

EUSBSR PA Tourism Steering Group Meeting

11/05/2023 10.00 PM CET - 3.30 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. *Latvia - Ms Inese Sirava, Investment and Development Agency of Latvia*
4. *Lithuania - Ms Lidija Bajarūnienė, The Ministry of Economics and Innovation*
5. *Poland - Mr Karol Biedrzycki, Ministry of Sport and Tourism*
6. *Sweden - Ms Anna Hag, Ministry of Climate and Enterprise*
7. *Sweden - Ms Jenny Wikblom- Kamage, Ministry of Climate and Enterprise*
8. *European Commission, DG REGIO - Ms. Blagovestka Riiser*
9. *Let's Communicate - Ms Anja Karpinen*
10. *PAC Tourism / PTB - Ms. Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło*
11. *PAC Tourism / Oulu Region - Ms. Anna-Maija Toivonen*

Welcome

On behalf of the Swedish Presidency to EUSBSR PA TOU Steering Group and the Swedish Ministry of Climate and Enterprise - meeting hosts, Ms Anna Hag welcomed the participants to the SG meeting. After a short introduction of all participants, the meeting started.

Presentation and adoption of the meeting's agenda

Ms Anna Hag presented the meetings' agenda to all the Steering Group members and asked if there were any comments or suggestions for a change. Since there were none, the agenda was approved by all participants.

Summary of PA Tourism activities 2022

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło and Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen, acting as Policy Area Tourism Coordinators, prepared the presentation outlining the activities of PA Tourism from April 2022, when they were appointed until the end of 2022. Among the essential things they mentioned:

- two Steering Group meetings organised in May and November 2022
- establishing the PA TOU website and social media
- the creation of a stakeholders database and PA TOU newsletter
- participation in several EUSBSR meetings like the Annual Forum, Interreg programme conferences, CPMR Working Group meetings, project development project meetings with BSR tourism stakeholders, meetings with the EUSBSR Swedish president and with Baltic Sea Point, and participation in project meetings for Interreg South Baltic Programme and SI - funded projects.
- organising the 14th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum 2022 on 01 Dec 2022 online for over 115 stakeholders from the BSR.

The SG Members had no comments or questions about the presentation and noted the information.

Workplan 2023 and information on PA Tourism activities between Jan - May 2023

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło and Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen presented the WorkPlan for 2023 and explained in detail the following activities:

- EUSBSR PA TOU working meeting in Gdansk on 26-27th Jan 2023 with PTB and Regional Council of Oulu teams, supported by the Polish and Finnish national Coordinators and EU representatives to the Steering Group. The meeting was a chance to talk about current PA TOU activities, including the BSTF plans for 2023-2025, an update on pending project applications for Interreg BSR and SBP with more detailed info on projects with explicit reference to tourism and PA TOU Action Plan, discussing the communication activities and finalising the issues for the 1st reporting period.
- preparation of the 1st report to Interreg BSR Programme for the time between April and December 2022;
- support given to the project consortiums developing their projects related to the PA TOU Action Plan and with explicit references to specific Action Plan activities
- participation in the 4th EU Macroregional Week in Brussels in April 2023
- planned applications for the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Riga: one application with PA Culture and PA Education and another one with CBSS and PA CULTure;
- participation in the Interreg BSR "Cultural Pearls" project kick-off meeting, Interreg BSR "BASCIL" project meeting,
- organisation of EUSBSR PA Tourism webinar on EU tourism initiatives with experts from DG Regio and JRC/EU.

The SG Members noted the information.



Baltic Sea Business Forum in Riga, Latvia

Ms Inese Sirava, Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, presented information regarding the event planned back-to-back to the Annual EUSBSR Forum. It will happen between 4th th October 2023 in Riga, Latvia and will target primarily the business representatives working in the tourism industry, SMEs etc. The event is planned as a B2B event called "Baltic tourism forum & Workshop". The Forum will discuss tourism trends and developments, coupled with an overview of potential technology available to enable the Baltic Sea regional tourism industry to compete on a global stage and accomplish success in achieving safe and sustainable growth in the coming years. A B2B workshop will invite suppliers and buyers from across the Baltic Sea Region to meet and further develop programmes in the area. During the Discussion Topics on Safe and sustainable tourism, participants will discuss:

- The importance of sustainable tourism in the Baltic Sea region
- What it is - more than just emissions
- Why it is essential - future trends and customer sentiment
- How to do it - product and services and more.

In the Technologies in tourism discussion, the topics will include:

- Digitalisation and technological developments
- Positive impacts - increasing efficiencies and reducing costs
- Customer-facing, operational, yield management, accounting
- Examples of new technology.

The event will have the following agenda:

- 03 Oct Evening welcome reception
- 04 Oct Conference (two discussions - each with a keynote speaker & panel discussion)
- 04 Oct Afternoon B2B workshop
- 04 Oct Evening Gala dinner for all delegates
- 05 Oct Morning departures for post-tours.

