

CONFERENCE REPORT

NEW AMBITIONS FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION

13th Baltic Development Forum Summit
2nd Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
Gdansk, 24–26 October 2011



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New Ambitions for the Baltic Sea Region



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Since the Baltic Sea Region re-established itself 20 years ago, regional co-operation has been driven by high political and economic ambitions. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was introduced in 2009 to address the key challenges and untapped potential of this large region, which makes up about one third of the total area of the EU. To ensure that the Strategy succeeds in promoting co-operation in the Region, new ambitions and targets needed to be discussed.

This was the joint premise of the 13th Baltic Development Forum (BDF) Summit and the European Commission's 2nd Annual Forum on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, held in Gdańsk on 24-26 October 2011. It was the first time the two events were organised jointly and the first time that the BDF Summit visited Poland. The European Commission, Polish Presidency of the EU Council, Pomorskie Voivodeship and the City of Gdańsk were the organising partners of the two events, which corresponded with the Polish government's special attention to this region during its Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011.

The Polish Presidency wanted to carry out an ambitious and comprehensive review of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region together with the European Commission. The outcome of the process was the Council Conclusions (see annex 1).

The Gdańsk conference invited stakeholders on all levels and from all parts of the Baltic Sea Region to take part and to provide input to the review process. How far have we come, what has worked well and what could be improved? Part of the discussion was the question of how to measure results and determine success. Can the introduction of specific indicators help the Baltic Sea Region co-operation set new objectives? The outcome of the Gdańsk conference provided input and inspiration to formal political processes of the EU when adopting the Council conclusions.

The conference took place at the same time when the EU's Heads of State and Government were meeting to find an effective policy response to the euro crisis. This context influenced the various discussions and contributions, and placed the future economic situation and the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region at the forefront. The new regional ambitions were also closely considered in relation to Europe's wider growth ambitions for 2020 under the headline of "Sustainable, Smart and Inclusive Growth". The Baltic Sea Region has been performing well and the post-crisis recovery has been surprisingly rapid, showing positive growth rates. At the same time, the region remains fragile in the face of a volatile European and global economy. The question of how the region could contribute to the EU's growth Strategy through its own initiatives was actively discussed in Gdańsk.

Growth strategies and the future ambitions of the region need close partnerships with the private sector. This was the reason why a special invitation was extended to the private sector and businesses to participate in setting the agenda in Gdańsk. The presence of approximately 120 people from the business sector contributed to and demonstrated a will to be part of the new plans for the region.

The conference took place close to the famous shipyard where the political rebirth of the Baltic Sea Region began, spearheaded by the Solidarity movement in August 1980. It undoubtedly gave inspiration to the 115 speakers who took part in more than 25 sessions that were part of the programme, which also included a networking and exhibition village where 40 project initiatives, companies and financial institutions were present, as well as 25 presentations of different regional initiatives.

It gave a strong impression of the broad variety of the collaborative projects in the region, increasingly filling out the strategic framework that has been adopted. More than 750

stakeholders from the entire region, including top politicians, business representatives and grassroots movements participated in the intense debate and networking. There is no doubt that Gdańsk, as the main regional venue in 2011, provided a vibrant atmosphere.

The conference in Gdańsk confirmed that interest in the Baltic Sea Region, the strategic framework and the concrete efforts on the ground is greater than ever before. Some also felt the need to voice optimism in light of the difficult political and economic context, underlining at the same time that the Baltic Sea Region actors could be proud of the results they had achieved. The region has come very far in a short time and is already acting as a model for other regions in Europe. How far could the region come within the next five years, if the pace is kept and the goals constantly moved forward?

The backing for new regional integration initiatives was the overall message from Gdańsk, which confirmed the following in particular:

- the EU Strategy has started off well, providing a unique common framework for regional and European integration processes. A lot of enthusiasm, many actors, high expectations and a huge variety of projects, as well as strong commitments, are in place;
- many regional organisations are joining up in support of the objectives of the EU Strategy and are ready to act in a more co-ordinated manner;
- stakeholders are ready to take the next step and support the identification of indicators and accompanying targets to measure the added value of common efforts;
- stakeholders are willing to tackle the challenges revealed during the first two years of the Strategy implementation not least to involve the private sector and remain open towards new civil society actors.

At the same time critical remarks were voiced:

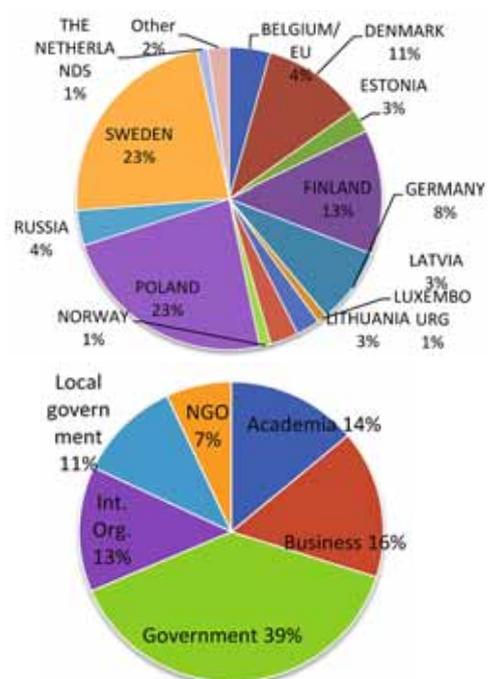
- the danger of excessive administrative burdens linked to EU funding;
- a clear governance structure including roles and responsibilities;
- the need for continued political commitment at the highest level;
- the Strategy and regional co-operation in general need to facilitate funding (including seed money) for pilot projects to ensure they remain sustainable and fully successful;
- the need to reinforce the integrated nature of the Strategy through closer alignment with the themes and flagships of Europe 2020;

- the need to explore ways in which project results could contribute to the development of various policies;
- the need for a higher level of information and communication on regional affairs.

This conference report gives an impression of the three days in Gdańsk and some of the main points made during the discussions and the networking. Unfortunately, it is not possible to honour and give credit to all the speakers and contributions made.

European Commission, Baltic Development Forum
DG Regional Policy

This year's conference gathered ca. 750 participants, during which 126 questionnaires were conducted with our participants – representing approximately 17% of all participants. The overall responses regarding the conference were very positive – an overwhelming amount of respondents viewed the conference as a success. The most popular sessions this year were *Setting Targets for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* and *Regional Identity and Region Branding*. The main reason for participation was to network and the Handbook was considered to be very useful. A vast number of respondents viewed the service of the organisers of the conference very positively and found the choice of venue to be excellent. Also, the more informal parts of the conference – the BDF Gala Dinner and Gdansk Shipyard Dinner – were rated highly.



The Opening

“We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny. But what we put into it is ours.” With these words of Swedish diplomat Dag Hammarskjöld, Commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn opened the Gdańsk Conference together with BDF Chairman Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, Marshal of Pomorskie Region Mieczysław Struk and Mayor of Gdańsk Paweł Adamowicz.

Johannes Hahn underlined that it was up to the regional partners to make the best of the Strategy. As the Strategy was born out of a spontaneous will in the Region to strengthen co-operation, Commissioner Hahn believed that the ownership of the Strategy still belonged to the region. “How – and indeed whether – it becomes a permanent feature of



European Commissioner Johannes Hahn and Colin Wolfe, DG Regio



life in this region depends on the decisions and actions that each of you will take”, he said, describing the results that had been achieved so far as a success.

In many ways Commissioner Johannes Hahn was open and frank in his statements: if some features of the Strategy needed adjusting, then it was important that changes be made. He also mentioned that those who had the vision to launch the Strategy had to keep on putting their weight behind it – even if this sometimes meant difficult decisions. The Commission and governments each had their respective responsibilities, including both sufficient staffing in national and regional administrations as well as alignment of funding: it was again stressed that financing of flagship projects could not be provided only by the European Territorial Co-operation programmes.

The Commissioner saw a need for a change of mindset. He mentioned that the new regulations which the Commission had proposed would help produce this new way of thinking. In the new programming period, macro-regional strategies would have to be taken into account in the new partnership contracts. Regional priorities would then have to be embedded in the national proposals submitted by Member States, creating a better link between regional and national priorities. “This must not be the only source of funding”, the Commissioner said.



Welcome address by Mieczysław Struk, Marshal of Pomorskie Region

The Marshal of Pomorskie Voivodeship Mieczysław Struk emphasised the active participation of the voivodeship in regional integration initiatives and in the implementation of flagship projects of the EU Strategy in many different areas, including transport, tourism, energy and cluster development. The voivodeship had taken several initiatives to strengthen its political and economic role as the main gateway in Poland to the Baltic Sea Region, including plans to

establish a Polish think-tank on Baltic Sea Region affairs and strengthening relations with Nordic Council of Ministers.



Welcome address by Paweł Adamowicz, Mayor of Gdańsk

The Mayor of Gdańsk Paweł Adamowicz similarly highlighted the how the city's different political and economic initiatives play an important role in the Baltic Sea Region through attracting foreign investments, not only from the Nordic countries. The Mayor emphasised the city's role in reaching out to the neighbouring Kaliningrad region and welcomed the new visa regime, which would allow residents of Kaliningrad to visit Northern Poland and Gdańsk without a visa. It would stimulate the movement of people, goods and services across the border.



Dirk Ahner, Director General for Regional Policy, European Commission, BDF Director, Chairman and Vice-Chairman Hans Brask, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen and Hans Skov-Christensen

The Ambitions

Two years with the first Macro-region

The political high point of the Gdańsk conference was the Ministers' session on 25 October, which gave attendees the opportunity to learn the views of government representatives on co-operation within the Baltic Sea Region. New ambitions were the headline for the session: How can macro-regions facilitate further integration in Europe and improve coherence and cohesion at a time of severe economic challenges in the EU?

The Gdańsk conference was indeed influenced by the European political context and the meetings at the European Council before and after the conference. For the same reasons, several Prime Ministers who had announced their participation at the Gdańsk conference cancelled their participation. However, Ministers from four Baltic Sea countries were present: Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Minister of Regional Development, Poland; Rimantas Žylius, Minister of Economy, Lithuania; Werner Hoyer, Minister of State of the Federal Foreign Office, Germany; and Lena Ek, Minister for the Environment, Sweden.

Their participation was very welcome and their positive approach to further regional initiatives was an encouragement to those stakeholders who had voiced the need for continued political assurance that the implementation of the EU Strategy and regional co-operation was high on national political agendas.

The immediate economic challenges of the Baltic Sea Region played a significant role compared to the presentations of new, grand visions for the region. The serious economic context also encouraged speakers to stress the positive role of the Baltic Sea Region in standing out as the best performing regional economy of Europe.

Poland's Minister of Regional Development **Mrs. Elżbieta Bieńkowska** emphasised that "In this difficult time, we need inspiration and good examples to follow. In this respect the Baltic Sea Region and the EUSBSR have plenty to offer to the European Union as a whole". She continued: "Its potential is exemplified by the ability to cope with the effects of the global economic crisis. There exist real possibilities for boosting competition, innovation, environmental protection, as well as further developing infrastructure and communication routes".



Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Minister of Regional Development, Poland

Mrs. Bieńkowska called the EU Strategy "a state-of-the-art tool" and confirmed Poland's will to be a promoter and active participant of the transformation of the Baltic Sea Region into the best place to live and do business. The Minister emphasised that the Strategy had contributed to the fact that Poland was beginning to re-discover its Baltic identity. Ms Bieńkowska underlined the importance of the Gdańsk discussions as they were inscribed into the first EUSBSR review currently being conducted within the EU Council

headed by Poland. She stressed that the Polish Presidency viewed the meeting in Gdańsk as a very significant element of the review process.

Mrs. Bieńkowska reminded us that it was still too early to say for sure whether macro-regional strategies would become an integral part of the broadly understood EU regional co-operation architecture. 2013 would be the year when a better evaluation of this would be possible since the European Commission will present its first assessment of macro-regional strategies.

Germany's Minister of State **Dr. Werner Hoyer** referred to the present German Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), which celebrates its 20th anniversary next year.

Mr. Hoyer presented the following priorities of the German CBSS Presidency:

- modernization of the south-eastern Baltic Sea area, especially by improving links between Kaliningrad Oblast and its surroundings;
- a joint initiative to promote public-private partnerships (PPP) to provide incentives for the development of the Baltic Sea Region and for private investment. This network project will be based on exchange and spread of experience and knowledge in order to fully exploit PPPs' potential;



Werner Hoyer, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, Germany

- strengthening the Baltic Sea Region's identity by increasing peoples' identification with the region, its history and culture;
- creating a coherent framework for co-operation in the region by linking the CBSS more closely to other Baltic Sea co-operation structures and ensuring stronger links among the various forums for co-operation.

Mr. Hoyer pointed at the relationship between the CBSS and the EU Strategy: given its decentralised project approach, the EU Strategy contributed to CBSS's five long-term priori-



ties – environment; economic development; energy; education and culture; and civil security and the human dimension. As well, the CBSS could provide added value for the EU Strategy, e.g. by strengthening cooperation with third countries like Russia.

