative of the Polish MFA to the Global Initiative against Nuclear Terrorism.

EGNRS Regular Meeting in Stockholm on 26-27 April 2016. With reference to the 30th Anniversary of the Chernobyl Disaster, Norwegian and Russian representatives gave presentations on the long-lasting effects of the disaster on the Baltic Sea Region. Following the presentations, the Expert Group member representatives discussed the development of cooperation between gamma spectrometry laboratories in the Baltic Sea Region and the recent developments in implementing nuclear and radiation protection programmes in the CBSS Member States.



The Civil Protection Network (CPN) - CBSS Intergovernmental Network

The CPN activity focused on strengthening safety in everyday life, at the level of local communities and households. Statistical data shows that the number of casualties and the scale of damages caused by the most common everyday accidents is still very high and has a destructive impact on the life of families and individuals. In response to these challenges, every civil protection service develops its own prevention policy that is rooted in the particular social tradition and culture, as well as it is correlated with national capacity. Sharing experiences, identifying best practices and impact factors, are the measures, which in the long run may contribute to set the common safety culture in the Baltic Sea Region and decrease the exposure of people to common everyday threats. The seminars and meetings held within the CPN during the Polish Presidency, under the supervision of the Polish State Fire Service, increased the awareness of a common security culture amongst the civil protection community.

CPN events:

Meeting with the UNISDR Europe in Brussels

The CBSS Secretariat Deputy Director General Mr Bernd Hemingway and PA Secure Adviser, Mr Jacek Paszkowski, visited the United Nations European Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) in Brussels on 27 January 2016 and discussed the possibilities of working together around the implementation of the Sendai Framework in the Baltic Sea Region.

The Sendai Framework aims to achieve a substantial reduction in disaster risk in the next 15 years with a reduction in the losses of the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries. While UNISDR Europe primarily works on the basis of bilateral agreements with the governments, it is facilitating a growing network of national platforms to mobilise actions in disaster risk reduction. The regional organisations and networks are encouraged to implement the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies. Several possibilities of cooperation were identified at the meeting. The Sendai Framework is in line with the CBSS long-term objective Safe and Secure Region. One of the priorities in the EUSBSR PA Secure is to strengthen resilience to emergencies and accidents at local and regional levels. This corresponds with the Sendai Framework focus on the engagement of local government, communities and civil society in ensuring resilient environments.

The CPN Senior Expert Meeting in Stockholm

on 18-19 February 2016 was hosted by the CBSS Secretariat and the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service, Poland. Ms Mette Helen Lindahl Olsson from the European Office of the UNISDR presented the Sendai Framework, which would enable the Baltic Sea States to handle risks in a holistic way and further strengthen ability to cope with disasters and emergencies in the Baltic Sea Region.

The CPN Seminar on Baltic Sea Region Civil Protection capacities for international response in

Warsaw on 7-8 April 2016 was hosted by the Polish Presidency represented by the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service. Representatives of relevant agencies from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden discussed the assets for international response in the Baltic Sea Region, including national and multinational response teams and partnerships in developing these assets. Representatives from the Polish National Headquarters of the State Fire Service presented the initiative to set up a regional calendar of exercises and projects, as well as an interactive map of research institutions in the field of safety and security.



ERNST & YOUNG

VOLKSWAGEN
BANK POLSKA

RYŁKO



**European
Union
Strategy for
the Baltic
Sea Region
(EUSBSR)
Policy Area
Secure**





During the Polish Presidency the Policy Area Secure (PA Secure), co-coordinated by the CBSS Secretariat, worked on developing a common security culture, following last year's restructuring of the EUSBSR Action Plan and the merging of PA Secure with the former PA Crime. The development of a common security culture would enable a more comprehensive and coherent approach in the PA, aimed at reducing trans-boundary vulnerabilities and building societal security in the Baltic Sea Region. It would further help to converge the perception of risk and threat by different actors and build a common knowledge base for further cooperation, enhancing cross-border assistance when needed. A common security culture concept would also serve as an instrument to involve regional and local governments and civil society into activities related to building a safe and secure Baltic Sea Region.

Since the well-being of citizens in the Baltic Sea Region, respect for their fundamental rights and freedoms are in the background of the whole PA, all actions will be orientated to:

- Save human lives as well as protect the physical and psychological integrity of human beings.
- Protect public and individual properties against destruction, serious damages or illicit transfer.
- Preserve vital public functions by protecting critical infrastructure.

All activities will be organised along two lines: addressing the human dimension of security and establishing the efficient institutional mechanisms to tackle emergencies. These two threads will be duly reflected in four sections of PA Secure:

- A.** Strengthening capacity to respond and to recover from major emergencies and accidents: better risk assessment and crisis management.
- B.** Build up resilience and prevention towards emergencies and threats at the local level.
- C.** Enhancing effective cooperation in protecting human beings against criminal threats, including trafficking and exploitation.
- D.** Prevent and detect serious crime through developing efficient framework for law enforcement strategic and operational cooperation.

The PA Secure Steering Committee gathered twice during the Polish Presidency. During the first meeting in December 2015 in Stockholm, the group discussed the development and planned activities within the new Action Plan for the coming year. The second meeting took place in Kraków in the beginning of May 2016, with Member States representatives and the European Commission representative Mr Alexander Somoza, discussing the progress of the flagship projects and possible new flagships under the EUSBSR PA Secure.

Flagships

The Policy Area Secure supports a number of flagships under four different sections:

A: Strengthening capacity to respond and to recover from major emergencies and accidents: better risk assessment and crisis management.

A1: Develop a joint macro-regional prevention and preparedness approach towards major hazards and emergencies

From Gaps to Caps

'From Gaps to Caps – Risk Management Capability Based on Gaps Identification in the Baltic Sea Region' – is a two-year flagship. The project is co-financed by DG ECHO and led by the Fire and Rescue Department of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, with the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat coordinating the project's communication. Other participating organisations are: Frederikssund-Halsnæs Brand- & Redningsberedskab (Denmark), Estonian Rescue Board, Ministry of the Interior of Finland, University of Iceland, State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia, Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning (DSB), Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw (Poland), Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) and Hamburg Fire and Rescue Service (Germany).



