EUSBSR
EU STRATEGY
FOR THE BALTIC
SEA REGION
POLICY AREA 'SHIP'

TRAFICOM
Finnish Transport and Communications Agency

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region

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Meeting Notes

On the 26th Meeting of the International Steering Committee for the Policy Area on Sustainable Shipping of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

11 May 2026

Joint Ministries Building, Suur-Ameerika tn 1, Tallinn, Estonia - **all times EEST**

Present:

PAC Milla Harju (Traficom), PAC Sami Vesterinen (Traficom)

Steering group members: FI Mirja Rosenberg-Kurki (Traficom), SE Lina Petersson (Swedish Transport Agency), EE CHAIR Annabel Keerd & Teemo Toomsalu (Climate Ministry of Estonia), DK Eloïse Jonsson (Danish Maritime Authority), NO Tommy Haugsnes (Norwegian Coastal Administration)

Guests: Tõnis Nirk (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Susanna Lundell (Baltic Youth Forum), Petri Koistinen (DG Regio), Ulf Siwe (PA Safe)

Online:

Steering group members: DE Susanna Heitmüller (German Hydrographic Agency), LT Mârite Augstmane & Jânis Kanusevskis

Guests: Marta Ruiz (HELCOM) and Juulia Suikula (John Nurminen Foundation)

Absent:

Steering group members: LV Aurelija Gudelevičienė and PL Iwona Chrząstowska-Kawałek & Edyta Żabicka

1) **Welcome words and Tour de Table 12:40 - 12:45**

After some technical hiccups with audio to reach the online participants, Chair Ms. Keerd opened the meeting and wished everyone welcome to Tallinn. Immediately afterwards PAC Milla Harju asked the participants if it would be acceptable to make a change to the agenda due to Mr. Nirk's schedule, which gained an approval from the participants.

Therefore, agenda item 3) was carried out before Tour de Table.

2) **Approval of the Agenda and Minutes of the Last Meeting 12:45 - 12:50**
Chair

After a swift change to the Agenda, it was approved with no notes to the previous meeting's notes.

3) **Farewell Presentation from EUSBSR Estonian Presidency 12:50 - 13:00**
Estonian National Coordinator *Mr. Tõnis Nirk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia*

Mr. Nirk outlined the three main achievements from the Estonian Presidency, which were 1) The finalisation of the Action Plan update, the Action Plan constructed around better preparation for security, performance and the impact of the Action plan. Also, it was put in together with the thought to have a better alignment for the coming MFF. 2) Accession of Norway to the EUSBSR 3) Strengthened cooperation with Ukraine.

4) **Activities of the Policy Area Coordinator 13:00 - 13:30**

PAC Vesterinen provided a look into PAC's recent activities since October 2025 together with the upcoming plans. Please refer to the Master presentation for details.

5) **News from the PA Ship Operational Group meeting 13:30 - 13:45**

PAC Harju gave an account of the contents of the Operational Group meeting in the beginning of April including updates from the newest PA Ship projects. Please refer to the Master presentation for details.

6) **Updates from the BSP: EUSBSR Action Plan & the Latest from PAC / NC meeting 13:45 - 14:00**

PACs Vesterinen and Harju provided information from the Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) and from the PAC-NC meeting in Copenhagen in April. See the Master presentation for details.

7) **PA Ship relevant policy updates in the Baltic Sea Region 14:00 - 14:20**

The tour de table began with

Sweden: SG member Ms. Petersson shared with the group that since the national Scrubber Wastewater discharge ban happened before 2025. She also mentioned that there are on-going discussions in Sweden to ban the two-stroke engines, after having info campaigns on them for the past 10-15 years. They have been banned since 2005, but two-stroke engines are the biggest source of emissions from boating. In addition, Sweden allowing the use of copper paint for recreational boats in order to prevent biofouling is in consideration. Finally, after the latest PPR there are now also talks about national ban for Sewage Treatment Plants as it has been shown that they do not work. STPs are type approved thus should work, but they are not functioning correctly when inspected. The problems are the biggest with passenger ships (cruise & ferries), but relevant for all ships.

Ms Ruiz from HELCOM stated that the issue could be raised at the Ballast Water Treatment group, and Ms. Ruiz and Ms. Petersson agreed to talk about it afterwards.

Finland: Ms. Rosenberg-Kurki informed the group that FI has been amending national laws on ships' emissions. In addition, the Finnish Ministry on Environment is currently leading the work to update the list on the Finnish Plans for river basin and marine management. These updates are directly related to the EU Mrine Stretagy Framework Directive. Ms. Rosenberg-Kurki wished to particularly raise the issue of underwater noise on the table, as there are currently no projects

directly addressing it. The PACs agreed to keep the issue in mind and promote it in relevant stakeholder groups.

