

# Thematic Report

## 12th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region



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# A word from the organisers

The event was organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, Kaunas City, Klaipėda City, and the Union of the Baltic Cities. This is what the representatives of these organisations said:



“ In order to achieve a climate-neutral economy, the involvement of the society is necessary, therefore we need to pay special attention to the more active participation of young people, regions, and cities.

**Arnoldas Pranckevičius, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania**



“ There is no question, that young people are equally participating in everything we do. Sometimes they have more or less competence, but you can never remove their creativity, energy, willingness to act. Let's agree on one principal, that young people and their participation bring different energy, ideas and help to think out of the box. This is the biggest added value that we can expect in leadership of cities.

**Mantas Jurgutis, Deputy Mayor of the City of Kaunas, President of the Union of the Baltic Cities**



“ Kaunas is trusted as a strong partner for sharing good practices and discussing topics and strategic issues relevant to the entire Baltic Sea Region. At the same time, the EUSBSR Annual Forum provides a unique opportunity to strengthen cooperation between states, cities, non-governmental organisations and local communities.

**Visvaldas Matijošaitis, Mayor of Kaunas city**



“ Sustainable future is only possible when we find sustainable solutions. No country alone can find solutions and do it. We have common challenges [...], we must unite our force for the common solutions and I hope we will find it.

**Vytautas Grubliauskas, Mayor of Klaipėda city**



# Inspiration from the keynote speakers



“ Europe succeeds when we join forces. Standing together creates level of resilience that no member state could achieve alone.

**Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission**



“ The Baltic Sea Region is about synergies, solidarity and cooperation. <...> Synergies between national and regional level, different policy areas, different stakeholders. Solidarity is between partners in economic development, in climate related issues, in challenges we face, such as pandemic or post-pandemic recovery.

**Ingrida Šimonytė, Prime Minister of Lithuania**



“ The countries in the Baltic region can and should serve as an example of cooperation and leadership on climate action by setting the right policies, by ensuring finances, and not least showcasing new innovative technologies. By that we can share the opportunities in the transition to climate neutrality globally.

**Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden**



“ EEUSBSR is a great example of how you can shape the future of the region by connecting and enabling local communities. <...> Communities in countries all around the world continue to face serious challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**

# Forum in facts and figures



**1700**  
Online  
GUESTS 

The coverage of  
 and   
posts on EUSBSR  
accounts was  
**36413**

 **12** FEMALE  
 **15** MALE  
panellists and speakers

## PANELLISTS AND SPEAKERS

**REPRESENTING:** European Commission, OECD, national and local governments, intergovernmental organisations, EUSBSR community, business, research and education, NGOs, youth

**42** Facebook posts on EUSBSR Facebook account @EUSBSR (2,087 followers in October 2021) and **45** Twitter posts on EUSBSR Twitter account @EUSBSR (3,462 followers in October 2021) about the Annual Forum were published before, during and after the event. Total coverage of all Facebook posts was **14,834** and total impressions of all Twitter posts were **21,579**. Annual Forum 2021 was also promoted in the EUSBSR internal newsletter (**419** subscribers in October 2021).

Opening and  
Closing events  
 **3**  
Plenaries

 **28**  
cross-sectoral  
online workshops

 **2**  
networking  
opportunities  
for cities

 **3**  
Networking  
village events

  
Baltic Sea Region  
2021 -2027  
Kick - off event







# Panellists and speakers



**Ursula von der Leyen,**  
President of the European  
Commission



**Ingrida Šimonytė,**  
Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Lithuania



**Mathias Cormann,**  
Secretary-General of  
the Organisation for  
Economic Cooperation  
and Development  
(OECD)



**Kaja Kallas,**  
Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Estonia



**Krišjānis Kariņš,**  
Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Latvia



**Mateusz Morawiecki,**  
Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Poland



**Stefan Löfven,**  
Prime Minister of the  
Kingdom of Sweden



**Virginijus Sinkevičius,**  
European  
Commissioner for  
Environment, Oceans  
and Fisheries



**Elisa Ferreira,**  
European  
Commissioner for  
Cohesion and Reforms



**Slawomir Tokarski,**  
Director for the  
European Territorial  
Cooperation,  
Macro-regions, Interreg  
and Programmes  
Implementation, DG  
Regional and Urban  
Policy, European  
Commission



**Elena Sinkevičiūtė,**  
Representative of  
the Lithuanian Youth  
Council in the European  
Economic and Social  
Committee



**Jyrki Katainen,**  
President of the Finnish  
Innovation Fund Sitra



**Greta Meškauskienė,**  
Head of project  
"Klaipėda – European  
Youth Capital 2021"



**Veronika Remišová,**  
Deputy Prime Minister  
and Minister of  
Investment, Regional  
Development and  
Informatization of  
Slovakia



**Tamara Soltys,**  
Representative of  
Klaipėda's youth



**Normunds Popenis,**  
Deputy Director-General  
of DG REGIO, European  
Commission



**Joscha Wagner,**  
Vice-President, ETUC  
(European Trade Union  
Confederation Youth  
Committee)



**Eitvydas Bingelis,**  
International Organization  
for Migration (UN), Head  
of the Office in Vilnius



**Marko Paunovic,**  
Head of UBC Antenna  
Brussels



**Megi Fino,** Deputy  
Minister for Europe and  
Foreign Affairs of the  
Republic of Albania



**Arnoldas Pranckevičius,**  
Vice-Minister of Foreign  
Affairs of the Republic  
of Lithuania



**Mantas Jurgutis,**  
Deputy Mayor of the City  
of Kaunas, President of  
the Union of the Baltic  
Cities



**John Holland,**  
Moderator, Holland &  
Partners



**Sanna Virta,**  
Participation coordinator  
at the City of Lahti,  
European Green Capital  
2021



**Geneviève Pons,**  
Director General of  
Europe – Jacques  
Delors in Brussels,  
Honorary Director of the  
European Commission,  
Former Director of the  
WWF's European Office



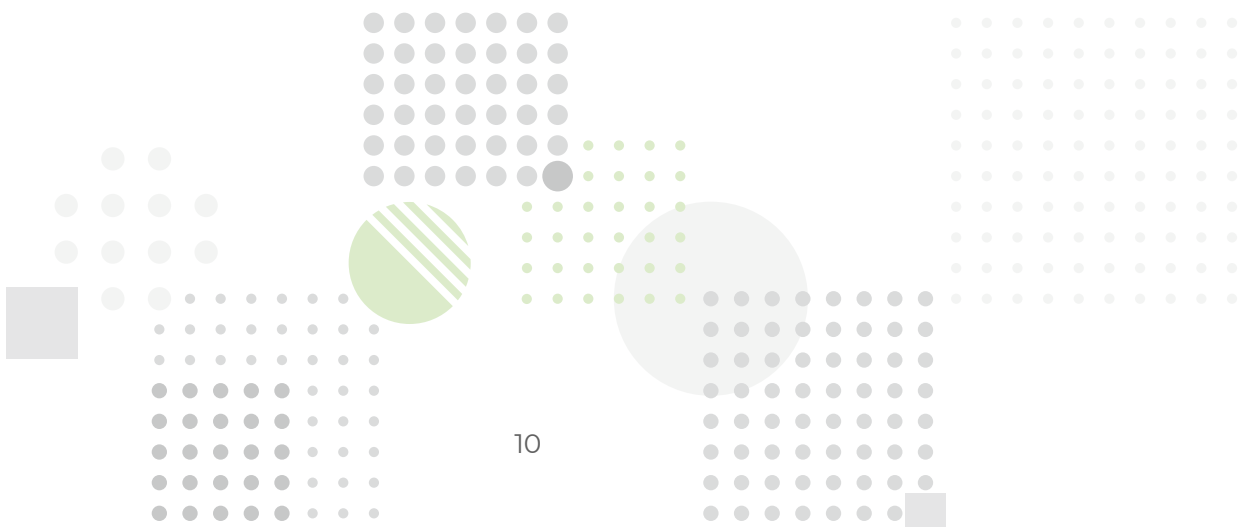
**Thomas Matthew,**  
Board Member at the  
European Youth Forum



**Diana Madill,**  
BBC journalist  
and long-standing  
collaborator of Prospex



**Jacki Davis,**  
Meade Davis  
Communications





# Concept of the Annual Forum 2021

The Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) has been organized since 2010. Its aim is to increase public awareness of the EUSBSR, its goals and achievements, to promote discussions between stakeholders, and to create conditions for their stronger cooperation and networking. The EUSBSR Annual Forum is organized by the Member States of EUSBSR in accordance with an agreed rotation order.

In May 2021, when the 12th EUSBSR Annual Forum was conceived, it was decided that it should return to Lithuania after 8 years. In accordance to the EU's ambitious goals for green and digital transformation, as well as the integration of climate issues into all policies of the revised EUSBSR Action Plan, the **Green Recovery** was chosen as the main topic of the Forum.

The guiding principle of the Annual Forum was synergies. The Baltic Sea Region (BSR), like the rest of the world, faced a variety of challenges, including climate change, global pandemic that led to health, social, economic, educational and other challenges. No country could solve these challenges alone, so it was more important than ever to join forces and to enable synergies between national and regional levels, different policy areas, EU macro-regional strategies (MRS) and different stakeholders.

The search for the synergies encouraged the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania** to put together a team of organisers accordingly: **Kaunas City** (the European Capital of Culture 2022), as it was a chance for this City to introduce itself for the BSR; **Klaipėda City** (the European Youth Capital 2021), as it was a perfect opportunity to increase participation of youth in the EUSBSR; the **Union of the Baltic Cities**, as cities are

of crucial importance to foster broader cooperation among local authorities and communities.

The Forum invited EUSBSR community to **revitalise** the Baltic Sea Region Strategy, to **recover** together after COVID-19 pandemic in such areas as economic, social and health, and to **recharge** for a greener, more prosperous and more resilient Baltic Sea Region.

There was also a need to look at all three objectives of the strategy: **Save the Sea, Increase Prosperity and Connect the Region** in a holistic manner as indivisible and equally important for the well-being of the people living around the Baltic Sea. Lithuania also aimed the Forum to become a stimulus for the increasing involvement of **local communities** and authorities, and young people in **cross-border cooperation** and the search for **solutions to common challenges**.

For the second time, the EUSBSR Annual Forum was organized in fully digital format. The organizers used this opportunity to provide a platform to all the stakeholders willing to contribute to the Forum's goals. It was also used as a momentum to reconfirm political support to the macro-regional cooperation.

In order to ensure as wide possibilities for participation as possible, the Forum lasted five days and featured 40 events: high-level opening event/strategic discussion, three plenary sessions on topical subjects, 28 workshops and seminars, 2 networking opportunities for cities, 3 networking villages and a closing event, dedicated to youth. In addition, the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme for 2021-2027 was launched during the Forum.

The Forum's panellists and speakers were carefully selected based on their experience and knowledge of the key

topics that were chosen as priorities for the event. Among them there were high-level representatives of the EU Member States and EU institutions, stakeholders participating in the implementation of the EUSBSR (including representatives of participating non-EU countries), members of youth organisations and representatives from other macro-regional strategies. An outstanding achievement was that, for the first time, the President of the European Commission and 5 Prime Ministers of the BSR attended the opening ceremony of the Annual Forum.

In order to address common challenges the Baltic Sea Region faces, participants of the Annual Forum 2021 discussed various issues, such as social challenges of COVID-19 faced by youth, the role of EUSBSR in accelerating economic recovery through **green** and **digital transformation**, contribution to the **green recovery** and setting the agenda of the EU, pollution in the Baltic Sea, sustainable energy consumption, social issues, such as demographic changes, migration, social injustice, poverty, lack of quality education in the regions. This Forum was exceptional because of the attention paid in finding solutions for **sustainable urban development** and enhanced involvement

of **local communities** and **youth**.

During discussions, the participants of the Annual Forum emphasized the importance of cross-border and cross-sectoral **cooperation** as it helps to overcome difficulties faster. It was also agreed, that many of the challenges that we face can be addressed through digital and innovative solutions. It was emphasized, that the responsibility for tackling the climate crisis, seeking **green recovery** and smooth **digital transition** needs to be shared, as these processes are interrelated and must be coordinated.

Participants also decided that it was crucial to give a voice to **young people** as they could bring in fresh energy and ideas. The event also highlighted the idea that positive change begins in **local communities** and **cities**, therefore it was important to ensure **balanced development** of the regions. The importance of the investment in research development and public education was emphasized.

Below, you may find more detailed summaries of the discussions, concrete suggestions or recommendations and inspiring quotes from the panellists and speakers.

### [More about the organization and agenda of the Annual Forum 2021](#)







# What we discussed in the plenaries and sessions



# Opening Session: Revitalise the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Stronger Together

## Main question for the panellists:

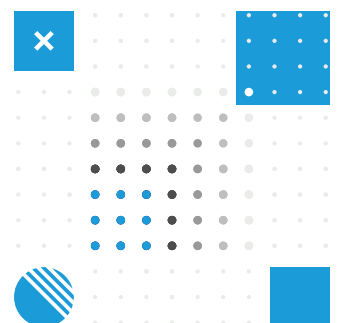
How to revitalise the EUSBSR and what needs to be done to intensify the cross-border cooperation, to encourage newcomers and stakeholders join?

## Prevailing themes from the conversation

- Recovery from COVID-19 pandemic
- Recovery from COVID-19 pandemic
- Solidarity as a tool for recovery
- Green and digital transitions
- Ways to increase resilience of BSR to future crisis
- Private/public sector cooperation
- Evolvement and the future of the EUSBSR
- Impact of the youth to the implementation of the EUSBSR
- Financial (2008-2009) and COVID-19 crises: differences, similarities and lessons learned

## Agreements

- Importance of EU cooperation, especially in times of recovery and in efforts to increase the general EU's resilience.
- The speed of green and digital transitions highly depend on the depth of cooperation between states in the BSR and the whole EU.
- Clear, certain policies are needed to attract the private sector to invest into green and digital transformations.
- Involvement of youth is very important, as their knowledge is crucial in scaling up EU's digital transformation.
- Trustworthy investments are important in building stable relationships among countries and businesses. Trusted connectivity is very strong in the BSR.
- The lessons of 2008 crisis helped the EU to quickly recover from the negative economic effects of the pandemic.