The project was launched in January 2015 and was kicked off in Reykjavik, Iceland in March 2015. It contributes to strengthening macro-regional capacities for risk assessment and establishing efficient crisis management schemes to cope with natural and man-made disasters in the Baltic Sea Region. From Gaps to Caps is based on the recommendations of its predecessor project 14.3. The project includes the formulation of a methodology for risk management capability assessment under the supervision of the University of Iceland and the comparison of evaluations and exercises run by the Hamburg Fire and Rescue Service (Germany).

The project is split up in four tasks A, B, C, D. Ten international partners contribute to a broad range of results. The aim is to gather national expertise and best practice, so an overall perspective of the resources, capabilities and shortcomings can be established and lead to a joint approach on dealing with crisis.

More about the project: www.gapstocaps.eu.

A2: Foster dialogue and common approaches to civil protection in the Baltic Sea Region

The Baltic Leadership Programme in Civil Security for Future High-Level Decision Makers (BLP)

The BLP contributes to increasing human and societal capital for international cooperation in the civil protection area amongst the relevant partners in the Baltic Sea Region. This paves the way for strengthening capacity of stakeholders to implement measures aimed at improving macro-regional cooperation at all stages of the crisis management cycle. The goal of the BLP is to build a strong network of dynamic leaders in the Baltic Sea Region, contributing directly to an improvement of

crisis management capabilities. In its effort to connect decision makers who work in the area of civil security, the programme seeks to create elements of common security culture by establishing a transnational team of experts.

Three programmes have taken place so far, with the third under the Polish CBSS Presidency on 23-26 November 2015 at the Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw in partnership with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), the CBSS Secretariat, the Polish National Headquarters of the State Fire Service and the Swedish Defense University (CRISMART). The focus of this year's Baltic Leadership Program was on strategic leadership, the use of social media in crisis management and developing tools helpful in managing cross-border collaboration and crisis-management in intercultural context.

On 19 February 2016, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Stockholm, together with the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service of the Republic of Poland (KGSP) and the CBSS Secretariat, co-hosted a seminar focusing on the BLP and future development of the leadership programme. The way ahead, after the end of financial and organisational support from the Swedish Institute, was discussed. During the Annual Meeting of Directors General for Civil Protection on 6-7 June 2016 in Gdańsk, it was agreed to continue the Programme. The BLP will be renamed Baltic Excellence Programme (BEP) and will be co-organised on a biennial basis and financed by the CPN Troika (three consecutive CNP presidencies).

Read more in the 'Polish Presidency Highlights' section.

B: Build up resilience and prevention towards emergencies and threats at the local level.

Action B1: Enhance a joint urban safety and prevention approach in the Baltic Sea Region

BaltPrevResilience

The project *BaltPrevResilience* (Baltic Everyday Accidents, Disaster Prevention and Resilience) led by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency concluded with a final meeting and a follow up seminar on 13-14 January 2016 in Stockholm at the CBSS Secretariat. The flagship contributed to better community awareness and resilience in the Baltic Sea Region in regards to prevention and reduction of consequences of accidents and crises. The project findings from the concluded BaltPrevResilience have resulted in the development of the new project "CRCC Making communities resilient to climate change: cross-sectorial cooperation in capacity building" (planned for 2016-2017) with project partners from the Frederikssund-Halsnæs Fire & Rescue Service (Denmark), Estonian Rescue Board, National Institute for Health and Welfare, Injury Prevention Unit (Finland), Jelgava City Municipality (Latvia), Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw (Poland), and Karlstad University (Sweden).

C: Enhancing effective cooperation in protecting human beings against criminal threats, including trafficking and exploitation.

C1: Develop joint macro-regional approach to prevent trafficking in human beings and assist victims of trafficking

Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) – Strategy 2015-2017 as a flagship of action

TRACE – Trafficking as a Criminal Enterprise

See page 73 for more information

C2: Strengthening capacity of municipalities to eradicate THB and mitigate its impact on society

STROM and STROM II – Municipalities in the Chain of Assistance

See pages 72 for more information

C3: Develop the Baltic Sea Region as a model region in the provision of comprehensive and sustainable social services and human rights for vulnerable groups crossing borders



PROMISE – Child- friendly justice

See pages 75 for more information

PROTECT

See pages 76 for more information

D: Prevent and detect serious crime through developing efficient framework for law enforcement strategic and operational cooperation.

D1: Strengthening efficient framework for law enforcement cooperation to combat serious crime

Baltic Sea Task Force on Organised Crime (BSTF)

The BSTF was established in 1996 by the Heads of Governments as a platform for cooperation between the law enforcement agencies in combating organised crime in the Baltic Sea Region. The mandate of the BSTF runs until the end of 2016, with the Russian Federation holding the rotating Chairmanship during 2015 – 2016. According to the Baltic Sea Task Force Regional Strategy 2015 – 2016, BSTF should complement the work done within other cooperation formats (Interpol, Europol, Eurojust, Nordic PTN in particular, as well as within various bilateral mechanisms). The BSTF is aimed at becoming the main regional facilitator for different types of operational cooperation by ensuring appropriate identification of the criminal threats at the regional level, as well as by defining how they shall be addressed. The key asset of the BSTF is the possibility to apply a multidisciplinary approach to all challenges. The BSTF's mission is to identify and address all sorts of obstacles (organisational, legal or practical), which hinder an effective cross-border regional cooperation in combating organised crime.

The CBSS Secretariat representatives have participated in the Annual Strategic Meetings in November 2015, as well as the Operational and Planning Committee (OPC) of the BSTF in September 2015, where the outcomes of the BALANCE Project (funded by the CBSS Project Support Facility) were presented to the OPC BSTF by the Finnish delegation. Closer contact with the Russian Chairmanship and the national delegations facilitated the exchange of information on relevant activities, projects and operations conducted in the areas of migration, drug trafficking, smuggling excise goods and trafficking in human beings. The Russian Chairmanship hosted the BSTF 20th Anniversary Conference on 4 May 2016 in St. Petersburg and reflected on the past 20 years of activities and achievements of the BSTF. The prolongation of the BSTF mandate for the period 2017-2020 was also discussed.

D2: Step up border security through developing efficient framework for law enforcement operational cooperation to combat serious crime

Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC)

The BSRBCC focuses on security-related issues concerning border control in the Baltic Sea Region. The Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation Heads Conference was hosted by the Lithuanian Chairmanship on 23-24 November 2015 in Vilnius.