Mr. Hoyer called for a sensible allocation of tasks in which the CBSS, the EUSBSR and other co-operation networks, such as the Northern Dimension and HELCOM, enhance each other.

“It’s thus to our advantage that two Baltic Sea countries, Poland and Denmark, preside the EU during our CBSS Presidency”, he said. “Together with the Commission we will try to inject new impetus into the co-operation between the CBSS and the EU”.



Lena Ek, Minister for the Environment, Sweden

Sweden’s Minister for the Environment **Mrs. Lena Ek** recognized the potential of a macro-regional co-operation perspective as contributing to:

- deepening integration;
- enhancing competitiveness and the green economy;
- ensuring a long term perspective.

The digital agenda and removing barriers for e-commerce were examples of how the Baltic Sea Region could become more integrated through macro-regional cooperation. Other examples were co-operation on sustainable transport and energy systems or health and labour mobility. “We need more practical solutions and the Baltic Sea Region can be a first mover”, she said.

Mrs. Ek further stressed that competitiveness should be boosted through a smarter use of Structural Funds, thereby diminishing bureaucracy. Moreover, the macro-regional ap-

proach should be safeguarded in the EU multi-annual financial framework and through setting clear and measurable indicators and targets. The Minister also saw the need to further improve co-operation with Russia.



Rimantas Žylius, Minister of Economy, Lithuania

Lithuania’s Minister of Economy **Mr. Rimantas Žylius** emphasized the topics of common interests for the region: transport, energy supply and open societies / culture. Macro-regional co-operation had helped Lithuania to integrate into the EU. “In EU27 we are all competitors”, he said, “but in the Baltic Sea Region Lithuania is leading projects, which could not be done in the EU context. The Baltic Sea Region cooperation has increased our capacities and readiness to compete in the European area”.

As an example of how the region could be more efficient than the rest of Europe, Mr. Žylius mentioned the implementation of the EU Service Directive - “If we could make it work in our region we could increase the European integration in the long run. Other examples are public procurement, cross-border trade, and e-commerce. Here we could test solutions on a smaller scale before entering Europe. Here we are collaborators, not competitors”, he said.

In summarising the discussion, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, Chairman of BDF, emphasised the need to focus on these initiatives and concentrate on issues where the Baltic Sea Region can make a real difference.

The Business Perspective

“The biggest challenge in the implementation of the EU Strategy is the lagging behind of business engagement”
Christian Ketels, author of the State of the Region Report series

The private sector needs to be more involved!

The EU Strategy was mainly developed in response to a political demand. One of the objectives was to make full use of the region’s economic potential and initiatives that increase competitiveness and business opportunities. Does the Strategy mirror the demands of the business sector and correspond to its priorities?



Session on Business Priorities: Hans Skov Christensen, Vice Chairman of BDF, Matthias Kollatz-Ahnen, Vice President of EIB, Carsten Nilsen, Chairman of Scandinavian-Polish Chamber of Commerce and Andrzej Bogucki, Member of the PL2012 Board for Infrastructure

The high priority of business involvement was underlined by the special “warming-up session” which introduced business opportunities and business priorities for the Bal-

tic Sea Region development. The Plenary Session “Business Priorities to Strengthen Growth and Competitiveness in Baltic Sea Region” provided an opportunity to discuss and highlight business priorities and recommendations to the EU Strategy on the day before the official opening of the conference.

The session was opened by Hans Skov Christensen, Vice Chairman of BDF and former CEO of the Confederation of Danish Industry. He stressed the impressive economic performance of Poland, the only economy in the European Union that has not witnessed recession during the last 2-3 years - “The Polish market is huge and growing every day. It is a promising market which all exporting companies should be interested in. Therefore, we have a perfect venue for discussing growth and the potential of the Baltic Sea Region”.

Hans Skov Christensen called for more involvement from the private sector and for deepening the internal market in the region. He underlined the importance of developing a “regional digital agenda” as a way of creating a clear link to the Europe 2020 growth strategy. This also implies the need for more “hard core” projects in the context of infrastructure development and better framework conditions for business – in addition to the many projects today which consists mainly of exchange of best practices.

Several speakers highlighted energy (efficiency, environmental friendly energy), water (supply, waste) and transport as relevant topics for real flagship projects as these topics are key areas for investment in the Baltic Sea Region.

With reference to the discussion at the BDF Advisory Board meeting, Hans Skov Christensen mentioned the role of BDF as linking public and private partners, bridging politics and business. “We want to sharpen our business profile and stimulate new public/private initiatives, e.g. initiatives to fur-



Professor Bernd Henningsen and SAS Vice President Lars Andersen

ther develop the Internal Market. There are success stories and we should highlight them for inspiration”, he said. He called for concrete initiatives aimed at integrating the business perspective and developing new public-private co-operation platforms.

“We should put more focus on what kind of practical measures should be taken to foster trade and investment in the Baltic Sea Region and what should be done to improve its competitiveness for foreign direct investments”
Timo Laukkanen, Confederation of Finnish Industries

“From a business point of view we need concrete and tangible targets within infrastructure, ICT, energy, environment etc. Topics that strengthen competitiveness in the Baltic Sea Region, deepen market integration, stimulate innovation, entrepreneurship and advanced technologies”
BDF Advisory Board, 24 October in Gdańsk

Bridge the gap between policy making and the market

“A Finnish colleague of mine referred to the EUSBSR as a Christmas tree: There is something for everyone under the tree”, said **Stephan Mücklich**, Chairman of Baltic Chamber of Commerce Association (BCCA) . He demanded a business friendlier approach including efforts to remove barriers within the internal market. He complained that a gap had developed between policy-making and the market. “We need fewer and bigger packages. We need to prioritise a few policy areas for the Baltic macro-region. The timing is now, as the coming decade will be dominated by EU budget restraints”, he emphasised.



Stephan Mücklich, President of Baltic Chamber of Commerce Association, and President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Southern Sweden

Mr. Mücklich recommended the following priorities from a business point of view:

- education and research, including enhancing the mobility of knowledge, people and ideas;
- development of functional cities, to improve transport and connectivity;
- development of the single digital market, including harmonisation and reduction of barriers, to enable the potential of a European single market.

Matthias Kollatz-Ahnen, Vice President of the European Investment Bank, emphasised the knowledge-based society as a factor stimulating growth, and the need to put more effort into involving SMEs. The new initiative “Connecting Europe Facility”, proposed by the European Commission, was mentioned by speakers and during the general discussion as a proposal that may provide new funding for initiatives like the Digital Agenda. Mr. Kollatz-Ahnen found it probable that EIB would provide financing instruments for initiatives like Digital Agenda, and that new ways of combining loans with structural funds should be explored.

It was mentioned that EIB priorities support the main areas of the EU Strategy: creating an environmentally sustainable, accessible and prosperous place. Suggestions from EIB that they believed would inspire other macro-regional strategies to build on the experience of the EUSBSR included:

- to make best use of existing instruments and structures;
- to maintain clear ownership of the Strategy;
- to focus on a limited number of priorities and define clear indicators and targets;
- to launch a few cross border projects of high visibility (flagship projects);
- to stress the importance and potential of IFIs (in full) in funding, particularly in blending grant and debt financing;



Emer Daly, Director, DG Internal Market and Services, European Commission, commenting on business perspectives

- to assess Technical Assistance needs and to consider the implementation of Technical Assistance facilities;
- to tap the potential of existing agreements and funding.

Mr. Andrzej Bogucki, Member of the PL 2012 Board for Infrastructure, gave examples of how a big event – the European Championship in Football 2012 in Poland and Ukraine – could boost investments in infrastructure and improve connectivity via new transit roads, thereby facilitating foreign direct investments and increasing GDP growth. However, there is still room for improvement, he said. Developing transport infrastructure is a key area for future investment projects which will provide better links between the different parts of Poland. The football championship will boost tourism, not only during the event but also in the long run, and stimulate interest from foreign visitors. He continued by underscoring the UEFA Euro 2012 as a perfect branding of Polish host cities, such as Gdańsk.



The National Stadium, Warsaw, during its construction. It was finished in November 2011 for the UEFA Euro 2012 hosted jointly by Poland and Ukraine.



Maciej Dobrzyniecki, Vice President of Business Centre Club, Poland

The Business perspective was elaborated at a Plenary Session on 25 October entitled “Business Perspective on regional Development in the Baltic Sea Region”. Among the speakers was **Emer Daly**, Director from DG Internal Market and Services at the European Commission. She emphasized the following key conditions to stimulate better framework conditions for business:

- legal certainty: knowledge of rules and their implementation;
- transparency: knowledge of rights and obligations, simple and clear;
- trust: high quality of public administration service;
- finance opportunities for SMEs and cross-border mobility, including recognition of professional qualifications.

“We need to remove barriers. The private sector knows them. Therefore, we need an active private sector that can provide inspiration and take part in the process of selecting new priorities”
Hans Brask, Director of BDF

Our Russian Neighbour

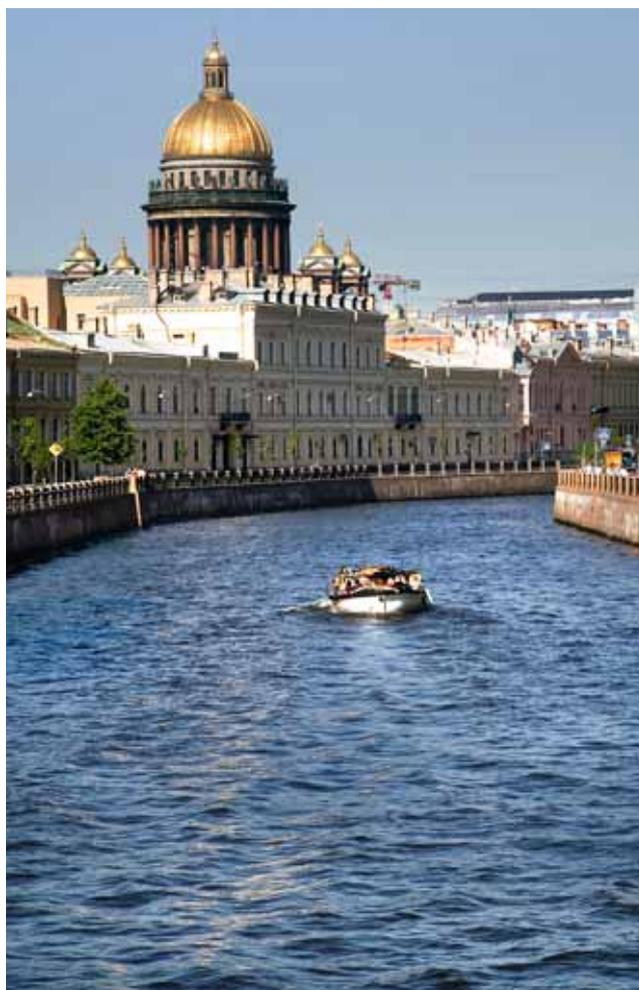
Russia was the theme of several sessions and the conference enjoyed the presence of many Russian participants. Generally there was also a considerable interest from Russian stakeholders in contributing to the development of the Baltic Sea Region and taking part in the discussions on further progress. The conference confirmed the good partnership atmosphere and the Northern Dimension framework played a significant role. Also the Kaliningrad region – close to Gdańsk – was mentioned several times, including the easing of the visa requirements for Kaliningraders who wish to cross the border into Poland and Lithuania. A special session on Kaliningrad was attended by many participants.

The German CBSS Presidency announced during the Conference that they would increase co-operation with Kaliningrad and throughout the whole south-eastern part of the Baltic Sea Region (SEBA). A co-operation agreement was signed in the margins of the Conference, which will place an expert in the Information Office of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Kaliningrad. At the same time, some participants underlined the need for addressing the whole north-west district of Russia, instead of focusing too much on Kaliningrad.

According to Colin Wolfe, Head of Unit at DG Regio, Russia is not explicitly a part of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy, but good relations with Russia are absolutely crucial to its success. “There is quite good contact between the regions around the Baltic Sea”, he said, focusing especially on the fact that Hamburg, St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad have been in contact, and that there are projects in place to reduce pollution into the Baltic Sea originating from Leningrad Oblast.

However, co-operation with Russian regions and cities had to take place within a centrally defined framework: “We cooperate with the authorities in Moscow, at state level, so

that we can have a good framework as part of the overall EU-Russia relations. We have to recognize that our Russian friends have their own interest in the Baltic Sea. To them this is an important transport link and very important area in itself, and we have to accommodate their interests as well as the interests we have laid out very clearly”, Colin Wolfe stated.





Professor Adam Daniel Rotfeld, Former Foreign Minister of Poland, and Hanna Lehtinen, Deputy Director General, Department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland



Slava T. Khodko, Vice-President and Chairman of the Executive Committee, Association North-West, Russia

European Commission representatives mentioned that it was important to the Russian side that co-operation in the Baltic Sea area is seen as part of the Northern Dimension – a common policy framework set up in 1999, where EU and Russia are equal partners. They further mentioned that there are many things which are of common interest – easier crossing of borders, easier trade, and increased mobility – and that these things were being worked on in concrete ways.