## Concrete steps suggested

- More visibility of the EUSBR and deeper sense of ownership are needed. It is important to concentrate on the implementation and concrete actions that will help to deliver common goals.
- Private sector investment is needed for a successful green and digital transition. The role of the public sector is to ensure trustworthy and certainty to attract the private sector.
- Greenhouse gas emission from transport in the EU, especially in the BSR, have been rising since the 2009 economic crisis. Therefore, there is a need of regulatory tools and price incentives to ensure a faster transition to climate neutral transport.
- Digital transformation brings many benefits, but it also comes with new risks and disruptions. Policy makers should manage those associated challenges. It includes proper access to digital infrastructure, investments in necessary skills development, addressing competition issues to guarantee a proper level playing field, ensuring security, privacy and tax policy implication, setting standards on artificial intelligence.
- More could be done to increase productivity and promote innovation, e. g. by boosting investment in research and development, eliminating digital skill shortages.
- Encourage synergies between digital transition and green recovery. Artificial intelligence could be applied to waste production, energy efficiency; environmental monitoring can bring major benefits to our economies and green goals.
- As regards the strategic visions/foresight, we have to foresee enormous flexibility due to rapidly changing environment in which we operate

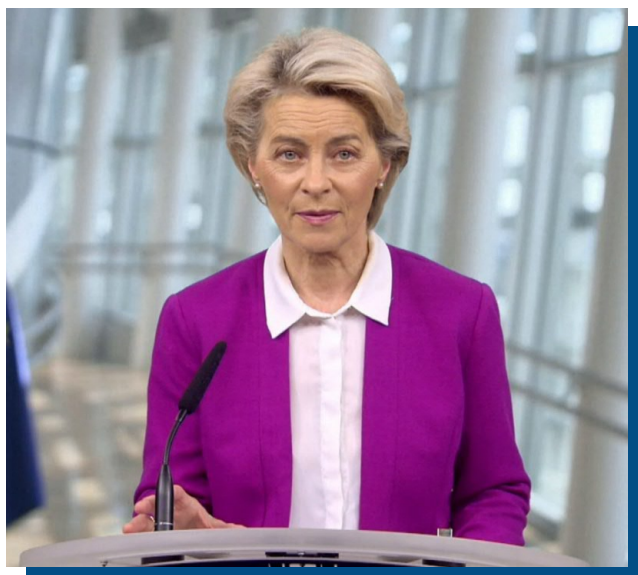
## Quotes

“ *Recovery plan and Strategy are based on the same idea – the closer our Union, the greater our prosperity.*

**Ursula von der Leyen,**  
**President of the European Commission**

“ *The Baltic Sea region strategy should never become just another paper to read, but an essential aspect of our day-to-day activities.*

**Ingrida Šimonytė, Prime Minister**  
**of the Republic of Lithuania**



“ *The Baltic Sea region strategy should never become just another paper to read, but an essential aspect of our day-to-day activities.*

**Ingrida Šimonytė, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania**

“ *Our strength, in technology and in the digital sphere, are our young people. In the next 10 years, since we want to move faster in digitalization, young people are a key element. They will help us to become the Silicon valley of the EU.*

**Kaja Kallas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia**

“ *European Green Deal will support stronger, cleaner growth and will help to reduce territorial inequalities across the EU.*

**Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**

“ *The pandemic made a major impact on health systems, but also on our economies, social systems and our way of life overall [...] With that in our mind, we have to learn from these experiences.*

**Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden**

“ *The Baltic Sea Region is a very dynamic region. We are different in our economic development, the wealth of our economies is still different, but the general approach and general policies, mentality of our people are quite similar.*

**Krišjānis Kariņš, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia**

“ *It is very important that we truly see our region as a fantastic opportunity to develop [...] Today we have good chances to realize a concept of real integration between our countries*

**Mateusz Morawiecki, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland**





12th ANNUAL FORUM of the EU STRATEGY for the BALTIC SEA REGION in LITHUANIA, 27th of SEPTEMBER '21



REVITALISE: OPENING SESSION REVITALISE the EU STRATEGY for the BALTIC SEA REGION. STRONGER TOGETHER

MODERATOR John Holland

3 KEY WORDS

REVITALISE MAKE the STRATEGY VIBRANT AGAIN WE HAVE TOOLS & SOLUTIONS  
 RECOVER AFTER COVID  
 RECHARGE NOTION OF GREENER

MORE RESILIENT & MORE PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR OUR REGION  
 CULTURE of PARTNERSHIP

BSR IS ABOUT SYNERGY, SOLIDARITY COOPERATION  
 THE KEY OF OUR SUCCESS WAS & REMAINS common VALUES

INGRIDA SIMONYTE PRIME MINISTER OF LITHUANIA  
 2022 KAUNAS CAPITAL OF CULTURE  
 DEMOCRATIC RULE OF LAW LIBERAL DEMOCRACY DEMOCRACY OF PRESS

URSULA VON DER LEYEN PRESIDENT OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
 LITHUANIA NEW STORAGE SYSTEM PRODUCED FROM OFFSHORE WIND FARMS  
 IT WILL CONNECT LITHUANIA TO THE OTHER BALTIC STATES

PRIORITIES of the BSR STRATEGY  
 SAVING the SEA & the ENVIRONMENT CONNECTING the REGION  
 CREATING PROSPERITY

THE CLOSER OUR UNION THE GREATER OUR PROSPERITY  
 BELARUS BORDER WE WILL STAY TOGETHER WITH LITHUANIA, LATVIA & POLAND  
 THIS IS THE TIME to ACT NOW AS the WINTER of 27

MIGRATION CAN NEVER BE USED TO DIVIDE US!  
 COOPERATION WITH NEIGHBOURS



EU STRATEGY FOR THE BSR IS ONE EXAMPLE HOW WE CAN SHARE the FUTURE of the IMPORTANT REGION

ECONOMIC RECOVERY IS UNDERWAY & HELPED BY POLICY SUPPORT  
 THE STRENGTH & QUALITY of THIS RECOVERY  
 INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM DEMOCRACY HUMAN RIGHTS RULE OF LAW

GREEN DEAL STRONGER CLEANER GROWTH  
 BOOSTING INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT  
 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE & BENEFIT FROM DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION  
 MATHIAS CORMANN SECRETARY GENERAL OF OECD



12th ANNUAL FORUM of the EU STRATEGY for the BALTIC SEA REGION in LITHUANIA, 27th of SEPTEMBER '21



REVITALISE: OPENING SESSION REVITALISE the EU STRATEGY for the BALTIC SEA REGION. STRONGER TOGETHER

MODERATOR John Holland

KRISTĀNIS KARIŅŠ PRIME MINISTER OF LATVIA  
 LOTS OF POSITIVE ASPECTS  
 DYNAMIC REGION  
 LOTS OF POTENTIALS TO ACHIEVE COMMON GOALS  
 DIGITAL ASPECT MAIN GOAL IN EU  
 GREEN ENERGY OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT WITH ESTONIA  
 5G via BALTIC  
 COVID-19 ARE WE PREPARED FOR THE NEXT CRISIS?  
 REGIONAL COOPERATION HOW WE CAN FURTHER GO ALONG AS THE LEADERS OF THE REGION...

PANDEMIC HAS BIG IMPACT ON OUR ECONOMY, HEALTHY & SOCIAL SYSTEM  
 GREEN TRANSITION is POSSIBLE  
 WE SHOULD BE AN EXAMPLE OF COOPERATION & LEADERSHIP OF CLIMATE ACTION  
 TOGETHER WE CAN REACH OUR COMMON GOALS!  
 STEFAN LÖFVEN PRIME MINISTER OF SWEDEN

KAIA KALLAS PRIME MINISTER OF ESTONIA  
 YOUNG DYNAMIC REGION  
 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
 IN NEXT 10 YEARS WANT TO MOVE FASTER IN DIGITALIZATION SILICON VALLEY OF EU  
 TRUSTED CONNECTIVITY CONNECTED WITH INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS & DIGITALIZATION  
 EVERYTHING IS BASED ON TRUST!

CONNECTIVITY ENABLING OUR COUNTRIES TO WORK ON THE SAME PLATFORM  
 FINLAND SWEDEN  
 TO HAVE A VERY GOOD CONNECTIVITY IN THE AREA OF HARD INFRASTRUCTURE VIA BALTICA VIA CARPATIA  
 BUT THERE IS... REAL COOPERATION  
 MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI PRIME MINISTER OF POLAND



# First plenary: EU Agenda-Setters vs. Implementers: Which Role for EU Macro-Regional Strategies?

## Main question for the panellists:

What role the macro-regional strategies play in achieving ambitious EU goals: EU agenda-setters or implementers?

## Prevailing themes from the conversation

- The importance of the cooperation between the EU members and beyond
- MRS are frameworks to better implement EU common strategies and initiatives
- Alignment with the EU and national funding, public and private investment
- MRS as pioneers in a vanguard of green revolution
- Visibility of the MRS
- Better engagement of the youth

### Concrete steps suggested

- Promote cooperation in such areas as tackling water pollution, green design, green energy, green shipping and green innovation
- Make sure that MRSs reinforce regional cohesion
- Help and prioritize the least developed regions
- Make good use of the funding opportunities. Alignment of EU funding programmes with relevant priorities from MRS.
- Encourage synergies between national, public and private investment
- Embed the MRS into relevant agreement and partnerships
- Make MRS as an example of partnerships, not just the cross-border ones, but also different partners – from the national level to a very local
- Build capacity and working in cooperation and openness
- Hear the voice of the youth and engage them more

## Agreement

MRS are important tools for cooperation within the EU and beyond. There is never enough for the cooperation.

Recovery is a priority of the EU.

## Agreement

MRS's goals go hand in hand with the EU priorities. At the same time, MRS has the power to influence the agenda setting.

Improve the visibility of MRS.

## Quotes

“ Whatever solution we find the answer is not less cooperation, is the opposite. EU is calling you to be an example of fresh thinking and working together, because no country, no region can tackle these challenges alone. MRS are a vivid expression of the cooperation.

**Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms**

“ Cooperation in Adriatic and Ionian region is one of the best tools to push forward the integration process of the Western Balkans by closely interacting in joint projects.

**Megi Fino, Deputy Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania**

“ MRS are inclusive and related with the EU agenda. Many ideas that have born in this region including Strategy, have also become the part of the European agenda.

**Arnoldas Pranckevičius, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania**

“ Baltic strategy is a successful example of macro-regional strategy. We can learn from your knowledge and experience.

**Veronika Remišová, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Investment, Regional Development and Informatization of Slovakia**

**Interreg** Baltic Sea Region **EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND** EUROPEAN UNION

28 September 2021 – 13:00-14:30 CET – Online

**Speakers announced!**  
**EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Annual Forum 2021 Lithuania**

**EU AGENDA-SETTERS VS. IMPLEMENTERS: WHICH ROLE FOR EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES?**

**Elisa Ferreira**  
European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms

**Veronika Remišová**  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Investment, Regional Development and Informatization of Slovakia

**Arnoldas Pranckevičius**  
Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

**Megi Fino**  
Deputy Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania

**Moderator: Normunds Popen**  
Deputy Director-General of DG REGIO, European Commission

Annual Forum 2021 is being organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Kaunas City, Klaipėda City, the Union of the Baltic Cities



# Second plenary: COVID-19: Challenges and Opportunities for Youth in Times of Crisis

## Main question for the panellists:

How young people can be brought in and get involved in shaping their future together with the EUSBSR strategy? Is there enough political attention to the challenges that young people are facing?

## Prevailing themes from the conversation

- Youth involvement
- Employment issues of young people
- Reforming the education system to meet the needs of both young people and society.
- Social media – main tool to reach youth
- Youth representation in decision-making groups

### Concrete steps suggested

- Trust in youth. Find out how they can be reached, remember that youth is not the future, youth is present. Always research and follow up: what is interesting to them?
- Give youth a possibility to act and be part of or in charge of the process. Encourage youth friendly approach, that is important in all kind of policies and initiatives.
- Create separate priorities/working groups about youth participation, involve national youth council
- Give young people all the chances: improve education system; give access to social protection to young people; ensure decent working environment for young people when public money is spent
- Considerate and apply more institutionalized youth participation.
- Do not use big questionnaires to find out about youth's needs. Find something appealing to them and use it
- Use of social media to reach young people: to get opinions; to inform people; to bring them together
- Use more the social media that the young people uses/prepares.
- Speak not about action plans, but turn to micro-stories about people, the impact of the EU initiatives and work to our daily live.
- Provide funding for the civil participation of young persons: to have national youth councils, NGO's, monitoring's and etc.

## Agreements

Young people should be given all the opportunities to get involved in the decision-making process.

Reform the education system in order to give youth the opportunity to participate in the decision-making.

Giving young people opportunities to successfully find job, plan family, etc. is very important for the EU future.

**Interreg**  
Baltic Sea Region

EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND  
EUROPEAN UNION

29 September 2021 –  
13:00-14:30 CET – Online

**Speakers announced!**  
**EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region**  
**Annual Forum 2021 Lithuania**

**COVID-19: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN TIMES OF CRISIS**

**Moderator: Diana Madill**  
Prospex

**Slawomir Tokarski**  
Director for the European Territorial Cooperation, Macro-regions, Interreg and Programmes Implementation I, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission

**Eitvydas Bingelis**  
Head of Vilnius Office of the International Organization for Migration

**Elena Sinkevičiūtė**  
Representative of the Lithuanian Youth Council in the European Economic and Social Committee

Annual Forum 2021 is being organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Kaunas City, Klaipėda City, the Union of the Baltic Cities

## Quotes

“ Young people question status quo, bringing fresh eye into organization, especially to big organization like mine. This type of little rebellion against established older. And it is important because in the Commission, but also in other administrations, we are facing the reality that is complex, which is multidimensional, and young people are bringing this dynamic to organize this change.