On 4 April 2016 the CBSS Secretariat delegation visited the Headquarters of the State Border Guard of the Republic of Latvia in Riga, which currently holds the Chairmanship of the BSRBCC. The Latvian Border Guard informed the secretariat delegation about the ongoing cooperation between border and coastal guards in the Baltic Sea Region, with an emphasis on the issue of migration and the possibilities of joint efforts and cooperation between CBSS networks and BSRBCC structures.

The first Annual Threat Assessment Seminar of the BSRBCC was held in Riga on 20-21 May 2016. The meeting focused on the current migration challenges, as well as coordination in the field of border management, fight against people smuggling and other trans-border crimes. Mr Janusz Gąciarz, Senior Adviser for Civil Security, and Mr Jacek Paszkowski, PA Secure Adviser, from the CBSS Secretariat took part in the seminar and discussed the opportunities for future joint projects with representatives of border guards, and the possibility of establishing cooperation between BSRBCC and CBSS expert groups. As one of the outcomes from the seminar, a common methodology and way forward for the ATA Report 2016 was decided upon.



Project TURNSTONE

TURNSTONE aims to enhance law enforcement cooperation between border agencies (Police, Border Police, Border Guard and Coast Guard organisations in Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden) in the Northern Baltic Sea Region, responding to the new need for the border agencies to initiate compensatory measures and new models of cooperation since the enlargement of the Schengen area in 2007/2008.

In order to strengthen macro-regional capacity to combat various types of trans-border crime, project Turnstone has four main objectives: increasing mutual trust and understanding between the border agencies and their officials at all levels; streamlining operative day to day cross-border cooperation between border agencies; initiating interaction between law enforcement agencies and the academic community; creation of effective and adaptable work methods while safeguarding the right to freedom of movement; improving social and cultural knowledge between and within the border agencies. These objectives will be achieved by the organisation of workshops for experts on the operational and intelligence level, cross-border actions, field studies, publication of a study handbook and a joint contact list and reports. The final conference of the project TURNSTONE took place at Lund University, Sweden on 22-23 October 2015. The possibility of continuing the project was discussed.

Cooperation with other Regions



The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation between the Permanent International Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Permanent International Secretariat of the **Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)** was signed in Bucharest, Romania, on 11 December 2015 by the Director General of the CBSS Secretariat Mr Jan Lundin and the Secretary General of the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat Ambassador Michael B. Christides.

Signing off the MoU paves the way to fostering cooperation between the Secretariats on issues of common importance to both regions. It should include exchange of reports and recommendations, as well as arranging consultations, joint seminars and workshops.

The main idea behind tightening the institutional ties is to maximise mutual support and create synergies between the two regions.

BSEC is a regional economic organisation consisting of 12 Member States: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

A study visit to the CBSS Secretariat by Ambassador Michael B. Christides, Secretary General of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation took place on 10 May 2016.

Project Support Facility

PHILOSOPHY:

“To support cooperation in a flexible way, and to pave the way for larger regional cooperation projects in the future, funded by much bigger funds existing in the region. This instrument adds value by being flexible, non-bureaucratic and fast.”

The PSF should be used to facilitate project preparation and implementation in relation to the defined priority areas of the CBSS:

1. Regional Identity
2. Sustainable and Prosperous Region
3. Safe and Secure Region

The CBSS Project Support Facility was created at the 9th Baltic Sea States Summit in Stralsund, Germany, on 30-31 May 2012. Its main purpose is to co-finance the development and implementation of the Baltic Sea macro-regional cooperation projects, which would bring added value for the Baltic Sea Region, show impact in regional cooperation and foster long-term partnerships. The facility's total amount of funding available was one million EUR for the timeframe 2013 - 2015 with a continuous open call for applications. The amount of co-financing granted range between **10.000** to **50.000 EUR**.

Under the Polish CBSS Presidency the future of the PSF was discussed and voluntary contributions were made by the member states Finland and Russia in 2016.

Which projects qualify to apply

- Support the implementation of the above mentioned long-term priorities of the CBSS.
- Bring added value and visibility for macro-regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.
- Have a clear transnational impact.
- Bring together different sectors and actors to increase coherence in cooperation among the CBSS Member States.
- Have outcomes of a sustainable character.
- The results of the project should be disseminated to all relevant stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region.
- Have the potential to become a basis for a network, partnership or cooperation model that would become viable beyond the duration of the project itself.
- The project must cover at least three CBSS Member States.

Who can apply

- The project partnership must involve at least three institutions/organisations from three different CBSS Member States.
- Each project has to appoint a Lead Beneficiary (LB), who is responsible for submitting the funding application and for the implementation of the whole project, including reporting and coordinating activities among the involved partners.
- Legal entities.

Progress so far

6 calls – total **76** applications. **20** grants approved.

Total contribution from Member States 2013-2015 in EUR	1 000 000 €
Amount committed May 2013 decision	-176 400 €
Amount committed September 2013 decision	-99 858 €
Amount committed December 2013 decision	-97 112 €
Withdrawal of funded project from PSF	49 112 €
Amount committed April 2014 decision	-329 344 €
Amount decommitted to PSF (Baltic Artek CBSS project)	13 709 €
Amount committed April 2015 decision	-190 461 €
Amount committed December 2015 decision	-98 515 €
Amount decommitted to PSF (NGO Survey and Common Map projects)	5 263 €
7% overhead	-70 000 €
Amount remaining for funding by December 2015	6 394 €

*withdrawal of 49,112 for LT led project

A total of **76 projects** have been submitted to the PSF Selection Committee. **20 projects** have received financing. **11 projects** are currently finished and have been reported upon. It is envisaged that this round of PSF will be completed and reported in 2017.

Out of the **22 awarded projects**, seven different CBSS Member States are represented in the Lead Party tally (Estonia **3**, Finland **3**, Germany **4**, Latvia **3**, Lithuania **1**, Russia **3** and Sweden **5**).

Adding the total number of co-beneficiaries and project partners together for the **20 projects** that have received financing, demonstrates that partners from all CBSS Member States have benefited directly or indirectly from the Project Support Facility (**20** for Sweden, **18** for Poland, **14** for Russia, **12** for Lithuania, **10** for Germany, **9** for Finland, **7** for Estonia, **7** for Latvia, **4** for Denmark, **5** for Norway and **1** for Iceland) and **1** for Ukraine. A total of **108 different co-beneficiaries** and **20 lead partners** totalling **128** Baltic Sea Region actors benefitting so far from the PSF.