“The time is ripe for the EU and for Russia to revise their Baltic Sea strategies”, said Alexander Sergunin, Professor at St. Petersburg State University, during the debate on the Political State of the Region Report. “Russia plays only a small role in the EU Strategy, with small projects in fields like environment, academic mobility, youth, culture”. Mr. Sergunin suggested that the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation was given a Baltic dimension, emphasising innovation – with an eye to the innovation potential of Kaliningrad, St. Petersburg and Leningrad Oblast. In that way, one could develop a sort of “Russian Dimension” in a revised EUSBRs.

A specific thematic workshop focused on the Northern Dimension, which was successfully developed. The workshop showed that the Northern Dimension is providing equality between the involved partners, which was seen as a prerequisite for progress in regional co-operation. Yet it was mentioned that consistency in rules and implementation process and a more even distribution of funding was needed: No funds – no policy. The debates further highlighted that the many institutions which have been established should not take over and multiply, but should adapt to challenges and problems.

“We should find synergies instead of duplicating. We should strive for equality in partnerships!” (from the debate at the ND workshop)

A discussion on regional priorities during the meeting of BDF’s Advisory Board on 24 October underscored the private sector’s special interest in opportunities in the Russian market. SMEs, in particular, needed more information and assistance in understanding the political framework. The Northern Dimension framework and the Northern Dimension Business Council could hopefully play a facilitating role. BDF was advised to focus more on Russia, not least in view of Russia’s upcoming Presidency of the CBSS (1 July 2012). An interesting question was how Russia’s membership of the WTO would influence trade in the region. There was also huge Russian interest in cross-border projects in the fields of environment, transport, logistics, etc.

Targets

The need for setting clearer targets for the implementation of the EU Strategy was widely debated during the conference. Initially, the Strategy did not include specific targets or objectives appropriate for evaluation. As the Strategy has assumed greater importance in the region, evaluation of the value added has become essential. Concrete targets can contribute to higher ambitions for the future by providing a clearer focus on key objectives. The European Commission and Member States have embarked on an exercise that will lead to agreement on both quantitative and qualitative targets that reflect the aims of the Strategy and the efforts of its stakeholders.

It is also part of the new ambition to set indicators for the Strategy in order to better document and measure its effects. There needs to be a focus on fewer priorities and the profile of the Strategy must be sharpened. Maybe the EU Strategy should be more goal-oriented, better targeted and clearly communicated to stakeholders and to the general public.

Dirk Ahner, Director General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Affairs, presented the indicators that a special task force had been preparing over the summer. It was mentioned that the EU Strategy could influence policies even though there was no money in the Strategy to finance big, high profile projects.

Mr. Ahner said that indicators should show two things: the impact of projects in the form of changes in the social-economic environment, as well changes in the way we cooperate. They should be linked to the overall goals of the Strategy, such as a clean Baltic Sea, increased prosperity and better accessibility. Mr. Ahner stressed that indicators "... should be quantifiable, where possible, but descriptive, where quantitative measurements are feasible. They should have a target clearly expressing where we want to go."



"It is important that we bring citizens of today into this project" Dirk Ahner, Director General for Regional Policy, European Commission



The taskforce had proposed a set of indicators and targets addressing the main objectives of each pillar of the Strategy. The work would be completed during the Danish Presidency of the EU Council, with indicators also established at the level of priority areas. The indicators would be identified and discussed in close co-operation with the Priority Area Coordinators. According to Dirk Ahner, "The indicators should be part of a solid delivery mechanism for the Baltic Sea Region Strategy."



From the debate on indicators and targets. Michael Smyth, President, ECO Section, European Economic and Social Committee, and Halldór Ásgrímsson, Secretary General, Nordic Council of Ministers

“The most important issue right now is to keep up the commitment which was there when the Strategy was created – even in the time of crisis – and to transform it into action”
Dirk Ahner, Director General for Regional Policy, European Commission

Member States should set aside funds for the Baltic Sea Region Strategy

“Devising the Strategy was the easy part”, European Commissioner Johannes Hahn said – implying that now it was about finding funds and clarifying targets and indicators. Commissioner Hahn underlined the importance of allocating sufficient staff for the efficient implementation of the Strategy, and of aligning funds not only from the territorial co-operation budget, but from all sources of Structural Funds to implement the Action Plan.

“To be very honest with you, we cannot expect great results from the Strategy if we confine it to co-operation funds”, he said, alluding to the Interreg programmes like the Central Baltic, South Baltic, and other cross-border programmes in the Baltic Sea Region.



Listening: Hans Skov-Christensen and Johannes Hahn.

“The Strategy requires a change of mindset”, the Commissioner said. “Only if the needs identified in the Action Plan – which was widely consulted and agreed upon in the Region – are linked to available financial sources, will the Strategy succeed. In the new programming period, macro-regional strategies will have to be taken into account in the common strategic framework and the new partnership contracts. This means that Baltic Sea Strategy priorities will have to be more firmly embedded in the national proposals submitted by Member States. A second challenge is ensuring adequate staffing to implement the Strategy with enough continuity to allow expertise to be built up.”

The (sub-) regions should have a larger role

“We would like to improve and extend the voice of the regions in the Baltic Sea Strategy”, said the Chairman of the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC), Olgierd Geblewicz, Marshal of the Westpomeranian Region of Poland. He urged the sub-regions (regional authorities) to be more engaged in the action plan and assume responsibility for some of the macro-region projects. He pointed specially to cultural matters and youth projects and projects related to “the economic part of our lives”.



Marshal Olgierd Geblewicz, Westpomeranian Region, Poland

The BSSSC stated that, so far, the macro-region Strategy had mainly had positive effects at the national level, as the sub-regions had co-operated in the Baltic Sea Region long before the Strategy. These were some of the BSSSC recommendations for the future:

- the information level of the Strategy should be improved;
- multi-level governance is the key factor in retaining involvement of regions in the implementation;
- Russia and other countries outside the EU should be more involved;
- financial support for the Strategy is not satisfactory because national and other programmes have supported the Strategy “without any co-ordination”; “INTERREG is too limited to solve all problems”;
- simplification and adaptability of EU programme management “should be a byword when establishing the framework for funding in the future”.

Today's Context

Several key reports were presented at the Summit / Annual Forum, serving as background and an inspiration source for the debates during the different sessions.

State of the Region Report 2011

The annual State of the Region Report has become an appreciated and respected institution measuring competitiveness, economic performance and prosperity in the Baltic Sea Region. It is used by governments, organisations, financial institutions and private actors. The 2012 report has been authored by Christian Ketels, Principal Associate of Harvard Business School, and this year in cooperation with Gunnar Eliasson, Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden, and Pontus Braunerhjelm, Managing Director, Entreprenörskapsforum, Sweden, as regards the chapter on entrepreneurship in the Baltic Sea Region. The subtitle of this year's report was *The Top of Europe's Quest for Resilience: A Competitive Region Facing a Fragile Global Economy*.



"The instruments are there, the EU Strategy is there, our organisations are aligned. Now it's just our decision to take the leadership choices and make the next step forward.", Christian Ketels

Key Findings

- A sound policy response has helped the Baltic Sea Region weather the global economic crisis better than most of its peers.
- The Region's post-crisis recovery has been surprisingly rapid, but turbulence in the euro zone and elsewhere has severely undermined the economic outlook.
- Longer-term, the Region also needs a Strategy to retain local value creation, as FDI is increasingly surpassing trade as a key mechanism for internationalization.
- The competitiveness of the Region remains solid and broadly in line with prosperity; sustained new growth requires further continuous upgrading of competitiveness.
- Regional co-operation is a critical tool for upgrading competitiveness, especially in areas like market and innovation system integration. Joint policy learning, but also traditional support for lagging countries, continues to hold benefits for the Region.
- Regional co-operation throughout the Baltic Sea has benefited from increasing levels of co-ordination across organisations, networks, projects, and financing.

- The EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy has played a very positive role in enhancing the effectiveness of co-operation. It has so far been less influential in introducing new participants, topics, or solutions to address regional issues.
- Strong political leadership from within the Region is needed to provide the EU Strategy with the financial and organisational architecture needed for another step-change in impact.
- Entrepreneurship through indigenous innovation and firm entry is critical for the less developed parts of the Baltic Sea Region to accelerate catch-up and for its already wealthy economies to maintain their strong global position.

According to the report, “The Baltic Sea Region has come out of the first phase of the global economic and financial crisis better than most of its peers. The collapse of world trade hit the mainly small open economies of the Region particularly hard. But their solid financial markets and macroeconomic policies also helped them to stage an impressive recovery”. This, according to professor Ketels, still places the Baltic Sea Region at the top of Europe. Many parts of the Region are among the global leaders in areas such as institutional quality, company sophistication, skills and innovative capacity, infrastructure, demand sophistication, and the openness of markets.

However, the Baltic Sea Region will not be able to escape the fallout from the second part of the crisis, with its focus shifting to sovereign debt. “Low growth in key markets, difficulty to access capital on globally connected financial markets, and rapid shifts in currency and equity markets will reduce growth in the Baltic Sea Region”, said Mr. Ketels.

The Report sees co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region as a significant asset compared to many other parts of the world. The EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy has been “a powerful tool” to better align the activities of the many regional institutions and networks. The next step would be deeper market integration, i.e. creating a localised market for small and medium enterprises to serve as a buffer of local demand against the vagaries of global cycles. Progress on this path has, however, been too slow and will require renewed impetus.

The report’s content and recommendations were intensively discussed during the conference sessions. Particular attention was given to the suggestions of establishing a Baltic Sea Region Competitiveness Council as a high level platform for setting a strategic agenda. The State of the Region Reports could provide benchmarks and a framework

for both regional and European development to identify the region’s strength positions.

The report is sponsored by the European Investment Bank and Nordic Council of Ministers and the two institutions took an active part in the special workshop on the report that was part of the Conference.

Political State of the Region Report

The **Political State of the Region Report** is the first of its kind and paints a picture of the political situation in all Baltic Sea Region countries, drawing attention to key political issues the region needs to address. The report provides a political context to the discussion on further regional developments. It is also the first report from the “Think-Tank for the Baltic Sea Region”, a new network of researchers who are experts on the development of the Region. The report is sponsored by BDF and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

The think tank consists of 24 researchers from the Baltic Sea countries and is led by professor Bernd Henningsen from the Humboldt University in Berlin and Tobias Etzold from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP).

The report provides a summary of the political situation in each of the nine countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, with a short evaluation of the national attitude towards the Baltic Sea Region Strategy. The attitudes vary enormously from country to country, and the Report is particularly effective at demonstrating how these viewpoints are connected to the objective situation of the country.

Key Messages

- The EUSBSR has been established as “the new game in town”.
- The Region has done relatively well during the crisis and will fare better than the South over the next generation.
- Relations to Russia are a major concern for all the states in the region.



- It is still necessary to convince all these states of the benefits of the macro-region. Regional actors have to clarify their roles and financial means.

During the discussion at the Summit / Annual Forum, it was stated that governance is weak. There is a need for real progress, but it is not clear who has to develop what. Is it time for a more formal structure? Can we move beyond co-ordination? Do we not need more than co-ordination to make this a true Strategy? The Strategy was born as a “catch-all”. Do we not need to give it a narrower and sharper profile?



Discussing the Political State of the Region Report. Rikard Bengtsson, Associate Professor at University of Lund and Lidia Puka, Analyst, the Polish Institute of International Affairs

The report was presented during a special workshop and many participants were pleased that there was a chance to discuss broader political issues at the conference, so that not only technical aspects of the EU strategy and economic matters were discussed, but also sensitive and pressing political problems.

Quotes from the Foreword of the Report
“I welcome the Think-Tank for the Baltic Sea Region as a network of scholars aiming to stimulate open discussion on the state of regional affairs, regional integration, mutual understanding and other topical issues”
 Carl Bildt, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

“Initiatives of this kind helps us taking the political dialogue of the Baltic Sea Region to a new level and make the issues relevant for the citizens in the Region”
 Carl Haglund, Finnish Member of European Parliament and Vice Chairman of its Baltic-Europe Intergroup

Is there a Baltic Sea Region Identity?

Is it possible to claim that a common regional identity exists in the Baltic Sea Region? What unites and what transcends the diversities of language, economic development, political systems, and religion in the region? To answer such complex questions, one must draw on knowledge from many scholarly fields – history, culture and politics – as well as take the European dimension into consideration.

Prof. Bernd Henningsen has authored the report “On Identity – No Identity, An Essay on the Constructions, Possibilities and Necessities for Understanding a European Macro Region: The Baltic Sea”. His presentation of the report during the conference created an opportunity to discuss how to strengthen a common identity internally and as an image to the outside world, as a mean to attract talents, investments, and tourism. The report is sponsored by BDF and the Balt-Met Promo project.

According to the Report, one finds in the Baltic Sea Region, more than any other region, a diverse, completely and totally opaque flora of NGOs. They concern themselves with local and regional issues, labour market issues, youth solidarity, protecting the environment, research and education, city partnerships and trans-regional cooperation, and economic development. The political will for co-operation in public institutions is unique in the world.

