

Policy Area Education

Steering Group Meeting, online, 15 March 2024

TIME	13.00 to 14.40 (CET)
MINUTES	<p>1. Opening Ms Aļona Babiča Ministry of Education and Science, Latvia Chair of the Steering Group</p> <p>2. To adopt the agenda for the meeting The agenda was adopted.</p> <p>3. Reports on EUSBSR affairs</p> <p>a. PAC support – prolonged funding 2025 and 2026 The current funding period for PACs by Interreg BSR runs until the end of 2024. In the second half of 2024, the PACs are invited to extend their projects and make necessary amendments to their applications. This includes adding a work plan for 2025-2026 and updating partner budgets.</p> <p>b. Update of the Action Plan scheduled for 2024/25. Policy Areas to prepare first drafts in last quarter of 2024 based on templates provided by the Baltic Sea Strategy Point.</p> <p>c. Annual Forum in Visby on 29 to 31 October 2024 Please see presentation attached. PA EDU has submitted a proposal for a joint workshop with PA CULTURE on the role of culture in the context of integration. Furthermore, inputs jointly with PA SECURE (Civil Protection) and PA HEALTH (Economy of Wellbeing) are discussed.</p> <p>d. Other updates</p> <p>DG REGIO: The Macroregional Strategies & Sea Basin Strategies days will take place 12-13 June in Brussels. 5 workshops will take place on the afternoon of June 12th. The 5 workshops are in the fields of: 1. Circular economy, climate change and risk management, 2. Clusters, innovation, and Smart specialization strategies, 3. Civil societies and the strategies, 4. Embedding and post-2027 embedding, 5. Enlargement. The dedicated website will open for registration from 8 April.</p> <p>4. Report on PA Education affairs – presentation attached.</p> <p>a. BSR Integrate Now New application for Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership among Welcome Houses in the BSR has been submitted in March 2024, feedback expected by summer 2024. Joint workshop proposal with PA CULTURE submitted for the Annual Forum.</p> <p>b. BSR Social Innovation Update from Hauke Siemen, REM Consult, on the implementation of the RESIST project (Interreg BSR)</p> <p>c. School to Work Update from Gunnar Anderzon, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions: closer cooperation with different networks in the EU (e.g., Centre for Innovative Education in Poland/Spain) and around the BSR dealing with similar topics, such as UBC Learning Cities Commission. Conference planned in autumn. Post-pandemic issues persisting absence from school still very high, PISA</p>

results show lack of learning in basic skills. Needs to be addressed. OECD Forum 24 and 25 September in cooperation with Copenhagen and Malmö, S2W planning a workshop on skills supply in this context. S2W newsletter being set up (to be sent out mid-April), in order to reach new members. New website being set up in April. Cohesion policy: work of S2W needs to be visible.

d. Economy of Wellbeing of People

Update by Anders Bergström on the current activities and the workshop held on 13 March. Focus topics: challenges related to an ageing population; competence development; and mental illness and involuntary loneliness.

e. Civil Protection Faculty Ukraine

Update by Anders Bergström on the cross-Policy Area collaboration with PA SECURE. Currently, a feasibility study is implemented with funding from the Swedish Institute. In 18 months, 8 trainers have been trained and accredited by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. These trainers have so far trained 6.000 volunteers. Furthermore, application for Erasmus+ submitted on "Active Citizenship".

5. Updates and reflections from members

Estonia: In Estonia, the number of war refugees has been among the highest in Europe per capita. As of January, this year, 9 130 children and youngsters are registered in the Estonian Education Information System. The government of Estonia has created a total of 1000 additional study places in Tallinn. A new school for war refugees, the Freedom School opened its doors in 2022 in Tallinn. The Freedom School follows the Estonian national curriculum and provides at least 60% of its teaching in Estonian. Ukrainian language and culture are taught at the school. Estonia is dedicated to support the re-building of Ukraine, with education being one of the priority areas. We have already started with projects in Zhytomyr region, and from this year on, will launch further support initiatives in early childhood education, general education, and higher education. This is also a substantive support for Ukraine on their way to joining the EU education area. In cooperation with the Government of Ukraine and the Ukrainian community in Estonia, schools in Estonia are able to use free digital teaching materials in Ukrainian. In cooperation with the Ukrainian Exam Centre, Estonia has been carrying out electronic admission tests for Ukrainian students looking to enter higher education in Ukrainian universities.