At the last application round in October 2015, the Secretariat received **6 project** applications requesting for a total amount of **253 952 €**. After the technical evaluation of the proposals, all of them were considered for quality assessment and ranking.

The Selection Committee consists of the Committee of Senior Officials Troika (preceding, current and future Chair of the CSO) alongside the Secretariat management (Director General, Deputy Director General, Head of Administration and Head of Media and Communications).

The Troika members invited to the meetings of the PSF Selection Committee held during the Polish Presidency were Estonia, Iceland and Poland as Chair. Under the Icelandic Presidency the Selection Committee Troika will consist of Poland, Iceland and Sweden.

The Selection Committee forwards proposals to the Committee of Senior Officials for discussion and approval.

Two PSF Selection Committee Meetings have taken place under the Polish Presidency (27 October 2015 in Warsaw and 25 May 2016 via video link).

During the discussions on the future of the PSF, the CSO decided to have an interim arrangement for 2016 combining the transfer of part of the surplus fund from 2014 with the voluntary contributions from the Member States. By May 2016, Finland and Russia had contributed **40 000 €** each. In addition to the transfer of the surplus from 2014 and remaining fund from the year 2015 the total available fund is **118 914 €** as specified in the table below:

Voluntary contribution from Member States (Russia, Finland) by May 2016	80 000 €
Transfer of surplus from 2014	57 192 €
7% overhead	-9 603 €
PSF Evaluation 2013-2015	-15 069 €
Amount remaining for funding by December 2015	6 394 €
Amount available for funding by May 2016	118 914 €

10 applications were received in the call for 2016 requesting for a total amount of **420 697 €**. After the technical evaluation of the proposals, all of them were considered for quality assessment and ranking.

The requested amounts per project range between **14 000 €** to **50 000 €**, thus **3 projects** were selected for funding requesting **113 478 €**.

Updated information can be found here along with the rules of procedure and application form:

<http://www.cbss.org/project-support-facility/>

Each of the 5 awarded projects during the Polish Presidency are described overleaf.



PSF 2012-2015 contribution:

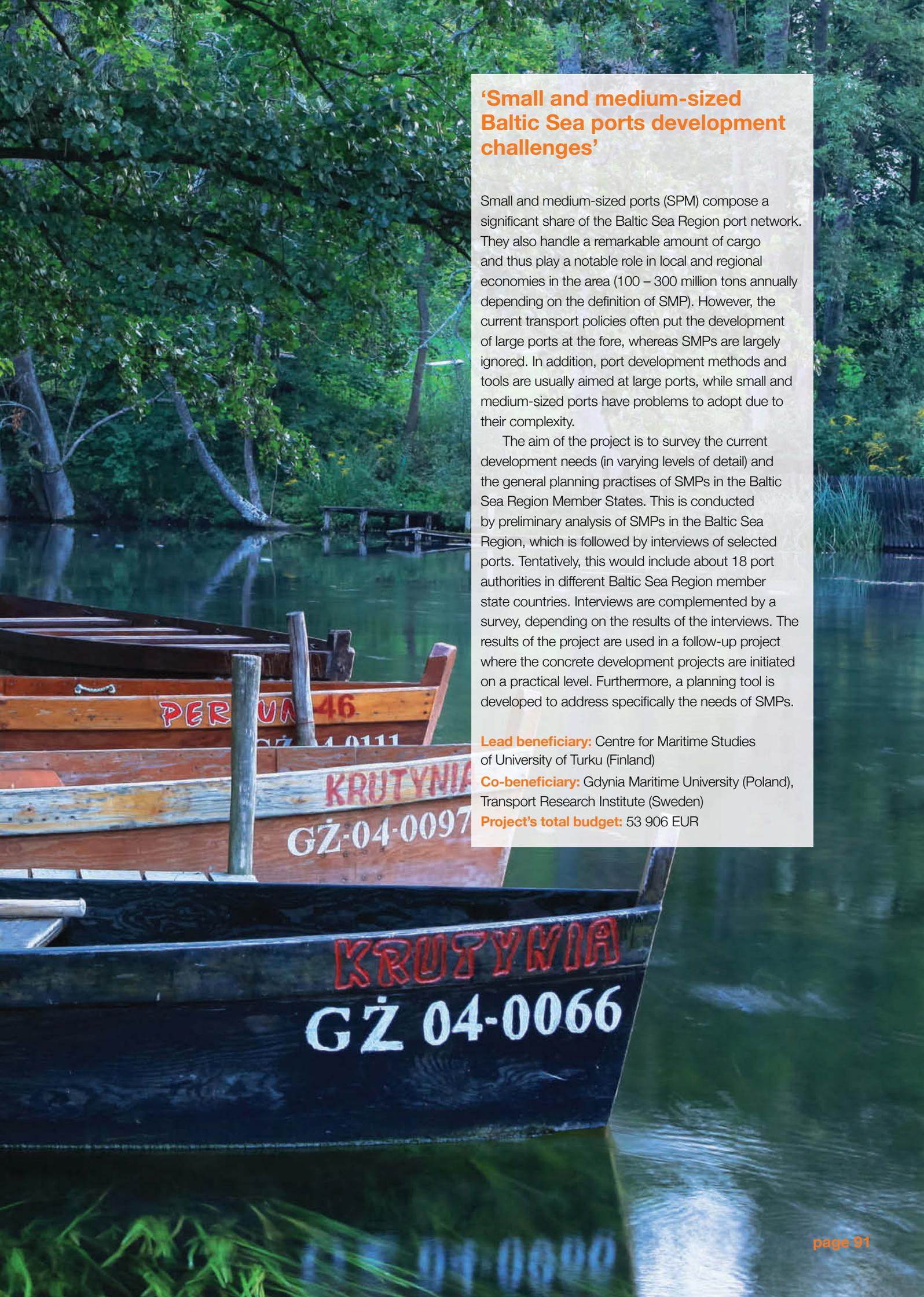
‘Strengthening cooperation in the field of prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children in the Baltic Sea Region’

The project ‘Strengthening cooperation in the field of prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children in the Baltic Sea Region’ is aimed at further strengthening the prevention of all forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children by means of increased cooperation between stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region. The project sets out to establish best practice in the field of prevention of children and young people involved in commercial sexual exploitation for relevant authorities, stakeholders and organisations in the Baltic Sea Region. A seminar for all of the regional representatives is planned to take place in St. Petersburg to share best practices and discuss possible joint initiatives, where possible funding for future joint initiatives will be identified. Some elements of best practices will be adapted to Lithuanian, Polish and Russian context. Seminars and workshops will be organised in Lithuania, Poland and Russia.