EUSBSR PA Tourism coordinators are invited to support the event's promotion on social media and the website and will have some role in the morning sessions. PACs will also attend the event on 04 Oct, the primary day for the discussion. Ms Sirava suggested organising the meeting of PACs with the organising committee sometime soon, and all agreed. SG members also discussed bringing business on board and ensuring they participated in the meeting. Ms Anna Hag suggested informing the business organisations about tourism to get their attention and inform them about tourism activities. Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen shared info on the business forum in Oulu for tourism business, and she



informed that based on their experience, the companies want not only seminars but also buy and sell opportunities.

Baltic Sea Tourism Forum 2023 in Tallinn

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło and Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen presented the details regarding the coming BSTF2023. The initial agenda draft and the technical details of the Forum were presented. The SG Members engaged in the discussion on the speakers and suggested names for the experts from their respective countries. Ms Ede Teinbas presented details on the get-together event on 10 Oct, as the Ministry will support the BSTF in this matter.

Ms Lidija ajarūnienė noted that she is missing the highlight of the Forum, the central theme. She mentioned that since this is the 15th Forum, so an anniversary, there should be some central theme presented, as this was usually done. All SG Members agreed with that. PACs suggested having some reference to green tourism in the Baltic Sea region, as the Baltic green initiatives and case studies in greening our destinations, incl. protected territories, parks etc., nature tourism will be presented.

Ms Eva Thybo said she would find some good cases for the 11.45 session and the afternoon session on maritime tourism, including the green cruising session; they have the new director for Cruise Baltic, who is an excellent speaker - she promised to share the contact details. She also added it is essential to talk about how to make sustainable tourism even more sustainable. Ms Anna Hag also suggested speakers from Passenger/Cruise companies. Ms Ede Teinbas confirmed she had already talked with the expert from the Tallink company, and they agreed to participate.

Ms Karol Biedrzycki agreed it would be good to add the slogan to BSTF related to green tourism.

Raising the awareness of PA Tourism and engaging actors from all member countries - ideas for future activities

The SG Members discussed how to increase the cooperation among the EUSBSR countries in tourism cooperation. Mr Biedrzycki noticed a need for more cooperation between national tourist boards in all BSR countries; now, cities and regions cooperate mainly. It is hard to address the national boards with information regarding the EUSBSR, so it may be good to invite their representatives to the event. Ms Inese Sirava commented that the Baltic countries have excellent cooperation among the National Tourism Boards, but we need more macroregional cooperation. Ms Eva Thybo confirmed that Nordic countries also have good relations, but there should be more networking opportunities in the whole-BSR events, like BSRF.

Ms Ede Teinbas noticed we should discuss accommodating the high-level speakers; participants commented on organising the get-together reception on 10 Oct. She also agreed that the National Tourist Board member could participate in this get-together meeting during the BSTF2023 in Tallinn. The PACs will initiate the Excel file/list and send it to SG Members requesting names and organisations they should address when they promote PAC TOU events and activities.



EU Short-Term Rental - the proposal from the Swedish Presidency in the *EU*

Ms Jenny Wikblom Kamage presented the information on the STR harmonised regulation proposed by the Swedish Presidency to the EU and is now being discussed among the EU Member States. She gave some data and statistics on STR in Sweden and outlined the details of the new regulation. It was mentioned that Short Term Rentals are a growing market in the EU, and many European cities have over-tourism problems. She also confirmed that the approach in the EU needs to be more cohesive, and in some places, it is excessive regulation. The concept assumes that all online platforms must share data on overnight stays with authorities, who still need to get these statistics, or the statistics lack many details.

The SG Members briefly discussed the situation regarding the STR in their countries and noted the information the Swedish presidential representatives presented.

Project news - Interreg BSR & other projects related to Tourism

Policy Area Tourism Coordinators presented the information on the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme projects related to tourism and referred to the PA TOU Action Plan. There are three small-scale Interreg BSR projects and two core projects related to PA TOU Action Plan. PACs are in touch with all of them, also participating in some project meetings whenever possible. Detailed information on all the projects will be presented on the PAC TOU website during the summer.

The SG Members noted the information.

News from each BSR country and DG Regio

All the SG Members from participating countries and the DG Region representative shared their information on currently run tourism-related initiatives, presented the tourism statistics in their home country for 2022 and informed them on planned events and activities that may be important for the EUSBSR tourism cooperation.

The SG Members also discussed the upcoming meeting, which should be organised in fall 2023. It was agreed that this meeting could be organised in November, after the BSTF2023, preferably online, to ensure everyone's participation. The following meeting, in spring 2024, should be again organised in person.

Any other business

There were no comments at this point.

End of the meeting



Ms Anna Hag, representatives from the Swedish presidency to EUSBSR PA Tourism Steering Group, closed the meeting and thanked everyone for participating.