**Slawomir Tokarski, Director for the European Territorial Cooperation, Macro-regions, Interreg and Programmes Implementation, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission**

“ Youth is not a future, youth is today. Everything what we can do today will have an effect in the future. Young people should be trusted.

Eitvydas Bingelis, International Organization for Migration (UN), Head of the Office in Vilnius

“ [...] important thing is accountability. After we choose to get involved, to make a claim, to work with other youth representatives, to work with governmental representatives on policy and solutions – we want accountability – that actually something was implemented [...] and there is a political follow-up on that.

Elena Sinkevičiūtė, Representative of the Lithuanian Youth Council in the European Economic and Social Committee

“ Change is not happening, this is why we call for more institutionalized youth participation [...] not only asking for the opinions. [...] We need real participation.

Joscha Wagner, Vice-President, ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation Youth Committee)

12th ANNUAL FORUM of the EU STRATEGY for the BALTIC SEA REGION in LITHUANIA, 29th of SEPTEMBER '21

RECOVER! PLENARY SESSION II. COVID-19: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN TIMES OF CRISIS

MODERATOR Diana Madl

WE NEED YOUNG PEOPLE MUCH MORE THAN THEY NEED US. THEY CAN BRING FRESH AIR TO THE ORGANISATIONS. THEY ARE IN FUTURE. UPGRADING SKILLS. GREEN DEAL DIGITALIZATION. IT'S ABOUT EDUCATION. YET GERMAN SYSTEM IS THE BEST EXAMPLE. TELL THE STUDENTS WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS. HACKATHONS GOOD TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION. MAKING YOUNG PEOPLE MORE ACTIVE IN MAKING DECISIONS. YOUTH MARKET. SLAWOMIR TOKARSKI DIRECTOR FOR THE EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION IN POLAND.

THERE SHOULD BE HORIZONTAL APPROACH. MICRO-REGIONAL IDENTITY IS SOMETHING NEW! THE LACK OF IDENTITY THINKING. YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE IDEA HOW IT SHOULD LOOK LIKE IN FUTURE. ACTION PLAN FOR YOUTH IN THE SHORT TERM. BSR STRATEGY SHOULD BE YOUNG FRIENDLY & INTERACTIVE. EITVYDAS BINGELIS HEAD OF VILNIUS OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION. Let's Communicate the EUSRR for the benefit of the region.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT in CIVIL SOCIETY. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE VERY BUSY. WHEN WE COME TO BE INVOLVED WE WANT TO BE USEFUL. THEY WERE VOLUNTEERS IN HOSPITALS - EVERYWHERE. COVID IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH. SOCIALIZATION BETWEEN YOUTH IS IMPORTANT. GOOD TO GIVE INFORMATION, SOMETIMES NOT TO GET INFORMATION. SOCIAL MEDIA. EU BUDGET PAID TIK-TOK CHANNEL TO EXPLAIN HOW WE WORK. YOUTH ORGANISATIONS CAN BE AN IMPULSE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

TRADE UNION IS AN AGING ORGANISATION. 40% OF YOUNG WORKERS IN EU HAVE TEMPORARY AGREEMENT. YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T GAIN ENOUGH ATTENTION. NEED ACCESS to SOCIAL PROTECTION. DECENT WORKING CONDITIONS WHEN PUBLIC MONEY ARE SPEND. IT'S NOT ABOUT COMMUNICATION BUT REAL INVOLVEMENT. JOSCHA WAGNER VICE-PRESIDENT ETUC. AMA STANKIEWICZ.



# Third plenary: Green Recovery: the Role of Education, Skills Development and Inclusiveness

## Main question for the panellists:

Do the objectives of the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the European green agenda coincide? Could they supplement each other?

## Prevailing themes from the conversation

- Green and Blue Deal
- Possibilities of young people and local communities to get involved in the green recovery
- The role of private and public sector in the green recovery
- Macro-regional role in the sustainable blue economy
- Sustainable use of marine analogies, marine resources
- Development of education and skills in greener/bluer future
- Subsidies on initiatives that focuses on new greener technology development

### Concrete steps suggested

- Become carbon neutral
- Initiate new citizen's initiatives and constructive dialogue with sea users (farmers, fishermen and etc.) regarding clean and renewable energy
- Encourage youth's involvement, sustainable activity in everyday life constant improvement of environment
- Develop close discussion between different stakeholders – private sector players, cities or government
- Give attention to private business owners, because they are the solutions and new technology providers
- Reduce knowledge gaps and share experiences
- Create reports about blue recovery for children, so they would understand how important it is to respect ocean and water
- Allow students to go in other countries and learn about what is sustainable blue economy
- Expand innovative technologies to clean the oceans
- Develop applications that allow everyone, including citizens, to be a part of the improvement of the oceans

# Agreement

Green recovery and sustainable investments are beneficial.
Circular Economy – is future of new businesses and sustainable world
Green solutions must be implemented in everyday life
Inform people what kind of impact they have on sea and oceans.

## Quotes

“ *Circular economy is becoming a trend and it will be the way the market is organized in coming years. So, the big wave or trend is coming to us in circular based business models. This big wave will help different markets but also sub regional areas to reap benefits from it.*

**Jyrki Katainen, President of the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra**

“ *We (the government of EU) have managed to design package of solutions that tackle pollution and ignorance toward seas, and we symbolize it through starfish because we are answering to all the challenges together.*

**Geneviève Pons, Director General of Europe – Jacques Delors in Brussels, Honorary Director of the European Commission, Former Director of the WWF's European Office**

“ *The green deal is set to led the EU in less than 30 years to first time neutral, modern and competitive economy by implementing carbon neutrality, circle economy, zero pollution, protection and restoration of bio diversity.*

**Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries**



# Closing/Youth Event: Sustainable Future of the Baltic Sea Region: What role for the youth?

## Main question for the panellists:

What role the youth could play in fostering sustainable solutions in the Baltic Sea Region and how young people already contribute to the sustainability goals?

## Prevailing themes from the conversation

- Empowering young people
- Educating youth about the EU
- Opportunities for youth to engage in EUSBSR
- Youth's benefits to the society and work environment
- Young people participation in society matters
- Sustainable development and youth





## Concrete steps suggested

- The opportunity for young people to participate in EUSBSR should proceed with bottom-up initiatives by letting young people to launch projects, such as "Youth Manifesto". It is important to take these projects further by working together with regional authorities, so they would commit to and contribute to the regional policies.
- Digitalization of democracy would help young people to participate more easily. It is important to develop such tools as electronic voting, also to work on local level and empower young people to believe that they can make a difference.
- Discussion on sustainability and sustainable lifestyle should take part not only in higher academic circles or political conferences, but also at schools and universities
- Many young people are confused and do not really know what does the concept of sustainability means, because of that it is important to educate young people from early on.

## Agreement

No single country can implement sustainable development goals – where is a need for a regional cooperation.

Young people can bring energy, creativity and new ideas.

With every new challenge the world faces there has to be a refresh of the study programs in order to provide the youth with the opportunities to adapt to the new and constantly changing world.

Young people want to participate both institutionally and in non-formal mechanisms.

## Quotes



*Participation of young people is important, especially in these days when, first of all, we are confronted with a big crisis. [...] We are confronted with a reality that is constantly changing, [...] need the capacity to reflect, to review what you are doing, to adjust, to question status quo.*

**Slawomir Tokarski, Director for the European Territorial Cooperation, Macro-regions, Interreg and Programmes Implementation, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission**



*Young people can make difference in the world, they can be leaders, they are leaders, they have been in the past. I think then you look at some of the biggest transformations that occurred over the past few hundreds of years very often young people are at the forefront of the movement which created the social conditions which have led to these transformations happening.*

**Thomas Matthew, Board Member at the European Youth Forum**

“ We need greener solutions, because we know what it means to the BSR. We have a lot of challenges, but together we are strong and together we can find many solutions in the future. We must start to do it right now.

**Vytautas Grubliauskas, Mayor of Klaipėda city**

“ Impact starts in the local level. [...] The real delivery, real speaking, educating and making ideas in communities start in cities.

**Mantas Jurgutis, Deputy Mayor of the City of Kaunas, President of the Union of the Baltic Cities**

“ We go really fast in youth participation, youth involvement, engaging and empowering [...]. We are forming culture in the city that the young people feel like more valuable part of the city's community.

**Greta Meškauskienė, Head of project “Klaipėda – European Youth Capital 2021”**

“ We have a very efficient waste management system. We recycle 99 percent of household waste [...] But many young people are expecting even more. They think, that we need to be even more ambitious

**Sanna Virta, Participation coordinator at the City of Lahti, European Green Capital 2021**

“ While it seems that young people are more sustainable [...] there are a lot of confusion among them. And I think that the reason is that these goals are not discussed in schools very often. [...] Sustainability is a bit of a new topic. There is definitely a need for more education on sustainability in schools and universities.

**Tamara Soltys, Representative of Klaipėda's youth**



12th ANNUAL FORUM of the EU STRATEGY for the BALTIC SEA REGION in LITHUANIA, 1 of OCTOBER '21



RECHARGE! CLOSING/ YOUTH EVENT: SUSTAINABLE FUTURE of the BALTIC SEA REGION: WHAT ROLE of the YOUTH?

MODERATOR  
Marko Paunovic

**YOU'LL BE YOUNG AS LONG AS YOU WISH**

**TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER**

**IMPACT STARTS ON THE LOCAL LEVEL**

**YOUTH ARE ENGAGED IN THE UBC PROJECTS**

**WE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO LISTEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

**YOUNG PEOPLE BRING US DIFFERENT ENERGY**

**WE THINK OUT OF THE BOX**

**THEY'RE EUROPEAN CAPITAL**

**2. TRYING TO BE CAPITAL**

**WE WORK WITH THEM DIRECTLY**

**YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT SOCIETIES COOPERATE TOGETHER**

**THERE IS NO DECISION WITHOUT THE YOUTH**

**LET THEM DO**

**THEY WANT TO TAKE CARE OF ENVIRONMENT**

**PLOGGING** (CLEANING THE BEACHES FROM TRASH)

**WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE SEA**

**NEW IDEAS**

**WE CAN REACH MORE TOGETHER**

**COMMUNICATION**

**YOUNG PEOPLE NEED SUSTAINABILITY AROUND THEM**

**IT'S A TREND**

**WE CAN REACH MORE TOGETHER**



AMA STASIEWICZ 1

12th ANNUAL FORUM of the EU STRATEGY for the BALTIC SEA REGION in LITHUANIA, 1 of OCTOBER '21



RECHARGE! CLOSING/ YOUTH EVENT: SUSTAINABLE FUTURE of the BALTIC SEA REGION: WHAT ROLE of the YOUTH?

MODERATOR  
Marko Paunovic

**THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THIS WORLD ...**

**DEMOCRACY** (THEY WANT TO PARTICIPATE)

**DIGITALISATION** IS HELPFUL!

**YOUNG PEOPLE** (THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT SUSTAINABILITY CONCEPT IS)

**THESE GOALS ARE NOT DISCUSSED IN SCHOOLS**

**MY GRANDMOTHER IS MORE SUSTAINABLE THAN MY GENERATION**

**LOCAL ENGAGEMENT CAN BE HELPFUL!**

**IMPLEMENTATION IS ON THE LOCAL LEVEL**

**IT'S TRENDY AS A TOPIC, NOT REALISTIC**

**NOT ONLY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

**WE WANT TO BE THE BEST DIALOGUE CITY IN FINLAND**

**WE LEARN HOW TO LISTEN**

**DISINFORMATION AS THE PROBLEM**

**WE SHOULD TAKE SUSTAINABILITY & GREEN TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S INFORMATION CHANNELS**

**THE QUESTION IS: HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT THESE ASPECTS?**

**WE'RE ON A GOOD WAY ...**

**0 WASTE YEAR 2050**

**YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATION IS VERY IMPORTANT**

**YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY!**

**40 MLN YOUNG PEOPLE ...**

**YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CENTER OF THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

**GAME-CHANGERS**

**THOMAS MATTHEW** (BASED MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM)

**SUMMARY**

**NEW IDEAS FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION**

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

**ENGAGEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

**SYNERGY AROUND THE SECTORS & CITIES**



AMA STASIEWICZ 2





# The results of the Forum's workshops



## Workshops in facts and figures

**28**  
CROSS-  
SECTORAL  
online workshops

ON AVERAGE  
**6** workshops  
per day

More than  
**40**  
POLICY AREAS/  
HORIZONTAL  
ACTIONS  
co-organisers  
of workshops

## How the workshops were shaped?

Many challenges in the Baltic Sea Region are common for several countries and have a multisectoral nature. Cooperation and coordination between various countries, sectors and stakeholders can help to broaden horizons and discover fresh ideas, that help to solve common problems. Events of 12th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR focused on the macro-regional strategy's role in shaping the EU agenda, the involvement of **local communities** and **young people**, raising awareness on **sustainable** and **balanced urban development, green** and **digital transformation**, the fight against pollution of the Baltic Sea, recovery after COVID-19 pandemic, and many other important topics in the BSR.

28 workshops and seminars, 2 networking opportunities for cities, 3 networking villages and a special kick-off of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme 2021-2027, dedicated to meeting other stakeholders and looking for partnerships, enriched the agenda of the Annual Forum. As a unifying principle, cultural elements complemented the whole programme of the Annual Forum. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced to organize the event fully virtually for the second time, the event brought together a large number of participants. The Annual Forum was as open and engaging as possible in order to create synergies and stimulus for further implementation of the priorities of the

EUSBSR and the EU as a whole. Guided by the same cross-sectoral philosophy as the Forum's plenaries, each workshop was organised by different BSR actors.

The aim of the workshops was to let participants discuss important topics with professionals, experts and together generate fresh problem-solving ideas on efficient implementation of the revised Action Plan of the EUSBSR. The workshops resulted in many concrete, original, innovative ideas and recommendations, covering a wide range of issues, common for many BSR countries.