Lead beneficiary: Regional NGO Stellit (Russia)

Co-beneficiaries: Caritas Lithuania (Lithuania), ECPAT Norge (Norway), Fundacja Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę (‘The Empowering Children Foundation’), formerly ‘Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje’ (‘Nodbody’s Children Foundation’) (Poland)

Project’s total budget: 55 600,00 EUR



'Small and medium-sized Baltic Sea ports development challenges'

Small and medium-sized ports (SPM) compose a significant share of the Baltic Sea Region port network. They also handle a remarkable amount of cargo and thus play a notable role in local and regional economies in the area (100 – 300 million tons annually depending on the definition of SMP). However, the current transport policies often put the development of large ports at the fore, whereas SMPs are largely ignored. In addition, port development methods and tools are usually aimed at large ports, while small and medium-sized ports have problems to adopt due to their complexity.

The aim of the project is to survey the current development needs (in varying levels of detail) and the general planning practises of SMPs in the Baltic Sea Region Member States. This is conducted by preliminary analysis of SMPs in the Baltic Sea Region, which is followed by interviews of selected ports. Tentatively, this would include about 18 port authorities in different Baltic Sea Region member state countries. Interviews are complemented by a survey, depending on the results of the interviews. The results of the project are used in a follow-up project where the concrete development projects are initiated on a practical level. Furthermore, a planning tool is developed to address specifically the needs of SMPs.

Lead beneficiary: Centre for Maritime Studies of University of Turku (Finland)

Co-beneficiary: Gdynia Maritime University (Poland), Transport Research Institute (Sweden)

Project's total budget: 53 906 EUR

PSF 2016 contribution:

Joint Approach to Tackle Organised Cross-border Crime in the Baltic Sea Region

The project “Joint Approach to Tackle Organised Cross-border Crime in the Baltic Sea Region” (JATOC) aims to implement the project recommendation of the concluded Baltic Law Enforcement Analysis Cooperation (BALANCE) project led by the Finnish Border Guard and partners from Baltic Sea Region Member States from April 2014 to December 2015. The project will set up a conceptual model for the joint regional analysis and encourage best practices of national Criminal Intelligence Systems between the participating member states law enforcement agencies to define common guidelines for further cooperation to tackle organised crime in the Baltic Sea Region. The long-term aim of the project is to increase the relevance of the CBSS in the Baltic Sea Region in tackling organised crime and criminal entities.

The project hopes to create more synergy between the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation and the Baltic Sea Task Force on Organised Crime as well as with the EU Policy Cycle on shared activities and actions relating to cross border crime, and has set out to identify possible funding sources for future projects and actions to counter cross border crime in the region. The project has been identified to be of relevance to all of the Baltic Sea Region States, as well as to Europol and Frontex.

Lead beneficiary: State Police of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia, Central Criminal Police Department (Latvia)

Co-beneficiaries: Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, National Police Board of Finland, Finnish Border Guard, State Border Guard of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia, Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia, Customs Police Department of the State Revenue Service of the Republic of Latvia, State Border Guard Service at the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania

Project's total budget: 55 000 EUR

‘At the Water's Edge’

The project ‘At the Water's Edge’ is a transnational and cross-generational communication project, which aims to foster exchange of memories from the Baltic Sea Region from the time when the sea was divided by the Iron Curtain. The idea of the physical sea as a connection but also a separation between different nations is at very centre of the project. While the political aspect of the sea as a border and the imagined Iron Curtain is viewed differently by the Eastern and Western Baltic Sea Region, for both sides, the sea is also seen as a place of summer vacations and a source of livelihood. By combining all the different layers of memory and connections, the project aims to strengthen the regional identity and the communication between the citizens of the Baltic Sea Region. The memories and different perspectives on the Cold War will be reflected through simultaneous exhibitions in all of the nine countries bordering the Baltic Sea.

Lead beneficiary: Unitas Foundation (Estonia)

Co-beneficiaries: Koldkrigsmuseum Langelandsfort (Denmark), Okupatsioonide Muuseum (Estonia), Nordens Institut på Åland (Finland), Schiffbau-und Schifffahrtsmuseum Rostock (Germany), SERDE (Latvia), A.Moncio namai-muziejus (Lithuania), Galeria Miejsce (Poland), The Kaliningrad State Art Gallery (Russia), Gotlands Konstmuseum (Sweden)

Project's total budget: 55 538 EUR



‘Bridge It!’ – Baltic Sea Region Initiatives for an Active Civil Society

‘Bridge It!’ is a regional active citizenship education programme aimed at the inclusion of youth from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, North-West Russia and South-East Finland. The project’s long-term aim is to enhance civil-society in the Baltic Sea Region through the means of communication across borders, building a sense of common regional identity and solutions to the region’s social problems. The project participants will acquire project management skills by taking part in seminars and by implementing social projects on a local and regional level e.g. projects addressing poverty, rehabilitation, violence, environment or youth unemployment. The cross-border project partnerships will be maintained through an alumni network throughout the region, which aims at fostering long-term regional cooperation.

Lead beneficiary: Creative Union “Orbita” (Latvia)

Co-beneficiaries: Foundation for Science and liberal Arts “Domus Dorpatensis” (Estonia), Theodor Heuss Kolleg of the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the MitOst Association (Germany), Autonomous Non-profit Organisation for Social and Legal Services “Russian – German Office for Environmental Information” (Russia)

Project’s total budget: 47 344 EUR

Icelandic Presidency





The priorities of the CBSS Icelandic Presidency which began on 1 July 2016 are **Children, Equality and Democracy**, which Iceland believes form the foundation for a shared, sustainable and secure future for the region and its citizens. These priorities will therefore underpin the CBSS strategies for a stronger *Regional Identity, Prosperous & Sustainable Region and Safe & Secure Region*.

In 2016 the CBSS Member States will start implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which all of our leaders have agreed to.

