

Draft minutes from the 26th Meeting of the International Steering Committee for the Policy Area on Maritime Safety and Security of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – Formal part (online meeting over Skype)

1. Welcome words and Tour de Table

Emelie Tingström (PA Safe PAC, Swedish Maritime Administration) provided welcome words, followed by the brief introduction of the meeting participants. This included e.g. descriptions of the SG members' areas of interest in terms of PA Safe Action items in the EUSBSR. Overall, all four actions were considered important to promote safety and security of maritime transportations in the Baltic Sea region.

2. Approval of the agenda and minutes of the last meeting

Ms. Tingström introduced the meeting agenda and minutes of the last meeting. The SG members approved both documents. At this point, she also provided thanks and greetings to the previous Danish PACs of this policy area.

3. Activities of the Policy Area Coordinators

Valtteri Laine (PA Safe PAC, Finnish Transport and Communications Agency) presented the PAC activities using the summary distributed before the meeting. The main achievements described were the application for Interreg BSR funding for the PAC work, the review of Interreg BSR applications related to PA Safe, the updated way of working of the steering group and getting the new rules of procedures in place and approved.

4. PA Safe Rules of Procedure

Mr. Laine took the Steering Group through the Rules of Procedure (RoP) article by article. Articles 3 to 6 explain the role and responsibility of the SG and the PACs. The order of the rotating presidency of the SG (the same as for the EUSBSR chair) of Article 5, as can be seen in the meeting presentation slide 13,

5. PA Safe meeting structure

Ulf Siwe (PA Safe PAC, Swedish Maritime Administration) described the initial ideas regarding the new structure for the PA Safe SG meetings. The aim is to distinguish the SG meetings in two interlinked parts: i) Formal SG meetings and ii) Operational meetings. In this new meeting concept, the role Formal meetings is to address administrative tasks, such as policy questions and guidance to the PAC work, whereas the Operational meetings would focus on new project initiatives, financing questions, etc. To support the integration of this new concept to the work of PA Safe, the aim is also to establish fluent communication and consultation channels between the meeting groups, introduce the idea across the EU Baltic Sea countries through specific events, and involve the PA Safe Presidency on this work. Mr. Siwe further noted that the first event in this context will be organized in Finland, back-to-back with the EUSBSR Annual Forum in September 2022

To conclude, the overall purpose of this new meeting concept is to support the implementation of the EUSBSR in the PA Safe work across the Baltic Sea region, including strengthening cooperation with the stakeholders.

BREAK

6. Discussion on meeting structure

DEU: Support for the new meeting structure. However, the current resources in Germany are somewhat limited for this work, which could result in some practical challenges for its execution. **DNK:** Support for the new meeting structure, but the associated practical procedure needs clarification. **POL:** The new meeting structure is challenging for Poland due to limited resources to this work. The topic needs to be discussed more in detail together with the competent ministry of the country. **EST:** Support for the new meeting structure. However, this concept still needs to be tested in practice to see how it works and know the level of commitment in the stakeholder groups. Additionally, the funding questions need to be addressed at early stage of its implementation. **LVA:** Agree with the points of Estonia. **FIN:** Support for the new meeting structure and points of Estonia. Additionally, both meetings should be carried out at the same day and open to SG members in case they want to attend Operational meetings as well.

Mr. Siwe referred to the identified challenges as follows:

- **DNK:** The procedure for implementing the new meeting structure into practical settings is still in progress. Generally, the idea is that the input for new project initiatives comes from the Formal meetings (what is needed), while its practical execution would be discussed and executed in the Operational meetings (how it can be done). On the other hand, this could also be a two-way procedure. In other words, the Operational meetings could also provide input to the Formal meetings, focusing on project results and associated recommendations. These could be further used as a base for e.g. policy recommendations.
- **POL:** It is up to each country to decide how much resources they are willing to allocate for this task.
- **EST:** The idea of testing the new meeting concept is very good. The associated procedure could thus be based on the principle of continuous improvement to reach a high level of maturity one day in this context. Regarding the financial matters, PA Safe will have a specific budget for this purpose that should cover the costs.
- **FIN:** Agree, the members of the SG group should be able to attend both meetings and these should be organized back-to-back at same day. However, it would be beneficial for the policy implementation that the Operational meetings are primarily carried out in traditional format instead of online applications.

7. Decision: PA Safe Meeting Structure

The new meeting structure will be adopted to the work of PA Safe for the next three years (2022, 2023 and 2024). For this purpose, the PACs will prepare an initial procedure to clarify the content of Formal and Operational meetings, including their alignment with one another. During the test period, this procedure will be updated and reviewed on a regular basis taken into account the identified issues and proposals for improvements.

8. Any Policy suggestions from flagships

Mr. Siwe noted that currently there are no suggestions from the Flagships.

Following the discussions, it was concluded that in the future there could be specific sub-groups in the PA Safe SG consortium to address the suggestions from the Flagships. If these suggestions are found to be useful, the aim of the sub-groups would be to prepare policy inputs accordingly. The participation in these sub-groups would be on voluntary basis depending on the interest in topic and available resources. The PACs could also help with the practical matters in this context. However, the final decision about the policy input should involve the entire PA Safe SG.

9. Any other business

Mr. Siwe shared information about the ongoing projects and new project proposals in the context of PA Safe.

The ongoing or recent projects include Speed up Re-Surveying, STM Balt Safe and R-Mode Baltic. Their results have been presented in several international forums, such as IMO, HELCOM and IALA, and received positive feedback from the audience.

In the recent Interreg BSR call, there were 11 new projects proposals that aim to contribute to PA Safe. Four of them could also be considered as potential new Flagship projects (Baltic Sea E-Nav, MaDaMe, OpenRisk-2 and BlueDataService) in case they are approved by the Interreg BSR Monitoring Committee. Additionally, in the Interreg CB there is a project proposal BalMarGrav that has a lot of potential.

Finally, Mr. Siwe noted that in many current project applications, the Lead Partners are from different countries of the Baltic Sea area. This can be seen as a positive indication of the growing interest in maritime safety and security throughout the region.

10. Wrap-up and Conclusion

Ms. Tingström wrap-up the day and concluded that all agenda items were covered during the meeting. She also elaborated briefly the next day meeting agenda, should the SG members are willing to participate. Additionally, she informed the participants that in 2023 Sweden will have the presidency of PA Safe, followed by Latvia (2024) and Poland (2025).

11. Meeting closure

Ms. Tingström closed the meeting and welcomed the PA Safe SG to the next meeting that will take place physically in Sweden at the end of this year. The Operational meeting of this policy area will also be conducted on a same day.