EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
National Coordinators Group

1st Meeting under the Danish Presidency, 2026-2027

Date: 28/09/2026
Time: 16:00-18:00 CET
Location: Asiatisk Plads 2, Copenhagen (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

MINUTES

1. **Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda**

   The meeting was opened by the Presidency at 16:04. The Presidency welcomed new NCG members from Finland, Latvia and Denmark to the group.

   The agenda was adopted without amendments.

2. **Policy Area Safe and Ship Coordinators**

   The Presidency presented the agenda point and informed the NCG about the successor Policy Area Coordinators (PACs) in Policy Areas Safe and Ship. Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom and Policy Area Safe PAC Swedish Maritime Administration informed about their withdrawal from the coordinating role in January and April 2026 respectively. Furthermore, Sweden informed the Presidency that it will not be able to continue as Policy Area Coordinator in PA Safe. Following the selection process facilitated by the Baltic Sea Strategy Point, the PA Safe Steering Group nominated a new coordinator Norway, represented by Norwegian Coastal Administration. Successor organisation shall take over the coordination of both PA Ship and PA Safe from the withdrawing PAC organisation as of 1 January 2027. Finland informed that the identified successor coordinator in Policy Areas Ship and Safe as of 1 January 2027 will be Kotka Maritime Research Centre.

   The NCG took note of the information and approved the updated PAC list.

3. **Annual Forum**

   The Presidency presented the agenda point and informed that no applications had been received by the deadline of the targeted call for organising the Annual Forum 2027. One Member State informed about potential interest from an organisation in hosting the Forum, with further details upcoming at a later stage.

   The Interreg Baltic Sea Region Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat representative clarified that any changes to the use of funds earmarked for the Forum would require a decision from the programme's Monitoring Committee. Should the Forum not take place, alternative

proposals would need to address the functions it was intended to fulfil, namely communicating the Strategy and its achievements, stimulating policy discussions, sharing results and providing opportunities for stakeholder networking. Written input would need to be submitted three weeks before the Monitoring Committee meeting, which is scheduled at the end of November. The Strategy representatives could be invited to present the matter at the meeting.

The NCG took note of the information. The Presidency concluded that the potential interest in organising the Forum would be explored further and the matter reassessed, considering the time constraints.

4. Update of the EUSBSR Guidelines for Annual Forum organisers

The Presidency and the BSP presented the draft of the updated Guidelines for Annual Forum organisers. The BSP noted that the revisions reflected previous NCG discussions and feedback from the Strategy stakeholders. The changes further clarified the purpose of the Annual Forum as a Strategy event and provided guidance on stakeholder engagement. A new chapter on funding and two additional annexes were introduced to better support future organisers in preparing the necessary documentation.

Minor wording adjustments were proposed to clarify that Interreg Baltic Sea Region funding is provided on a project/application basis and to soften the formulation concerning partners.

The NCG approved the updated Guidelines with the proposed wording adjustments.

5. BSP Work Programme 2026-2027

The BSP presented its draft Work Programme for October 2026-September 2027. The main priorities for the next 12 months include funding dialogues and guidance, improved internal communication, implementation examples and communication of the updated Action Plan. The BSP also outlined plans for more frequent BSP-PAC calls, wider engagement of funding programmes, and a review of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The work programme contents remains subject to adjustment throughout its validity by decision of the National Coordinators Group should other priorities emerge.

The NCG took note of the draft. The Presidency concluded that the approval of the programme is to be finalised at a later stage once the details on the next Annual Forum are clarified.

6. Funding updates

The BSP and the Presidency presented the agenda point. The BSP outlined the status of post-2027 negotiations, relevance for the Strategy and advocacy opportunities currently available.

The NCG discussed using the updated Action Plan in the future funds programming and strengthening dialogue with the funding programmes. The BSP highlighted the need to continue or launch new dialogues with programme Managing Authorities to assess the Action Plan's relevance to their programming, with support from the National Coordinators, Steering Groups and other national stakeholders.

The NCG took note of the information and the BSP support on the matter.

7. AOB

- Norway informed about the upcoming national Strategy kick-off event in Oslo on 16 October 2026. The session will include a high-level political part including Norway's Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Strategy Presidency and the European Commission, followed by an interactive discussion on the Policy Area work in the Strategy and the engagement of Norwegian stakeholders in the Strategy work.
- Norway informed that the Strategy national coordination will move to the department of the EU/EEA affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as of November 1, 2026. Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development of Norway will remain deputy NC.
- DG REGIO representative informed that the EU Arctic Strategy is expected in the coming weeks of October.

The meeting was closed at 17:54.

PARTICIPANTS

Denmark *(Presidency)*	Bjarke Brix Olsen Vilma Lewis-Clemmensen	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NC)
Estonia	Andreas Sepp	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NC)
Finland	Helena Tuuri Anne Saloranta	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NC)
Germany	Sven Freitag	Federal Foreign Office (NC)
Latvia	Solvita Sāre Santa Karina Norvele	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NC)
Lithuania	Albinas Zananavičius Modesta Vanesa Viskontė	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NC)
Norway	Jens Erik Grøndahl Blagovestka Riiser	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NC) Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (Deputy NC)
Poland	Anna Korolec-Monko	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NC)
Sweden	Anna Hagström	Prime Minister's Office (NC)
	Juhani Ailio Viktoriia Hladii Kirsi Ahlman Tom Schumacher Anja Karppinen	Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP)
	Petri Koistinen Nina Kvello	European Commission, DG Regio
	Elena Kolosova *(agenda items 1,2,3,4,5)*	Interreg Baltic Sea Region Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat