



MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA



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UNION
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CITIES



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FUND

The project “Annual Forum 2021LT” will be co-financed by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

21 May 2021

Dear Stakeholders of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy,

The years 2020 and 2021 are marked by COVID-19. The pandemic clearly shows that it can only be overcome if we work together. Thus, regional cooperation, foreseen by the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy (EUSBSR), is more **important today than ever before**.

Organising physical events is still challenging. Lithuania is, therefore, determined to host the **Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in 2021** as an online event on a virtual platform.

In this context, we call on all the stakeholders to consider the possibility of holding various events in relation to the Forum.

DATE. The Annual Forum 2021 will be a weeklong virtual event and will take place from **27 September to 1 October 2021**.

TOPIC. The topic of the Annual Forum 2021 is **GREEN RECOVERY**. Bearing in mind the need to overcome COVID-19 and to improve our resilience, in July 2020 EU leaders agreed **on the long-term budget for 2021-2027 and the recovery plan**, the latter being the proof of solidarity and a clear vision for making European economies and societies more sustainable, resilient and modern.

The EU will also contribute major resources to finance the green transition. Climate change was also mainstreamed into the policy areas of the new EUSBSR Action Plan for 2021-2027, promoting even more active collaboration between the EUSBSR member states and participating non-EU countries on the greening of the region. The Annual Forum 2021 aims at fostering green transition in the Baltic

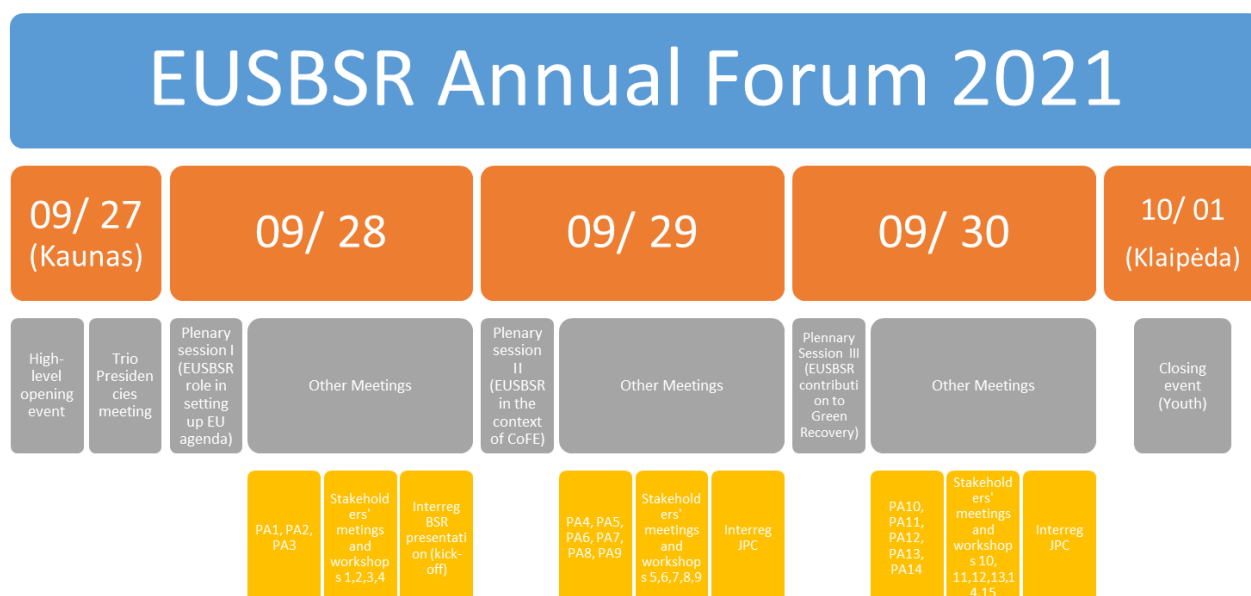
Sea Region through a close partnership and more active involvement of the stakeholders, in particular youth and local communities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE. We may be different, we may be working in different fields on various topics, but we see how it all builds up to our main ultimate goal – a better future for the Baltic Sea Region. In the context of recent challenges (the COVID-19 pandemic, green and digital transitions), it is worthwhile to combine forces to achieve more: enabling **SYNERGIES** between national and regional levels; different policy areas; Macroregional strategies; and different stakeholders.

Against this background, three main partners joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania in this endeavour:

- **Kaunas City Municipality** will be the *European Capital of Culture in 2022*. Therefore, the Annual Forum offers a chance for the city to introduce itself to the Baltic Sea Region and to ensure the local government's active participation. The EUSBSR combines forces with CULTURE.
- **Klaipėda City Municipality** is the *European Youth Capital 2021*. This is the perfect opportunity to increase youth participation in the EUSBSR. The EUSBSR joins forces with YOUNG PEOPLE.
- **Union of the Baltic Cities.** Lithuania will hold the Annual Forum in an attempt to foster a more active involvement of the Baltic Sea region/ local authorities and communities. The role of the Baltic cities is of crucial importance to this cooperation. To achieve the best outcome, the EUSBSR aims to combine forces with the BALTIC CITIES.

OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAMME:



On 27 September (Monday), the event will start with a high level strategic discussion on the role the EUSBSR could play in achieving the goals of the European Green Deal and applying the **Next Generation EU recovery instrument**.

The last day of the Forum – 1 October (Friday) will be dedicated to Youth participation - ideas and initiatives on how to promote the green transition in the Baltic Sea Region.

In addition, there will be three Plenary sessions on topical issues open for all participants of the Forum.

The **1st Plenary session** (Tuesday) will be dedicated to macroregional strategies' (in particular, EUSBSR) role in setting the EU's agenda.

The **2nd Plenary session** (Wednesday) will focus on the future of Europe (and will be linked to the Conference of the Future of Europe).

The **3rd Plenary session** (Thursday) will be devoted to the possibility for the EUSBSR to significantly contribute to the EU's green recovery.

POSSIBILITIES FOR STAKEHOLDERS. In order to ensure possibilities for all the stakeholders to organize their events, we have reserved 14 slots for each policy area, as well as 15 additional slots for partner organizations, so that they can hold their respective events. The organizers of the Annual Forum will provide a virtual event platform for the registration of participants, streaming, and communication.

Please submit proposals (up to 1 page) regarding the events that could be included into the Annual Forum's programme by filling the table in Annex I.

Regional networks enable us to exchange best practices for improving resource efficiency and creating new opportunities in a changing world. Let us make the most of the **Annual Forum 2021** for cooperation, for sharing best practices, but, also, for filling in the gaps. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring that the EUSBSR seizes the opportunity to help the Baltic Sea region become a **role model that inspires others**.

We are very much looking forward to cooperating with you!

Proposals should be sent by e-mail to AnnualForum2021@mfa.lt by 18 June 2021 (when submitting your proposals, please refer to "Annual Forum 2021" in the subject of the e-mail).

The proposals will be evaluated and decisions on the inclusion of particular events into the programme will be taken by 2 July 2021.

On behalf of the organizers of the Annual Forum 2021, Robertas Bružilas, EUSBSR National coordinator of Lithuania