Latvia: Latvian EUSBSR presidency since last summer, priorities: improvements of governance and communication, support and reconstruction of Ukraine. About 4 000 Ukrainian children integrated into Latvian general education system, 130 integrated into vocational education, 350 in higher education institutions. More than 40 Ukrainian teachers integrated in Latvian education system. Latvia continues organising entry tests for Ukrainian universities. Latvia offers scholarships for Ukrainian students and researchers, Latvian language learning opportunities and psycho-emotional support. Latvian state scholarships: quota is lifted for Ukraine.

Germany: Around 30 000 Ukrainians have arrived in Hamburg since February 2022. Housing continues to be a challenge. Hamburg plans to extend the services of the Hamburg Welcome Centre. Partnership with Kyiv now exploring a stronger focus on youth cooperation being established (Kyiv Youth Council came to Hamburg in 2023). Close connection to cooperation in civil protection (e.g., youth fire brigade). Day care centre established in Kyiv with support from Hamburg providing psychological care.

Finland: 12 500 pupils, 4 000 students in universities, many of them part-time. Bilateral and multilateral programmes with Ukraine. Currently continuation of these projects being under preparation. 7 new bilateral cooperations between Finnish and Ukrainian higher education institutions.

	<p>Lithuania: Support to children and students through all the levels of education. Municipalities' contacts and information for Ukrainians (also in Ukrainian language) available on the Ministry's website (also for Ukrainian teachers).</p> <p>6. A.O.B. Change in PAC team: participation Co-PAC in NEPT programme, European Commission, DG Employment</p> <p>7. Next meeting To be held in Warsaw in September with focus on the update of the Action Plan. A suggestion for a date will be discussed with the incoming Polish presidency and communicated ASAP.</p>
MEMBERS	<p>POLICY AREA FOCAL POINTS / MEMBERS OF THE STEERING GROUP</p> <p>Estonia <i>Ms Liisa Ojaveer, Ministry of Education and Research</i></p> <p>Finland <i>Ms Sari Eriksson, Ministry of Education and Culture</i></p> <p>Germany <i>Ms Stefanie Wodrig, Senate Chancellery of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg</i></p> <p>Latvia <i>Ms Aļona Babiča, Ministry of Education and Science</i></p> <p>Lithuania <i>Mr Raimondas Paškevičius, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports</i></p> <p>Poland <i>Ms Anna Pammerska, Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy</i></p> <p>Sweden <i>Ms Cecilia Ragnarsson, Ministry of Education and Research</i></p> <p>POLICY AREA COORDINATORS</p> <p><u>Core Group</u> Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg Senate Chancellery <i>Ms Merle Andraschko, Policy Area Coordinator</i> Norden Association Sweden <i>Mr Anders Bergström, Policy Area Coordinator</i></p>
GUESTS	<p>DG REGIO, Unit D.1, Macro-regions, Transnational/Interregional/External Cooperation, Enlargement <i>Ms Blagovestka Riiser, policy officer</i></p> <p>Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions <i>Mr Gunnar Anderzon, flagship leader School to Work</i></p> <p>REM Consult GmbH <i>Mr Hauke Siemen, managing director</i></p> <p>Baltic Sea Network – European Social Fund <i>Ms Tereza Vilén, national coordinator</i> Swedish ESF-Council</p> <p>Baltic Sea Strategy Point <i>Ms Marlene Riedel, coordination officer</i> <i>Ms Victoriia Hladii, administrative officer</i></p>