However, these many civilian activities have not yet managed to yield a positive picture of Baltic Sea coherence – the many activities are entirely too hybrid, insufficiently goal-oriented to be coherent. The strong sense of solidarity among people in the (Baltic Sea) region is extremely helpful for achieving efficiency. “Identity” is not the right term, but perhaps it could be called a “we-feeling”.

The Report concludes that there is no common macro-regional identity but many common interests, which can serve as an engine for joint regional branding and marketing. The conference session on the Report agreed that we should leave the discussion of joint identity. There is no such identity and we



do not need it. We have a common interest, which is good enough. We have historical commonalities. Let us build on these and common values to strengthen a common identity. We should concentrate on branding the region. In a globalised world, this is absolutely necessary if we want to stay on “Top of Europe”.

The Baltic Sea Region Could Attract More Investment

The global share of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows that come to the Baltic Sea Region is falling, the State of the region report has identified. It is a process that is slowly eroding the Region’s share of global inward FDI stock and increasing the challenge of marketing the Region as an attractive FDI destination in an increasingly crowded global market.

It is clear, however, that the Baltic Sea Region countries could attract more investments and increase their export share through joint international efforts. This was one of the recommendations from a new BDF publication *Promotion of Trade and Investments in the Baltic Sea Region – A Report on opportunities for co-operation between trade and investment agencies*. The report presents 21 concrete recommendations in this regard.

Hans Skov Christensen, incoming Chairman of BDF and former CEO of the Confederation of Danish Industry, hopes that the Report will spur new debate on closer co-operation in the field: “Due to the internationalisation, it is clear to me that we need to join forces in the region to be able to better promote trade and attract investments. Most of us are small and open markets that need to build critical mass in order to attract investors and trade opportunities globally.”

He further emphasised that “competition between the Baltic Sea Region countries in investment promotion is good and healthy since it keeps us all on our toes. At the same time, we must not exclude joint efforts in order to penetrate better and reach the big companies and investors. This report shows that we can collaborate in many areas, both in order to have more impact and outreach in our marketing activities, but also to increase efficiency and re-



duce costs in operations. EU funding programmes could be useful tools in this area, if applied and tailored rightly. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region should be used to test new collaborative approaches and instruments”.

The Report, which was commissioned by the Danish Enterprise and Construction Agency, is part of the Action Plan of the EU Strategy.

In the margins of the conference, experts and key stakeholders from Investment and Trade Promotion Agencies in the region met and agreed to explore how closer co-operation could be achieved. This is a new offspring of the policy roundtables that were conducted as part of the BaltMet Promo project.

Analysis of Needs for Financial Instruments in the EUSBSR

The report *Analysis of needs for financial instruments in the EUSBSR*, authored by the consultancy firm SWECO, analyses the financial and non-financial needs expressed by the stakeholders against the backdrop of existing financial and non-financial instruments. The analysis is based on interviews with nearly 60 stakeholders involved in the implementation of the EUSBSR and on information about existing financial instruments largely provided by INTERACT Point Turku. The report was commissioned by DG Regional Policy.

Matching the actions and priorities of the Baltic Sea Region with available funding is a crucial pre-condition of the Region’s ability to advance. International financial institutions have a key role in supporting development by providing loans, technical assistance, and expertise. The need for long-term funding and strong financial partnerships has been emphasised after the recent economic turbulence. This will be highlighted even more in the revision of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

As the needs are non-financial, tailor-made advice and institutional and technical assistance (seed money) are needed, as well as a common database of different funding sources, support in setting up networks, etc.

Current attempts to align funding to the EU Strategy are seen as insufficient. The coverage of available funding sources is good, but the main problems in aligning them are structural. More proactive stimulation and co-ordination is needed, together with political commitment from the Member States to improving the alignment of funding.

International Financial Institutions (EIB, NIB, NEFCO, EIF - IFIs) are playing a crucial role in the EUSBSR

implementation, having different focuses, priorities, lending activities and requirements. The lending activities by the International Financial Institutions are in line with the priorities of the EUSBSR.

International Financial Institutions can provide expertise required to elaborate high quality bankable projects. The current economic situation requires supporting strategically important projects contributing to the sustainable development in individual countries. The Member States should play a part in defining investment priorities. It is essential that the needs for funding be clearly expressed to the administrators of financial sources, who could reflect on how they could help fulfil those needs.

These issues were discussed during a special session at the conference where IFIs were taking active part in the discussion.



Back-to-Back Meetings

DG Regio Meeting

24 October - in the margins of the conference - the European Commission, DG Regio, met with National Contact Points (NCPs), Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) and Horizontal Actions Leaders (HALs) of the EUSBSR. Commissioner Hahn also participated in the meeting. An overview of the review process was presented, including the European Commission's Report, the accomplishments of the Polish Presidency and the role of macro-regions in future regulations.

Commissioner Hahn reflected upon some challenges of the EU Strategy, i.e. greater political commitment, agreement on roles and responsibilities of main stakeholders to better address administrative needs and alignment of funding and contribution of mainstream programmes into the Strategy. A key ambition was to further strengthen the role of key stakeholders and to encourage them to become more ambitious in implementing the Strategy as well as to develop a better understanding of the expectations that arise from undertaking Strategy responsibilities.



Commissioner Johannes Hahn at the internal EUSBSR meeting

It was also mentioned that the European Commission had conducted an expertise study that provided an overview of the needs for financial and non-financial instruments in the EUSBSR.

An overview of the taskforce working on targets at the Strategy's level was presented. The work on introducing precise targets for the implementation would become an important issue in the coming months, and this was also discussed during the conference in Gdańsk. The European Commission, in co-operation with INTERACT, also planned to launch an expertise group on the communication needs of the EUSBSR. As well, INTERACT intends to become more active in the communication aspects of the Strategy, such as launching its own web platform.

BONUS Forum 2011

The EUSBSR flagship project BONUS convened its second stakeholder forum for policymakers in Gdansk on 24 October, where the latest knowledge produced by the BONUS+ projects ending in 2011 was showcased. Over 80 participants came together, including representatives from different ministries and governmental research institutes from the nine countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. During the panel sessions, the 16 BONUS+ projects shared results on themes related to multiple risks and stressors, past and future scenarios of the Baltic Sea, eutrophication and biodiversity.

BONUS combines research related to the Baltic Sea System into a joint and durable interdisciplinary multinational

programme for sustainable development. The BONUS Forum 2011 focused on encouraging and ensuring that the links between the BONUS+ results and important policy processes across the region are transparent. Moreover, the forum emphasised that the knowledge generated be used effectively in the critical work across different sectors in efforts to ensure a better future for the Baltic Sea Region.

Model European Parliament Program Meeting

The Model European Parliament program is a leadership program for youth in the 27 EU countries, set up in 1994 whose aim is to educate young people at high school level about European integration and co-operation, and to develop their understanding of common issues as well as provide them with knowledge about the EU's institutions. The program develops political awareness and an understanding of Europe's cultural diversity. The MEP program has successfully expanded into regional organisations in several parts of Europe. In 2004, a regional organisation was set up in the Baltic Sea Region.

The MEP program also gives the participants the opportunity to experience the diversity of the countries around the Baltic Sea and be part of numerous social events, such as teambuilding, sightseeing along with living with a family in the host country. The sessions take place twice a year in the



Students of the MEP Program

Baltic Sea Region. The October 2011 session was hosted by the cities of Gdańsk and Gdynia and linked to the Summit / Annual Forum, where MEP students were present. The session was very welcome by all, not only because regional stakeholders have often been criticised for not sufficiently including younger generations.

Also present in Gdańsk were approximately 30 students from the University of Gdańsk who were studying Scandinavian languages or regional studies. Their participation and help was widely appreciated.



Volunteers from the University of Gdańsk

Actions

The Baltic Sea Region is characterised by a huge and vital multitude of collaborative projects, reflecting a long tradition of co-operation and a thriving landscape of organisations, formal and informal structures. It has however also given rise to demands for greater coherence in regional co-operation and streamlining regional organisations. At the same time, the EU Strategy seems to have provided a common reference point and a framework.

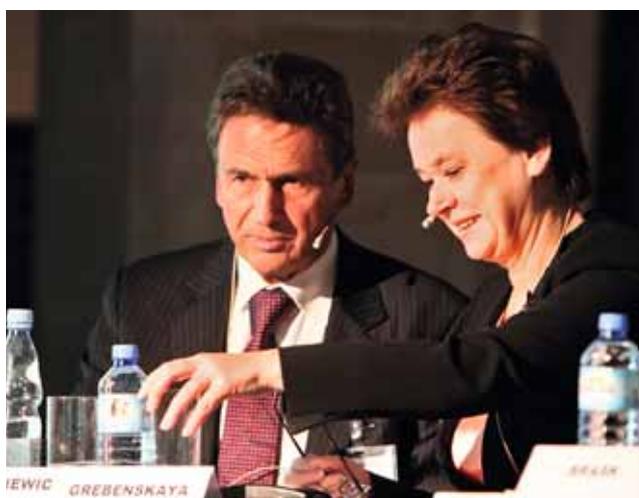
The many regional organisations have created a dynamic background for the variety of thematic projects that are developed or under development within the framework of the EU Strategy, being designated flagship projects or ideas in the pipeline. Selected thematic priorities were presented at special sessions during the entire conference. This created an opportunity to present projects and other strategic initiatives, to discuss progress and barriers – or simply launch and exchange views on new ideas on how to stimulate the development of the Baltic Sea Region.

Only a small selection of these initiatives is presented in this report. It will be briefly described under two thematic headlines: “Green Growth and Sustainability”, and “Innovation and Competitiveness”.

Green Growth and Sustainability

Green Growth: Water

Many analysts regard water to be one of the 21st century’s greatest challenges. Since 1970, the amount of water available per person has fallen by 40 %, and 1.8 billion people may soon experience outright water scarcity. The challenges concern both developed and developing countries, and climate change and urbanisation will intensify them. The global water market amounts to approximately 360 billion Euros – an export potential for countries that have a strong tradition of solving complex water supply and environmental problems in public-private partner-



Water on the table and on the agenda. Andrzej Jagusiewicz from Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland, and Tatiana M. Grebenskaya from SUE Vodokanal of St. Petersburg, Russia

ships. Can the problems of the Baltic Sea be turned into a positive story and booming industry?

The conference demonstrated that the level of investments needed in the water sector in years to come is huge. In Poland alone, many state of the art waste water treatment plants will be established and they will contribute to a cleaner Baltic Sea. Investments will also be made in Russia. Today, Vodokanal of St. Petersburg is a model to follow in many other parts of Russia. It is a municipality-owned water utility responsible for the water supply and wastewater treatment in the city and its suburbs.

However, which strong clusters does the Baltic Sea Region possess, and how could a better public-private partnership be established to address the existing challenges related to the pollution of the Baltic Sea? Furthermore, how could the region’s water sector position itself to address future challenges related to climate change?

Blue Growth

Maritime regions can play a pivotal role in the solutions to many of Europe's challenges, especially through the great potential they hold in terms of innovation and technological advancement for sustainable growth and employment. The session on Blue Growth focused on the fact that Europe's maritime sectors can be at the forefront of Europe's economic recovery by unlocking the sustainable, untapped potential of marine resources (living and non-living), as well as scientific and economic activities in established, emerging and prospective maritime sectors. To facilitate this, sustainable maritime growth and employment and adequate maritime skills, qualifications and education must be in place.

The growth of the maritime economy surpasses the growth in the overall economy of the Baltic Sea Region. Therefore, Europe's maritime sectors can be at the forefront of Europe's economic recovery. The maritime component plays an important part in the EU Strategy, which was pinpointed during the conference. One question was how to direct skills, research and capital in maritime industries so as to obtain the best results, create the right products and services at the right time, and with that, jobs and growth. The gap between the industry's needs and the qualifications and skills available needed to be identified and solutions found.

There were several **Key messages** from the session:

- will new innovative links between government, research institutions and maritime companies foster growth and development in the maritime sector?
- creating a Baltic maritime knowledge hub through innovative partnerships was suggested;
- we need a closer link between the Integrated Maritime Policy and the Baltic Sea Strategy; a plea for a Baltic Sea Clean Marine Award;
- clean Shipping, offshore renewable energy and sustainable aquaculture are potential areas for growth in the Baltic Sea Region;
- the cruise industry injects strong economic value in local economy;
- clusters are key to growth in maritime sectors; in addition to achieving long term objectives they also help to maximize immediate economic potential;
- sustainability plays a key role in economic growth. The tourism industry itself is heavily reliant on a clean environment and there are good examples of efforts being made in the industry to reduce its environmental footprint.
- joint regional solutions to tackle emissions from ships are necessary; there is a great potential for innovation in clean shipping.

There is enormous potential for growth in maritime sectors in the Baltic Sea Region. To capture it, there is work for all different actors to ensure overall coherence through governance at different levels, private public partnership, more intense links between different private sectors, and linking all maritime actions of the Strategy.

Save the Sea on Land

The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the CBSS Secretariat hosted a thematic workshop on Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region. It was discussed how integrated approaches to the implementation of the Action Plan of the EU Strategy can lead to sustainable development. The focus of the session was on integrated natural resource management.