The participants of workshops agreed, that it was important to promote **cooperation**, listen to different stakeholders from different countries (including neighbouring ones) and sectors in order to solve common problems. The need to learn from COVID-19 management mistakes and good lessons was highlighted during events. In terms of attracting and informing civil society, the necessity to involve different members of the society in the process of decision-making, encourage **young people** to share their ideas and show them that their opinion is valuable, was emphasized. Participants concluded, that more investment in research development and public education was needed.

A lot of attention was paid to the climate crisis, therefore the participants of the workshops stressed that it was important to pursue joint responsibility for tackling the pollution of the Baltic Sea and reduce energy consumption, search for more synergies between **digital transition** and **green recovery**. During the Annual Forum special attention was paid to **cities**. The participants emphasized the need to ensure a sustainable and balanced **urban development**.

Strategic projects, programmes and policy frameworks that would help to achieve these goals and foresee future collaboration within EUSBSR were also discussed.

Each workshop's results are summarized below. The priority was given to ideas, suggestions or recommendations which could serve as basis for concrete joint actions.

# 1. Innovative Water Protection Measures for Agriculture – Gypsum, Structure Lime and Other Ideas

## Organiser

PA Nutri and John Nurminen Foundation

## Contact

Anna Saarentaus,  
[anna.saarentaus@jnfoundation.fi](mailto:anna.saarentaus@jnfoundation.fi)

## Challenges

The Baltic Sea is highly affected by eutrophication. A major part of the anthropogenic nutrient loading originates from diffuse sources, which are difficult to control and where fewer nutrient load reductions have been achieved. In agriculture, however, there are promising new methods for curbing nutrient loading, namely gypsum and structure lime. How can nutrient loading from diffuse sources be tackled?

## Expected positive change

It is important to pay more focus on the costs and long-term impacts of gypsum and structure lime on field P balances, effects on plant fertilisation need, and on raw material sources and their applicability in organic farming. The participants were invited to test the presented novel nutrient reduction methods and innovations in the Baltic Sea Region. Also new researches and scientific papers on agricultural techniques improvement are in progress.

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Test what methods best implies to particular country
- Develop researches, projects that improve agricultural technologies
- Share data, knowledge and experiences locally and internationally
- Encourage cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach
- Fund programmes to enhance the effectiveness of water protection

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)

[Gypsum Initiative](#)

[Natural Resources Institute Finland](#)

[Pulp and Paper Mill Sludges Decrease Soil](#)

[Erodibility](#)

[www.luke.fi/kuitu](http://www.luke.fi/kuitu)



## 2. Plastic Pollution in the Baltic Sea. A Circular Economy Approach on Reduction, Recovery and Recycling of Plastic Waste in the Baltic Sea

### Organiser

Fraunhofer Gesellschaft Germany

### Contact

Michael Thurm,  
[michael.thurm@igd-r.fraunhofer.de](mailto:michael.thurm@igd-r.fraunhofer.de)

### Challenges

Even though the Baltic Sea appears to suffer less than other waterways, plastic pollution is an issue. The high number of people living directly at the Baltic Sea leads to a significant potential for human induced plastic pollution in the Baltic Sea. To solve this problem a joint approach that combines different stakeholders from different locations within a circular reflection of the

issue is needed. How big is the problem of pollution in the Baltic Sea? What are the key challenges to overcome?

### Expected positive change

To successfully implement a green recovery, the involvement and responsibility of different industries are essential. It is important to increase knowledge across sectors and global, as there is a big fragmentation in legislation sphere. A circular approach for different issues is important to develop. More sustainable solutions throughout the complete lifecycle of products and processes by integrating various stakeholders at different stages of the circle are needed. It is necessary to reduce the inflow, monitor the state,

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Encourage integration of different industries and stakeholders nationally and regionally to propose solutions or identify further research needs
- Develop new technological concepts on aquatic litter monitoring. Support and stimulate innovative methods and projects with the help of financial sources, regulatory framework, interdisciplinary, international and intersectoral cooperation.
- Improve sea and beach monitoring methods for the BSR
- Encourage more active recycling of the plastic waste, improve sewage treatment, reduce of stormwater and sewer overflow
- Develop policy statements, action plans, implementation plans on national and regional levels
- Solve the problem of the lack of knowledge about the negative ecological effects through the development of innovative research and sharing experiences
- Focus waste recovering activities on the rivers as well as shore and seabed in the vicinity of their estuary
- Find business models to use the recovered waste in a sustainable manner – financially and in terms of environmental impact



amounts and locations of existing pollution, recover, what's already in the Baltic Sea, find sustainable use cases for recovered material in order to finance it sustainably and reduce the use of plastic in the society.

## **Related links**

**[Workshop video](#)**

**[Pluxin](#)**

**[Flanders Marine Institute](#)**

**[SINTEF](#)**

**[Plasticene](#)**





### 3. Fertilizer Leakage Issue. Farming Impact for Baltic Sea. What Can Be Done? Sustainable Farming Practices, Latest Researches

#### Organiser

PA Bioeconomy/PA Nutri

#### Contact

Mantas Bernotas,  
[Mantas.Bernotas@zum.it](mailto:Mantas.Bernotas@zum.it)

#### Challenges

Climate change, depletion of global bioresources, the important need to supply food, clean water and energy for humanity stimulate innovations. Those innovations are inseparable from bioeconomy, offering the integrated approach to economic prosperity, social and environmental sustainability in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture. Sustainable bioeconomy is closely linked with green and blue economy and is the main part of circular economy. How does agriculture impact the Baltic Sea? What can be done to reduce the negative impact?

#### Expected positive change

Nutrients should be managed sustainably in all BSR countries. It is important to secure the productivity of agriculture and minimize nutrient loss to the Baltic Sea environment through efficient use of nutrients and cost-effective nutrient recycling. More efficient and practical agricultural technics should be taken. Agriculture is one of the main sources of the Baltic Sea pollution, but there are other sources too. Because of that, actions must be taken in different sectors. Policy framework to protect land and sea needs to become more comprehensive and coherent.

#### Related links

[Workshop video](#)

[HELCOM](#)

[SuMaNu](#)

[Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry](#)

#### Suggestions and recommendations

- Adopt the updated BSAP, that will include new actions on agriculture and nutrient recycling
- In order to seek more efficient problem-solving results, BSR countries have to imply common actions, share experiences, data and solutions locally and regionally
- Encourage change in all sectors that cause the negative effect on the Baltic Sea
- Improve national standards and guidelines for handling and spreading manure and regional nutrient reallocation
- Develop coherent P fertilization policies in BSR, plan fertilization and balance nutrient
- Minimal use of harmful substances and careful manure processing ensure safe recycling of manure nutrients
- Support cross-sectoral collaboration and transfer knowledge between farmers, advisors, researches, authorities, policymakers and other stakeholders
- Encourage use of more efficient practices and technologies in agriculture. Raise the requirements for acceptable practices and technologies for animal housing, manure storage and manure spreading.



## 4. International Assistance in Emergencies and Disasters – Procedures and Practicalities for Requesting and Receiving Assistance in the Event of a Natural or Manmade Disaster in the Baltic Sea Region

### Organiser

PA Safe, OIL SPILL

### Contact

Minna-Liina Ojala,  
[milioj@utu.fi](mailto:milioj@utu.fi)

### Challenges

The workshop dealt with Host Nation Support activities of Rescue Services and focused on coastal and maritime incidents involving oil or chemical spills. What kind of procedures and practicalities for requesting and receiving assistance in the event of a natural or manmade disaster (involving oil or chemical spills) exist in the Baltic Sea Region. What are the current challenges and opportunities?

### Expected positive change

Though many good practices exist already, continuous risk management efforts and cooperation are required in order to prevent future maritime accidents and minimize their consequences. It is necessary to deepen knowledge, share lessons learned and further develop regional preparedness and response related services.

### Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[About the event \(programme, speakers, presentations\)](#)  
[HELCOM](#)

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Foster holistic/integrated management of marine pollution incidents to enable coordinated response operation at sea and on shore
- Strengthen mutual assistance for oiled wildlife response in the Baltic Region
- Develop mutual oil spill monitoring services, risk analysis for oil and HNS pollution
- Develop monitoring and pollution risk assessment regarding species and habitats
- Support maritime risk management and technological development of the shipping industry in the Baltic Sea
- Address threats posed by munitions, wrecks and other hazardous submerged objects
- Increase coordination and cooperation by promoting the exchange of knowledge and sharing information and ideas between different stakeholders both locally and internationally

## 5. Improvement Connectivity in the BSR Aiming to Promote Complementary National and Regional Activities Along the CNCs, Addressing Green Multimodal Logistics, Integration of Urban Nodes and Remote Rural Areas

### Organiser

PA Transport (Coordination Group)

### Contact

Algirdas Šakalys  
[algirdas.sakalys@vilniustech.lt](mailto:algirdas.sakalys@vilniustech.lt)

Paulius Kojis,  
[paulius.kojis@vilniustech.lt](mailto:paulius.kojis@vilniustech.lt)

### Challenges

One of the most important tasks of the transport policy in the BSR is to improve internal connections, and assist expanding cities in coping with new bottlenecks and congestions in urban and suburban

passenger transport, as well as in freight transport. By using innovative transport solutions and green technologies, it is also very important to have a good transport connection with other EU's macro regions (specifically, to develop three TEN-T core network corridors). How to improve linkage between national and regional transport policy making in the BSR? What are the main challenges?

### Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[EMMA Extension Project](#)  
[MARA Tools](#)  
[www.bsraccess.eu](http://www.bsraccess.eu)

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Strengthen coordination between TEN-T policy and EUSBSR transport policy, including the link between bottom-up and top-down processes
- Promote joint actions (macro-regional wide) in order to shift to more sustainable transport modes and to enhance multimodality and synchromodality
- Encourage political debate and action proposals based on the outcomes of cross-sectoral, multilevel and transnational stakeholder dialogue
- Prepare coordinated solutions for harmonized infrastructure developments for clean fuel deployment along CNCs
- Include first mile issue in future flagship processes, develop its concept
- Increase awareness, improve knowledge and share best experiences
- Highlight the importance of the shift from privately owned cars to bus on demand, micro-mobility solutions, and car sharing in the EUSBSR transport policy
- Develop digital infrastructure, as we are living in an era of big data. Develop standards, systems and platforms how to connect and share data between different stakeholders.
- Find best transport solutions that apply not only to different countries, but also rural and urban areas



## Expected positive change

During the discussion, participants agreed that generated proposals should be presented at the next Transport PA Supervisory Group meeting, expecting that they will be properly evaluated implementing the revised Transport Action Plan of the EUSBSR. A formal planning/governance instruments, allowing for a

integrated spatial and transport planning and more active constructive dialogue between countries and European Coordinators are needed in order to develop the TEN-T core network corridors more efficiently.





# 6. Digitalization Efforts in Ports

## Organiser

PA Transport

## Contact

Anders Berg,  
[anders.berg@sjofartsverket.se](mailto:anders.berg@sjofartsverket.se)

## Challenges

Digitalization is a driver of innovation and sustainability across all sectors, and it helps effectively address many global challenges that citizens and businesses face today. This also affects global shipping and ports. Therefore macro-regional collaboration on maritime digitalisation can help turn climate and environmental challenges into new opportunities in line with the EU Green Deal. During the pandemic the lack of coordination among Baltic Sea countries in the field of maritime digitalization has

increased even more. How digitalization can be used to assist effective and secure transport flow through Baltic ports?

## Expected positive change

LISA Flagship Process needs to be funded more. It is important to steer and manoeuvre towards the realization of EUSBSR policy area transport action plan. A more harmonized and coordinated approach would make it possible to offer streamlined services throughout the region, make better use of current project results and give these results a chance to become adopted and scale up.

## Related links

[LISA Flagship](#)

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Build on experiences learned in LISA Flagship Process – grow number of stakeholders
- Integrate other systems and share data regarding vessels port call process
- Start making business decisions based on the data
- Develop platforms for projects, initiatives and other relevant stakeholders
- Digitalization must be carried out in cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation



## 7. Energy Efficiency Measures: the Key Role on the Implementation of National Energy and Climate Plan for 2021-2030

### Organiser

PA Energy/ Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania

### Contact

Saulius Šimanauskas,  
[saulius.simanauskas@enmin.lt](mailto:saulius.simanauskas@enmin.lt)

### Challenges

The European Commission adopted a comprehensive package of interconnected policy activities that allow delivering on the climate and energy ambitions – the European Green Deal. Currently, European countries have adopted the existing policies, including the national energy and climate plans, that need to be assessed and adjusted in order to fulfill the fit for European Green Deal aims. What are the needs of the

countries? What are their future steps?

### Expected positive change

The effective use of all measures (technological, innovative, economic, also in education and consultation, etc.) and incentives to change consumer behaviour are crucial to achieving the targets for energy efficiency and emission reduction. New legislation acts and measures that aim to deliver the transformational change in a fair, efficient and competitive way will have to be adopted in order to meet the EU's objectives.

### Related links

[Workshop video](#)

[Fusebox](#)

[Lithuanian Energy Agency](#)

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Develop cooperation between stakeholders at regional level through the exchange of experience and good practices, awareness-raising initiatives to solve energy efficiency issues
- Implement existing and new efficiency measures, such as renovation of building, climate change programme, public transport modernization, higher duties and taxes for petrol, energy saving agreements, mobility plans for towns, electrification of railways
- Imply indirect measures in specific cases that have impact on energy efficiency, such as energy literacy, policy and regulations, financial eligibility, technology availability, research and innovation, maturity of the market
- Monitor the implementation of energy efficiency measures actively and consistently
- Reduce consumption of energy 4.5 percent yearly without undermining economic growth in Lithuania
- Promote sustainable, smart, innovative and save technologies which benefit both consumers and socio-economically. Grow awareness of the decision makes about these new incentives.
- Inform enterprises that energy efficiency measures are useful not only for the country, EU, but also help to reduce their costs
- Improve communication, individualize information, nudge citizens to change their behaviour and make sustainable choices

## 8. Bridging the Old with the New: How Can We Built a Better Baltic Sea Region Future for 2040 and Beyond?

### Organiser

VASAB/ PA Spatial Planning

### Contact

Liene Gaujeniete,  
[Liene.Gaujeniete@vraa.gov.lv](mailto:Liene.Gaujeniete@vraa.gov.lv)

### Challenges

Developing shared visions and setting joint goals is crucial for thriving in our territories, strengthening the resilience of our communities. Current developments can be drivers for elaborating a clear vision for a more sustainable, thriving and modern BSR in 2040, that is also based on the first VASAB vision in 1994.