With a special focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women, Iceland will actively work to engage men and boys in the gender equality discussion, as only through the participation of all, we can achieve our goals. It remains a cross-cutting issue in all of the CBSS's work, including its sustainable development work, with reference to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 5 which aims to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women which is also a cross-cutting issue throughout the Agenda and its 17 Global Goals.

Children's well-being will be at the heart of the Icelandic Presidency, building on previous efforts, including all activities that are related to the implementation of the *Barnahus* model in the region. Upholding children's rights is the obligation of all CBSS states and ensuring their safety and well-being will create a healthier and safer society for the future. The rights of the child are one of the core pillars of the Safety and Security priority of the CBSS.

The **democratic ideal** is a founding vision of the CBSS, which some 25 years ago formalised the cooperation of old and newly established democracies in the region. With the oldest parliament in the world, Iceland has a strong democratic tradition. At challenging times, there is a great need for the CBSS Members to form a dialogue on the importance of upholding democratic values. In this context, the Icelandic Presidency highlights how democracy reshaped and made the Baltic Sea Region stronger and more peaceful than ever before.





Regional Identity:

- Celebrating 25 years of Nordic-Baltic cooperation between independent States (Seminar held in cooperation with the Nordic House, Reykjavik, September 2016)
- High-level meeting on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the CBSS, March 2017
- Reinforcing regional identity through cultural events and promoting shared values
- Promoting Icelandic culture in the CBSS Member States

Sustainable and Prosperous Region:

- Focusing on gender equality as a driver for sustainable development, following up on Global Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda
- Organising Barbershop events, designed to encourage the engagement of men and boys in the discussion about gender equality
- Developing an Action Plan for Baltic 2030, focusing on knowledge sharing related to the implementation of the UN Global Goals
- Increasing emphasis on cooperation with grass-root organisations on sustainable development
- Further emphasis on creative & entrepreneurial collaborations in the region through the Balticlab programme

- Promoting science and innovation on a macro-regional level

- Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of sustainable development cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region – Baltic 2030

Safe and Secure Region:

- Further focusing on children's well-being through the work of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk (EGCC)
- Increasing cooperation and coordination between expert bodies, including a joint meeting of the EGCC and the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) in October 2016
- Expanding the PROMISE project and promoting the Barnahus model in the Baltic Sea region
- Focusing on UNSC Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security
- Marking the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB)
- Emphasising crisis communication and the capabilities of volunteer organisations for civil protection through the Civil Protection Network
- Continuing the engagement in the Gaps to Caps project
- Cooperation with other regional bodies

International Secretariat



Employment rotation overview

Jan Lundin Director General (Sweden)
completed his tenure on 15 June 2016

Bernd Hemingway Deputy Director General (Germany)

Ilya Ermakov Senior Adviser (Russia) completed
his tenure on 16 August 2016

Iris Kempe Senior Adviser (Germany)

Janusz Gaćiarz Senior Adviser (Poland)

Jacek Paszkowski Adviser PA Secure (Sweden)

Maira Mora Director General (Latvia)
from 22 August 2016

Daria Akhutina Senior Adviser (Russia)
from 1 September 2016

Jóna Dögg Thordardóttir Trainee Assistant, Core
Secretariat from September 2016 (Iceland)

Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB)

Vineta Polatside Senior Adviser and Head of Unit for
the TF-THB (Latvia)

Anniina Jokinen Project Officer for the TF-THB (Finland)

Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD-Baltic 2030)

Krista Kampus Senior Adviser and Head of Unit for the
Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic
2030 (Estonia)

Valdur Lahtvee Policy Officer of the Sustainable
Development Unit – Baltic 2030 (Estonia)

Aleh Kliatsko Project Assistant for the Expert Group
on Sustainable Development – Baltic 2030 (Belarus)
on funding for projects involving Belarus and Russia,
completed his tenure on 30 June 2016

Maxi Nachtigall Adviser for the Expert Group on
Sustainable Development – Baltic 2030 (Germany)
completed her tenure on 25 August 2015

Expert Group on Cooperation for Children at Risk (EGCC)

Turid Heiberg Senior Adviser and Head of Unit for
Children at Risk (Norway)

Shawna von Blixen Finecke Project Coordinator of
the Unit for Children at Risk (Sweden)

Media and Communications

Anthony Jay Olsson Head of Media
and Communications (Sweden)

Mirjam Külm Media and Communications Officer (Estonia)

Kamila Wojsznis Media and Communications Officer
for the Polish Presidency, secondment from the Polish
MFA (September 2015 - August 2016)

Zane Šime, Communication and Research Coordinator
(Latvia)

Marie von Stauffenberg Communications and
Project Assistant (Germany) completed her tenure in
December 2015

Kirill Filimonov Trainee Assistant, Media and
Communications (Russia) from September 2015 to
February 2016

Alexandra Sophie Jarolim Trainee Assistant, Media
and Communications (Denmark) from February to
September 2016

Marlene Riedel Trainee Assistant, Media and
Communications (Germany) from April to October 2016

Administration

Gertrude Opira Head of Administration (Sweden)

Ligia Broström Senior Administrative Officer (Sweden)

Susann Burström Project Accountant (Sweden)

Chris Tancredi Front Office and Office Administrator
(Sweden)

Jekaterina Popova Project Assistant (Lithuania)

Ignė Stalmokaitė Trainee Assistant, Core Secretariat
(Lithuania) from September 2015 to February 2016

Mārtiņš Legzdīņš Trainee Assistant, Core Secretariat
(Latvia) from February to July 2016

Adam Burström Administrative Assistant (Sweden),
June and July 2016

Weronika Bonnerius Office Administrator - Employment
Agency Staff (Sweden) from March to June 2016

Calendar of selected events during the Polish Presidency





28 June – 5 July

Almedalen Political Week,
Kick-Off of the Polish Presidency,
Seminar: 'Clean and Safe Baltic
Sea', Visby, Sweden

27 – 30 August

Balticlab 3.0 Ideation, Module 3,
Gothenburg, Sweden

2015

July

August

30 August – 1 Sept

24th Baltic Sea Parliamentary
Conference, Rostock, Germany

Calendar of selected events 2015/16

2 – 9 September

2nd Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue,
Olsztyn, Poland

7 – 9 September

18th International Maritime Exhibition
BALTEXPO, Gdańsk, Poland
Meeting of the Expert Group on
Maritime Policy, Gdańsk, Poland

15 September

1st CSO meeting and 1st Joint
Meeting on Culture, Gdańsk,
Poland

15 – 16 October

Meeting of the Task Force against
Trafficking in Human Beings
(TF-THB), Warsaw, Poland

21 – 22 October

Closing event of the EuroFaculty
Pskov, Pskov, Russia

27 – 28 October 2015

70th VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting
and Workshop on Urban
Revitalisation, Łódź, Poland

3 – 5 November

Meeting of the Expert Group on
Nuclear and Radiation Safety
(EGNRS) and Topical Day on Nuclear
Forensics, Warsaw, Poland

4 – 5 November

Conference “Mastering the
Game. Business and Legal Issues
for Video Games Developers.
Baltic Sea Region Perspective”,
Kraków, Poland

11 November

Annual Meeting of the Four Regional
Councils of the North, Reykjavik,
Iceland

17 November 2015

Conference ‘Increasing energy
efficiency through Public-Private
Partnership projects in the BASREC-
countries’, Warsaw, Poland

September

16 September 2015

9th Meeting of the Baltic Sea
Region Ministers of Culture,
being part of the Baltic Sea
Cultural Gathering (15-18
September), Gdańsk, Poland

21 – 25 September

14th International Symposium Boats
and Vessels in Archeology, National
Maritime Museum, Gdańsk, Poland

21 September

Training Seminar on Human
Trafficking for Diplomatic and
Consular Personnel in the CBSS
Region, Stockholm, Sweden

22 – 23 September

8th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum,
Gdańsk and Malbork, Poland

October

27 October

2nd CSO meeting and Project
Support Facility Selection
Committee meeting, Warsaw,
Poland

28 October

2nd Joint Meeting on Sustainable
Development and Climate
Change Adaptation and 13th
meeting of the Expert Group
on Sustainable Development,
Warsaw, Poland

28 – 29 October

5th Roundtable of the Baltic Sea
Region Climate Change Dialogue
Platform, Warsaw, Poland

29 – 30 October

3rd Regional Carbon Capture and
Storage Conference, Warsaw, Poland

November

17 – 19 November

Expert Group on Children at Risk
Meeting, Warsaw, Poland

18 November

Baltic Sea Labour Forum Round
Table, combined with a meeting
with BASTUN, Gdańsk, Poland

23 – 26 November

The Baltic Leadership Programme in
Civil Security for Future High Decision
Makers, Warsaw, Poland

25 November

Seminar: ‘Water: today’s challenges
and future solutions - water
management in Sweden and
Poland’, Stockholm, Sweden

26 November

Seminar: ‘European groupings of
territorial cooperation and the Baltic
Sea Region development’, Gdynia
Maritime University, Poland

1 December

Meeting of the Expert Group on Maritime Policy, Warsaw, Poland

2 – 3 December

3rd CSO meeting and Annual Consultations with the Observer States, Stockholm, Sweden

9 December

Concert at the Polish Embassy in Stockholm marking the midpoint of the Polish Presidency, Stockholm, Sweden

15 January

TRACE project consortium meeting, London, Great Britain

18 January

Baltic Sea Region University Network Steering Committee meeting, Riga, Latvia

December

2016

January

10 December

Seminar: 'EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Positive change in the Baltic Sea Region. How far have we gone and why do we want to go on?', Warsaw, Poland

12 – 14 December

Balticlab 4.0 Networking Weekend, Stockholm, Sweden

18 – 19 January

Conference on Strengthening Multidisciplinary Cooperation Against Trafficking in Human Beings for Labour Exploitation, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

27 January

PA Secure Meeting with the UNISDR Europe (European office for Disaster Risk Reduction), Brussels, Belgium

27 – 29 January

Meetings of the CBSS Secretariat and Polish Presidency delegates with the European Commission DG Regio, European External Action Service and Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference representatives, Brussels, Belgium

Calendar of selected events 2016

3 February

PROMISE project first exchange meeting, Zagreb, Croatia

15 – 16 February

Training in preventing exploitation and trafficking of children with participants from the Nordic and Baltic countries and North-West Russia, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, Riga, Latvia

7 – 9 March

TRAM Kick-Off, Zeuthen (Berlin), Germany

8 March

4th CSO meeting, Warsaw, Poland

9 March

Seminar on the future of the Baltic Sea cooperation, Warsaw, Poland

7 – 8 April

Baltic Science Network kick-off meeting, Hamburg, Germany

7 – 8 April

Seminar on Baltic Sea Region civil protection capacities for international response, Warsaw, Poland

12 April

3rd Joint Meeting on cooperation with the EU, Warsaw, Poland

13 April

5th CSO meeting, Warsaw, Poland

18 – 20 April

Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage meeting, Zakopane, Poland

19 – 20 April

Expert Group on Children at Risk Meeting, Warsaw, Poland

February

18 – 19 February

Civil Protection Network Senior Expert meeting, Stockholm, Sweden

19 February

Seminar 'Summary of the Baltic Leadership Programme in Civil Security for Future High-Level Policy Makers', Stockholm, Sweden

23 February

71st VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting, Gdańsk, Poland

24 February

VASAB workshop on Assessment of Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2013-2020, Gdańsk, Poland

29 February

TRACE Workshop on Policy implications of future trends in trafficking, Stockholm, Sweden

March

11 March

14th meeting of the Expert Group on Sustainable Development

15 – 17 March

Conference on Extended Collective Licensing ('Creativity' Priority), Warsaw, Poland

17 – 18 March

Meeting of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings, Warsaw, Poland

24 – 27 March

Balticlab 4.0 Ideation: Module 1, Vilnius, Lithuania

April

25 – 27 April

6th CSO meeting, Stockholm, Sweden

26 April

Preparatory meeting for the 1st CBSS Science Ministerial, Leżno/Gdańsk, Poland

26 – 27 April

Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety meeting in Stockholm, Sweden

28 April

TRACE final conference "Understanding the business of human trafficking, Brussels, Belgium

9 May

BENELUX and CBSS Seminar "Macro regional cooperation in clusters of countries dealing with challenges of climate change adaptation", Brussels, Belgium

11 – 12 May

Seminar on cooperation between law-enforcement and civil protection agencies, Kraków, Poland

