

## EUSBSR PA Tourism Steering Group Meeting (Hybrid)

22/11/2022 11.00 AM CET - 15.15 PM CET

MEETING MINUTES (draft)

### PARTICIPANTS:

1. *Denmark - Ms Eva Thybo, Visit Denmark*
2. *Estonia - Ms Ede Teinbas, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications*
3. *Finland - Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment*
4. *Latvia - Ms Inese Sirava, Investment and Development Agency of Latvia*
5. *Lithuania - Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė, The Ministry of Economics and Innovation*
6. *Poland - Mr Karol Biedrzycki, Ministry of Sport and Tourism*
7. *Sweden - Ms Anna Haag, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation of Sweden*
8. *European Commission, DG REGIO - Ms Blagovestka Riiser*
9. *PAC Tourism / PTB - Ms Marta Chełkowska*
10. *PAC Tourism / PTB - Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło*
11. *PAC Tourism / Oulu Region - Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen*
12. *PAC Tourism / Oulu Region - Ms Hanna Honkamäkilä*

### Welcome

Before the official start Policy Area Tourism Coordinator Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło informed all the participants that the meeting was recorded for technical reasons - preparation of the meeting minutes. As a new PA Tourism Steering Group Member and the representative of the Swedish Presidency, Ms Anna Haag from Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation introduced herself and welcomed all the participants to the SG meeting. All the participants introduced themselves.

The meeting was hybrid: Ms Ede Teinbas, Ms Marta Chełkowska and Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło joined the meeting from Pomorskie Tourist Office in Gdansk and the other participants joined the meeting online.

## Presentation and adoption of the meeting's agenda

Ms Anna Haag asked the SG Members if there are any issues regarding the agenda and asked if they accept it. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło informed that there was a request from Finland and Denmark to have their presentations before the lunch. **The SG Members adopted the meeting Agenda with the change mentioned above.**

## Information on PA Tourism activities between May and Nov 2022

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło told about the PAC's working routines which include online meetings regularly, usually once a week. She also told that PA Tourism has worked according to the Work Plan which was adopted in the last SG meeting in May.

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło presented the activities between May and June 2022. PA Tourism has been invited in many events during this period. The first one was SuSMarTour project webinar in May where Ms Marta Chełkowska was talking about action plan and recommendations for crisis situation in the BSR Tourism sector. This was the first chance for new PA Tourism representatives to present themselves to a bigger group of Tourism Stakeholders. Next event was Coffee with the Presidency, in June and organised by the EUSBSR. The idea of this event is that the National Coordinators, Policy Area Coordinators and all other people who were back then working with the Let's Communicate project (now it is the Baltic Sea Strategy Point) will gather together to have a discussion with the current EUSBSR Presidency and get information what is happening with the Strategy and other current topics. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło and Ms Marta Chełkowska have also been invited into Tourism related Interreg project meetings. First one was Baltic Manors project, funded by Interreg South Baltic Programme. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło and Ms Marta Chełkowska participated into the project's final conference in June. The other project event was DG Mare Brokerage event & Conference of Peripheral Maritime Coastal Tourism WG Meeting in June. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło and Ms Marta Chełkowska and also Ms Hanna Honkamäkilä participated in this event so this was also the first meeting where the teams from Poland and Finland had the possibility to see each other. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło, Ms Marta Chełkowska and Ms Hanna Honkamäkilä had a discussion there with CPMR representatives and also with the Secretary of the BSC, Ms Lucille Erhart and the current Chairman of BSC who was Mr Jari Nahkanen from Oulu Region. The possibilities of cooperation between BSC Maritime WG and PA Tourism were discussed and the very close relation was seen because the BSC Maritime WG also discusses about Maritime Tourism. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło told that the DG Mare Brokerage event was also about potential partnerships and consortios that would in 2023 and beyond work together on Coastal Maritime Tourism Project that could be for



instance to be submitted to Horizon program. For PA Tourism it was important to hear their ideas about Coastal Maritime Projects and to also hear what is happening in other regions. Between July-August there were no events because of the holidays but during that time Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło worked with the PA Tourism websites with help from Let's Communicate project (now BSP) who is responsible for the EUSBSR website. Now the PA Tourism website is a part of EUSBSR website and both PA Tourism PACs have the possibility to update the pages with events, blogposts and news.

Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen presented the activities in September 2022. Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen started to work as a PAC in September and on her second working day she joined the Kick-off of the Swedish EUSBSR Presidency in Stockholm with Ms Hanna Honkamäkilä and had the possibility to meet Ms Anna Haag, Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło and Ms Marta Chetkowska for the first time. She also told that the meeting was a great opportunity to meet other new PACs and to get a lot of information about EUSBSR, The priorities of Swedish Presidency and funding. The next event in September was the EUSBSR Annual Forum which was organised 28-29 Sep in Lappeenranta, Finland. PA Tourism PACs participated in PAC walk, which was organised in the first evening. The second day was the formal big day and Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło was invited to participate in the panel discussion on the closing plenary. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło added that the idea of the setting was that there were six speakers and everyone was representing different type of governance of the strategy. There was a representative from the Commission, a National Coordinator, a PAC (Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło), CBS, BSP and one representative from the SG from PAC's so this was a good discussion between different levels of cooperation.

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło presented the activities in October 2022. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło joined a SUSMARTOUR CBSS project webinar with a presentation from PA Tourism presenting our policy area and also discussing the tourism challenges. Also in October the both PA Tourism PACs Ms with Ms Saija Tikkanen from Council of Oulu Region participated in Interreg BSR 2021 2027 Kick off conference in Hamburg. There we had the possibility to hear about the program priorities and there were also presentations of some projects that were accepted. The second call for applications was also launched. Also in October Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło was present at the seed money project workshop, the project is called Trans Baltic Sea Cycle route and that is seed money by the Swedish Institute. The goal of the workshop was to develop new partnership consortium and plan their future funding of this. This partnership is interesting because they plan to base their work on Eurovelo route and that goes through all the BSR countries, so it's potentially a type of a project that could be interesting for PA Tourism. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło gave a presentation about the Interreg Baltic Sea Region at the workshop.

Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen told about the activities in November. There were two Interreg BSR webinars where PA Tou participated in and got a lot of information about funding. In November Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło had a national PACs meeting with their National Coordinator. There we also a





meeting between PA Tourism and PA Transport and the Coffee with Presidency with lots of information about the coming activities. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło also had a meeting with Visit Tampere regarding their project idea in which they are finding partners and Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen and Ms Hanna Honkamäkilä will have the same meeting with Visit Tampere in December.

## Baltic Sea Tourism Forum 1.12.2022 - status quo, agenda, speakers, topics to be discussed

Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen told that the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum 2022 will be organised in 1 December online and the agenda and the speakers of the forum was presented to the SG members. Ms Anna Haag asked if there are any questions and Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen asked if the BSTF will be recorded and Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło told that it is planned to record the event and later post everything to PA Tourism website. After this discussion Ms Anna Haag noted that it is time to move on to the next point at the agenda.

## EUSBSR PA Tourism Rules of Procedure - communication from NCG and adoption of suggested changes

Ms Anna Haag told that this is communication from our National Coordinators Group and if there are any changes. Ms Anna Haag gave the word to Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło who told that the Rules of Procedure were adopted at the last SG meeting. After that meeting the document was sent to National Coordinators Group and they gave their reactions to the document. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło read the document through. All the changes PA Tourism SG has made have been accepted but there was one request from the NCG asked for, and that is the principle about one of the representatives has to be nominated as the main representative. The reason for this was that if there are more than one person in SG coming from a country, this country has to say which one is the major representative. The NCG strongly recommended indicating this principle as indicated in the Common Structure: **In this case, one of the representatives has to be nominated as the main representative and main contact person and act as one.** So it means that the text should be slightly changed. Ms Anna Haag asked if there were any objections or any things to comment on this. There were no comments so the change in Rules of Procedure was adopted.

## Presentation of the EUSBSR PA Tourism Swedish Presidency - update & ideas for future activities

Ms Anna Haag presented the topics of tourism policy in Sweden. There are no overtourism in Sweden so there is still possibility to grow the hospitality industry but combining sustainability with. There is a new objective for tourism adopted by the Swedish Riksdag. Ms Anna Haag noted