Some of the environmental challenges facing the Baltic Sea, such as eutrophication, over fishing and loss of biodiversity, are widely familiar. In order to have a sea in balance, there is a need to deal with some of the fundamental questions shaking the system in the first place. Many of the root causes stem from human activities on land. The focus should be on cross-sectoral activities and integrated approaches to the implementation of the EU Strategy and its action plan.

Sustainable Bio energy – Moving Towards a Bio energy-based Society

The increased focus on green growth and the strong political will to reduce dependency on fossil resources paves the way for new sustainable solutions that can promote social, economic and environmental innovation. However, there are many choices to be made as well as many possible mistakes. The focus of the session was on the challenges related to the development of sustainable bio energy solutions in the transition from a fossil-based to a bio energy-based society. What needs to be done, and what are the steps ahead? Issues addressed were biomass potential, development of new energy technologies, handling of residuals, trade, and socio-economic development.

Promote Measures to Reduce Emissions from Ships

The flagship project promotes measures to reduce emissions from ships to the atmosphere. In total, 39 formal partners in two sub-projects, InnoShip and CleanShip, partly financed by the Baltic Sea Regional Programme, transform innovations into operations to reduce emissions at sea while retaining the competitiveness of Baltic shipping, promote infrastructure for bunkering of LNG, sewage treatment, and increased use of shore side electricity. A web based Pan-Baltic Best Practice Manual and a Strategy for Clean Shipping are examples of deliverables by the sub-projects.

Policy change as a tool for a toxic free Baltic Sea

In order to efficiently improve the environment in the Baltic Sea with regard to hazardous substances, there is a need for preventive action to minimize the number of substances entering the environment. This project aims to reduce the use of hazardous chemicals in the Baltic Sea Region through upstream reduction by actively working towards inclusion of substances of very high concern (SVHCs) in the REACH candidate list.

BaltAdapt

The countries boarding the Baltic Sea are threatened by climate change. Although the likely impact of climate change is difficult to predict with certainty, it is generally accepted that the projected increase in precipitation amounts and temperature will put the integrity of the ecosystem at risk and increase the risk of natural disasters. BaltAdapt intends to strengthen co-operation and knowledge sharing on climate change issues in the region and develop a Baltic Sea climate change adaptation strategy, a basis for a region-wide action plan.

Baltic Deal – Putting Best Agricultural Practices into Work

What do farmers do to improve the Baltic Sea environment? Baltic Deal gathers farmers and advisory organisations around the Baltic Sea in a unique effort to raise the competence concerning agro-environmental practices and measures among farmers and advisors. The aim is to support farmers to reduce nutrient losses from farms, while maintaining existing productivity and competitiveness.

CBSS Baltic 21 - A greenhouse for sustainable ideas

CBSS Baltic 21 meets the environmental, social and economic challenges facing the Baltic Sea Region by developing a multitude of sustainability projects, called **Lighthouse Projects**. Within their frameworks, CBSS Baltic 21 finds, develops and tests practical sustainable solutions for climate change, urban-rural development, consumption and production, and more.

HELCOM and the EU Strategy in Synergy

HELCOM, an intergovernmental organisation of the nine Baltic Sea countries and the EU, highlighted its major work as implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan in synergy with the EU Strategy, to achieve a healthy, safe and secure Baltic Sea by 2021, through fighting eutrophication, reducing inputs of hazardous substances, protecting biodiversity and ensuring the safety of navigation as well as efficient response to oil spills. A practical implementation of Broad-scale Maritime Spatial Planning was also in focus.

Innovation and Competitiveness

A Digital Agenda for the Baltic Sea Region

A digital single market – including e-commerce – is of great importance to economies in the region. As front-runners in many areas of the digital economy, the region has the interest and potential to show practical results in terms of providing a more integrated framework. This framework would allow innovative companies to grow and prosper through a larger and more integrated digital market, and, in the long term, benefit from an integrated market of European scale. The task is to link the EU Strategy for the Region to the Europe 2020 initiatives.

The discussion at this thematic session in Gdańsk concluded:

- a digital Strategy is imperative for the digital single market and can strengthen economic and social ties;
- today, our digital market is fragmented; there is a lack of consumer trust and confidence in e.g. e-commerce;
- common legislation is needed on this and on intellectual property;
- a common telephone area for the Baltic Sea Region (without charges) is needed;
- further exploiting the potential of e-health can be part of the digital strategy for the macro-region. The ongoing project, which involves Russia as an engaged partner, should be utilized.

The session confirmed the potential and interest for the development of a digital initiative for the region, including reducing barriers to trade; thereby opening for new business opportunities and providing practical solutions that will benefit both citizens and the competitiveness of SMEs. Such experiences can serve as a model for how a single digital market could be developed in Europe. It was announced that the Baltic Chamber of Commerce Association and BDF would present a study in June 2012



Discussing the Digital Agenda. Kaj Juul-Pedersen, President of Sitella in Denmark, Ambassador Raul Mäik from Estonia and Silvija Juscenko, NDPHS, Sweden

on barriers and how regional efforts could contribute to overcoming them.

Fostering Innovation in the Baltic Sea Region

The current regional innovation performance in the Baltic Sea Region – measured by the main research and technological development, and innovation indicators – is strong. However, globalisation has resulted in increased competition between countries and regions in relation to investments in production, knowledge, and innovation. It was identified that being composed of relatively small countries, if the Baltic Sea Region is to sustain a vibrantly innovative environment, it is crucial to strengthen transnational co-operation in these areas.

Research and Innovation

To exploit the full potential of research and innovation, the Baltic Sea Region needs to think outside of the box and outside of traditional sector policies. Goals need to be set in relation to the grand challenges of society in order to address these solutions. Actors at all levels (multi-level) and from all policy fields (cross-sectoral) need to co-operate.

The session identified several links as making up the real added value:

- link business to universities/research to arrive at smart specialisation strategies;
- link early education to innovation to arrive at smart education systems and innovative entrepreneurial citizens;
- link clusters and enterprises across borders to reach global markets and be competitive.

It was further emphasized that co-operation/links are not free of factions. These links need efforts to speak the right “language” across different sectors, equal partners, and strong leadership and resources on all sides.

The region has the potential to be very innovative if grand challenges are taken up as goals (think outside the box), if an open approach is followed (open innovation) and if links are established that cross administrative borders within a country (multi-level), sectoral borders (cross-sectoral) and national borders / the whole macro-region.

Doing Business in Poland

The Polish economy continues to attract the interest of international investors and entrepreneurs due to its high performance, not only during the global economic and financial crisis. A session discussed various aspects of the Polish economy and how to invest and do business in Poland. It also included information on legal and administrative frame-

works, as well as some of the challenges that Poland will face in the coming years.



The session concluded that Poland consistently expands its investment offering, targeted at foreign companies, and enjoys growing interest from foreign investors. It is seen abroad as a combination of a stable market and a growing economy. A well functioning financial market and good prospects for growth, combined with human resources and investment incentives, contribute to a very positive perception of the Polish market abroad and make Poland an interesting destination for investors. Representatives of foreign companies in Poland expressed their strong satisfaction with working in Poland. It was important that foreigners felt welcome and quickly felt at home.

Connectivity

In the Baltic Sea Region, transport and energy connectivity is particularly important due to vast distances (internally, to the rest of Europe, and to the wider world) and often difficult transit conditions. The region, being located at the periphery of the economic centre of Europe, is highly reliant on foreign trade in goods and needs a well functioning transport and energy infrastructure for economic growth. Moreover, the Baltic Sea is a sensitive ecosystem, which makes environment and safety important considerations in the development of connectivity.

The workshop had several main findings:

- connectivity is crucial for other policy areas and investments;
- rail-air-sea transports need better integration in the Baltic Sea Region;
- safety and security are prerequisites for the transport of goods and human travel;
- Baltic Transport Outlook should feed into the TEN-T planning and the region must also attend inbound air traffic;
- different modes of transport must co-operate to strengthen each other and thus the region;
- regional branding and connectivity go hand in hand.

Many participants encouraged a stronger focus on connectivity in the future, underlining at the same time that the Commission had recently presented a proposal called “Connecting Europe Facility”. The proposal emphasises the need for more investment in infrastructure development, which is also the basis for the Europe 2020 Growth Strategy.

Tools

Communication

The success of the EUSBSR will depend on the ability to define clear structures for collaboration and on the quality of new and existing networks. The improvement of knowledge management and awareness of the Strategy – and the results it delivers – is also essential. Key groups, such as local and regional authorities, NGOs, and the private sector, should increasingly be involved. A “Communication initiative” needs to be developed. The main question at the conference was how.



Conference Moderator Verner Kristiansen

This thematic session confirmed the need for a broad communication platform in order to improve knowledge sharing and to engage “civil society” in the EU Strategy. There is a need for better communication to foster a common identity, not merely through top-down constructs, but by exchanging news and learning about the ways of life of different parts of the Region. The coherence among Scandinavian countries was cited as an example of an “identity”, created from through a bottom-up process, dating back to the 19th century. In Gdańsk, there was a general support for

the need to develop a “Communication initiative” to ensure broader participation in the Strategy, as well as publicise its achievements.

One of the problems in the creation of the EUSBSR, according to Director-General Dirk Ahner from the European Commission’s DG Regio, was that the original commitments were made by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in the Member States, but now – as other people from other ministries and other agencies have had to step in to create action on the ground – sometimes the message has



Westpomeranian Marshal being interviewed

not really been passed down to the ground level. In more concrete terms, he called for new investments, new trade agreements, and new co-operation agreements – co-operation along borders, between universities, and between regions and cities.

Mr. Ahner emphasised that the EUSBSR is “a learning-by-doing” exercise, and that more should be done to bring young people and NGOs into the process and to commu-

nicate better, not only to those involved, but also to the general public.

Several speakers underscored the need to stimulate involvement in civil society. Civil society, made up of ordinary citizens, volunteer organisations / NGOs, and business, is only involved in a few of the concrete projects under the different flagship projects. Michael Smyth, President of ECO Section, European Economic and Social Committee, put it this way: “When setting the targets of the EU Strategy we should also assess the degree of involvement of our citizens and the civil society. It should be part of our success indicators”.

Some believed that, for the success of the EUSBSR, it was important that the citizens feel ownership of the Strategy and have the possibility to engage in dialogue with persons responsible for each project, e.g. by establishing a website for the Strategy and developing pilot projects for the involvement of citizens and civil society organisations. This could be part of a new communication initiative as a way to spread knowledge and strengthen citizen involvement. Others called for a broader information exchange in order to create a regional “general public” as a basis for a long term regional development initiative.



Christopher Beazley, Honorary President, European Parliament Baltic Europe Intergroup

During the discussions in Gdańsk, Christopher Beazley, Honorary President of the European Parliament’s Baltic Europe Intergroup, suggested the introduction of a rotating presidency for the Strategy, perhaps with a nominated honorary chairman who would help facilitate and promote the initiative.

Financing and Governance

Alignment of Funds within Operational Programmes

Effective alignment of funding remains one of the crucial points for the further success of the Strategy. Stakeholders consequently underlined the need for comprehensive dialogue between National Contact Points and authorities responsible for cohesion policy in Member States involved about the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, mainly when it comes to future financing of macro-regional strategies.



Question from the floor



Sum-up session. Colin Wolfe, DG Regio, Henryka Moscicka-Dendys, MFA of Poland and Hans Brask, BDF

What are the lessons learned in combining these various financial sources? How will macro-regional priorities be included in the future EU Cohesion Policy post 2013? These questions were addressed in a thematic session, alongside the issues of co-ordination and co-operation among stakeholders to make better use of available funds.

These are some of the suggestions on what to change in the 2014-2020 period:

- alignment of funds, also within sectoral policies of EU and national levels with territorial impact: transport, environment, maritime, R&D;
- a new and clear logic for the Baltic Sea Region Programme with a definite link to EUSBSR;
- effective co-ordination of different policies, political leadership and ownership of decision makers;
- a mindset change to overcome misunderstandings in perception of the Strategy between EUSBSR stakeholders and Operational Programmes.

It was said that a joint, coherent and consequent understanding of the role of funding sources in 2014-20, both at EC and national level, is needed. Active and quick dialogue on that is indispensable from now until the end of 2012 during negotiations of regulations.

Multi-level Governance

The Baltic Sea Region enjoys well-established structures for inter-governmental, interregional and cross-border cooperation. However, regional and local levels operate very differently in the countries around the Baltic Sea. The regions have different statuses, both constitutionally and *de facto*, different legal ramifications and different competences – making deeper co-operation among these levels more chal-

lenging. It is important that the traditional vertical multilevel governance model – EU institutions, governments, regions – is complemented with the horizontal dimension – private actors, governments, civil society. A new governance model taking all these elements into account will constitute an important instrument in furthering the implementation of the Strategy – but is it feasible?

Several stakeholders find it difficult to get access to the main circles involved in the “governance” of the EUSBSR. The Commission wants to address this issue.

”We need more flexible and less bureaucratic financial instruments. We need seed money for small pilot projects to investigate cooperation opportunities” (from a seminar on the EU Strategy, Copenhagen 9 September 2011).

