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

**Seminar: Mutual Interest – Mutual Benefit: Cooperating with North-West Russian Regions - Showcasing Examples from Interreg Baltic Sea Region**

**Time:** Tuesday, 13 June, 15:15 to 16:45 hours, Rathenau-Saal

Baltic Sea cooperation with the North-West regions of the Russian Federation works if all partners involved are aware of the benefit. This was demonstrated by three ongoing cooperation projects, financed by Interreg Baltic Sea Region.

“The main benefit for us is the possibility to extend scientific knowledge regarding threats on recovery activities of dumped munitions”, said Valeriy Nabatov, Shirshov Institute of Oceanology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Kaliningrad, and partner in the DAIMON project. DAIMON, EUSBSR flagship project, will support maritime, defence and environmental administrations in making decisions on how to manage dumped chemical and conventional warfare in the Baltic Sea. Organisations from all around the Baltic Sea collaborate in DAIMON led by the Institute of Oceanology of Polish Academy of Sciences, in Sopot, Poland. “This topic is important for the economic development including fisheries, and for the development of cables and pipes under water. Also data exchange and assessments of the impacts on eco-systems is crucial,” emphasised scientist Nabatov.

Bringing sustainable and eco-friendly cruise ship tourism to Kaliningrad became an economic development goal for Kaliningrad, supported by the Russian federal authorities. Andrey Moshkov, representing the Kaliningrad Authority of the North-West Basin Branch of ROSMORPORT, one of the Russian partners in the GREEN CRUISE PORT project said that this was achieved also because of the results of cooperation. “We were interested in new solutions on energy efficient smart technologies, to avoid mistakes in construction of a cruise terminal”, he explained. He added that one secret of a successful project was to understand the local problems and to know what one wants to achieve.

Boris Komovnikov, director, and Ekaterina Latysheva, both representing the Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology of Kaliningrad collaborate in the IWAMA project (Interactive Water Management) led by Union of the Baltic Cities, EUSBSR flagship and financed by Interreg Baltic Sea Region. Both stressed that capacity building in the waste water treatment was still very important for them.

The official opening of the new Kaliningrad wastewater treatment plant took place only a few days ago, on 7 June 2017. Alla Ivanova, Acting Minister and head of the Agency for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation of the Kaliningrad region stated that the inauguration of the waste water treatment plant became an important step for the region as a HELCOM hot spot had been closed, and that the plant was important for significantly reducing eutrophication of the Baltic Sea. She would see municipalities, universities, environmental NGOs as potential partner for such cooperation also in the future. Natalia Goleva, representing Pskov region, said priorities in Pskov region were on creation of new jobs, improving social infrastructure, strengthening the educational system, and boosting investments. Concerning participation in Interreg Baltic Sea Region, she would like to increase cooperation with some of the Western states at the Baltic Sea region as there were already well established links to the Baltic States. Irina Karelina, Leontief Centre, outlined information and support measures to potential Russian organisations interested to become Interreg Baltic Sea Region partners.

Yulia Savkina, representing Federal Russian Ministry of economic development, underlined that the EUSBSR and the Russian Strategy for the North-Western Federal District had common development priorities including environmental protection, transport and logistics, and economic development of the regions. She also mentioned that Russian partners would not have difficulties in the project implementation as the provisions of the international treaties prevail over the national legislation. She added that the Russian law on foreign financing would not apply to Interreg partners.

“We live in the same region, in good weather or in bad weather”, stated Mikko Lohikoski, HA Neighbours. Many issues could only be addressed in a constructive dialogue with neighbours, and especially with Russia. The seminar attracted a large audience, and particularly those who want to think and act in that way.