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that sustainability is in every sentence just to make sure that it is not only talking but really making thing sustainable way. Ms Anna Haag also stated that the direction is more into tourism as an industry that is growing and contributing to employment and attractive locations, not only just tourism and marketing. And this is the mindset how Ms Anna Haag sees how PA Tourism SG should also work together. There are activities in Sweden, launched by the former government and the financing was done then and they are still running this year. Right now there are extra seed money on national level and there are also a lot of things going on regionally and locally. There is an assignment to the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth in 2021-2022. 150 MSEK which is mostly about improving the knowledge and the statistics and data of tourism. Ms Anna Haag told that there have also been activities for tourism business improvement (digitalization, competence development) which is important and challenging for the industry. There is a shortage of people in the area and the problem is even bigger now after the pandemics. There are also assignments for Visit Sweden which is the company who is in charge of marketing Sweden abroad and within the country. They have different target groups in different countries and within the country and their new ideas and campaigns are creative. Finally Ms Anna Haag talked about cooperation in PA Tourism SG and she suggested that PA Tourism could work more with PA Transport and also with maritime and coastal tourism, there is a lot to do and develop together. She also mentioned the importance of networking and also engaging small businesses to really work together. Ms Anna Haag also presented the figures which can be seen from her presentation attached. About Swedish presidency Ms Anna Haag told that there are two big issues coming up: First one is Short Term Rentals (STR) which is EU proposal on a European register for short term rental accommodations. The purpose is to facilitate but also regulate and harmonize the market. Another one is European Agenda for Tourism 2030. The Agenda will be adopted at COMPET 1st of December. Sweden will continue the work on the Agenda and member states can develop the agenda on voluntary basis. After her presentation Ms Anna Haag gave the floor to PA Tourism SG member from Denmark, Ms Eva Thybo who started the next point of the agenda with her presentation.

## Information on tourism strategies, policies & events in BSR countries - information from each SG Member / EUSBSR Member State

Ms Eva Thybo thanked Ms Anna Haag for the interesting presentation and apologized that she is not able to stay for the whole meeting. Ms Eva Thybo told that there is a new national strategy in Denmark since June 2022 until 2030 and all the organizations from tourism have been involved in this work with the government. There were numbers about the tourism sector on Ms Eva Thybo's presentation and they can be seen from the presentation attached. Ms Eva Thybo told that there has been some recovery in 2022 because so many Danish people have stayed at their home country and there have also been German tourists. At the moment there is a fear with the new crisis of the Ukraine, inflation etc. and their

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effects and that there will be some difficulties in the years to come. Ms Eva Thybo emphasized the importance of Nordic cooperation because of the situation mentioned. Ms Eva Thybo also supposed that there are more or less the same kind of situation in other countries as well and she hoped that we can help each other doing activities together. Ms Eva Thybo presented the Denmark's vision and told that for the first time the aim is to work very much for sustainability, before the focus was mostly on the economic growth. There is no overtourism in Denmark but despite of that it is important to consider the environmental and social aspect, said Ms Eva Thybo. She also underlined that the it is not only talking about sustainability but it is part of the strategy to also have measurements for sustainability by year 2030 and also focus on developing year round tourism to avoid damages to the environment and local communities. Finally Ms Eva Thybo encouraged all the SG members to share their ideas and to work together with common challenges in the field of tourism. Ms Anna Haag thanked Ms Eva Thybo for her presentation and gave the floor to Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen from Finland.

Before Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen's presentation Ms Ede Teinbas told that in Estonia the development of new strategy is in process and she asked the other SG members if they could share their presentations so it could be possible to make some comparisons. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło informed that the presentations will be shared for all the SG members and also in PA Tourism website. Ms Anna Haag noted that the presentation from Sweden can be shared for the SG members at the moment and later, when it will be approved by the new government, also in the PA Tourism website.

Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen presented Finland's tourism strategy 2022-2028 which was published 2019 just before the pandemic so many things have been changed since then and that's why the strategy was renewed this year. There is also more concrete action plan for 2022-2023. The strategy is made with cooperation with very wide actors from tourism sector and coordinated by Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland but also many other ministries have participated in preparing the strategy. Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen presented the vision and mission and told sustainability is very important for Finland and that's way it is stated in the vision. Tourism is seen as a very big potential and that is seen from the mission. Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen also presented the four key priorities of the strategy which are related to sustainability, digital transformation, accessibility and competitiveness and the cross-cutting theme is cooperation. Under these key priorities there are more concrete actions which are in the action plan. More detailed information about the key priorities can be seen from Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen's presentation which is attached to these minutes. Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen told that there is no separate funding for the strategy but EU- and national funding are used for this. The strategy is a joint guideline for tourism operators in development work. The actions of the strategy are monitored every second year by Tourism Forum which is a horizontal and multi-actor expert group on tourism coordinated by Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. Ms Anna Haag thanked Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen for her presentation and noted that we are all working on same direction and also competing which each other and that way all getting better with our work.

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After Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen's presentation Ms Eva Thybo, Ms Hanna Honkamäkilä and Ms Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen had to leave the meeting.

Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė presented the topics of tourism in Lithuania. The focus in Lithuania is to grow tourism in Sustainable way. Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė told that the war in Ukraine has affected tourism in Lithuania very much and that is why Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland had an international conference with Ukraine to support Ukraine and also to show that the countries are safe to travel. According to affects of pandemic Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė told that in 2021 there were slight signs of recovery it is seen that complete recovery will need the time till 2025. Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė presented the four guidelines Lithuania has for tourism which are related to open data, entrepreneurship and competence, infrastructure and marketing. Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė also told about the National tourism information system which is created to get more data from from tourism industry to ensure the accuracy of statistisc, and to help for example to get open data for private investments. Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė also presented the ways competence, entrepreneurship and collaboration and supported and the measures for tourism sector in Lithuania. Finally Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė noted that the fight for tourists is on and nowadays the tourists expect sustainability and also high quality. She also presented the 700 anniversary of Vilnus. More detailed information about the presentation is seen from Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė's presentations which is attached. Ms Anna Haag thanked Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė for her presentation and gave the floor to Mr Karol Biedrzycki.

Mr Karol Biedrzycki presented the brief notice on Tourism Strategies and events in Poland. There is a Strategy for Responsible Development until 2030 and one of the strategic projects in this is the Polish Tourist Brands. The aim of this is to support the process of creating and developing territorial tourist brands that will be an organizational and promotional umbrella for the set of tourist products and tourist services available in a given area. Also important dimension of the project of Polish Tourist Brands is to strengthen the awareness of the role of cooperation between individual stakeholders in the process of creating and promoting the tourist offer. Mr Karol Biedrzycki told that the other strategic document for tourism in Poland is Polish Foreign Policy Strategy until 2026 which aim is to organize events promoting tourist attractions of the country as well as arousing interest in the specific value of places, events and the whole country. Mr Karol Biedrzycki also presented the Positions taken by polish representatives on the EU forum, and he told that on the EU forum, Poland present the following strategic directions of activities for Polish tourism: climate issues, digitalisation, accessibility and skills development, increasing the competitiveness of SME's, building the resilience of the tourism sector, conducting research that monitors and forecasts the condition of the tourism sector in Poland, regulatory activities. More detailed information is seen from Mr Karol Biedrzycki's Brief notice which is attached to these meeting minutes. About events in tourism Mr Karol Biedrzycki told that the main event of this year in polish tourism was the first Congress of Sport and Tourism in Zakopane under the slogan: Tourism of tomorrow. Finally Mr Karol Biedrzycki told that in the first half of 2025 there will be Polish Presidency of the EU Council and as the first time, it will form the presidency trio together with Denmark and Cyprus. Ms Anna Haag thanked Mr Karol Biedrzycki for his



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presentation and noted that there has been a lot of work done both nationally and internationally. Ms Anna Haag gave the floor to Ms Inese Sirava.

Ms Inese Sirava told that the main document for Tourism in Latvia is the Tourism marketing strategy and that the Ministry of Economics is responsible of Tourism policy in Latvia. The Tourism Strategy in Latvia is currently being worked and this process is advised by an Tourism advisory board which consists of main Tourism organisations and other Tourism related Ministries. Ms Inese Sirava said that Latvia will have the new Tourism strategy latest in the beginning of next year. Ms Inese Sirava told that there is need for support for Tourism sector for market orientation and creation of new products because Latvia had a lot of Russian Tourists and now the Tourism companies have find the new target groups. So there is a new challenge. Digitalisation and development of sustainable Tourism are also important for Tourism industry in Latvia, training for businesses is provided to strenghten their competitiveness. Ms Inese Sirava also told that in the beginning of next year the Ministry of Economics is going to launch a new program to support Tourism sector and at the moment there is a program which supports the Tourism companies with their international activities. There are also many activities planned to support for example digital activities. Ms Inese Sirava mentioned that there will soon be new government in Latvia which can mean that there will be some kind of changes to the draft of Tourism Strategy. Finally Ms Inese Sirava told that this summer has been good but she estimated that the full recovery from the pandemic will last until 2025. Ms Anna Haag asked if there is seen that the amount of tourists from the other BSR countries coming to Latvia has increased now when there are no Russian tourists. Ms Inese Sirava answered that increase is seen for example Scandinavia and UK. Ms Anna Haag thanked Ms Inese Sirava for her presentation and gave the floor to Ms Ede Teinbas. Before Ms Ede Teinbas started her presentation Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło noted that PAC's could make a presentation where the situation of each BSR country's Tourism strategy is seen.