### Expected positive change

Largely most elements depict a desirable future for the region, with discussions focusing extensively on the most desirable role for the rural areas in the future. Participants stressed the need to highlight the interdependencies of places with each other, as well as the necessity to respect each country's diversity in the development of the vision. A vision without actions may end up being a wishful thinking.

### Suggestions and recommendations

Today the vision for the BSR is under development and being regularly updated through the designed co-creation approach.

#### Further steps and actions were announced during the workshop to keep up with the vision process:

- Stakeholder survey
- Stakeholder consultations
- Organization of online workshops

#### Actions how to implement the vision:

- Develop networks and connections between urban areas
- Develop sustainable solutions for transport, sustainable production of goods and management of the commons
- Strengthen links between land and sea
- Encourage cooperation and exchange information between different levels of governance, involving citizens and increasing the capacity building of administrations

### Related links

[VASAB](#)





## 9. Victims, Helpers or Partners? Children and Youth as Contributors to Resilient Baltic Sea Region

### Organiser

PA Secure

### Contact

Andriy Martynenko,  
[Andriy.martynenko@cbss.org](mailto:Andriy.martynenko@cbss.org)

### Challenges

Children and youth's vulnerability to disasters is expected to increase as the intensity and frequency of natural disasters increases. Building resilience in children and youth is important for the BSR. However, children can also play an important role as active contributors in preparing society's response to disasters and accidents. What are synergies between different stakeholders on increasing children/youth active involvement in making the BSR more resilient?

### Expected positive change

The workshop resulted in recognition of the importance of youth's role in making a difference. More space, voice, audience and influence given to young people can help to solve the problem of their vulnerability. It is important to guarantee opportunities and encourage young people to participate in decision making process meaningfully. They have to be empowered and given necessary tools in order to become an active part of the society. Children, like adults, are diverse and they can contribute in different ways, therefore, they should not be treated as victims.

### Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[ChYResilience project](#)  
[Expert Group on Children at Risk](#)  
["Youth for Safer Youth"](#)  
[Danish Youth Fire Brigades](#)

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Create platforms that invite different sectors, such as civil society, sustainable economy and education, in solving the problem
- Organize training, programmes, workshops for youth, that present the ways of active participation and its importance
- Give possibility to youth build networks and learn from each other
- Learn more about youth, what communication forms and channels are the most useful to reach them
- Strengthen the voice of children and youth, addressing issues of poverty, discriminatory cultural norms and other factors that can limit participation
- Create an enabling environment and opportunities for youth to explore and express their views and participate in developing strategic plans locally and internationally. Legislation and policies for inclusion may be needed.
- Provide educational tools, create methodology on different safety and security topics which would be interesting and engaging for young people
- Let young people feel that they are taken seriously and their cooperation and action are valued

# 10. Real-Time Economy (RTE) Community Building

## Organiser

PA Innovation

## Contact

Reet Reismaa,  
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## Challenges

RTE can be related to all EUSBSR Policy Areas or any field, primarily concerning topics of the twin digital and green transitions. It is about the synergy of digitalisation and the exchange of data of any area of life in real time. What are the benefits of RTE? Why it is important to develop it?

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[DINNOCAP](#)

## Expected positive change

RTE aim is to create a real live business environment in which administrative operations and financial transactions together with non-financially information will be created and process automatically in real time and in standardized digital form. In order to do this and to help business become more efficient, more unify approach to data standardization should be taken. Data and information should be also received faster. It is important to work jointly on the developing and connecting data sharing technologies, that information could be shared is standardized machine readable form.

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Raise awareness, encourage cross-border information exchange, organize projects, workshops and other activities to stakeholders from various sectors
- Boost structural and mind set change in companies and government toward real RTE
- Create innovations and support measures for the development of technologically advanced solutions, such as artificial intelligence, to provide smart and user-centric public services to companies
- Improve data quality through standardization and apply digital technologies to automate the operations. Map existing and develop new common data standards for efficient and automated business processes for machine to machine data exchange between business and governments in real time.
- Develop more consistent legal framework at national, international and EU levels
- Reduce the administrative burden on companies and make administrative practices more unified
- Develop digital platforms where companies can easily exchange information

# 11. Indoor Environment Quality and Health – Evidence, Best Practices, and Lessons Learned from the Covid-19 Crisis

## Organiser

PA Health/ NDPHS/PA Energy/ Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia

## Contact

Zane Vilnīte,  
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## Challenges

Building ventilation system is a key element to maintain proper indoor air quality and human health. However, there is an existing stigma around the associated costs of installation, use and maintenance of such systems. The COVID-19 crisis has made that now more than ever it is important to have these systems optimized, to mitigate health risks in indoor environments and to do so with energy efficient and cost-efficient solutions.

## Expected positive change

Participants of the workshop agreed that indoor air quality is an essential factor to promote human well-being and health. Benefits in healthy indoor environment provided by energy efficient and other modern technical solutions, ventilation systems, also systematic monitor and reporting systems of air quality are needed. Regulations and guidelines, legal requirements and monitoring, preferably at EU level, should be taken. Incorporate responsibility between civil society, business and government should be strengthen.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[Urban Insight](#)

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Encourage cross-sectoral cooperation and dialogue for finding best solutions. Share research data and experiences between countries.
- Engage various stakeholders of the society into debates, workshops and actions into achieve better health and social well-being
- Promote healthy lifestyles. Increase the awareness and understanding of the importance of good indoor and outdoor air quality among society.
- Ensure sustainable urban development, design healthy buildings
- Strengthen the competence of key stakeholders. Train, educate and empower people with information so they can make choices.
- Government needs to keep balance between regulations and motivations. Take measures and guidelines to promote health and well-being.



# 12. Distance Education - Teaching and Learning Powered by Digital Technology

## Organiser

PA Education

## Contact

Nino Simic, [nino@norden.se](mailto:nino@norden.se)

Anders Bergström,  
[anders.bergstrom@norden.se](mailto:anders.bergstrom@norden.se)

## Challenges

School children were affected by the policy responses to contain COVID-19 greatly. The crisis has exposed the many inadequacies in our school systems, such as the broadband and computers needed for online education, the failure to enable local initiative and align resources with needs. But as these inequities are amplified in this time of crisis, this also holds the possibility that we will not return to the status quo when things return to “normal”. It is the nature of our

collective and systemic responses to the disruptions that will determine how we are affected by them. What are challenges of distance education and what we learned from distance education during COVID-19.

## Expected positive change

Sharing experiences can mitigate negative effects of the pandemic. The organizational culture how school deal with the challenges should be improved. The problem of inequality of recourses and skills should be solved. It is important to ensure that teachers feel comfortable in using modern technologies. Schools and education institutions should be kept as open as possible to children and young people.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[Swedish Edtest](#)

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Encourage teachers to reflect on the pandemic experiences, provide them opportunities to grow professionally, learn new ways of teaching and assessing students' progress
- Encourage new partnerships between professionals, that can result in new innovative ideas
- Improve digital competence and literacy of a whole society
- Ensure national investment in the quality of distance education. Ensure that students and teachers are provided with the necessary learning tools.
- Ensure the availability of support and guidance services
- Create the best preconditions through legislation and administration for municipalities, teachers and schools
- Share ideas and solutions with partners locally and internationally
- A possible thematic platform on distance education within the existing flagship „School to Work“ (S2W)
- A platform for sharing good practice and co-create solutions jointly with stakeholders from the Baltic Sea Region

# 13. The Importance of Collaboration Between Regional Clusters in the Baltic Sea Region and the Impact of BSR Cluster Manager Education

## Organiser

PA Education, PA Innovation

## Contact

Katarina Hansell,  
[katarina.hansell@netport.se](mailto:katarina.hansell@netport.se)

## Challenges

The workshop discussed the importance of collaboration and education for Cluster Managers, both on an EUSBSR level and for single Cluster Managers and companies, and how the Erasmus+ project 'BSR Cluster Manager Education' is contributing to this. What are different perspectives of cluster collaboration.

## Expected positive change

Clusters are constantly working to increase collaboration on national and international levels, however long-term funding is needed to support the clusters. Personality traits, important skills and strengths of educational organisations that foster collaboration and needs for clusters and SME's should be strengthened and developed. Improvement of collaboration skills can be learned individually with the help of right tools.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[Kaunas University of Technology](#)  
[Swedish Institute](#)

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Guarantee the long-term funding for clusters
- Encourage collaboration of Cluster Managers and EU policy coordinators, show what are the benefits of partnerships
- Develop cross-border cooperation, with the help of clusters and projects
- Raise awareness of the issue and its importance among the society
- Encourage education and experience sharing for Cluster Managers
- Keep open mind for new and fresh ideas for partnerships, try to see the potential in new leaders

# 14. CULTURE 4CLIMATE “How the Cultural Sector Can Help to Tackle Climate Crisis”

## Organiser

PA Culture Partners  
ARS BALTICA, Growing Pathways,  
UBC Cultural Cities Commission,  
Kaunas Artists' House, Ecologic Institute

## Contact

Marcus Hagemann  
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Zara Zerbe  
[zara.zerbe@arsbaltica.net](mailto:zara.zerbe@arsbaltica.net)

## Challenges

The Project CULTURE4CLIMATE works on establishing a collaborative and cross-sectional platform/forum for the Baltic Sea Region to address the challenges of climate change by means of culture. What strong role culture can take in tackling the climate crisis.

## Expected positive change

The panellists agreed on the growing need of international cooperation. The artist has a big potential role as a citizen. Art can get in touch with people who have no contact with the topic of climate change and develop an understanding of the situation. The individual and collective responsibility was carved out as a cue point as well as holding governments accountable for implementing change.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[CULTURE4CLIMATE](#)

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Encourage cross-sectorial and cross-regional cooperation
- Make decision makers accountable for the implementation of changes
- Take individual responsibility in coping with the climate change
- Educate people and help them adapt and understand that climate change is not an abstract concept but happening locally
- Tackle the subject internationally and enhance the visibility of climate change
- Use culture and art to make a difference and influence the population



# 15. Connect the Baltic Sea Region with the Arctic Region – Ways Forward to Unlock the Potential for Sustainable Development and to Realise the Ambitions of the EU Green Deal

## Organiser

CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

## Contact

Lucille Ehrhart,  
[lucille.ehrhart@crpm.org](mailto:lucille.ehrhart@crpm.org)

## Challenges

How the Baltic Sea interlinks with the European Arctic. How the two macro-regional territories can connect, complement and strengthen each other to unlock potential for sustainable development in these territories and contribute to achieve the European Green Deal.

## Expected positive change

The new EUSBSR Action Plan should consider the Arctic dimension, because the development of the Arctic in a sustainable way benefits the Baltic Sea Region and the EU, and vice versa. The BSR should strengthen cooperation with the neighbouring Arctic Region, because the connection of the two macro-regional areas can help to reach sustainable development and guarantee security and political stability. For these purposes more attention should be given to investment in infrastructure and transport sectors.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[Baltic Sea Commission](#)  
[ENERGY VAASA](#)  
[Metsäkeskus](#)  
[Green Flyway](#)  
[Kvarken Council](#)

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Strengthen interregional and multilevel cooperation of countries, levels of government and individuals. Raise awareness of cross-border cooperation advantages.
- Encourage frequent exchange and sharing information between BSR and neighbouring countries
- Develop sustainable and cost-effective transport infrastructure to connect the Arctic with the Baltic and achieve the green transition in both areas
- EU should take a good knowledge of sustainable use of renewable natural resources as a starting point. For example, knowledge in climate smart boreal forestry could be EU's flagship in the discussion with other Arctic countries.
- Examine financial options, best business models, accelerate innovations
- Discuss and assess existing technological and other challenges in political environment locally and internationally
- Stimulate sustainable economic development, organize programmes and funds on EU level. Set up tough standards of sustainability.

# 16. Baltic Sea Region Climate Change Curriculum

## Organiser

Kaunas University of Technology (with a group of other universities)

## Contact

Linas Kliučininkas,  
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## Challenges

Climate change is a complex, transdisciplinary topic connected to several different areas. With an increasing threat from climate change, there is a growing need for educating students and civil society on the risks and solutions of climate change. Participants of the event tried to disseminate outcomes of the Swedish Institute financed project Baltic Sea Region Climate Change Curriculum to the academicians, decision makers and broad public.

## Expected positive change

Climate change is a serious threat today and for future generations, therefore it is important, that different actors, both government authorities and citizens, take action. These groups should seek a consensus, sheer holistic view to the word and offer more practical solutions. The researchers should find a way how to transform economy form market to green economy. Long-term environmental policies should become a worldview.

## Related links

**Workshop video**  
**[The Baltic University Programme Defining Environmental Citizenship](#)**

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Establish national inter-disciplinary expert groups to develop strategies and action plans towards transformation from market to green economies
- Start comparative studies on public perceptions, attitudes, practices. Develop research on how to transform the economy and fulfil European Green Deal.
- Encourage cross-sectorial and cross-regional cooperation and exchange of knowledge. Encourage regionally based climate change education, because countries can share different experiences.
- Find a way how to communicate with citizens and encourage their contribution and action
- Access young people with adequate solutions with their lifestyles

# 17. Empowering Youth for Green Entrepreneurship

## Organiser

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), Nordregio

## Contact

Olga Zuin  
[Olga.Zuin@cbss.org](mailto:Olga.Zuin@cbss.org)

## Challenges

The transition towards sustainable economies, in line with the European Green Deal, requires a shift in the business models and in the way we produce and consume goods and services. Young people have clearly showed commitment and competence to support the green transition. Policy-makers have increasingly realised the central role the youth can play to shape the future of Europe and of the BSR. However, young entrepreneurs who hold sustainability as a core principle have faced many challenges along the way.

