

Minutes of the EUSBSR National Coordinator Group virtual meeting 19 January 2021

1. Strategic Priorities in 2021

Mr. Johan Magnusson (DG Regio) briefed the NCG on the COM priorities for the EUSBSR for 2021 followed by a general discussion among the NCG. The adoption and implementation of the new Action Plan is a top priority. Second, the embedding process and its implementation among the NCG, PACs, COM and MA networks will be focused on. To ensure the best possible complementarity, DG Regio will continue to check all draft programmes handed in by MA for inclusion of MRS actions. Third, the possible MRS contribution to joint response to COVID-19 pandemic and implementation of European Green Deal and Digitalisation as well as involvement of civil society and, in particular, youth in the implementation of MRS will be among key topics to be discussed in 2021.

The NCG stressed that the preparation for the BSP as well as the finalisation of the supporting documents for Steering Groups and PAs are key tasks for the year 2021.

Next steps:

- Stronger inclusion of Let's Communicate in all EUSBSR processes
- NC Chair will initiate an informal exchange format with PACs
- Preparation for the MRS week on 1 - 5 March. FRA prepares the 4-Trios- Meetings
- The GER EUSBSR Presidency suggests the implementation of dedicated Task Forces for specific topics. The general outline is to be discussed further.
- Ms. Blagovestka Riiser will take over the coordination tasks for the EUSBSR in DG Regio. The recruitment of a dedicated desk officer is ongoing.

2. Interreg- Macro-regional governance

Ms. Elena Kolosova (Interreg Baltic Sea Region Joint Secretariat) gave an overview on the macro-regional governance support. The presentation focused on the assistance to PACs, the organization of the Annual Forum (this year organized by Lithuania) and the coordination of the Baltic Sea Strategy Point. Next steps are the following:

1. **Cooperation Programme** (first quarter 2021)
 - a. finalising priority description with core information
 - b. discussing the budget per priority
2. **Programme Manual** (first half 2021)
 - a. procedures on application, assessment, selection, reporting
3. **Calls for proposals** (end 2021, depends on the approval of the programme by COM)
 - a. announcement notes with detailed requirements

The current timeframe strongly implies a gap in the funding and thereby implementation of the EUSBSR in the beginning of 2022 which should be taken into account by all relevant stakeholders.

3. Follow-up on the Autumn Meeting and Action Plan

Discussion was corresponding to priorities already raised with COM in TOP 1. Exchange with PACs and communication of success stories are the basis for a stronger political commitment.

4. Flagships

The NCG discussed the discussion paper on flagships handed in by the Presidency. The NCG stressed the AP as basis for all sorts of projects. The Presidency will develop the approach further.

Participants

Germany, Simon Stermann (Chair), NC, MFA
Germany, Valentina Frezzella, MFA
Finland, Helena Tuuri, NC, MFA
Denmark, Anders Henriksson, NC, MFA
Estonia, Karin Rannu, NC, MFA
Estonia, Raul Mälk, Senior Expert, MFA
Latvia, Ieva Salmiņa, NC, MFA
Lithuania, Robertas Bruzilas, NC, MFA
Lithuania, Laura Ceponyte, MFA
Poland, Joanna Wojtkowska, NC, MFA
Poland, Kamila Wojsznis, NC, MFA
Sweden, Henrik Hultberg, Desk Officer, Prime Minister's Office
Norway, Olav Berstad, MFA
European Commission, Johan Magnusson, DG Regio
European Commission, Blagovestka Riiser, DG Regio
Centrum Balticum, Kirsi Ahlman
Centrum Balticum, Juhani Ailio
Interreg, Elena Kolosova
Germany, Jan-Hendrik Kathmann, Ministry for Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy
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