

## EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Nutri and Policy Area Hazards

### Joint Steering Group meeting

**Date:** 28/02/2024

**Time:** 10:00–11:30 CET

**Location:** Dalarnas Hus, Stockholm

### MINUTES

#### 1. Opening of the meeting

Participants were welcomed and meeting opened at 10:10 o'clock. Since the meeting was a joint meeting between Policy Areas (PA) Nutri and Hazards and PA Hazards lacks an appointed chair, it was suggested that PA Nutri's chair Magdalena Dawidowicz would chair the joint meeting. The suggestion was accepted.

#### 2. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved without amendments.

#### 3. Agenda Item 2, Information from the European Commission

DG REGIO representative Johan Magnusson welcomed the initiative of organizing a joint Steering Group meeting. Finding synergies is great and something the EU Strategy for Danube Region (EUSDR) has also experimented with. The EUSDR has a tradition of annual joint meetings of related Priority Areas.

In 2028, the new Multiannual Financial Framework and programme period for EU's regional policy will start. Now is the time for reflections on the current programme. There will be consultations with Interreg-programmes and Macro-Regional Strategies (MRS). In 2025 the new regulatory framework will be drafted.

Part of the reflections is reporting of activities during years 2022 and 2023 in Macro-Regional Strategies to the EU. PA Reports will be asked in March-April and input from Steering Groups will be highly suggested, but not obligatory. It will be important to visualise the results and show stakeholders what has been done.

The annual EU MRS Week will be organised on 12-13 June, as a two-day long live-event. It will be co-organised together with DG MARE, to find synergies with sea basin strategies (maritime

strategies). The event will be interactive with speed dating with different DGs. Youth councils from each MRS will join the event.

DG ENV representative Andrea Bianchini offered updates from EU environmental policies (slides in attachment). Several new legislations are upcoming related to Zero Pollution Action Plan (ZPAP) that are relevant for the Baltic Sea Region and PAs Nutri and Hazards. Those include for example Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive revision, actions on legacy pollution and update on hazardous substances list under Water Framework Directive. Cohesion Policy and MRS could play a role in supporting those topics.

A new Life-project in Italy (Sedremed - Enhanced bioremediation of marine sediments) that was relevant for sediment-topic of the afternoon's workshop had received funding.

Information on several funding opportunities were presented. DG ENV reminded that there is still big financial gap for addressing pollution, and therefore it is important to involve the private sector.

#### 4. Agenda Item 3, Tour-de-Table

Tour-de-Table was moved to the end of the meeting due to lack of time. However, no issues were raised at the end of the meeting either.

#### 5. Agenda Item 4, Information from Baltic Sea Strategy Point

Tom Schumacher from Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) shared that in addition to the report to EU, EUSBSR has internal reporting that was being finalised. The reports will be analysed on how Indicators have been achieved.

Action Plan (AP) update will start during 2024, with a focus on content and topics of PAs. BSP will prepare templates for PAs by the end of summer and PAs will draft new Actions by the end of year. In early 2025 there will be a decision on which PAs will continue (possible that some might be removed or merged together with others). Final adjustments to AP will be made in 2025 and after that the AP will go to EC for approval and be ready for implementation at the beginning of 2026. Important to have in mind with this update: the new AP will be the basis for influencing the new financial framework. What should the policy work focus on, to later on be able to influence the funds? Important to take this update seriously.

#### 6. Agenda Item 5, Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)/Baltic Sea Youth: Information on youth engagement in MRS. Decision on next steps for youth engagement in Steering Groups

Aline Mayr from CBSS presented information about how youth engagement is organised in CBSS, what kind of events and groups it includes, and how it is cooperating with other youth organisations in the region and within EU (presentation in attachment).

PACs presented what kind of steps PA Nutri and Hazards have already taken to engage with the youth. It was also discussed that according to EUSBSR rules of procedure only legal organisations can become observers in Steering Groups, and therefore, the Baltic Sea Youth structure could not be used.

It was suggested to adopt as a decision that PACs will be tasked with identifying a relevant youth organisation that could be invited as an observer to the respective Steering Groups and before that youth representatives could join the meetings as guests. The suggestion and its benefits were discussed, and **the Steering Groups approved the suggestion.**

## 7. Agenda Item 6, Information and discussion point on the EUSBSR Annual Forum

Annual Forum (AF) will take place on 30-31 October in Visby, Sweden. SGs were informed that PACs have submitted total four ideas for workshops (two joint ideas and one specific for PA Hazards and specific to PA Nutri):

1. PA Hazards: seminar together with the Baltic Sea PFAS Network and projects EMPEREST and NonHazCity3: “Let’s talk about PFAS! Connecting PFAS Strategies in the BSR Region”.
2. PA Nutri: Wastewater treatment in touristic towns, together with PA Tourism.
3. PA Hazards + Nutri: Workshop to follow-up on the 2023 workshop on “how to support a sustainable rebuild in Ukraine”.
4. PA Nutri + Hazards together with HELCOM and PA Spatial Planning: Workshop about EUSBSR-HELCOM complementaries. PACs informed the SGs that the workshop about EUSBSR-HELCOM complementaries will have significance for the AP update. It will be the first step in drafting concrete guidelines for how EUSBSR and HELCOM can support each other and what kind of synergies there are. Those guidelines should be included to the AP and will help in drafting Actions and Indicators for both PAs. It will be important to have SG members join the discussion. It was suggested that the workshop could be continued with a follow-up joint SG meeting for drafting the Actions and Indicators.

## 8. Agenda Item 7, Information post 2027 and EUSBSR strategy

SGs were informed that Interreg BSR is willing to organise consultations with both SGs about the post-2027. In order to do that, SGs will have to organise a meeting preferably in May-June and invite Interreg BSR as a guest. Other Interreg-programmes might approach SGs with similar suggestions.

Simultaneously with post-2027 consultations of Interreg-programme the EUSBSR AP update-process will be going on, as already discussed in Agenda point 4. Important to remember, that both processes will support each other.

## 9. AOB and closing of the meeting

No other points were raised for discussion. PAs will organise their separate SG meetings, so no times for next meeting were discussed. It was suggested to use this format of joint SG meeting again in autumn, when the update of Actions will be discussed.

Chair closed the meeting at 11:30 o’clock.

## PARTICIPANTS

Country/role	Organisation	Name
<b>PA Nutri</b>		
Poland (chair)	Ministry of Infrastructure	Magdalena Dawidowicz
Finland	Ministry of the Environment	Henna Rinne
Sweden	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	Josefin Hjort
PAC	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment for Southwest Finland	Elsi Kauppinen
PAC	Polish Waters - State Water Holding	Jan Pryzowicz
<b>PA Hazards</b>		
Sweden	Swedish Ministry of Climate and Enterprise	Anders Wallberg
Finland	Finnish Environment Institute SYKE	Jukka Mehtonen
Poland	Bureau for Chemical Substances	Magdalena Frydrych
PAC	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	Louise Floman
	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	Emma Bjarnås (trainee)
<b>Observers</b>	DG REGIO	Johan Magnusson
	BSP	Tom Schumacher
	HELCOM	Lotta Ruokanen
<b>Guests</b>	CBSS	Aline Mayr
	DG ENV	Andrea Bianchini