## Expected positive change

There is no single ingredient that can guarantee the success of the young entrepreneurs' business. However recommendations from the experience of successful entrepreneurs and experts include the importance of more perseverance and passion, the capacity of having a broad understanding of sustainability when developing the models, identification and minimization of financial risks, as well as the use of opportunities provided by local communities and resources.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[BeUBio](#)

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Participate in as many pitching events as possible – this increases the chance to further develop the idea, find good partners and support
- When approaching a financial institution, ensure to showcase how the risk for the investors is minimized
- Do not underestimate the importance of the local market and community – it helps to increase the sense of ownership, participation and strengthen the local economy
- Start creating a sustainable entrepreneurial mind from school age – help students develop projects and business models which account for spillover and cascading effects of their business project
- Foster cooperation among schools and research institutions to promote innovation and sustainable entrepreneurial initiatives
- Encourage cross-sectorial and cross-regional cooperation
- Link opportunities and interests together across industrial sectors, both from public and private sectors
- Encourage young entrepreneurs starting their businesses to learn from the existing examples. Increase the exchange of good experiences between successful entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs.
- Persistence in searching partnership is important, take time to find the right team for implementing the idea



# 18. Enhancing Stakeholder and Citizen Engagement Within the EUSBSR Green Transition

## Organiser

Swedish Insititute,  
Umbrella 2.0, Nordregio

## Contact

Gabor Schneider,  
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## Expected positive change

Public sectors should involve actors such CSOs, enterprises and academia to EUSBSR and lead comprehensive processes towards green transition. This involvement needs, however to be very clear, by defining clear roles to the respective stakeholders.

Long-lasting formats that are strategic and inclusive should be developed. It is also important to take into consideration that

stakeholders have different capacities regarding resources and knowledge. These processes have to show concrete opportunities for being part of the implementation process and they need to provide clear results.

## Challenges

How EUSBSR and different pan-Baltic networks can contribute and boost green transition. What are the benefits, challenges and future steps of stakeholders involvement and engagement.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[BSR Youth for SDGs & Circular Bioeconomy](#)  
[Umbrella 2.0 programme](#)  
[Union of the Baltic Cities](#)

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Promote capacity building programmes for different type of stakeholders (policy coordinators, implementers, newcomers). Such programmes would help the alignment of policies and processes. This might be the next stage for developing further EUSBSR activities and bringing the strategy closer to local stakeholders in the respective countries.
- Clearly define key terms of EU Green Deal and other relevant frameworks. Stakeholders need to understand what is their role in such cooperation/framework and what is the role of others in such cooperation/framework.
- Encourage communication with even more clear reach out (activation, engaging type – value based communication)
- Involve new groups, especially youth, and have intergenerational dialogues in every case
- Encourage individual changes, such as attitude change and stronger ownership
- Involve newcomers by “a step-by-step approach”. Start to involve them in smaller collaborations.
- Improve skills and knowledge as there is a constantly learning environment
- Improve motivation, enable the spread of new perspectives and access to innovations
- Establish stronger links between research and policymakers to ensure that stakeholder challenges are identified and scientific inputs are considered

# 19. Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage: an Essential Technology for Achieving Carbon Neutrality

## Organiser

BASRECCS

## Contact

Monika Ivandic,  
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## Challenges

The deployment of full-scale carbon (utilisation) capture and storage (CC(U)S) on a global scale is key to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement and mitigating climate change. In the power sector, CC(U)S is key for fossil fuel-based generation, for delivering the deep emission reductions needed for fossil fuel-based power and many industrial applications, while this technology offers opportunities for “negative emissions”. Although much potential exists in the BSR for CC(U)S, the region is still lagging behind in deploying a large-scale CC(U)S due to the national policy and regulatory frameworks.

## Expected positive change

The workshop resulted in the agreement that policy and regulatory changes for industrial-scale projects are required in the BSR. The BSR should take more homogeneous approach when it comes to challenges of deployment of technologies such as CC(U)S. A comprehensive long-term BSR campaign for social outreach should include effective and transparent communication with the public regarding cost, economic benefit and advantages.

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Improve national policy and regulatory frameworks, which create unfavourable conditions for the technology integration
- Baltic States have to update their CC(U)S regulations and to permit CO2 storage in industrial scale. Latvia and Lithuania should join London Protocol.
- Strengthen the networking between stakeholders from various sectors in the BSR countries locally and internationally. Combine challenges, competences and possibilities in different countries that could lead towards establishing complete CC(U)S value chains in the region and solving problems of costly infrastructure and lack of suitable storage sites.
- Support studies, innovations and new technologies that help to develop renewable energy and recycle more CO2 emissions
- Increase awareness and acceptability of the issue in most of the countries of the region
- Redesign approach and communication ways and provide more homogenous information to reach different stakeholders

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[CLEANKER](#)

## 20. Green Transition in Maritime Industries, Clean Shipping, Involving Maritime Businesses and Representatives from The Neighbouring Countries Norway, Iceland and Russia: Linking Baltic and Arctic Perspectives

### Organiser

CBSS (PA Ship, EU DG Mare, VASAB/ PA Spatial Planning)

### Contact

Olga Zuin, [Olga.Zuin@cbss.org](mailto:Olga.Zuin@cbss.org)

### Challenges

Several institutions and organisations in the BSR are currently adopting strategic papers on the blue economy, green transition of the maritime sector, and, generally, are focusing on clean shipping, alternative fuel, as well as action plans to make the BSR a model region for sustainable maritime economy, at both regional and national levels. How to implement these strategies in practice, as well as to identify common challenges and opportunities. What are good practices of the neighbouring countries that can provide a broader perspective, given that the sustainable development of the maritime sector is a common concern and of high relevance for both the Baltic and the Arctic regions.

### Expected positive change

Policy developers and international organisations (such as IMO) should take more proactive role in promoting alternative fuels. Subsidies are needed for transitional period before alternative fuels become more competitive. Otherwise piloting of new alternative will not be at the scale needed. The business needs to show example that CO2 reductions are the part of their corporative strategies, therefore governments should be more active. It is important to find and develop common regulatory framework which would establish a long-term vision in the area.

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Encourage cooperation at the sea basin level. Including neighbouring countries will help to achieve the objectives of the Sustainable Blue economy's vision.
- Encourage the cross sectorial cooperation among private sector, government and academia which is crucial for implementation of the strategies towards greener and sustainable maritime industry in BSR – CBSS
- Bridge the gap between the fossil fuels and greener alternatives that are currently more expensive
- Reduce the CO2 price for the end user/buyer and make it more attractive product by distribution of the CO2 costs along all the chains of the logistics
- Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy can serve as a common platform
- Create strong link between climate policy, EU Green Deal, EU's new approach for Sustainable Blue Economy and EU's Arctic engagement
- EU Commission plans to set up the "Blue Forum for Users of the Sea" to promote and help to reconcile different competing parties
- Net zero emissions by Maersk by 2050

### Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[Green shipping programme](#)  
[Northern Dimension](#)



# 21. Hazardous Objects in the Baltic Sea – Management Options

## Organiser

Institute of Oceanology Polish Academy of Sciences

## Contact

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## Challenges

Dumped chemical and conventional munitions are a problem for the environment and industry. This creates an environmental pressure by leaking military material, and hinders offshore development. Future trends are unknown, since some of the material is still contained in corroding containers. How Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and Discarded Military Material (DMM) affect the environment and economy and what potential actions in case of DMM and UXO related accidents could be taken.

## Expected positive change

Such problems as lack of monitoring data, lack of integration between Baltic and other marine areas, as well as some legal problems that are obstacles preventing management actions in munition contaminated areas should be solved. It seems that both knowledge and technology exist to take action, and begin remediation of munition dumpsites. However, the argument stating that munitions are better left to deteriorate in the sea, than being recovered and destroyed, is still alive. In order to solve these problems, political will must be shown and decisions must be taken professionally and environmentally friendly. Monitoring, leading to better forecasts, is the best way to settle this argument.

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Encourage monitoring that can help to solve the problem of dumped chemical and conventional munitions in the Baltic Sea
- Improve forecasting and show the future environment damage resulting from no action
- Organize technology demonstration pilot projects
- Develop better cooperation with other seas and cross-border partners
- Remember, that seas must be cleared of munitions not only for economic reasons, but also for environmental reasons
- Do more research to get better knowledge what priority proposals should be funded first Economy and EU's Arctic engagement
- Asses various risks for different areas such as shipping, flora/fauna, diving. Determine specific measures and actions based on expert knowledge.
- The action should be taken immediately, because the scale of the problem and possible damage is too great

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[Daimon Project](#)  
[International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions](#)

# 22. Sustainable Development, UN SDGs, Biodiversity, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves

## Organiser

Biosphere for Baltic Network

## Contact

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Olaf Ostermann,  
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## Challenges

The Biosphere for Baltic Network comprises 9 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, that are located on the Baltic Sea coast. They are dedicated to function as model regions for sustainable development and implementers of the UN SDGs. Due to rapid developments, nutrient inputs, overexploitation and climate change, cultural assets and cultural features are in danger of being lost. While implementing the SDGs, the biosphere reserves co-create sustainable solutions in a highly collaborative manner and are thus massively dependent on the support of partners and players in the region, but also on political decisions.

## Expected positive change

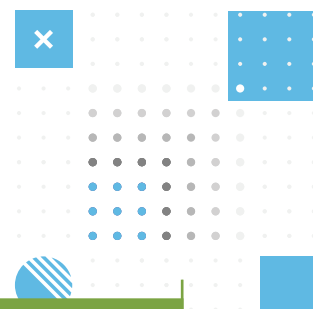
The efforts of the biosphere reserves should be praised and supported. The establishment of a scientific exchange from the biosphere reserves and even closer cooperation in projects is on its way. It is also important to seek more active involvement of local communities, authorities, business and young people.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[Blekinge Arkipelag](#)  
[www.biosfar.fi](http://www.biosfar.fi)

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Encourage further networking of the biosphere reserves with one another in current project work. Establish a scientific exchange among the biosphere reserves.
- Applicate working solution approaches from other areas
- Establish new partnerships with more organisations relevant for the well-being of the Baltic Sea
- Introduce children to sustainable values during the educational process
- Develop and strengthen political awareness within the network



# 23. Co-created NEW R&I Agenda for the Baltic Sea and the North Sea Enhances Sustainable Blue/Green Growth in the Baltic Sea Region

## Organiser

BONUS EEIG

## Contact

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Maija Sirola,  
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## Challenges

Baltic and North Sea Coordination and Support Action (BANOS CSA) represents the leading research and innovation funders of 12 EU member states and associated states surrounding the Baltic Sea and the North Sea. Together, they have developed preconditions for BANOS. The new Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda – the BANOS SRIA highlights current knowledge gaps and presents R&I objectives and themes with concrete descriptions and outcomes for overcoming the challenges facing the neighbouring regions of the Baltic Sea and North Sea, and enables the green transition of the blue economy.

## Expected positive change

Climate change must be taken into account when developing new management governance practices. For reaching sustainable blue economy and human well-being regional collaboration is of key importance. A collective R&I capacity of the Northern European region needs to be elevated to the next level through a scientifically, administratively, and financially firmly integrated R&I programme. In order to take right measures, it is necessary to know your ecosystem. Ecosystem services are a key for the prosperity of the region and wellbeing of its people. Policy tools, that do not work will be identified, conflicting concepts of EU policies will be highlighted and new strategies will be suggested.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[BANOS SRIA](#)  
[HELCOM](#)





## Suggestions and recommendations

**The BANOS is complete, at the same time there are similar initiatives going on. It is important to take further steps**

- Encourage awareness, skills and knowledge of the society
- Develop research and make sure that policies and decision making are based on scientific information and knowledge, that can be translated to regional scale
- Development of efficient spatial plans and practices at sea, with increasing numbers of interested stakeholders and users, is a regional challenge rather than national endeavour
- Encourage development of sustainable industry and economy
- Support best innovations, involve small and medium enterprises
- Monitor the health status of the ecosystem, handle big data from various monitoring programmes, use new techniques such as artificial intelligence
- Move towards ecosystem-based management, but keep in mind that ecosystems are different in different European sea areas. Hence a regional approach needs to be developed to find the local solutions that are suitable for local circumstances.
- Encourage cross-sectoral local and cross-border cooperation and partnerships for solving common problems
- Use living and especially not renewable non living sea resources carefully and in most efficient way
- Find innovative ideas and management tools for extracting new resources



# 24. New European Bauhaus Initiative in Development – How Can It Be Linked to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

## Organiser

Ministry of Culture of the  
Republic of Lithuania

## Contact

Milda Vakarinaite,  
[milda.vakarinaite@lrkm.lt](mailto:milda.vakarinaite@lrkm.lt)

## Challenges

New European Bauhaus initiative, launched by the European Commission, is an environmental, economic and cultural project, aiming to combine design, sustainability, accessibility, affordability and investment in order to help deliver the European Green Deal. How the values promoted by the New European Bauhaus could contribute to achieving the goals of the EUSBSR.

## Expected positive change

Participants of the panel discussion expressed a unified approach to the holistic renovation process and agreed on the need to improve the existing regulative frameworks. More efficient ways to revitalise modernist housing estates by involving communities should be found. The built environment should not only be functional and meet the standards of energy efficiency, but it also must take into account cultural, social and beauty aspects that create the sense of place and contribute to the well-being of the society.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[Paradima Ariadne](#)

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Continue the discussions and knowledge exchange on the housing renovation with international partners, making built environment more innovative, sustainable and inclusive
- Search for possibilities to cooperate and develop new initiatives
- Organize meetings and workshops with different stakeholders (architects, designers, historians, geographers, city planners, activists, politicians, communities' representatives, lawyers, etc.)
- Involve local committees in decision-making and assessment of new projects
- Before starting the renovation, do holistic research, listen to the opinions of different stakeholders
- While thinking about renovation process, social, environmental and architectural aspects should be taken into consideration

# 25. Green Advanced Materials Technologies in the Hydrogen Future

## Organiser

JMS Center for Research Utilisation | ALMINICA AB (Sweden),  
Aalto University (Finland)

## Contact

Mikael Syväjärvi,  
[mikael@alminica.se](mailto:mikael@alminica.se)

## Challenges

Novel advanced materials research and innovation avenues explore hydrogen as an emerging technologies concept. These technologies will create products and services, that will be adopted by stakeholders. However, the research and innovation domain are facing a challenge – the routes from the emerging technologies to stakeholders and market uptake are not known.

