

Meeting Minutes

23rd Meeting of the international Steering Committee for the Policy Area on Clean Shipping of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

17 October 2024

Gdynia Maritime University / Uniwersytet Morski w Gdyni, Morska 81/87, 81-225 Gdynia, Poland **all times CEST**

1) Welcome words and Tour de Table 09:00 - 09:10

Chair: *Ms. Edyta Żabicka and Ms. Iwona Chrzęstowska-Kawałek, The Polish Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation, EUSBSR Polish Presidency*

PACs: *Ms. Milla Harju and Mr. Sami Vesterinen, Finnish Transport and Communication Agency*

Prof. Sambor Guze shortly introduced Gdynia Maritime University and co-operation with Ukraine. Curriculum includes also maritime & shipping economy and safety of shipping and dockyards. He also mentioned how Safety and Shipping are important and common areas of interest and how there is always a need for new ideas to be realised to make shipping more effective and safer.

2) Approval of the Agenda and Minutes of the Last Meeting

There was nothing to add to the minutes of the last meeting.

3) Presentation from EUSBSR Polish Presidency

Brief introduction of the topic by Ms. Chrzęstowska-Kawałek/ the Polish Presidency which started in July 2024 with the aim to increase prosperity, also taking into account the situation of the region. It also focuses on increasing the involvement of Ukraine. Polish Presidency aspires to make an effort in the implementation of the action plan and its need for the strategies, external communication and visibility of the strategy.

4) Activities of the Policy Area Coordinator

PAC Ship/ Ms. Harju went through the actions taken by the PACs since last meeting and plans for the near future:

- Sami Vesterinen has started as co-PAC for PA Ship.
- One PA Ship platform.
- Operational Group meeting 8.10.2024
- Visby, Annual Forum 2024. Co-coordinating 2 workshops, one with PA Nutri, one dealing with Ukraine.
- Action Plan update. Path for finalisation.
- Upcoming events:
 - Idea generating workshop Feb 2025
 - Sjöfartens Dag 22.5.2024
 - European Maritime Day Cork 22-23.5.2025
 - EU macro-regional strategies day, last full week of Sept 22.9.2025

• **DG REGIO:** Annual Forum 2025 Gdansk, end of October. Sequency of presidency and sequency of Annual Forum will coincide. 2025-2026 Estonia. Annual Forum 2026 in Estonia.

Ms. Harju shared about the Operational Group meeting, and briefly on the Polish project Idea Generation Workshop which was held the day before, 16.10.2024.

5) EUSBSR Action Plan Update

PAC Ship/ Mr. Sami Vesterinen (SV) introduced the Action Plan update process with extracts from the template provided by the Baltic Sea Action Point (BSP).

Particular emphasis was paid on the indicators and examples of them.

The objective of this agenda item was to collect comments and ideas from the Steering Group.

Main objective: The Baltic Sea Region to become a model region for clean shipping.

DE: Thought that term "clean shipping" is a bit narrow, and suggested "sustainable shipping". DE also pointed out that we should pay attention to the interface between shipping and ports - we need ports to have clean facilities, which support clean shipping.

FI: Agreed that clean shipping is nice wording, effective, but felt that it feels better to change it. Baltic Sea has been a role model for global issues, shipping is global and we are showing an example for the rest of the world - this is why we should also keep in mind that the objectives we have in this region might be upscaled at global level. Also, we should think from the global perspective.

Action 1: Support measures including digitalisation in reducing emissions from shipping

DG REGIO: Suggested removing the Zed, and remain in British English.

FI: Pointed out that the word "digitalisation" has been there for 15 years, and encouraged the group to think what other solutions are there. Wording is good as it is very wide, but there might be a reason to change it.

PAC Safe: Asked if there is a need to have "including digitalisation" there?

DG REDGIO: Pointed out that similarly, it does not mention AI.

DE: Pondered that still, digitalisation is still considered "hot", e.g., on interfaces between ship and port, as there is still a lot of development taking place.

Youth: Brought some comments from the youth into the groups consideration: Include harmonisation of regulation - ensure that national and regional policies related to shipping and maritime pollution are harmonised and based on scientific research. It was wished that it should be made visible that we are a model region!

In regard to digitalisation: the CBSS Youth organise regular hackathons for sustainable development, AI etc. - if there is anything you would like to include in one of the hackthons, they should be let know.

DE: Considered that in regard to the "emissions" term - it's very broad, as it includes air pollution, water pollution, and noise pollution, therefore perhaps it should be kept as it is.

Action 2: Support research on emerging thematic challenges related to clean shipping and its impact on the environment and wildlife in the Baltic Sea.

PAC Safe: Acknowledged that we have the term "clean shipping" here again which was also mentioned in the first action, if it is to be changed, for the coherency let's change it in the same way with each action.

It was also stated that the action is very long, and suggested whether it could be shorter.

It was also said that this is the action which is closest to other PAs - environment and wildlife - it would be interesting to send to those PAs who work in similar thing, and see how you could be more complementary or work together.

FI: Reminded the group that research projects are important, as we need research in order to have meaningful actions. It was suggested that we could promote some kind of combination - few research papers on real issues about money, fuel, ports and shipping cooperation. We could be ones to foster the kind of research that it needed before the next steps. It was pondered, whether "wildlife" as a term is needed.

PAC Ship: Pondered that there must be a reason why they wanted to include wildlife even though they used the term "environment" which should include it. It was then asked if "marine life" would work instead?

DG REGIO: Pointed out that the order of the words should be taken into account. Is the word thematic needed in this action, should it be taken away?

PAC Safe: Stated that the term "Baltic Sea" should be taken away, doesn't need to be in the action.

DE: Stated that the term "sustainable shipping" should be used here; marine pollution includes marine emissions. Socio-economic aspects should be considered - cost benefit.

