

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region National Coordinators Group

1st Meeting under the Estonian Presidency, 2025-2026

Date: 11/09/2025

Time: 09:00-10:30 EEST

Location: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islandi väljak 1, 15049, Tallinn, Estonia

MINUTES

1. Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda

The meeting was opened by the Presidency at 09:09.

The new members of the NC group from Latvia, Germany and Poland were introduced.

The agenda was approved without the amendments.

2. Council Conclusions on the fifth report on the implementation of EU Macro-regional Strategies

Presidency presented the agenda point, and Denmark presented the overview of the draft Council Conclusions to be adopted on 16 September 2025 by the General Affairs Council.

The Council Conclusions are based on the report on the implementation of macro-regional strategies, released by the European Commission in May 2025. The negotiations of the draft Council Conclusions focused, among others, on more inclusive approach towards neighbouring states and candidate countries. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the Strategies need more visibility and effective communication of the results. It was also discussed to increase the interval for publishing of MRS reports to three years (currently two), in order to allow more time for implementation and better visibility of the results.

The NCG took note of the information provided. It was noted that the Council Conclusions provide continuity to the Strategy, so it is a good opportunity to coordinate in the NCG the input and messages to include. It was appreciated that the topics of cohesion policy, Interreg, security and resilience, as well as measures to support Ukraine were reflected in the Conclusions.

3. Norway participation in the EUSBSR

Presidency presented the agenda point. Norway has expressed interest in being invited to the NCG meetings on a standing basis with a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway to Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland (former Presidency) and Estonia (current Presidency). Based on the NCG Rules of Procedure Article 2, Estonian Presidency is ready to invite Norway to all meetings during the Estonian presidency as a guest. The Presidency also proposed for the subsequent presidencies to invite Norway during their presidency terms. The NCG took note of this information and welcomed inviting Norway to the NCG meetings on a standing basis. The Presidency and the BSP are to communicate this decision encouraging cooperation and participation also on the PA level.

4. Action Plan update

The BSP presented the list of items to update in the Action Plan governance chapter. The proposal is a continuation of the version presented under the Polish presidency. The proposed updates concern Action Plan chapter 1 “The scope of the EUSBSR Action Plan”, namely Background, Strategic context, Objectives and sub-objectives, Actors and modes of operations, Funding and Monitoring and evaluation.

The NCG took note of the proposed changes and agreed on the list of items presented for the update. Based on this list, the BSP shall draft a proposal with more concrete wording.

5. Annual Forum 2027

Presidency presented the agenda point. Denmark communicated to the NCG on 7 August 2025 that it will not be able to organise the Annual Forum during Danish EUSBSR Presidency term 2026-2027 due to restricted resources and the necessity to prioritise. Denmark nevertheless remains committed to holding the EUSBSR Presidency 2026-2027.

NCG took note of this information and agreed to consider the issue in the respective ministries. The item will be further discussed during the future NCG meetings.

6. EUSBSR participation in the MRS & SBS days in Brussels

Presidency presented the agenda point. The EUSBSR Presidency Trio was invited to represent the Strategy at the annual High Level Group meeting and the Trio Macro-regional Strategies Presidencies meeting, organised back-to-back with the Macro-regional and Sea-basin Strategies Days in Brussels on 23-25 September 2025. Among the topics on the agenda are future of cohesion policy, enlargement, efficient governance, as well as the role of MRS in the new financial period and MRS visibility stakeholder commitment. Presidency and the BSP prepared draft speaking points to be delivered at the meeting and asked NCG for additional input, if any. Additional input is to be shared with the NCG and the BSP via email in due time for finalisation of the speaking points.

7. AOB and date for next meeting

- Poland informed about progress in preparations for the Annual Forum 2025 in October in Sopot. The Annual Forum will take place on 29-30 October 2025, and the day of Cities and Regions organised by BSSSC will take place on 28 October in connection with the Forum. There are already over 400 registered participants, and close to 600 is expected to be welcomed in Sopot. The Forum will host 16 workshops covering key thematic priorities of the Strategy. The Forum will also have the networking village, providing possibility to chat and connect with the EUSBSR Policy Areas.
- Next NCG meeting will take place on 16 October online, and the next one - on 30 October in Sopot back-to-back with the Annual Forum.

The meeting was concluded at 10:33.

PARTICIPANTS

Denmark	Peter Wilhelm Linde (NC) (online) DK embassy rep	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Estonia	Tõnis Nirk (NC, Chair) Andreas Sepp (Deputy NC)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Finland	Helena Tuuri (NC)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Germany	Sven Freitag (NC) Christine Gockel (Deputy NC)	Federal Foreign Office Federal Foreign Office
Latvia	Kristine Cukure (NC) Santa Karina Norvele (Deputy NC)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Lithuania	Albinas Zananavičius (NC) Modesta Vanesa Viskontė (Deputy NC)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Poland	Katarzyna Barcikowska (NC) Anna Korolec-Mońko (Deputy NC)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sweden	Anna Hagström (NC)	Prime Minister's Office
	Juhani Ailio Viktoriiia Hladii Kirsi Ahlman	Baltic Sea Strategy Point Baltic Sea Strategy Point Baltic Sea Strategy Point
	Petri Koistinen Blagovestka Riiser	European Commission, DG Regio European Commission, DG Regio
	Elena Kolosova Eeva Rantama	Interreg Baltic Sea Region Interreg Baltic Sea Region