Denmark: Ms. Jonsson shared that there is no news on changes. The politics in Denmark are currently on a "stand still", since there was an election recently. The new government has not yet stepped in. The ban on discharges from open loop scrubbers was introduced in 2025 and from 2029 it will also apply to closed-loop scrubbers in Danish territorial waters.

Germany: Ms. Heitmüller informed the Steering Group that no new relevant measures have been adopted since the last meeting. She highlighted ongoing work on revising the national regulations implementing MARPOL in German legislation, as well as the update process of the national programme of measures within the framework of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). With respect to the issue of underwater noise Germany is currently investigating the possibility to deploy a measurement station in either the North Sea or the Baltic Sea. She also noted that, across discussions at different levels, security considerations are increasingly taking precedence over environmental issues.

Regarding scrubbers, Germany and Sweden are leading together work on a HELCOM Recommendation implementing Action 1 of the HELCOM Scrubber Roadmap. Ms. Heitmüller welcomed the John Nurminen Foundation's financing of the Baltic Chemical Tanker Project and informed about a national workshop in this context to be held in June in Hamburg.

Finally, Germany is developing a national initiative on green shipping emissions (National Action Plan for Climate-Friendly Shipping), which will be published soon.

Estonia: Ms. Keerd informed the members that Estonia is developing its Marine Pollution Concept Note together with Seafarer's regulation, especially on the working hours. She added that EU-level changes are also currently being adapted into the national policies, e.g. MSFF, Port state control and OceanAct & OceanPact. Last year, Estonia adopted changes in its water way taxes, resulting as less fees for ships using alternative fuels. At the IMO level, Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) has pushed for port digitalisation and remote pilotage. Transnationally, Estonia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Hamburg and Lübeck on Green Shipping Corridors. Finally, Estonia has developed its shore-power infrastructure for internal ferry lines and works on retro-fitting two Norwegian ferries for electricity.

Norway: Mr. Haugsnes informed the Steering Group of Norway's new zero-emission requirements for vessels operating in selected UNESCO-listed World Heritage fjords. From 2026, the requirement will apply to vessels under 100 gross tonnes, and from 2032 it will be extended to vessels above 100 gross tonnes. He also noted that earlier measures already bring smaller passenger vessels under the regime.

In addition, under Norway's climate regulations, passenger vessels under 24 metres are expected to significantly reduce emissions, with a target of achieving a 90% reduction (or becoming largely fossil-free) between 2028 and 2030.

Latvia: Ms. Augstmane had not received input in time; therefore, she informed the fellow SG members that she would send Latvia's intervention via email later. She did confirm that Latvia had implemented ETS and several Green Shipping projects currently take place. Additionally, they are concentrating on developing their port-side infrastructure for hydrogen.

Here are the notes delivered by Ms. Augstmane:

- The most significant recent development is the ratification of the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, which sets out the framework for ship recycling procedures.

- The Ministry of Climate and Energy plans to transpose Directive (EU) 2024/3101 of 27 November 2024, amending Directive 2005/35/EC on ship-source pollution and on the introduction of penalties for infringements, by July 2027.

- A related topic is the currently announced amendments to the Criminal Law, through which Directive (EU) 2024/1203 on the protection of the environment through criminal law is being transposed, replacing Directives 2008/99/EC and 2009/123/EC. This process is being coordinated by the Ministry of Justice.

8) **Any other business 14:20 - 14:30**

The first item under AOB was presented by PAC Vesterinen: Project Manager Juulia Suikula from Chemical Tanker Project had been in touch with PA Ship to request support to collection of data from ports. Many ports or port operators have not replied or are not willing to give out the data of chemicals carried in or out by ships. This data is needed for the assessment carried out by the project. Request is to have the data from the national single-window system, the data will be used anonymously, and no port shall be identified, instead the data will be used as nationwide data.

Mr. Koistinen from DG REGIO wished to inform the participants on the Macro-Regional and Sea Basin Strategies Days that take place in Brussels on the 8th and 9th of July. There will be a possible workshop on the Black Sea cooperation, which is relevant to all PA Ship stakeholders.

Scrubber Waste Management Workshop will be held in Riga, Latvia on the 17th of June. PA Ship is still looking for speakers and participants; the Steering Group is invited to share the invitation and scout for relevant speakers.

Next meeting will be held online in October, but the date is not set. It will be checked so that the meeting will not clash with HELCOM or IMO meetings.

9) **Closing the meeting at 14:45**

Chair thanked the participants both present and those online and wished them a great stay in Tallinn.