Suggestion: "Support research on challenges to sustainable shipping and its impact on the environment"

Action 3: Support development of shore-side facilities to enhance clean shipping measures including infrastructure for climate-neutral and clean fuels

FI: Opened the discussion by stating that climate neutral is a good idea, but it would be important to include "carbon hand print" in this discussion, particularly when we are talking about port facilities - they should also be informing what they are doing to decrease their carbon footprint.

It was stated that otherwise, the topics are good.

PAC Safe: Stated that maybe this one could be shortened a bit, and also that climate neutral fuels are quite far ahead, we suggest zero emission fuels.

DG REGIO: Suggested to take out the "measures".

Additional comments

DG REGIO: Continued saying that the indicators are very important, as they show the value added to the world.

It was stated that the terminology and pathway should be clear in the new action plan. The Strategy is not about the money, but the cooperation included, which should be made evident.

Ideally in the end the action plan will be able to use as a tool for monitoring the success.

DE/HELCOM: The member reflected that both as a SG member and a HELCOM operator's perspective is to have a clean Baltic Sea, and this should be used as an opportunity to show how it all plays together: HELCOM is a mechanism to implement the measures, and PA Ship can play an important tool in supporting that work.

DG REGIO: Stated that there are no "EU rules for MRS", when it comes to indicators and Interreg BSR. Strategy and the actors should show their value added in the larger picture.

PAC Safe: Suggested that maybe Ship should widen the scope and consider cooperation with other intergovernmental organisations (other than HELCOM). When phrasing the actions, we spend time to consider thinking about them next to each other, are they different, are they covering the topical challenges, and are the crucial ones that did not exist 15 years ago there?

As for the indicators: how do we measure cooperation, how do we include new members of EU family in?

Considering DG REGIO's words of there really not being any rules, that means that we can connect ppl without thinking about the rules, as there are no pecking rules and we can include both the industry and other players.

This is how cooperation can be increased.

DE: Pointed out that the PAs trigger cooperation, make links to projects, and e.g. generate tangible results such as what has been done with the innovation (idea generation) workshops. The PAs get people excited about the issues and this generates a lot of potential, and this is where I see the role of the PAs.

Interreg BSR: Stated that in general, what Interreg BSR is looking at is how you'd like to have the change - not just increasing cooperation, but the added value of the work.

Youth/CBSS: Suggested that we should be aligning the efforts e.g. with HELCOM, then we could be showing e.g. to Interreg as well what are the goals we want to work with, what is important to us.

FI: Reminded of the great work in this area on IMO perspective.

DG REGIO: Stated that the strategy should be embedded and supported. 80% of the funding goes to actions supporting the strategy. There is no carrot or stick on embedding them.

PAC Safe: Stated that as embedding is taking place in the national or sub-regional level and it would be interesting to gain Interreg funding with other funding.

DE/HELCOM: Finished by saying that from HELCOM's point of view - it's important to align the work with our Action Plan. PA Ship's work is seen as triggering and supporting to HELCOM work. A lot is covered already, but resources are needed to implement the BSAP, so resources should not be used to come up with new objectives, but more support on implementation. Projects can then reach out to Interreg with these goals, which is crucial for governments who don't have resources otherwise.

6) Update on the Common Structure of the Steering Group Rules of Procedure 11:00 - 11:10

Ms. Harju informed the group about the Common Structure Update, which had taken place in June. The key aspect was to allow shorter time for decision making, i.e. from current 10 days down to minimum of five.

DE was happy with keeping it as 10 working days, FI agreed to bring it down to 5, as did PL. PA Safe then suggested to have it as seven (7), as it allows a full week of working days (e.g. a holiday) and there would still be time to act upon it once back in office.

The present SG members agreed that we will consult the rest of the Steering Group by bringing it down to 7 working days.

Ms. Harju Informed that in the Common Structure, SG meetings are encouraged to be held online; whereas in the PA Ship Rules of Procedure, it has at some point changed to have one on site and one online. It was then asked from the members, whether we should keep the way it is, or should we change.

Concerns: Because of few last minute cancellations, many participants asked for the hybrid meetings.

FI: Agreed to hold online meetings only, but acknowledged the importance to have also on site meetings - therefore hybrid meetings are suggested.

GE: Also supported the idea to allow hybrid meetings.

PL: Acknowledged their special situation now since the EUSBSR Presidency. Stated that they are also willing to hold online meetings, but also online and on site is agreeable.

DG REGIO: Appreciated of having the PA Safe and Ship meetings back-to-back. It was stated that it is difficult to interact with new people online, but once you know each other, the online meetings are fine.

Decision: Three of the member states were present and agreed for the hybrid meetings and the final decision will be done with the silent procedure.

Steering Group meeting with the Annual Forum meeting time suggested.

FI: Passed warm greetings from Anita Mäkinen, whose last meeting this would have been.

Ms. Harju acknowledged Ms. Mäkinen's long membership with PA Ship with gratitude. She is wished well.

7) Any other business

DG REGIO: The Commission publishes a report on the four Macro-Regional Strategies every two years, which also includes a more detailed “staff working document” on each strategy. As there will now a new college of Commissioners, the report is foreseen to be published early next year. This time, the aim is to have have a somewhat shorter report than before.

DE: Ms. Heitmuller invites the group to join the HELCOM Maritime Working Group, which is holding its meeting the next week.

NO and FI / Ms. Rosenberg-Kurki were warmly welcomed to the Steering Group.

8) Closing the meeting

The meeting was closed at 11.25 with an introduction for Ms. Kosolova / Interreg BSR who would be giving a presentation between the PA Ship and Safe Steering Group meetings.

Next meeting will be held in spring 2025 online.