## Expected positive change

More focus must be given on research and its promotion. Action should start from innovations that are based on research point of view. More various stakeholders from different areas should be included.

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Organize proposed workshops, partnerships, as well as BSR and EU projects
- Gather Baltic Sea consortium around the topic
- Encourage cross-sectorial and cross-regional cooperation and collaboration. Encourage exchange between technology and regional actors that results in a knowledge community and mutual synergies.
- Involve active individuals and organizations related to green advanced materials in the hydrogen future
- Figure out what is the strategic actions needed from the government side
- Learn to overcome barriers present in the research utilization, innovation communities and partially societal change



# 26. Wetlands Creating Landowner Benefits

## Organiser

County Administrative Board of Stockholm

## Contact

Håkan Häggström,  
[hakan.haggstrom@lansstyrelsen.se](mailto:hakan.haggstrom@lansstyrelsen.se)

## Challenges

Wetlands are multifunctional biotopes, that are rich in biological diversity, reduce risk of flooding, minimize nutrient run-off and erosion from farmland and urban areas. All these functions are highly wanted both to mitigate the effects of climate change and to reduce concentrations of greenhouse gasses. However, many European wetlands have been exploited and drained for various purposes. What are the benefits of wetlands and the challenges associated with creating more and efficient wetlands.

## Expected positive change

Constructing or restoring wetlands will be an important, perhaps even necessary, part of the EU Green recovery. A possible goal is that the network formed during the workshop, with participants interested in continuing cooperation to find ways to increase wetland construction and restoration, develops a project for a joint application to one of the macro-regional strategy funds.

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Initialise a long-term project aiming to increase the speed of creation and restoration of wetlands in Europe

- Develop different activities that can give landowners incentive, e. g. economic profit, to create wetlands. Introduce them with such advantages as tourism and agritourism, drought and flooding of farmland avoidance.
- Develop cross-border cooperation and networking between different stakeholders – farmer organisations and landowners interested in constructing or restoring wetlands, NGOs and officials at local, regional, or national authorities working with wetlands, tourism, or rural development



# 27. Baltic Forum for Sonic Environments

## Organiser

Baltic Forum for Acoustic Ecology

## Contact

Jacek Smolicki,  
[jacek.smolicki@liu.se](mailto:jacek.smolicki@liu.se)

## Challenges

Studies demonstrate the increase in sound pollution effects on our well-being. Underwater noise has been proven to cause devastating effects on multiple ecosystems and marine species. Simultaneously, conscious use of sound and its various expressions have been crucial to local identities, regional cultural conducts, and practices in the coastal areas of the Baltic Sea. What are intended and unintended sonic realms. How they impact lives of human and other-than-human species.

## Expected positive change

More holistic approach to the acoustic environment, its effect on the quality of life should be adopted. It is important to draw more attention to imbalances which may have unhealthy or inimical effects. Interdisciplinary network of professionals interested in the history, present condition, and future of acoustic environments and sonic heritage in the Baltic Sea Region should collaborate more in order to provide fresh ideas and raise awareness of the sonic environment and how sound pollution affects our well-being.

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Encourage multi-sectoral and cross-border cooperation, research, projects. Develop common perception of environment. Connect artists, scientists, researchers, activists and general public to share similar interests.
- Organize various workshops, trainings and improve awareness of the diverse environments that constitute the richness of the BSR
- Collect various data related to human perception, acoustic environment and context
- Share best experiences concerned with the understanding of the BSR (social, cultural and environmental changes) through a variety of sound practices
- Revitalize vocabulary and ways of attending to regional soundscapes by taking interdisciplinary perspective, with strong focus on arts
- Inform society about the issue, educate about the sonic thinking and sensibility from the young age

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)

# 28. Engaged Society – Examples of Active Collaboration Between Project Partners and Local Society for Green Recovery and More Sustainable Regions

## Organiser

Interreg South Baltic  
Programme 2014-2020

## Contact

Katarzyna Sempołowicz-Lipska,  
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## Challenges

How the cross-border cooperation projects can effectively involve local society, youth, and local authorities in activities for green recovery on different levels. What option for close partnership is suitable for an organisation, a project, or a cluster.

## Expected positive change

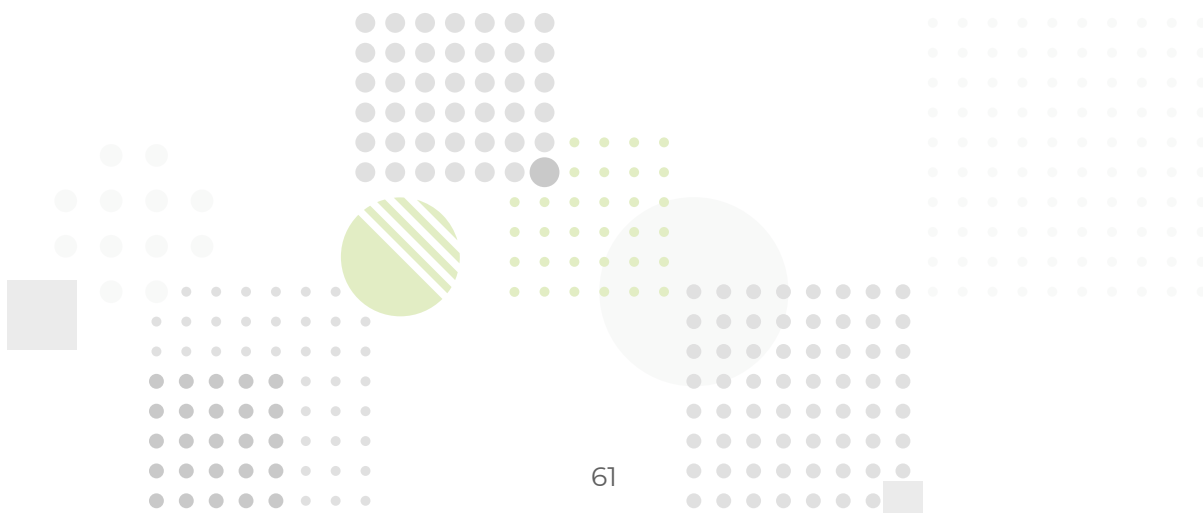
Options for local and cross-border training and networking, that aim greener future and establishing partnerships, should be developed. By boosting capacities in small regions more actively, communities can be activated. Each organization, a project, or a cluster needs to find a suitable option for close partnership, how to engage local society to pursue green recovery and more sustainable regions.

### Suggestions and recommendations

- Organize more inclusive trainings, initiatives, projects, programmes
- Improve skills, labour and education services for different target groups
- Encourage citizen engagement and develop upgraded tools for citizen engagement. Develop dialogue with local communities, give them tools to participate in decision-making process.
- Invest in civil education and awareness raising
- Connect and involve institutions to establish future partnerships
- Ensure that provision of services is in accordance with citizen expressed needs
- Initiate cross-border networking activities that involve various stakeholders

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[CONNECT 2 SMALL PORTS](#)  
[BOFA](#)





# What is more?

An exceptional focus on cities  
Interreg Baltic Sea Region presentation  
Experiences of the Networking Villages





# Cities Leading Positive Social Transformations

## Organiser

Union of the Baltic Cities

## Contact

Marko Paunovic,  
[marko.paunovic@ubc.net](mailto:marko.paunovic@ubc.net)

## Challenges

The workshop was dedicated to discuss cities' strategic projects in promoting positive social movements in terms of social inclusion, participatory models in communities and decision making, citizenship initiatives, debating the role of new technologies in promoting social cohesion and reflecting on impacts of COVID-19 crisis on social movements

## Expected positive change

The workshop resulted in the agreement that more support of local inclusiveness and integration of the people of all age should be guaranteed. More responsibility on integration by different stakeholders should be taken locally, nationally and regionally. EU Commission programmes that promote inclusiveness of citizens should be developed actively. The BSR performance in citizen-citizen and citizen-city authorities cooperation needs to be advanced. It is also important to make better use of new technologies and to improve democratic decision making, transparency and communication.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)  
[Union of the Baltic Cities](#)  
[URB Cultural Planning](#)  
[Ghetto games](#)  
[Kaunas2022](#)



## Suggestions and recommendations

- Encourage more discussions and experiences sharing about people involvement on the local level
- Encourage local and cross-border cooperation, networking and common policies
- Involve citizens of all age in local decision-making process, such as budget formation
- Make people feel welcome and that their opinion and solutions are valued
- Strengthen frameworks that address the integration of beneficiaries of international protection and other third-country nationals. Organize inclusive education and training, improve employment and skills recognition, promote access to health services, adequate and affordable housing.
- Find and develop communication forms and channels to spread information and reach people more efficiently. Increase awareness and knowledge of the importance of social inclusiveness.
- Create places, participatory mechanisms and conditions of safe encounters
- Develop ICT tools to support participation of citizens. Digitalise EU's and its member states decision-making process and guarantee equal access to digital infrastructure.
- Develop skills of local leaders and civil servants
- Promote social and cultural programmes in rural areas, encourage youth exchanges and European volunteering





# Cities as Leaders in Green Recovery

## Organiser

Union of the Baltic Cities

## Contact

Marko Paunovic,  
[marko.paunovic@ubc.net](mailto:marko.paunovic@ubc.net)

## Challenges

The workshop discussed cities' strategic projects in advancing green projects and initiatives in terms of transport, food, ecology, smart cities and discovering the role of European and cross-border cooperation in this matter.

## Expected positive change

Cities must play a crucial role in helping EU reach targets of European Green Deal. More sustainable infrastructure in cities should be developed in order to have sustainable transport, food supply, to achieve climate neutrality, affordable energy. More cooperation and an open approach are needed on how the city can adapt to changing climate conditions, find sustainable solutions and move towards green recovery. It is important to give more attention on placing concepts of sustainability and resilience in the focus of urban development. Sustainable and balanced development need to be seen a default criteria in all the decision making and societal and individual acting.

## Related links

[Workshop video](#)

[ENERGY VAASA](#)

[C40 Cities](#)

[LIFE SURE](#)

[Green Lahti](#)

[carbonneutralfinland.fi](http://carbonneutralfinland.fi)

## Suggestions and recommendations

- Cities need integrated planning and development in order to make changes that improve citizens' lives. Long-term urban planning increase resilience of the cities and develop infrastructure for urban mobility, green infrastructure, smart grids, circular zero-waste economic infrastructure, integrated water management, urban agriculture.
- Develop circular and sharing economy to help solve sustainability challenges
- Look for innovative and sustainable ways to transform old industrial territories in cities
- Fund and use innovative and digital solutions, create digital development plans
- Change approach to adapt city to changing conditions, for example, organise smart and better transport and travel system, increase resiliency to supply disruptions, reduce the energy demand, reduce the amount of waste
- Promote European initiatives and projects that are useful tools to overcome local challenges
- Encourage cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation, support and share knowledge and experience
- Involve citizens and different stakeholders in decision-making process. Asses current and future outcomes of the decision and monitor its implementation.

# Interreg Baltic Sea Region 2021-2027 Kick-off event!

## Organiser

Interreg Baltic Sea Region

## Contact

info@interreg-baltic.eu

## What was the Interreg Baltic Sea Region kick-off about?

Interreg Baltic Sea Region 2021-2027 creates an environment for public authorities, NGOs, companies, academia and others to work together across borders. With some 250 million euros of EU funding, partners from countries around the Baltic Sea bring solutions to tackle existing and rising challenges, and to grasp opportunities for growth. The Programme is funded by the European Union and approved by the European Commission.

More than 500 participants from the whole region and beyond attended the Kick-off event to discover the thematic objectives for funding. In short presentations, the Programme experts explained the thematic foundations of the new Programme that shape innovative, water-smart and climate neutral societies across the region. The new Programme will create a good environment for cooperation to respond to demands from citizens and businesses in the region. It will also help public authorities in their mission to serve citizens and trigger knowledge exchange.

### **Among other things, the participants learned that within the scope of new objectives the Programme:**

- supports building fair, innovative and resilient economies and communities across the Baltic Sea region in the Programme objective Resilient economies and communities
- experiments with new ways of delivering public services using innovative, data-driven and participatory methods to improve the lives of citizens in the Programme objective Responsive public services
- helps implement water-smart solutions to improve the quality of water and make its management more sustainable in the Programme objective Sustainable waters
- supports blue economy that enables innovative businesses to use fresh and sea water and marine resources more efficiently while supporting a healthy marine environment in the Programme objective Blue economy
- supports making the shift from linear to circular use of resources and keeping materials in use in the Programme objective Circular economy
- supports the energy transition and help develop solutions to move towards the decarbonisation of energy systems in the Programme objective Energy transition
- supports green and smart mobility solutions that make movement of people and goods smooth, save resources and reduce pollution in the Programme objective Smart green mobility

### **Question discussed**

The Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme Kick-off event answered these questions:

- under which topics the funding could be received
- when the calls for applications were planned
- how to find partners

# Priorities of the Programme

## The priorities of the Programme were presented:

**Priority 1:** Innovative societies – the Programme supports actions that improve responsive public services and strengthen resilient communities and economies, because they prepare the BSR for upcoming changes and challenges.

**Priority 2:** Water-smart societies – the Programme supports actions that improve sustainable water management, because it helps enrich the environmental state of the Baltic Sea and inland waters. It also supports actions on sustainable use of fresh and sea waters as well as marine resources in innovative business development, because blue economy remains an inexhaustible spearhead for innovative business and sustainable growth.

**Priority 3:** Climate-neutral societies – the Programme supports circular approaches, a transition to low-carbon energy systems and smart green mobility.

**Priority 4:** Cooperation governance – the Programme supports the cooperation of EU-funded projects in project platforms, because these actions bring the results of various projects to stakeholders in the BSR in a structured way. It also supports actions that implement and strengthen governance and communication activities in the EUSBSR.