”Don’t point to the south of Europe in trouble these days. Be proud of what we achieved in the Baltic Sea Region without the teaching approach to regions in trouble. The EUSBSR is a European Strategy, and EU is about solidarity in difficult times. The Baltic Sea Region experienced solidarity itself!” (anonymous conference participant)

”Weak link between political commitment in the Strategy and the projects/activities trying to make the Strategy a success” (anonymous conference participant)



Miscellaneous

Baltic Sea Award 2011

The 2011 Baltic Sea Award was given to Professor Arjen Hoekstra for his pioneering work on the water footprint concept. Mr. Hoekstra is both a university academic at the University of Twente and scientific director of the international NGO “the Water Footprint Network”.

The Baltic Sea is one of the most polluted waters in the world. This situation is of course both unacceptable and untenable. Luckily the political will to address this situation has increased over the last years, but concrete actions are still called for. The water footprint can help us to evaluate our own use of water, to raise awareness and to sharpen our competences. Better knowledge of the water consumption and the impact of waste water on the environment should become good business, not only as the price of water is expected to increase dramatically in the future. We hope the water footprint concept will be welcomed by business as a new aspect of companies’ corporate social responsibility in the Baltic Sea Region.

Next year, the work of Mr. Hoekstra is expected to be turned into an international ISO standard. This will hopefully be welcomed by business, by national and local government, and by the general



Professor Arjen Hoekstra speaking on the occasion of receiving the Baltic Sea Award 2011

public as an objective way of measuring our use of water resources.

Baltic Sea Region Innovation Award

German BioCon Valley was the winner when the best innovation improver in the Baltic Sea Region was awarded for the first time in Gdańsk. BioCon Valley received the honour for its outstanding work with linking the strongest innovation milieus in the Baltic Sea Region within the field of life science and health. BioCon Valley has, among other things, developed the protein rich blue sweet lupine into a “soybean of the north”. The network has also mapped competences within the field of life sciences and health in the Baltic Sea Region. The outcome is a strategically important database of actors in economy and industry (yellow pages in life sciences and health).

“I am especially proud about the award because it merits work and efforts which have been started more than a decade be-



Managing Director Wolfgang Blank upon receiving the first Baltic Sea Region Innovation Award

fore by BioCon together with ScanBalt to develop the vision of a joint healthy and wealthy Baltic Sea Health Region”, said Wolfgang Blank, Managing Director of BioCon Valley.



The award was given out by BDF and Baltic Sea Region Stars, which is one of flagship projects within the EUSBSR, led by the Swedish innovation agency VINNOVA. The purpose of this project is to create a number of world leading innovation hubs in the Baltic Sea Region by linking strong research and innovation milieus, clusters and SME networks.

Conference Handbook and Web Site

A special conference Handbook was given out to the participants that, apart from the programme also included



presentations of speakers, exhibitors and participants. The Handbook seems to have been very valuable for the participants and should become a common practice in the future, serving as a tool for stakeholders to establish and maintain direct contacts. It facilitates networking and the

exchange of ideas, which is the essence of Baltic Sea Region co-operation.

In June 2011, the website www.bsr2011.eu was opened for the Summit / Annual Forum as a joint platform for the organisers, administered by BDF. It contained practical information about the conference programme, speakers, organisers, venues, the exhibition, pre-booked hotels etc., and also hosted the online registration platforms for participants and media. Exhibitors were encouraged to contribute with articles about their stands, especially flagship projects to present the state of affairs of their ongoing activities, and several such posts were published during



the months preceding the conference, linking back to the respective websites of the projects themselves. In total the website attracted 12,700 visits by 6,230 unique visitors and had 39,500 page views.

Evening Dinners

This year the traditional BDF Gala Dinner took place at Sheraton Hotel in the picturesque town of Sopot 24 October. The main speech was held by Hans Dalborg, Honorary Chairman, Nordea Bank. During the dinner the winner of the 2011 Baltic Sea Region Award was announced and entertainment performed by members of the Baltic Youth Philharmonic.





The main dinner for all participants of the Summit/Annual Forum took place at Gdańsk Shipyard's Business and Cultural Center 25 October. During the dinner the winner of the new Baltic Sea Region Innovation Award was announced and entertainment performed.



Visualisation of the Baltic Sea Environment

The exhibition included an inflatable dome theatre that could accommodate 20 visitors at a time. Inside the dome, the visualisation "Baltic Vision" presented the outcome of the BONUS research programme ECOSUPPORT, which, through an advanced multi-model system tool, assesses the combined effect of climate change and nutrient loads in the Baltic Sea. Hourly presentations were held, with participation of experts in climate, oceanography and hydrology from the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute, SMHI. The exhibition was produced by SMHI and the Centre for Climate Science and Policy Research, in cooperation with Visualization Centre C.



Impressions from the Networking and Project Village

The conference included a large exhibition area, called the “Networking and Project Village”, where approximately 40 project initiatives, companies and financial institutions were present, as well as 25 presentations of different regional initiatives.



Next Steps

The conference in Gdańsk proved to be a crucial event for bringing together all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the EUSBSR. It was regarded as essential that the Forum take place on a yearly basis and that its agenda reflects the current state of debates about the EUSBSR each time.

The review of the EUSBSR, undertaken by the Polish EU Council Presidency, offers an important momentum for boosting the implementation process of the Strategy. The Council conclusions on the EUSBSR should be implemented swiftly in 2012 with good co-operation between the Member States involved, the European Commission and the stakeholders involved – in particular since their ultimate goal is to reduce existing deficits of the Strategy, which, after only 18 months of implementation, has already begun to get results.

On 1 January 2012, Denmark will assume the Presidency of the EU Council. In the Presidency programme, modernisation of the single market will be one of the key objectives. The Commission has proposed a package of 12 initiatives

aimed at creating a better business environment in Europe that will promote innovation and reduce red tape. The single market should be brought into the digital age, achieve final agreement on an efficient and user-friendly EU patent system, as well as a legally binding directive concerning consumer rights. A well-functioning internal market is a precondition for a stable euro system and economic growth. A second important objective will be to strengthen European leadership in shaping a green agenda at the global level. When it comes to developing green technologies and promoting energy efficiency, more should be done to help European companies remain on the cutting edge internationally. The third major objective was tangible progress towards a deal on the future budget of the EU.

With regard to the EUSBSR, Denmark will do its best to keep political focus on the Strategy within the EU, regional forums and bilaterally throughout the region. However, in order to attract this kind of attention, the Strategy needs to be more explicit on how it is able to address the urgent



needs of the Region, for instance through identification of clear targets and through the ability to measure and assess the output it produces. The Danish Presidency will work together with all other relevant stakeholders to finish the Commission chaired task force work on targets and indicators. Closer links to Europe 2020, and indeed to other strategies and policies, should be established. This underscores the Strategy's potential as an instrument for implementation of overall European priorities. The participation and involvement of Russia in the strategy is of particular importance to the Danish EU Presidency.

Finally, Denmark announced that it would like to host the 2012 Annual Forum in Denmark at the end of its Presidency – the Minister for European Affairs Mr. Nicolai Wammen has proposed this to Commissioner Hahn.

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen says “Farewell”

At the conclusion of the conference, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen announced that he would step down as Chairman of BDF, which he created 13 years ago, explaining that this was re-

lated to his upcoming 70th birthday on 1 November and a need to reduce his engagements. The announcement was accompanied by spontaneous and very warm applause for the long history of engagement and achievement by “Mr. Baltic Sea”. “My wildest dreams have come true – and they were indeed wild dreams 20 years ago”, said Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, looking back at developments in the Baltic Sea Region since the fall of the Soviet Union. He was very pleased to be part of the conference in Gdańsk, since the BDF Summit came to Poland for the first time. “Now the circle of the travelling Summits has come to a completion in Poland where the new regional development began. Now it is up to others to make a new beginning”, he said.

From now on, the position as BDF Chairman will be held by Hans Skov Christensen, who had been the CEO of the Confederation of Danish Industry for a long time but recently retired from that position. “I look forward to participating in the conference next year as a backbencher”, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen said in his closing remarks. Subsequently, he was named Honorary Chairman of BDF.



BDF Founder and Chairman Uffe Ellemann-Jensen receiving a warm and long applause for his important role in the development of the Baltic Sea Region.



New BDF Chairman Hans Skov Christensen holding a spontaneous speech of thanks on behalf of the audience.

Organisers

European Commission, Directorate General for Regional Policy



The European Commission's Directorate General for Regional Policy works to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion within the EU by reducing disparities in the level of development among regions and member states. It helps to promote the competitiveness of regional economies and the permanent catch-up of those lagging behind the prosperous areas. The main instruments of this policy are the European Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund. Commissioner Johannes Hahn has the political responsibility for regional policy.

www.ec.europa.eu/dgs/regional_policy/

Baltic Development Forum



Baltic Development Forum (BDF) is a high-level network for decision-makers from business, politics, academia and media in the Baltic Sea Region. Our mission is to create a prosperous Baltic Sea Region through regional integration, sustainable growth, innovation and competitiveness. One of our main activities is an annual Summit where decision-makers from business, politics, academia and media meet to exchange ideas and formulate strategies for the future development of the Region. BDF was founded in 1998 by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. Director of the Secretariat is Hans Brask.

www.bdforum.org

The Polish EU Presidency



The main objective of the Polish Presidency of the EU Council in the Second Half of 2011 is that of leading the European Union towards faster economic growth and an enhanced political community. In order to achieve these targets, the Polish Presidency is concentrating on three fundamental priorities: "European integration as the source of growth", "Secure Europe", and "Europe benefiting from openness".

www.pl2011.eu

Pomorskie Voivodeship



POMORSKIE
VOIVODESHIP

There are not many places in Poland like the Pomorskie Voivodeship or Pomeranian Region. Its magic is created by the murmur of the waves of the Baltic Sea, the mysterious forests and woods with their hundreds of lakes and rivers, the beauty of the landscapes and the picturesque hills. The capital of the region – Gdańsk – is a city with a

thousand-year-long history, a mixture of events, dates, historic figures, climactic events, the cradle of Solidarity. Together with the picturesque Sopot and economically dynamic Gdynia, Gdańsk forms a unique conurbation called the Tri City.

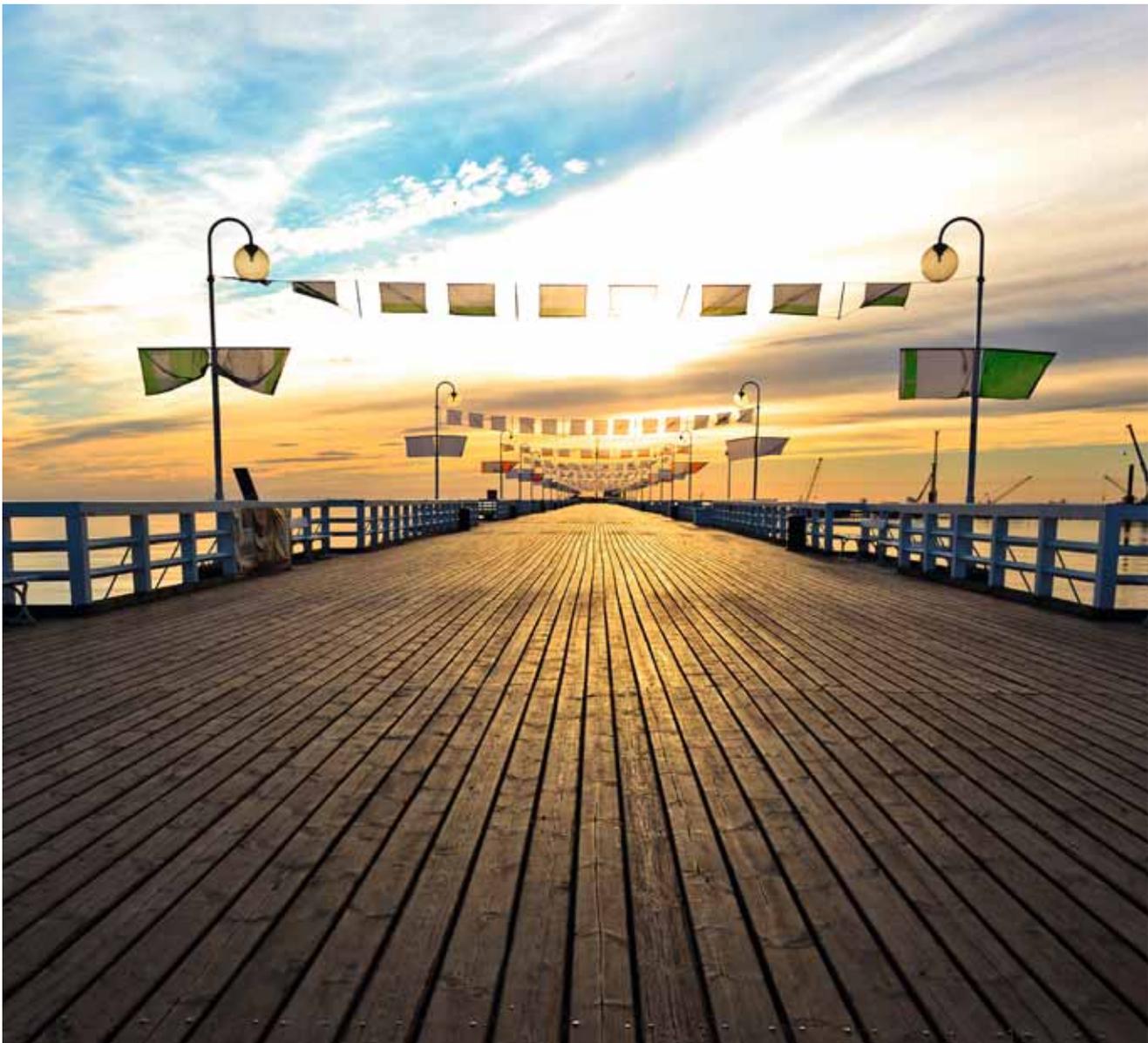
www.pomorskie.eu/en

City of Gdańsk



Gdańsk with its 0,5 million inhabitants creates a metropolis of one million people together with Sopot and Gdynia. Major industries are maritime, high tech, logistics, tourism, petrochemical and cosmetics. The city has an important academic centre with education at high level in different faculties, with emphasis on foreign languages. Gdańsk has a unique place in history as starting point of both World War II and the Solidarity Movement, which led to the collapse of the communism system. Gdańsk is also an important tourist destination surrounded by the beaches of the Baltic sea and wild forests.

