

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region National Coordinators Group

2nd Meeting under the Estonian Presidency, 2025-2026

Date: 16/10/2025
Time: 10:30-13:00 EEST
Location: Online

MINUTES

1. Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda

The meeting was opened by the Presidency at 10:40. Norway was warmly welcomed to the NCG meetings and the representative introduced themselves. The agenda was approved without any amendments.

2. Post-2027 programming

The Presidency and the BSP presented the agenda point and the draft of a joint NCG letter to the European Commission, aiming to advocate for the inclusion of macro-regional strategies in the forthcoming Interreg and cohesion policy regulations for 2028-2034.

The discussion recalled that the draft MFF regulation for 2028-2034, published by the European Commission in July 2025, does not include references to macro-regional strategies, as featured in the current 2021-2027 framework. It was emphasised that for the development of the Baltic Sea Region and impact of the EU funds in the region maintaining references to the EUSBSR is essential.

The NCG expressed strong agreement on the importance of ensuring that the needs of the Baltic Sea Region are reflected in the future funding framework. Members agreed that, in light of both the structure of the MFF negotiations and the cross-cutting nature of the issue, a broader and more inclusive approach will be required. The discussion will be continued.

3. BSP report April-September 2025

The NCG reviewed the BSP progress report and expressed satisfaction with its content. It was agreed that a letter of feedback from the NCG will accompany the report to the Programme Secretariat.

Presidency will circulate a draft of the letter following the meeting. National Coordinators will provide comments, after which the letter will be amended and submitted to a silence procedure. The letter is to be finalised and approved by the end of the month.

4. BSP Work Programme 2025-2026

The BSP presented the BSP Work Programme for the period October 2025 - September 2026. The BSP reminded that the Work Programme serves as the main tool through which the NCG guides and monitors the activities of the BSP, and that it is approved annually in line with the BSP's technical support framework under the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme.

Members expressed satisfaction with the content of the Work Programme. The NCG agreed that the Work Programme is in line with the priorities set by the group. It was appreciated that the Programme takes into account the importance of being forward-looking and of following relevant developments in EU processes. It was also appreciated that the Programme includes activities to support Norway's closer cooperation with the Strategy.

The NCG approved the Work Programme without amendments.

5. Action Plan update

The BSP presented the proposed formulations for Chapter 1 of the updated EUSBSR Action Plan, outlining the strategic context and objectives of the Strategy. Members expressed general satisfaction with the style and direction of the draft and several indicated willingness to contribute through written comments.

A large part of the comments received during the meeting concerned structural improvements, while additional content-related feedback is to be sent in writing. The BSP may start working on structural adjustments immediately and will take the forthcoming content comments into account once received.

Members are invited to submit written comments by 24 October. The Presidency will review the inputs, identify any potentially sensitive issues, and prepare these for discussion at the next meeting. Following that discussion, a revised version of Chapter 1 will be prepared and circulated for online consideration in November.

6. Annual Forum 2027

The NCG continued discussions on identifying the organising country for the 2027 EUSBSR Annual Forum. It was recalled that, according to the NCG Rules of Procedure, the Presidency is to organise the Forum during the second part of its term or by the end of the same calendar year. Denmark had informed the NCG that it will not be able to host the Forum during its 2026-2027 Presidency.

Some members indicated potential interest in hosting the 2027 Forum; however, internal consultations are still ongoing before any formal expressions of interest can be made. Members

were invited to share their expressions of interest by October 20th, and the matter will be revisited at the NCG meeting.

7. AOB and date for next meeting

Next NCG meeting will take place on 30 October in Sopot back-to-back with the Annual Forum.

The meeting was concluded at 12:58.

PARTICIPANTS

Denmark	Peter Wilhelm Linde (NC) (online)	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)	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) Krzymowski Jan	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sweden	Anna Hagström (NC) Anna Tofften (Deputy NC)	Prime Minister's Office Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure
	Juhani Ailio Anja Karppinen 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	Interreg Baltic Sea Region