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**8th Strategy Forum of the EUSBSR in Berlin 13 – 14 June**

**Summary report**

**Seminar: Macro-regional strategies: what’s in it for Cohesion Policy?**

**Time:** Tuesday, 13 June, 17:00 to 18:30 hours, Weltsaal

***The CPMR’s Baltic Sea Commission (BSC), together with the Directorate General for Regional Policy of the European Commission (DG REGIO), co-organised a seminar to discuss how Macro-regional strategies can bring added-value to EU Cohesion Policy. The seminar, was held during the 8th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Regions (EUSBSR), on 13 June in Berlin.***

The session began with a presentation of a study carried out by the Interact programme in 2016, which collected arguments on why it is important to engage in macro-regional cooperation.

**Baiba Liepa, from the Interact programme**, provided participants with an overview of the recognised benefits and the potential added value that macro-regional strategies can bring to programmes and projects.

The event also offered the opportunity to discuss the first results of the ‘pilot’ network of Managing Authorities (MA) on the field of innovation, funded by the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) and set up in 2016. The aim of the MA network is to increase the geographical flexibility of ERDF and to better contribute to the implementation of the EUSBSR.

**Niclas Forsling, Policy Area Innovation within EUSBSR**, informed participants about the first project initiated by the MA network called ‘Cleaner Growth’. The objective of the project is to develop transnational collaboration proposals to help implementing smart specialization strategies for regions focusing on cleantech.

**Erik Bergqvist, President of Region Västerbotten and Member of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission,** explained why the Region Västerbotten decided to lead the first ‘pilot’ in the field of Clean-tech, of the ERDF MA network.

He underlined that the region has been looking for new ways of cooperation and they have faced problems in terms of working outside the programmes. He said “It is crucial to boost transnational component of ERDF in mainstream programmes in the future”.

He also shared some recommendations for improving cooperation. These include the need to improve the geographical flexibility of the ESI funds allocated to national and regional Operation Programmes, and that public and private partnership for matching regions working on smart specialisation strategies should be increased in the future.

In the Panel discussion also **Anders Lindholm, chair of the ERDF MA Network**, and **Vilma Gaubyte, Director of Lithuanian Biomass Energy Association** gave their perspectives on the current ongoing pilot of the MA Network, a work that Anders Lindholm is coordinating and Vilma Gaubyte participating as one of the stakeholders in.

**Marc Lemaître, Director General at DG REGIO**, concluded the seminar by praising the good results of the EUSBSR and the ability of the actors to find innovative way of cooperation with regards to the establishment of the MA network. He congratulated the Region Västerbotten for his willingness to foster cooperation with other regions in the field of innovation. He also informed participants that a communication on smart specialisation strategies will be published by mid July.