

## EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region National Coordinators Group

### 9th Meeting under the Estonian Presidency, 2025-2026

**Date:** 22/04/2026  
**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 at 10:05.  
The agenda was adopted without amendments.

##### 2. Cooperation with Interreg Baltic Sea Region post-2027

The BSP presented the agenda point and informed on the progress of advocacy activities in the Strategy in preparation to the 2028-2034 EU funding period. The BSP and the Presidency participated in the Monitoring Committee meeting of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme to present the updated Action Plan and to discuss prospects for further cooperation with the funding programmes. In addition, the BSP also presented the Action Plan to the Interreg Central Baltic Secretariat. Furthermore, the BSP informed about participating in the mid-term evaluation interview of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme. Finally, the BSP also informed about the ongoing work on advocacy messages and cooperation with other macro-regional strategies. The NCG discussed possibilities to strengthen engagement with programmes and to improve national advocacy efforts. Several Member States highlighted national stakeholder meetings as a useful platform for promoting the Action Plan and advocacy messages.

The Presidency concluded that the offer from the BSP to support national-level advocacy remains available and encouraged the NCs to make use of it. The NCG took note of the next steps outlined by the BSP.

### **3. Update of the NCG Rules of Procedure**

The Presidency and the BSP presented the agenda point and the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure following earlier discussions and written comments within the group. The proposed amendments include inclusion of Norway as a Member State, linguistic adjustments, clarification of the role of the Presidency and National Coordinators in the organisation of the Annual Forum and streamlining of the annexes. The NCG discussed different options regarding Article 11 and the formulation concerning deviations in organising the Annual Forum.

The Presidency concluded that the revised text will be circulated with the National Coordinators for written procedure in order to present the compromise proposal.

### **4. PA reporting 2025**

The BSP presented the agenda point and the summary of the Policy Area reports for 2025. It was noted that the summary remains in draft form as one report is still pending. The BSP highlighted key observations, including the continuing importance of stakeholder platforms, active Policy Area support of Interreg projects, and the need to strengthen the transition from project results to policy-level impact. The NCG discussed the approach to providing feedback to the Policy Areas and possibility of sharing the summaries of findings with the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Monitoring Committee.

The Presidency concluded that further work would continue on the feedback approach and communication of results.

### **5. BSP report**

The BSP presented the report for the period 1 October 2025 - 30 March 2026. The main highlights of the reporting period included the finalisation of the Action Plan, development of advocacy messages, strengthening of cooperation with stakeholders and Policy Area Coordinators, and progress on Norway's membership process. The NCG acknowledged the work carried out by the BSP. Reflections were shared on the lessons learned from the Action Plan update process.

The NCG took note of the report and discussed the content of the Feedback form to Interreg Baltic Sea Region.

### **6. AOB and date for next meeting**

- The Presidency informed about participation in the preparatory meeting to the 4 MRS Trio Presidencies meeting coming on 7 July 2026 in Brussels. The cross-MRS Trio Presidencies meeting is organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the EUSDR in cooperation with DG REGIO, and the planned agenda topics include macro-regional strategies in the upcoming EU funding period 2028-2034 and the common messaging and advocacy for macro-regional strategies towards MFF 2028-2034. The NCG took note of the information and exchanged on the feasibility of joint messaging. As the next step, the BSP and the Presidency will



prepare, based on the existing EUSBSR internal advocacy materials, a draft set of non-binding common messages, circulate them with the NCG and share with the other MRS by May 15th. The EUSDR is to produce a consolidated version of the messages until June 1st.

- DG REGIO representative informed that as a result of the EU Council SMOR Working Party meeting from April 21<sup>th</sup> 2026, the draft Council Conclusions on including Norway in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was approved. Next, the document will be considered and subsequently adopted by the EU Economic and Financial Affairs Council ECOFIN.
- DG REGIO representative informed that the MRS and SBS Days date has been adjusted to 7-9 July 2026.
- The Presidency informed that the next meeting would take place on 11 May at 19:00 in the working dinner format.

The meeting was concluded at 12:00.

## PARTICIPANTS

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