

Vilnius Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts

Press release

**More attention to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in Lithuania**

*Vilnius Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, organized a seminar on the issues of implementation and communication of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) and its importance. This macro-regional strategy addresses the challenges of the prosperity, transport, ecology and security of the region.*

On March 9, 2009, a seminar "Baltic Sea Region Strategy in Lithuania: Own or Foreign?" organized by the Vilnius Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts took place in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

Asta Radikaitė, Director of the European Union Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, welcomed the participants of the event and was glad by the fact that Vilnius Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts took the necessary initiatives in Lithuania to spread information and arrange discussions on how to improve the involvement of institutions and society in the implementation of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy. Sigitas Leonavičius, President of the Vilnius Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts emphasized that without the united society and real cooperation between authorities, science and business, tangible results will not be achieved. All of these sectors must take responsibility for the successful implementation of the three priorities of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy: clean Baltic Sea with biological diversity, faster regional transportation and prosperity. The seminar was also attended by the EC Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, Principal Adviser delegated to Lithuanian Government, Dr. Natalija Kazlauskienė, representative of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania, Julija Kvietkė, representatives of other ministries, state institutions and businesses.

National Coordinator of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region dr. Nijolė Žambaitė gave an overview of the EUSBSR topical issues and forthcoming events, which will give an opportunity to spread a word about activities of the Lithuanian Republic related with the strategy and, at the same time, share and adapt experience among the partners. Vice Minister of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, Lina Sabaitienė spoke about the correlation of this Strategy with the National Energy Independence Strategy and concluded that they are going in one direction. Moreover, good practice examples were shared by dr. Algirdas Šakalys, who is a coordinator of EUSBSR transport policy, and Director of the Lithuanian Innovation Center, dr. Mantas Vilys. They both agreed that with international partners and combined forces we can achieve much more and much better support for our region.

During the seminar there was an active discussion among the participants about the possibilities of public institutions, business associations and non-governmental associations to contribute to the implementation and promotion of the EUSBSR. Discussing issues and problems, the Director of the Association of Lithuanian Municipalities, Roma Žakaitienė emphasized the importance of operative informing for municipalities about the opportunities offered by the Baltic Sea Region Strategy in order to improve the involvement of municipalities in the implementation activities of the strategy. Consequently, all participants generally agreed that it is necessary to publicize achieved results and raise awareness of the EUSBSR in Lithuania, both in public and private sectors. It was also agreed to seek greater inclusion of the EUSBSR in the domestic affairs agenda of Lithuania.

Vilnius Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts are one of the “Let's Communicate the EUSBSR for the benefit of the region” project partners. Project aims at supporting the communication actions taken by the internal stakeholders of the EUSBSR in order to increase the external visibility of the EUSBSR in the Baltic Sea Region societies.