www.en.Gdansk.gda.pl/



Summit Partners 2011



Strategic Partners



Members



Cooperation Partners



Networking and Project Village Exhibitors

BaltAdapt: The countries bordering the Baltic Sea are threatened by climate change. Although it is difficult to predict with certainty the likely impact of climate change, it is generally accepted that projected increase in precipitation and temperature will put the integrity of the ecosystem in danger and increase the risk of natural disasters (surges, inundations, etc.). BaltAdapt aims to strengthen cooperation and knowledge sharing on climate change issues in the Baltic Sea Region. BaltAdapt will develop a Baltic Sea climate change adaptation Strategy that will form the basis for a region-wide action plan.

Baltfood: To enhance the competitiveness of the food industry in the Baltic Sea Region 12 partners from six EU countries have founded the baltfood project. The primary goal is to provide support for small and mid-sized enterprises, enabling them to recognize trends more quickly, transform research findings more readily into marketable products, and penetrate international markets with greater success. At our stand we will also present Beltfood – a German-Danish network that interlinks food-processing companies in the Fehmarnbelt-region and facilitates cross-border business activities.

Baltic Deal unites farmer's advisory organisations around the Baltic Sea in a unique effort to raise the competence of agri-environmental practices and measures. The aim is to support farmers to reduce nutrient losses from farms, with maintained production and competitiveness. National advisory services play an important role in developing more sustainable agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region. Baltic Deal will provide advisory organisations with improved, cost efficient methods and tools to support farmers to reduce nutrient loss on farms.

Baltic Master II: Achieving long-term results for the Baltic Sea. Baltic Master II brings together countries from around

the Baltic Rim. Maritime safety, security and environment are improved by integrating local and regional perspectives with cross-border cooperation. Baltic Master II implements hands-on solutions to maritime problems and brings together experts and doers to implement prevention measures and preparedness for spills of hazardous substances.

Baltic Sea Labour Network Project is a tripartite network. Partners come from trade union confederations, employer organisations and the state sector. Mobility of labour and social dialogue is central focus areas of the project. During the project's lifetime, studies and pilot projects have been carried out on national and transnational level. The BSLN's work will be continued by the "Forum for Social Dialogue in the Baltic Sea Region" that will hold its first annual round table during the conference.

Baltic Sea Maritime Functionalities project is led by the Finnish Border Guard, facilitated by the CBSS Secretariat and co-funded by SIDA. The project aims to produce a perspective on the work, which will lead towards the development of a maritime information-sharing environment, by seeking to harmonize the concepts and create functional goals in the field of maritime functionalities from the perspective of an individual state's national entity. An important part of the project is the real time computer-based simulation of maritime functionalities, which simulates the multi-sectoral and multinational surveillance of a target vessel.

Baltic Sea NGO Network has existed since 2001. It consists of NGOs from different Baltic Sea countries including non-EU member states such as Russia, Norway and Iceland that are interested in transnational cooperation. In each country a national focal point/platform is established. At our stand you can get information about our network and vision for the future development of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Baltic Supply and **North Sea Supply Connect** are European Interreg funded projects, aiming to create better business opportunities for the many small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) located in the North Sea and Baltic Sea Regions. The projects are focusing on European supply markets and are looking to set up supporting structures for SMEs in order to increase access to inter-regional supply markets in these regions.

BaltMet Promo: This project aims to join forces in marketing the Baltic Sea Region on a global scale. Concretely, BaltMet Promo promotes the entire Baltic Sea Region globally and strengthens its identity both at home and abroad by 1) Jointly designing and selling services and products of the macro-region for tourists, talents and investors, 2) Mapping branding initiatives and energizing policy dialogue on branding of the region, 3) Testing a method on how to do collaborative place promotion for a macro-region. The project is a flagship project in the EUSBSR and aligns horizontal activities related to the identity building and marketing of the region.

BaltSeaPlan: Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) has become a widely acknowledged and necessary tool for co-ordinating spatial use in the sea. Currently, however, this tool is far from being established practice. In order to change this, the 3.7 million € project “BaltSeaPlan” has realised eight different pilots on MSP throughout the Baltic Sea. The project also contributes to the HELCOM / VASAB working group on Maritime Spatial Planning with a set of recommendations on various aspects related to MSP.

BONUS is a research programme of the eight Baltic EU member states and the European community. It supports the development of fit-for-purpose regulations, policies and management practices in response to the environmental and societal challenges faced by the region. Welcome to gaining an insight into the 16 ongoing BONUS+ projects, as well as the future BONUS research agenda and activities.

BSR Stars flagship is about creating global competitive eco-systems in the Baltic Sea Region. This is done by creating linkages between strong research and innovation milieus, clusters and SME-networks from different countries in the region. A first step is the StarDust project, which includes challenge driven innovative developments in clean water, mobile telecommunication, wellness – for elderly people, marine transportations and living concept in houses for elderly people.

Centrum Balticum – City of Turku – Baltic Sea Challenge: Centrum Balticum is Finland’s policy think tank on Baltic Sea regional issues. It is a platform between Baltic Sea research conducted in the Finnish universities and the Finnish policymaking processes. It generates new ideas and challenges existing institutions and traditional ways of thinking in order to reinforce the impact and voice of the Baltic Sea Region in Europe. The Turku region is the third largest urban centre in Finland with a population of app. 300.000. Maritime, logistics and biotech clusters are its industrial flagships. Turku has a very favourable geographical position in the south-western tip of the country. Thus the City of Turku has nationally and internationally a profile of an active actor in Baltic Sea cooperation. The Baltic Sea Challenge is an initiative of the Cities of Turku and Helsinki, which encourages organisations to commit to voluntary water protection work.

ChemSec: Reduce the Use of the Substances of Very High Concern in the Baltic Sea Region. In order to efficiently improve the environment of the Baltic Sea, in terms of hazardous substances, there is a need for preventive action to minimize the number of substances entering the environment. This project aims to reduce the use of hazardous chemicals in the Baltic Sea Region through upstream reduction by actively working towards inclusion of substances of very high concern (SVHCs) on the REACH candidate list.

CleanShip and **InnoShip** are two integrated strategic Baltic Sea Clean Shipping Interreg Projects. The flagship promotes measures to reduce emissions from ships into the atmosphere. In total 39 formal partners in two sub-projects – InnoShip and CleanShip – partly financed by the Baltic Sea Regional Programme, transform innovations into operations to reduce emissions at sea while retaining the competitiveness of Baltic shipping, promote infrastructure for bunkering of LNG, sewage treatment, and increased use of shore side electricity.

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) provides an inter-governmental platform working through network and project based activities. At our stand you will meet experts and partners playing a leading role in: Tourism through the project AGORA 2.0; Innovation in SMEs through the SPIN project; Maritime Surveillance and Maritime Policy; Civil protection mechanisms; Bio Energy promotion; Solutions to making the Baltic Sea Region a pioneering Ecoregion; the fight against trafficking as well as our focus 2011-2013 – the South Eastern Baltic Sea Area (SEBA).

EfficienSea project gathers experts from the Baltic Sea Region and beyond to make a difference to maritime safety.

The tools developed will help to make sure that we can continue to enjoy the sea: live by it, swim in it and eat the fish from it. EfficienSea covers several aspects of current and future maritime challenges, among them e-Navigation, recruitment and sensitivity maps.

EU funding programmes' stand is aimed to give an overview on the EU financing activities (projects) supporting the EUSBSR implementation. It is stressed that EU funding programmes are significant funding sources to overcome jointly defined challenges of the Baltic Sea Region. Taking into account one of the EUSBSR principles "No new funding", the EU funding programmes are becoming the crucial funding source for its implementation.

European Commission: Europe working for the Baltic Sea Region: Now is your chance to say how the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is performing. What works? What does not work? How can we do better? As a bonus, also learn more about EU Regional Policy and other key EU policy areas. A special feature is the Baltic cousin, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, started earlier in 2011.

European Investment Bank (EIB) is the most important Multilateral Financial Institution active in the Baltic Sea Region. The Bank has lending activities in all countries around the Baltic Sea and the annual lending volume in this region has for the last years been approximately EUR 11bn. The EIB supports the region's long tradition of cross-border cooperation by financing long-term priority projects in transport, energy, environment, research development and innovation (RDI), climate action and SMEs, including several flagship projects of the EU's Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

GeoDome: Climate change will affect the Baltic Sea in several ways. The Helcom target of a sea unaffected by eutrophication might be even harder to meet in the future. Nutrient load reductions are becoming increasingly important and the plans of today might not be enough. Presentations of environmental research on the Baltic Sea will be held in a GeoDome© that permits 25 visitors at a time. Presenters from the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute will lead you through a 15-minute visualization. Baltic Vision is based on new results from the Bonus+ project ECOsupport.

Helcom – The Helsinki Commission – will be showcasing the synergetic implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (2007-2021) and the Strategy by displaying selected highlights of the activities and their outcomes. These will cover

the main Helcom areas related to the protection of the Baltic Sea marine environment: Eutrophication, Biodiversity, Hazardous Substances and Maritime Activities. The experts involved in the flagship projects implementation will be available to explain more about the details of the projects and the progress and impact towards sustainable use of marine resources and a healthier Baltic Sea.

ICT for Health will strengthen the social capacity for the use of eHealth technologies in view to the ageing population. The knowledge about and acceptance to use eHealth technologies by citizens and medical professionals are basic conditions for the implementation and further development of innovative technologies in the health sector. One of the most important fields for the use of eHealth is the growth of chronic diseases caused by the ageing population that challenges the traditional structures of medical care. Here eHealth technologies allow a mutually beneficial collaboration of patients and medical professionals in prevention and treatment.

ImPrim – Improvement of public health by promotion of equitably distributed high quality primary health care (PHC) systems. ImPrim contributes to the cooperative action "Fight health inequalities through the improvement of primary health care" and is one of the flagship projects included in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Action Plan. Blekinge Centre of Competence holds the Lead partner role. The ImPrim project aims to promote equitably distributed high quality primary health care services in the Baltic Sea Region.

NEFCO (Nordic Environment Finance Corporation) is an international financial institution owned by the five Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. NEFCO finances environmentally-related projects and investments primarily in Russia, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus in order to generate positive environmental effects for the Nordic region. At present, the funds administered by the corporation are valued at some EUR 450 million.

NIB (Nordic Investment Bank), the international financial institution of the Nordic and Baltic countries, has a special mandate to enhance competitiveness and the environment of the region through its lending activities. In order to strengthen the competitiveness, NIB provides loans particularly to energy and infrastructure project. The environmental focus is on climate change and the Baltic Sea.

Nordic Council of Ministers is the formal cooperation between the governments of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, including Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. The Nordic Council of



Time to meet the Press: Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for Regional Policy, and Mercedes Bresso, President, Committee of the Regions



Swedish Region Västra Götaland, presented by Head of International Affairs Magnus Engelbrektsson

Ministers has an extensive network in the Baltic Sea Region and a strong commitment to contribute to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

PlasTep: Dissemination and fostering of plasma-based technological innovation for environment protection in the Baltic Sea Region. PlasTep combines the expertise of 15 partners from eight countries around the Baltic Sea. The main point of this project is to clearly inform decision makers from policy and industry about practical possibilities of the low-temperature plasma technology for environmental purposes. The project wants to raise awareness within the public and to bring the idea of investing in plasma technology.

Polennu.dk is an independent online newspaper in Danish with news about Poland and Polish people. polennu.dk is the Danes preferred source of information as regards information and news from and about Poland. It informs about politics, culture, trade, social relations, media, sports, international affairs and much more.

Pomeranian Regional Development Agency from Słupsk in Poland is a public company that initiates, promotes and supports development of the Pomeranian Region. As an administrator of the Słupsk Special Economic Zone with perfectly located investment lands (greenfields), we create great opportunities for business and provide information and advisory service for the small and medium enterprises. The Agency is also in the stage of construction of the Słupsk Technological Incubator and will be offering brownfields from 2012.