13 May

PA Secure Steering Group Meeting, Kraków, Poland

18 May

European Maritime Day 2016, Turku, Finland.
Meeting of the Expert Group on Maritime Policy, Turku, Finland

19 – 20 May

7th CSO meeting, Warsaw, Poland

23 – 24 May

Conference 'INTERREG changes the Baltic Sea Region. Stories that inspire', Gdańsk, Poland

7 June

VASAB Conference "Achieving Good Living Environment: territory matters. What's beyond 2030 for macro-regions?", Warsaw, Poland

7 June

8th CSO meeting, Warsaw, Poland

8 June

Deputy Foreign Ministers Meeting, Belweder (Warsaw), Poland

8 – 9 June

14th Meeting of the Directors General for Civil Protection of the Baltic Sea States, Gdańsk, Poland

9 – 11 June

Balticlab 4.0 Ideation: Module 2, Kiev, Ukraine

10-11 June

14th Baltic Sea NGO Forum, Gdańsk, Poland

4 July

'Balticness – what is it?' Seminar on regional identity organised as part of the Presidency handover programme, Almedalen Political Week, Visby, Sweden

5 July

CBSS Presidency Handover ceremony, Almedalen Political Week, Visby, Sweden

May

June

July

24 May

EUSBSR Policy Area Culture seminar, Polish Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden

25 May

Project Support Facility Selection Committee Meeting (video conference)

30 – 31 May

UN Special Representative on Violence against Children 6th Cross-Regional Roundtable to promote accelerated progress in the prevention and elimination of violence against children around the world, Stockholm, Sweden

30 – 31 May

Meeting of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings, Warsaw, Poland

14 – 15 June 2016

Polish Presidency Priority Creativity sum-up event, including the Senior Officials Group for Culture meeting and EUSBSR PA Culture Steering Group meeting, Warsaw, Poland

15 – 16 June

1st Meeting of the Baltic Sea Region Ministers of Science, Kraków, Poland

15 – 23 June

CBSS Summer University 'Cultural Memory of Europe: East and West', Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden

27 – 28 June

'From Gaps to Caps' meeting, Hamburg, Germany

28 June – 5 August

CBSS Summer School 'European Integration Summer University (EISS)'

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Icelandic MFA; Mr Kim Kuivalainen, EEAS; Mr Jan Lundin, Director General of the CBSS Secretariat; Ambassador Michał Czyż, Polish Chair of the CSO; Ms Vita Zivtiņa, Latvian MFA; Mr Sergey Petrovich, Russian MFA; Ms Kornelija Jurgaitienė, Lithuanian MFA; Mr Hans Olsson, Swedish MFA; Ms Kristina Pingoud, Finnish MFA; Mr Michael Däumer, FFO of Germany; Mr Bernd Hemingway, Deputy Director General of the CBSS Secretariat; Mr Kim Vinthen, Danish MFA; Mr Per Kjell Mannes, Norwegian MFA; Ms Katarzyna Barcikowska, Polish MFA)

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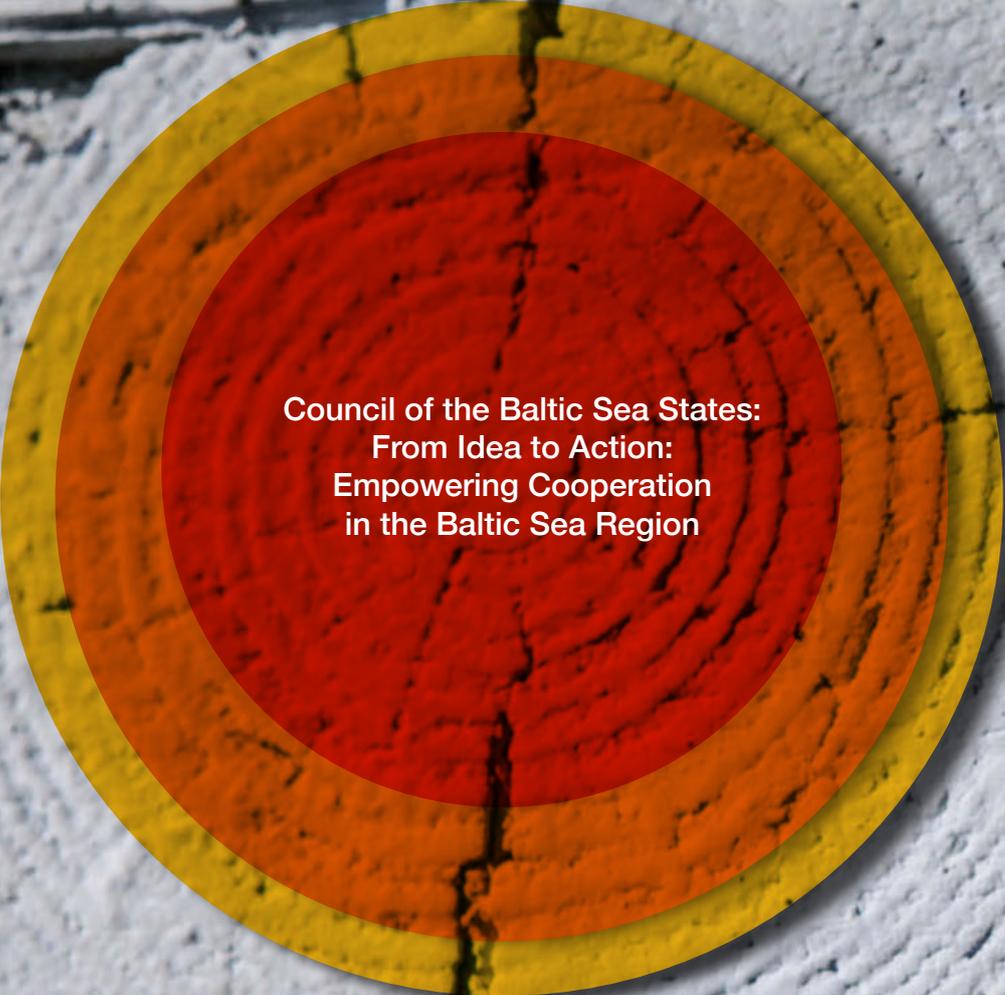
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From Idea to Action:
Empowering Cooperation
in the Baltic Sea Region**