First Ms Ede Teinbas presented the impact of Tourism sector in Estonia, the numbers can be seen from her presentation attached. Next Ms Ede Teinbas talked about the legislation of Tourism in Estonia and she noted that there are only two specific laws for Tourism but there are horizontal laws also affecting Tourism. Ms Ede Teinbas presented the Estonian Tourism Strategy 2022-2025 which is called the recovery strategy and Ms Ede Teinbas told that the work for long-term Strategy will be started and it will be in line with the European Tourism Agenda. Estonian Tourism Strategy 2022-2025 has three pillars: Product and destination development, Restoration of demand and securing connections. The organisations that are in the strategic management and cooperation model regarding Tourism Strategy in Estonia are Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Tourism Advisory Board, Estonian Tourist Board and Destinations are represented by DMOs. Ms Ede Teinbas told that Tourism has been hit hard by the pandemic and that the Tourism sector in Estonia has received in 2020-2021 nearly 90 million euros emergency state aid to combat the consequences of Covid-19 and it was complemented with liquidity measures directed to affected companies (loans, loan guarantees). About the current challenges Ms Ede Teinbas told that the Tourism sector is facing a labor and skills shortage. At the moment Estonia is updating their DMO model and the new model should apply from 2023. Ms Ede Teinbas presented the numbers



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for supporting international events, events are very important as travel motivation. The numbers are seen from Ms Ede Teinbas's presentation attached. Ms Ede Teinbas also presented the sustainable marketing strategy with the buyer personas. Finally Ms Ede Teinbas presented the new many new things (hotels, restaurants, spas etc) for Tourists to visit and welcomed the SG to visit Estonia. Ms Anna Haag thanked Ms Ede Teinbas for her presentation.

### Cross-sectoral cooperation between PA TOU and other EUSBSR Policy Areas - discussion on potential cooperation formats

Ms Anna Haag gave the floor to policy area coordinators. Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen told about the cooperation with PA Transport which started from the idea from Ms Anna Haag and is concerning cruising business in the BSR and how to support it. Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen told that there was a meeting between PA Tourism and PA Transport where this idea was discussed. After the meeting there was an input from PA Transport and port of Tallin regarding the international cruises, they told that the new situation is that the boats don't visit St. Petersburg anymore and that has affect on the business. Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen told that the next step to discuss this issue is the BSC Maritime WG on 7 December. Ms Anna Haag wondered how could we support this and reflected the possibilities together with Ms Ede Teinbas and Ms Marta Chelkowska.

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło noted that there is a lot of potential in the cooperation between the policy areas and she told that she also talked about the cycling tourism with PA Transport because cycling is related to both policy areas. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło also told about the discussion with PA Culture in Stockholm and Lappeenranta and also in Hamburg and she told that one big project has been approved in the first call and it is called The Baltic Sea Cultural Pearls. Finally Anna Haag noted that culture is always driving tourism and it is very important for us to come up with ideas where we can connect and she also asked the other SG members if they have some ideas to tell. Ms Lidija Bajarūniene mentioned that the next year will be the year of skills, and perhaps some activities, training, could be done with EU funding. Ms Ede Teinbas noted that we could also cooperate with PA Innovation and perhaps we could work with them as well. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło told that she has been invited into meeting with PA Innovation to discuss about Social Inovation project and it's direction and they would like to have some kind of activities with other policy areas. So PA Inovation is on PA Tourism list. There were no more comments in this issue.

### Introduction of the upcoming PA Tourism events and initiatives

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło told that PAC's have been planning the next years Baltic Sea Tourism Forum and it would be preferably be a live event and told that it could be arranged in Gdansk but there are also other possibilities. It was decided that the PAC's will propose the date and the place to start the planning. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło also presented the numbers of registered persons to Baltic Sea Tourism Forum 2022.



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### **Any Other Business**

There were no comments at this point.

### **End of the Meeting.**

Ms Anna Haag closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation.



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