

**EU STRATEGY FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION**  
**NATIONAL COORDINATORS GROUP**  
**1st MEETING OF THE SWEDISH PRESIDENCY, 2022-23**  
**6 September 2022**  
**Minutes**

**§1 Welcome and opening**

The presidency welcomed the participants and declared the meeting open.

**§2 Approval of the agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**§ 3 Steering Groups - Rules of Procedure**

**- PA Health**

Let's communicate presented the latest revisions of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) for PA Health, referring to the communication from the NCG to PA Health, dated 9<sup>th</sup> of June. Let's communicate suggested that the RoP for PA Health, dated 16<sup>th</sup> of August, should be endorsed by the NCG.

The RoP for PA Health was endorsed by the NCG.

**- PA Spatial Planning**

Let's communicate presented the latest revisions of the RoP for PA Spatial Planning, referring to the Communication from the NCG to PA Spatial Planning, dated 26<sup>th</sup> of May. Described that PA Spatial Planning had revised the template and the format of the RoP.

The RoP for Spatial Planning was endorsed by the NCG.

A short discussion of the remaining RoP and the process of completing them followed.

**§ 4 The relation between PAC and members of Steering Groups**

The NCG discussed whether double functions should, or not, be accepted within the group of implementing stakeholders. As an example, the presidency lifted whether it should be possible to be both PAC and member of a Steering Group.

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Let's communicate explained that there are PACs that are listed as Steering Group members, which might lead to conflicts of interest. For example sometimes, the Steering Groups makes decisions during which PACs may not be present and thus the MS in question could not participate in the discussion.

After discussions, the presidency proposed to clarify the content of the Action Plan that PACs and Steering group members should not be allowed to be the same person, but allowed to be representatives from the same organisation. A general positive response to this within the NCG. The presidency concluded that they will return to the item in a written procedure for decision, in order to let the NCG consult the question properly with their line ministries.

## § 5 Annual Forum 2023

The presidency lifted for discussion where the Annual Forum for 2023 will be situated. This was however an agenda item for formality since there is an order of the rotation for this in the Action Plan, which states that next year's turn is on LV.

LV informed the NCG about their plans ahead for organising the Annual Forum. Riga City Council would likely be their partner.

The presidency concluded that the NCG supported LV application for organising the Annual Forum 2023. A formal letter should be formulated by the presidency and sent to the NCG of Latvia for further submission to Interreg as part of the project application for organisation of the Strategy Forum in 2023.

## § 6 Communicating the EUSBSR

### - Let's Communicate's report

Let's communicate briefly presented their interim report of their projects for the period January - June which was circulated to the NCG in June, 30<sup>th</sup>. Concluded a need in focus on internal communication within the strategy, but also a need in focus on external communication. A discussion followed by the NCG on current communication of the strategy, and the need for a strategic approach to communicating the EUSBSR.

### - Communication Plan

Discussion in the NCG of the need for a communication plan that concretizes and visualizes the EUSBSR even better. A focus for the SE EUSBSR presidency and a suitable task for the BSP. Suggestions of priorities to focus on were lifted.

The presidency concluded that the suggestions lifted in the NCG, of priorities for the BSP, would be circulated in a separate document for the NCG to comment on and for a final decision, in time before October, 1<sup>st</sup>. On basis of this paper, the BSP would formulate a draft

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written communication plan which preferably could be presented to the NCG at the next meeting, later on this autumn. The NCG approved the suggestion.

### § 7 Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) - expectations and coordination

As an extension of the previous agenda item, the NCG discussed the expectations on the services to be provided by the BSP and priorities in the work of the BSP for autumn 2022.

The presidency took note of the suggestions lifted in the NCG.

### § 8 Ukraine - possibilities for collaboration

The NCG discussed eventual possibilities for the EUSBSR to develop collaboration forms with UA. The clear position that the EU has today in supporting UA makes it inevitable for the SE presidency to not explore the possibilities of collaboration forms with UA.

A full tour-de-table followed. No MS were against the idea in investigating in possible ways of supporting UA. Important though to explore this in the right manner, let UA express what kind of support they want. Important to find a balance; humanitarian support should be a priority instead of the re-building of UA. The political will is strong in supporting UA but this must be balanced in a proper way; the human resources in UA might be limited and therefore difficult to receive accurate support.

The discussion was followed by a presentation of The Swedish institute of an idea for a seminar and workshop, on how to support UA within the framework of EUSBSR.

The event was proposed to be held in November 2022 in Stockholm as well as hybrid format. The event would consist of a strategic seminar and an operative workshop, which would bring together EUSBSR stakeholders and UA representatives. It would aim to find out the prerequisites, interest and needs from the PA:s. There would be an open project call from the Swedish Institute with deadline February 2023, that would be an opportunity for funding.

The NCG discussed the options presented by the Swedish Institute and welcomed the idea of an event. Important to follow-up the discussion in the NCG after the outcome of the event.

The presidency concluded that the NCG would return to the discussion.

### § 9 NCG - practical questions and a timeline

The presidency presented the timeline of the coming meetings and suggested two more NCG-meetings this year; both were for the moment planned to be held remotely. Also

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suggested three NCG-meetings in the spring, held in February, April and June, whereof one planned on-site.

The NCG approved the suggested timeline for upcoming meetings.

### § 10 AOB and date for next meeting

#### **AOB: Coffee with the Presidency**

The NCG discussed the value of the 'Coffee with the Presidency'. A strong support in the NCG in continuing with this meeting format; a helpful and encouraged cross-policy area cooperation.

The presidency concluded that they would continue with the 'Coffee with the Presidency' and that it could be included in the communication plan.

The presidency finally stated that the next NCG-meeting would be held remotely on October 24<sup>th</sup>, before lunch.

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**Participants:**

Lithuania, Robertas Bružilas (Chair), NC, MFA

Lithuania, Modesta Viskontė, MFA

Germany, Maurice Gajan, Federal Foreign Office

Sweden, Anna Hagström, NC, Prime Minister's Office

Sweden, Anna Tofftén, The Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Sweden, Alicia Nathanson Thulin, Prime Minister's Office

Estonia, Kadri Lepp, NC, MFA

Denmark, Anders Henriksson, NC, MFA

Finland, Helena Tuuri, NC, MFA

Finland, Eeva Kiisseli, MFA

Finland, Katja Kurki, MFA

Latvia, Iveta Stanislavska, NC, MFA

Latvia, Ita Klekere, MFA

Poland, Ewa Dębska, NC, MFA

European Commission, DG Regio, Petri Koistinen

Let's Communicate, Kirsi Ahlman (Centrum Balticum)

Let's Communicate, Juhani Ailio (Centrum Balticum)