

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region National Coordinators Group

7th Meeting under the Estonian Presidency, 2025-2026

Date: 14/01/2026
Time: 10:00–12:00 EET / (9:00-11:00 CET)
Location: Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

1. Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda

The meeting was opened by the Presidency at 10:04. The Presidency informed that the new Danish NC representative joined the group as of 1 January 2026.

The agenda was adopted without any amendments.

2. Action Plan update

The Presidency presented the agenda point and the draft text of the Chapter 1, which was prepared taking into account the previously agreed amendments discussed at the National Coordinators Group (NCG) meeting on 16 December 2025. The NCG went through the text section by section, agreeing on the amendments and clarifying the content. It was agreed that the final text will be put for formal approval with the Member States via the silence procedure, once all Member States have completed internal review nationally.

3. Funding the new Action Plan

The BSP presented an internal, non-binding advocacy paper consolidating earlier analysis on the role of the Strategy in the post-2027 financial framework, noting the absence of explicit macro-regional references in the draft regulation and the resulting risks for implementation capacity and results. The paper intends to support an informed and timely advocacy, particularly given that overall funding for supporting the Strategy implementation have remained nominally unchanged since 2015, resulting in a significant real-terms decrease. The discussion underlined that while Interreg remains an important entry point, effective implementation requires broader access to other funding instruments, with programme-level allocation decisions being decisive.

The NCG welcomed the effort and comprehensive argumentation in regard to the future of the MRS approach. The paper was seen as useful for both official and informal advocacy,

including engagement with programme monitoring committees, and as a living document that can evolve alongside negotiations, allowing to remain prepared for emerging windows of opportunity. The Presidency concluded the item by inviting written feedback and suggestions on the paper by 30 January 2026.

4. AOB and date for next meeting

- DG REGIO representative informed that the European Commission launched a public consultation on the EU Arctic policy on 23 December 2025 with the view of collecting input for the policy.
- DG REGIO representative informed that on 18 December 2025 the European Council invited the Commission, in cooperation with Member States, to develop an EU macro-regional strategy for the Atlantic by June 2027, taking into account the existing Atlantic Maritime Strategy and the Atlantic Action Plan.
- DG REGIO representative informed that the personnel changes will take place in DG REGIO EUSBSR team as of week 4/2026.
- BSP informed about planning of the live NC-PAC meeting in the spring 2026 in Denmark. The place and date will be informed by the BSP in due time.

The next NCG meeting will take place on 18 February 2025 in the morning.

The meeting was closed by the Presidency at 11:38.



PARTICIPANTS

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|-----------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Denmark | Bjarke Brix Olsen (NC) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Estonia | Tõnis Nirk (NC, Presidency) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| | Andreas Sepp (Deputy NC) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Finland | Helena Tuuri (NC) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Germany | Sven Freitag (NC) | Federal Foreign Office |
| | Christine Gockel (Deputy NC) | Federal Foreign Office |
| Latvia | Kristine Cukure (NC) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Lithuania | Modesta Vanesa Viskontė (Deputy NC) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Norway | Jens Erik Grøndahl (NC) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Poland | Katarzyna Barcikowska (NC) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| | Anna Korolec-Monko (Deputy NC) | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Sweden | Anna Hagström (NC) | Prime Minister's Office |
| | Anna Tofften (Deputy NC) | Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure |
| | Juhani Ailio | Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) |
| | Viktorija Hladii | Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) |
| | Kirsi Ahlman | Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) |
| | Tom Schumacher | Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) |
| | Petri Koistinen | European Commission, DG Regio |
| | Blagovestka Riiser | European Commission, DG Regio |
| | Elena Kolosova | Interreg Baltic Sea Region Secretariat |