## Quotes

“ *EUSBSR has a long and illustrious history, building on a long tradition of cooperation [...] It was the first macro-regional strategy, that is an example for others to follow. Sometimes, the right level to common problems is in fact the macro-regional one. This is clearly the case, there is a common geographical feature uniting a group of countries.*

**Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms**

“ *I am confident, that the Programme will reach its main aim and will create an environment for public and private partners to work together across the borders on their smart ideas.*

**Arnoldas Abramavičius, Vice Minister of the Interior of Lithuania**

**More Interreg Baltic Sea Region 2021-2027  
Machmaking Platform**



# The Networking Villages

## What are the Networking villages about?

Despite the virtual type of the Annual Forum 2021, the organizers wanted to ensure as many networking possibilities as possible. The aim of the Networking Villages was to provide an opportunity for the stakeholders to have a space to network and discuss the opportunities for collaboration

## Participants

54 representatives of city municipalities, CSOs, EUSBSR, stakeholders, policymakers

### **NETWORKING VILLAGE I: Meet the stakeholders**

Key features of EUSBSR were discussed. The stakeholders were invited to think how particular organization can contribute to EUSBSR goals.

### **NETWORKING VILLAGE II: Meet the colleagues**

The reasons of macro-regional cooperation were explored.

### **NETWORKING VILLAGE III: Foster green innovations**

Special attention was paid to the need of green innovations.

## Networking topics

1. Funding possibilities and requirements
2. Partnerships and collaboration
3. Implementation of the revised EUSBSR Action Plan

## Results

- Shared experience on how different organizations, ongoing projects and initiatives contribute to the objectives of the EUSBSR.
- Main objectives, aims and challenges of the EUSBSR, the revised Action Plan 2021 and networking opportunities were presented.
- Trends within macro-regional cooperation, the EUSBSR importance for participating countries and regions, engagement of future stakeholders' and macro-regional cooperation were discussed.
- A platform for the researchers and entrepreneurs to present their green innovations was provided.
- The profile of the urban citizen in terms of use of resources, production of wealth and smart growth plans was presented.
- Options for investment in energy-efficient retrofits, waste and water management systems were discussed.
- The potential of new jobs in nature-based solutions and services, and increasing nature-based solutions in urban planning were considered.
- The participants of events were invited to share ideas and experiences in small work groups or one-to-one meetings.
- The stakeholders were given an opportunity to find new partners in the BSR.





**For your  
inspiration**



# Keynote Speech of Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms

**For the Plenary Session “EU Agenda-Setters vs. Implementers: Which Role for EU Macro-regional Strategies?” of the 12th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR**

“ Dear Ministers, ladies and gentlemen.

12 years already!

My congratulations to all of you, who have worked so hard over the years, to make such a success of the Baltic Strategy.

As the first ever macro-regional strategy, you have been an inspiration and example to the three that followed, and a pattern for all kinds of regional cooperation.

12 years on, the world looks very different.

And we face a new set of challenges. There are many, but let me mention just three.

**First**, the pandemic was an X-ray. It has exposed some of the fractures in our societies, impacting more the low-wage jobs, young and women; as well as some vulnerabilities in our economies, with some sectors affected more than others. From tourism to digital schooling, from healthcare to hospitality, Europe must “level up”, filling the gaps and build more resilience.

**Second**, the pandemic was an accelerator of existing trends, notably digitisation and teleworking. These are now happening very quickly, with broad implications, across our economy and society.

**Third**, the fires and floods of the summer, are a sad reminder, that we cannot forget the other existential threat to our lives and societies: dramatic climate change. This is no longer something for someday in the future, it is already happening right now, and we suffer the consequences.

These are the challenges: to build a **resilient economy** and **society**, while leaving no person behind, to navigate the **digital revolution**, and to transition to a **green economy**, while dealing with the fallout from climate change.

As President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said the other day, in her State of the European Union speech, whatever solutions we find, we know that the answer is not less cooperation.

So Europe is calling you, to be an example. An example of fresh thinking, and an example of working together, because no country, no region, can tackle these challenges alone.

Macro-regional strategies are a vivid expression of the cooperation that we need at different levels: between countries, between regions and across regions. No specific format is better than the other, all are needed.

The principle upon which we have built European integration is subsidiarity. This means that decisions should be taken at the level where they are most effective. And this means that the right level may sometimes be the macro-regional one; whenever there are particular challenges common to a subset of countries or regions.

In a Union of 27, we need to combine the common approaches that are necessary to preserve our internal market, common currency and strategic interests, with the flexibility that allows for tailored responses to the diversity of our 242 regions (NUTS 2).

So macro-regional strategies can be new ways of organising our work, of thinking the territory and of finding solutions for some of the problems we are facing. They are frameworks to better implement our common strategies, but also spaces where new solutions can be devised. From





trend takers to trendsetters. And you know this already, and you are already leading, because the theme of your Forum is the **green recovery**. You could not have picked a more appropriate topic.

As you move forward with your work, may I suggest five ways where Baltic Sea countries, but also other participants of macro-regional strategies, can show leadership, and inspire the rest of Europe, and perhaps even beyond.

**First**, is tackling water pollution. As you know, the Baltic Sea remains, unfortunately, one of the most polluted seas in the world. Your efforts in tackling sea pollution, and the techniques you develop, can be an example to the world.

**Second**, there is the question of green design and innovation. Baltic countries are well known for their design capabilities. Design can take ways of production and consumption, and make them more sustainable, and at the same time more functional and more pleasing to the eye. This is the concept of the New European Bauhaus, where I hope to see many Baltic projects winning awards in future. Green innovation, green energy and green shipping are also key European priorities for the future, and there are projects and ideas in the Baltic, from which others could learn.

My **third** suggestion is to make sure that macro-regional strategies reinforce territorial cohesion. One of the strengths of the Baltic Strategy, is its wide reach. It is home to around 85 million people, involving 12 countries. However, your Action Plan, your development strategy needs to contribute to the reduction of internal disparities and prioritise those regions that are least advantaged.

My **fourth** suggestion is to make good use of the funding opportunities. By this I mean the alignment of the EU funding programmes with the relevant priorities from the macro-regional strategies. This also relates to ensuring the necessary synergies between national public and private investment and the different European funds. This approach makes policies more coherent, and more effective.

My **fifth** and final suggestion: I challenge you to be examples of partnership, not just across borders, but also different partners, from the national level to the very local, building capacity and working in cooperation and openness. There is something very specific, about the partnership and cooperation here: please share lessons with others.

**Cooperation** is key. Which is why I am very pleased that February's revision to the Baltic action plan includes cooperation with neighbouring countries, reinforced communication with stakeholders and a set of actions and indicators which are more relatable to partners. I would also urge you to actively seek the participation of **youth**. Young people have an important stake in the economy of the future and the environment of the future: we must make space for their voices!

In conclusion, in the last 12 years you have achieved a lot. I see every reason for the next 12 years to be even more successful.

I am looking forward to a strong **recovery** fuelled by exceptional levels of European investment. And I believe that this recovery, and this exceptional European investment, will be our springboard, into a new age, a green and digital age.

We need pioneers, those willing to serve in the vanguard, in green renovation, in tackling pollution, in green transport and green design. And we need pioneers in terms of cooperation. Collaboration across borders, bringing in all the relevant stakeholders, involving young people.

Today, more than ever, the macro-regional strategies are essential.

Today, more than ever, we need all actors and programmes to complement each other and add value to our overarching objectives.

All of the macro-regional strategies are leaders and models in one way or another, setting the pace in cooperation across borders.

And this is a key European achievement.

These last 12 years, with the Baltic Strategy, followed by the Danube, the Adriatic and Ionian and the Alpine Strategies, you have already played the role of pioneers.

In the coming years, Europe calls you again.

I have every confidence in your answer.

28 September, 2021



# Conclusions – what we learned from the Forum





# Conclusions

**12th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR was marked by many meaningful, enriching discussions and honorable guests. From the sheer scale and depth of the conversation, it became apparent that:**

- No country or no region can tackle challenges that we face alone. Joint decisions should be taken at the level where they are most effective. The BSR stakeholder community is ready to continue active **cooperation** and is set to be an example of fresh thinking and innovative solutions.
- A **cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary** approach to tackle common BSR issues is effective and should be applied in all fields of cooperation.
- Judging by the ideas of the President of the European Commission, Prime Ministers of the BSR, Secretary-General of the OECD, commissioners and other key officials expressed during the Annual Forum, the EUSBSR has **strong political support**. Macro-regional strategy's goals go hand in hand with the EU priorities. At the same time, macro-regional strategy has the power to influence the agenda setting and contributes to efforts to increase the **resilience of the EU**, especially the economic and societal one, while leaving no person behind.
- The macro-regional strategies have shifted from being a pure platform for regional cooperation to being the hub for identifying challenges a particular region faces and for looking for **common solutions**. The ongoing embedding process strengthens this change.
- The EUSBSR has all the possibilities and must contribute to the **Green Recovery** of the EU. It is important to share responsibility for tackling climate change and to take common action.
- The involvement of **local communities** (in particular, **youth**) can bring more energy, creativity and fresh ideas into the decision-making process and is crucial for green and digital transition.
- Sustainable and balanced **development of regions**, based on innovative, digital and eco-friendly solutions is not only the future, but also the present. **Cities** must play a crucial role in helping reach targets of European Green Deal.

The proposals recorded here come from the collective experience of the experts in all fields of cooperation and we, the organisers of the Forum, encourage you to find inspiration in them.

## 1. The main challenges we face

**Like the rest of the world, the BRS faces variety of challenges, that require to join forces and pursue common solutions:**

- Recovery of the economic, social, health and other areas after COVID-19 pandemic
- Revitalization of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy
- The pursuit of green recovery and transition from market to green economy
- Smooth digital transition
- The involvement of communities, authorities, business and young people in local and cross-border cooperation
- Finding a way to tackle climate crisis, reduce the pollution of the Baltic Sea and the sustainable use of its resources
- Sustainable and balanced development, and the improvement of the quality of daily life
- Building a resilient economy and society
- Social issues, such as demographic changes, migration, social injustice, poverty, lack of quality education in the regions





## 2. The most successful ways for cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

**Joint projects, initiatives, programmes and workshops** are the key of the EUSBSR success. However, there are several areas of improvement for the Strategy to continue delivering value to the BSR communities:

- Improve strategic communication and increase the Baltic Sea Region Strategy's visibility
- Raise awareness and reduce knowledge gaps in society
- Increase support for the Baltic Sea Region Strategy by different stakeholders
- Engage business in the implementation of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy
- Include all levels in cooperation and networking, intensify collaboration with neighbouring countries
- Ensure balanced development of the regions, in particular, in the process of post-pandemic recovery
- Make macro-regional strategy as an example of partnerships, not just the cross-border ones, but also different partners – from the national level to a very local
- Encourage more active involvement of civil society (in particular, youth), regional and local authorities. Hear communities' suggestions.
- Find innovative and eco-friendly solutions, that guarantee sustainable urban development
- Improve EUSBSR contribution to the Green Recovery of the EU

### 3. The most promising areas of joint, multidisciplinary actions in the BSR

The Forum goes would like to see increased cooperation **in education, research, environment, innovation, local communities and youth involvement, sustainable development and security**. More specifically:

- Climate change and the Baltic Sea environment together with the biodiversity loss remains one of the most important issue in the region
- The focus should be on the sustainable recovery, taking into account the solutions and needs of different stakeholders
- Education and information provided to the Baltic Sea Region communities can help to improve their resilience and help to reach green and digital transition
- EUSBSR needs to remain dynamic and open for fresh ideas and cooperation in order to guarantee sustainable development of the BSR and find innovative solutions to common problems
- EUSBSR role in implementing the UN SDGs, EU Recovery plan “Next Generation EU”, EU Green Deal, European Digital Strategy is vital
- The involvement of civil society, in particular young people, both in formal and non-formal discussions and mechanisms is crucial. It is important to let them understand that their opinion is very valuable.
- Solutions for sustainable and balanced region development can be sought through the practices of different sectors and stakeholders. Changes important for the whole region usually start from cities and local communities.





## Message from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

Dear Reader,

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, coordinating the implementation of the EUSBSR in Lithuania, have taken the task to organise the Annual Forum 2021 of the EUSBSR with great responsibility and determination. We are pleased that Kaunas City, Klaipėda City and the Union of the Baltic Cities joined us in this endeavour.

The Annual Forum 2021 has been both a challenge and an opportunity. Although we could not invite participants to come to Lithuania, we used the virtual format of the Annual Forum to attract speakers and a huge number of participants from the whole Baltic Sea region and beyond.

We are very proud and grateful that Prime Ministers of Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Sweden, as well as President of the European Commission and Secretary-General of the OECD, Members of the European Commission and other honourable speakers shared their insights on the green, digital and resilient future of the Baltic Sea region.

We invited the participants to REVITALISE the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, to RECOVER after COVID-19 pandemic together and to RECHARGE for greener, more resilient and more prosperous Baltic Sea region.

We are glad that participants of the Annual Forum had the opportunity to visit two cities of Lithuania virtually: Kaunas, the European Capital of Culture 2022, and Klaipėda, the European Youth Capital 2021. These cities represented the main principles of the Annual Forum – more active involvement of youth and the cities in the cross-border cooperation.

We appreciate the cooperation with the Union of the Baltic cities, which resulted into networking possibilities for the cities around the Baltic Sea.

We are also happy to have been able to provide the participants with the unique opportunity to visit Lithuanian museums and galleries virtually.

For the team of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Annual Forum 2021 was a journey full of new and long-lasting partnerships, of daily learning, of new experiences, of creative solutions and ambitious ideas for the sustainable future of our Baltic Sea region.

Thank you all who joined us in this journey and cooperated with us in turning the Annual Forum an enriching and forward-looking event!

### The Organizing Team

Arnoldas Pranckevičius, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania  
Robertas Bružilas, EUSBSR National Coordinator, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania  
Laura Čeponytė, Deputy to the EUSBSR National Coordinator, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania  
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More information about the 12th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR including its video recording is available at: [www.eusbsr2021.eu](http://www.eusbsr2021.eu)

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