Pomorskie Voivodeship – a Polish region located on the Baltic Sea – with a population of 2.2 million people. One of the

best developing regions and most successful when it comes to the use of EU funds. Economy covers traditional sectors (maritime and chemical industries, foodstuffs processing) and modern ones like IT, services, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. Gdańsk – the regions' capital – is a thousand year old city!; an important cultural centre and meeting place of many cultures, nationalities and denominations.

Region Västra Götaland, a new member of BDF and one of the major regional authorities in the Baltic Sea area. The region with 1.6 million inhabitants and its major city Gothenburg is a research and development centre, a global industrial competitor and an important transport hub for Northern Europe. Västra Götaland is also a leading venue for meetings and conferences, including next year's European Maritime Day.

ScanBalt Health Region promotes a globally competitive Baltic Sea Region Health Economy. The flagship project serves as an umbrella for a multitude of coordinated activities applying to shared visions and values and utilising a common communication and coordination structure (ScanBalt). The stand will present 1) BSHR HealthPort "Baltic Sea Health Region – Business acceleration support and training bridging innovative SMEs and health care organisations to strengthen the Baltic Sea Region Health Economy" (Eco4Lif; Submariner – Sustainable use of Baltic marine resources).

Scandinavian-Polish Chamber of Commerce is an organisation established by and for business people who have links to Scandinavia or an interest in the region. Our mission is to add value to member's companies' business interests in Poland by providing quality services, representing their

views and interests and operating as a networking platform for members and other stakeholders. We currently have almost 340 members, which makes us one of the biggest bilateral chambers in the country.

Sida –the Baltic Sea Unit has been assigned by the Swedish Government to promote cooperation between stakeholders in Sweden and the countries around the Baltic Sea, particularly Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. The aim is starting up partnerships and networks by providing seed money and support for issues of mutual interest for Sweden and the countries around the Baltic Sea.

SMOCS – Sustainable handling of dredged contaminated sediments, for example in ports is presented with focus on the stabilization/solidification method which enables beneficial use of contaminated sediments as construction material for new port areas. The method reduces environmental impact, improves technical properties and saves costs and natural resources. The main outcomes of the project are a guideline for management of contaminated sediments and handling alternatives, e.g. disposal and beneficial use of treated contaminated sediments and a tool-box comprising treatment technologies, tools for assessment of sustainability and decision support tool to be used in planning and application processes.

SPIN aims at enhancing “Sustainable Production through Innovation in SMEs”. SPIN taps on innovations throughout the Baltic Sea Region which lead to sustainable production in SMEs. It supports SMEs who have developed sustainable solutions (eco-innovations) to reach out to a larger market. At the same time it gives enterprises the technical and managerial solutions they need to make their production process more sustainable and to increase their profits.

Swedish Institute (SI) is a public agency that promotes interest and confidence in Sweden around the world. SI seeks to establish cooperation and lasting relations with other countries through strategic communication and exchange in the fields of culture, education, science and business. SI also supports Swedish language instruction at foreign universities. SI works closely with Swedish embassies and consulates around the world.

Tourism: The Information Stand covers the activities of Priority Area 12 - Tourism of the Action Plan which in detail comprises the following Flagship Projects: 12.7. “Attract tourists to rural areas especially the coastal ones”, 12.8. “Facilitate environmentally sustainable cruise vessels in the Baltic Sea”, 12.9. “Promote the cultural and natural heritage”, 12.10. “Develop strategies for sustainable tourism”.

Transenergy: Innovative harbour fender systems equipped with EPAR technology of kinetic energy absorption. The novel systems protect the ships, harbours or any other water facilities against damage caused during mooring or entering a port. Thanks to the systems’ self-adopted characteristics, the collision parameters are always optimal. An additional feature of EPAR fender systems is the possibility of using the converter’s rotary motion to generate electric current.

Transport: The transnational transport projects TransBaltic, EWTC II, Scandria and Rail Baltica Growth Corridor have put the green transport corridors in focus as a measure to combine the optimised performance of multimodal supply chains with sustainable regional growth and territorial cohesion. With manuals, strategies and specific business concepts they intend to provide measures for enabling the development of a green transport network.

Council conclusions on the review of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

**3125th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 15 November 2011**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

”THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. RECALLING the Commission’s Communication on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) of 10 June 2009 ENDORSED by the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 28 October 2009 and the European Council of 30 October 2009.
2. RECAPITULATING the European Council conclusions of 30 October 2009 calling on the European Commission (hereinafter: the Commission) to submit to the Council the progress report by June 2011 and RECALLING the Commission’s Interim Report on the EUSBSR of December 2010 indicating that: *“The political discussions foreseen under the Polish Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011 will constitute an opportunity for a more fundamental review of the Strategy.”*
3. WELCOMING the Commission’s Report on the Implementation of the EUSBSR of 22 June 2011 that constitutes the basis for the present Conclusions.
4. RECALLING extensive debates on EUSBSR implementation as well as the review related consultations conducted within the framework of Polish Presidency of the Council and WELCOMING the commitment of the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, representatives of Baltic Sea regions as well as other interested stakeholders.
5. RECOGNISING that an overall assessment of macro-regional strategies is to be undertaken by the Commission in mid-2013¹.
6. STRESSES that the EUSBSR constitutes an integrated framework to address common challenges in the macro-region benefiting from strengthened co-operation between its stakeholders and that it is contributing to economic, social and territorial cohesion of the EU.
7. REITERATES that the Strategy is based on the principle of no new EU funds, no additional EU formal structures and no new EU legislation, while relying on a coordinated approach, synergy effects and more effective use of the EU and other financial instruments and funds.
8. STRESSES that successful implementation of the EUSBSR for the benefit of the macro-region requires involvement of all Baltic Sea States as well as relevant stakeholders at transnational, regional and local levels, following a multi-level governance approach.
9. RECOGNISING the contribution to date of the EUSBSR implementation experience towards achieving common EU goals as well as towards addressing the shared challenges of the macro region, it ACKNOWLEDGES the need to make the Strategy more effective and result oriented for further attaining the Strategy objectives and therefore ENDORSES the following recommendations resulting from the Commission’s Report on the Implementation of the EUSBSR as well as from consultations with relevant stakeholders. Based on this, the Council:
Political commitment
 - a) CALLS on the Member States concerned to intensify actions to further enhance existing political support for EUSBSR implementation at all levels (EU, national, regional, local), particularly by making the EUSBSR a reference point for all adequate fora.
 - b) RECOGNISES the territorial dimension of the EU sectoral policies and therefore the need to include the EUSBSR on the agenda of the Council in its different formations as and when appropriate in order to promote effective involvement of, and closer links to, relevant EU policies in the Strategy implementation.

¹ General Affairs Council Conclusions on the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) of 13th April 2011.

Integrated approach, coordination of policies and alignment of funding

- c) INVITES the Commission and the Member States concerned to follow an integrated approach to the EUSBSR by strengthening coordination between policies with a territorial impact and thematically relevant to the EUSBSR at EU and national level² and to closer align the Strategy with the Integrated Maritime Policy and the Europe 2020 Strategy, also with facilitation of EUSBSR national coordination committees in order to provide increased effectiveness, more synergy and sustainability of results achieved.
- d) INVITES the Commission and the Member States concerned to better align existing sources of funding in the macro-region with the EUSBSR objectives. INDICATES, without prejudice to the results of the negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework, that future alignment of funding should be facilitated in the new 2014-2020 programming period, inter alia by taking account of the EUSBSR when designing programmes, including the transnational, national and regional ones and those with third country involvement, where appropriate and with respect to subsidiarity principle.
- e) INVITES the Commission and the Member States concerned to cooperate on enhancing possibilities to create EUSBSR projects' pipelines and to consider the possibilities for establishing the Implementation Facility framework in cooperation with international financial institutions as a means to support the preparation of key EUSBSR projects based on a thorough needs analysis coordinated by the European Commission.

Governance

- f) INVITES the Commission to strengthen its role in EUSBSR strategic coordination, in facilitation of information flows internally and towards Member States and in safeguarding an added value of the macro-regional concept. ENCOURAGES the Commission to reinforce the role of the EUSBSR High Level Group, meeting on a regular basis, as the main operational forum for key steering debates and INVITES all Member States to actively take part in its sessions.
- g) INVITES the Member States concerned to consider the EUSBSR objectives in specific development strategies at national level as well as to encourage

² Such as environment, transport, agriculture, fishery, maritime spatial planning, innovation, research and development, information and communication technologies, climate action etc.

regional and local authorities to reflect EUSBSR activities in their development strategies where territorially adequate.

- h) INVITES the Member States concerned to explore the potential of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation as a tool for the Strategy implementation at appropriate levels.

Clarification and strengthening roles of key stakeholders

- i) UNDERLINES the need for cooperation between the Commission and the Member States concerned on clarifying the roles and responsibilities of key EUSBSR implementing stakeholders³ in order to provide transparent guidance on their functions and facilitate their work on strategy implementation as more efficient. At the same time, the Council RECOGNISES the need to strengthen the roles of National Contact Points in national coordination as well as Priority Area Coordinators and Horizontal Action Leaders in thematic and transnational implementation.
- j) UNDERLINES the need to set up a stable and more effective link between the key EUSBSR implementing stakeholders and administrators of funding sources, in order to deepen the dialogue on access to financial solutions and STRESSES that cooperation possibilities with the private sector in this regard should be explored.
- k) ENCOURAGES the key EUSBSR implementing stakeholders, the Commission and the Member States concerned to continuously ensure their own adequate internal capacity in order to undertake their work.

Monitoring system and introducing targets and indicators

- l) INVITES the Commission to report every two years on the EUSBSR progress and results achieved, including reference to the contribution of relevant sectoral policies.
- m) INVITES the Commission to propose by early 2012 a system of realistic and feasible targets and indicators (quantitative and qualitative), worked out in cooperation with Member States concerned, taking into account targets and indicators already set by multilateral cooperation structures in the macro region, i.a. HELCOM (Helsinki Commission) and the need to avoid unnecessary duplication. REC-

³ National Contact Points (NCPs), Priority Area Coordinators (PACs), Horizontal Action Leaders (HALs), Flagship Project Leaders (FPLs).

OGNISES that this will strengthen monitoring of the EUSBSR and provide a basis for a comprehensive evaluation system aimed at the Strategy becoming more operational and result oriented. The Council therefore WELCOMES the works of the EUSBSR Task Force on Targets and Indicators.

Improving communication system and visibility

- n) RECOMMENDS that the Commission and Member States concerned jointly develop a “Communication Initiative”⁴ improving communication channels between key EUSBSR stakeholders as well as between them and administrators of funding sources, i.a. by considering the establishment of an interactive web based tool for sharing experiences and good practices, resulting in better access to funding information, increased partners’ matching and projects’ clustering.
- o) ENCOURAGES the Member States concerned and the Commission to increase efficiency of information dissemination and promotion of EUSBSR activities as well as to foster communication channels towards wider public of the macro-region, stimulating involvement of a broad range of actors at various levels.
- p) RECOMMENDS that the Commission continues the good practice of holding the EUSBSR Annual Forum to provide a stable platform for debates on progress, results, challenges and solutions for implementation between a wide range of actors at all possible levels.

Integration with multilateral structures and links with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

- q) INVITES the Member States concerned to look for synergy effects between the EUSBSR and multilateral cooperation structures and networks within the Baltic Sea Region⁵ as well as with international financial institutions through better coordination and effective use of communication channels and fora related to EUSBSR and Baltic Sea Region to provide increased efficiency of intervention within macro region.
- r) ENCOURAGES the Member States concerned and the Commission to strengthen links between the EUSBSR, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and possible future macro regional strategies

by securing exchange of experiences and good practices, leading to increased quality of implementation solutions for those strategies as well as to added value in strengthening European territorial cohesion, including i.a. coherence in implementing the infrastructure and energy projects.

Cooperation with third countries

- s) WELCOMES cooperation with interested third countries in EUSBSR projects and initiatives of mutual interest and ENCOURAGES the Member States concerned to search for the most relevant instruments and forms of third country involvement in order to tackle challenges in the macro-region effectively. Specifically, the Northern Dimension, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council of Ministers and HELCOM should serve as cooperation platforms, involving relevant partners, in particular the Russian Federation.
10. CALLS on the Member States concerned and the Commission to incorporate the recommendations listed above into the EUSBSR implementation practice in the course of 2012. CALLS on the European Commission to review the EUSBSR in the light of the above recommendations by early 2012 and to assure the review of the EUSBSR Action Plan shortly thereafter. UNDERLINES that the scope of implementation of these recommendations should be reflected in the overall assessment of macro-regional strategies and evaluation of their added value by the Commission in 2013.”

⁴ Commission’s Report on the Implementation of the EUSBSR of 22 June 2011.

⁵ Such as Northern Dimension, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Nordic Council of Ministers, HELCOM, VASAB (Visions and Strategies around Baltic Sea), Baltic Sea States Sub regional Cooperation.

Baltic Development Forum
The leading high-level network for
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academia and media
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