Meeting of the Steering Group of the Policy Area TRANSPORT

(2nd in 2026 / online)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

October 29 2026, 11:30-14:00 (CET)

Welcome words and tour de table

PAC Annabel Keerd (Ministry of Climate, Estonia) opened the meeting at 11:30.

- Tour de Table

Participants: Ms Miglė Panasenkienė (PAC, Transport Innovation Association), Ms Annabel Keerd (Lead PAC, Ministry of Climate, Estonia), Mr Teemo Toomsalu (Ministry of Climate, Estonia), Mr Mikael Nyberg (Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland), Ms Gudrun John-Ruff (Federal Ministry for Digital & Transport, Germany), Mr Jānis Laivenieks (Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia), Mr Dmitrij Zadojenko (Ministry of Transport and Communications, Lithuania), Mr Marc Binzenhoefer (Interrecherche, quest), Mr Stefan Zickgraf (Interrecherche, quest). Mr Hubert Kurlej (Ministry of Infrastructure, Poland) attended on behalf of Mr Konrad Uściłowski. Ms Nina Kvello (DG REGIO) could not attend due to a health matter.

1. Approval of the agenda and minutes from the last SG meeting

- Agenda approved, no comments nor additional proposals.
- Approval of the minutes from the last meeting was deemed as a silent agreement in June 2026.

2. Updates from DG REGIO

Ms Nina Kvello (DG REGIO) was unable to attend the meeting.

3. Introduction to Interrecherche, Marc Binzenhöfer

Mr Marc Binzenhoefer presented the services of Interrecherche, including funding strategies, proposal writing, partner searches, project management and reporting. He referred to their experience in road and port infrastructure, safe truck parking and charging infrastructure, and emphasised the importance of connections between ports, rail and road transport.

Mr Stefan Zickgraf addressed military mobility and funding opportunities for transport and critical infrastructure. He noted that details of future calls were not yet available. In response to a question, he explained that they can also support project implementation and that they have acted as coordinators in research and innovation projects.

Ms Miglė Panasenkienė asked whether they could act as project coordinators or only support proposal preparation. Mr Stefan Zickgraf explained that their involvement also covered project implementation and consortium support. He had acted as coordinator in research and innovation projects, while formal coordination of transport infrastructure projects was less common.

4. Updates on PA Transport activities:

Lead PAC Annabel Keerd (Ministry of Climate, Estonia) presented the activities carried out since the previous Steering Group meeting in May. The presentation covered occurred events, activities according to the actions and other activities supporting the actions.

4.1 Occurred events

- EUSBSR Annual Forum 2026, 12-13 May 2026, Tallinn, Estonia
- CBSS EGSME meeting, 9 June, Gdansk, Poland
- Macro-regional and Sea Basin Strategies Days, 7-9 July, Brussels, Belgium
- Baltic Ports Organization Annual Conference, 2-3 September, Turku, Finland
- Connecting Europe Days, 28 September- 1 October, Brussels, Belgium
- Connecting Europe Days, side-events: Scandria Alliance & POLIS seminar, Cross-border connectivity in Northern Europe, Waterborne Technology Roadmap Declaration, Scandria Alliance & POLIS workshop
- Kick-Off Meeting for the Danish EUSBSR Presidency, 29 September 2026, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Transport Innovation Forum, 28 September- 1 October, Vilnius, Lithuania
- Launch of Norway's Accession to EUSBSR, 16 October, Oslo, Norway

4.2 Activities according to the actions

Following the **Action 1:**

- Contribution to the EU Arctic Strategy (launched 20 October 2026) and the European Arctic Summit in Rovaniemi
- Contribution to the meeting of Heads of Transport and Defence Administrations (28 September 2026, Brussels)
- Contribution to bilateral meetings on transportation in the BSR
- MoU between TIA and Ukraine's Ministry for Recovery, Infrastructure and Transport to strengthen cooperation in transport innovation and digitalisation (15 October 2026)

Following the **Action 2:**

- Dissemination of PA Transport project results finalised in 2026 and contribution to projects meetings
- Suggested experts for webinar Climate Change and Spatial Planning on the Baltic Coast: Where Are We Now?' arranged by VASAB

- TIA's active Green Transport Working Group fostering the transition to low- and zero-emission transport
- Promotion of modal shift from road to rail freight and other low-emission multimodal solutions
- Development of alternative fuel charging and refuelling infrastructure

Following the **Action 3:**

- Promotion of digital transport permits in the Baltic Sea Region
- Implementation of the eFTI Regulation
- Development of cyber-secure digital procedures for transport data exchange
- Promotion of eCMR uptake in the Baltic Sea Region
- Deployment of emissions (GHG/CO_2) monitoring tools
- Promotion of innovative, digital and multimodal transport solutions development and deployment

4.3 Other activities supporting the actions

- Letter of Support for project BaReCo
- Recommendations for potential lead partners- BaReCo and PULSE
- Interview with University of Agder- a research project examining cooperation and policy implementation within EU macro-regional strategies (twin transition)
- Joint webinar with PA Tourism on cycling and connections between our PAs
- Contribution to project proposals- 16 proposals submitted in 2025-2026

Ms Gudrun John-Ruff asked for clarification about TIA, expressed interest in the 16 project proposals mentioned and asked whether the presentation would be shared. Ms Annabel Keerd confirmed that the slides and minutes would be circulated and uploaded on the EUSBSR website. Ms Miglė Panasenkienė introduced TIA and clarified that the proposals had not all received funding and that TIA participated through its European partner network rather than leading proposals.

5. Future plans

Lead PAC Annabel Keerd (Ministry of Climate, Estonia) presented forthcoming events in 2026-2027.

- Innovation days 2026 (TIA organiser)
- Urban Mobility days 2027
- Transport Logistic 2027
- Transport Innovation Forum 2027 (TIA organiser)
- Macro-regional and Sea Basin Strategies Days 2027
- Connecting Europe Days 2027
- Digitalisation Day 2027 (TIA organiser)

Lead PAC Annabel Keerd outlined the planned administrative activities, including preparation of the Work Plan, participation in EUSBSR thematic meetings, reporting and the project extension.

6. PA Transport projects

Agenda item 6 was postponed due to the limited meeting time. The participants were informed that they will receive the updates on PA Transport projects via email togetehr with the meeting minutes and slides.

7. Knowledge sharing on national developments & idea generation

Steering Group members were invited to share recent developments, priorities and challenges in their national transport sectors.

Mr Teemo Toomsalu (EE) highlighted Rail Baltica as a government priority, noting rising construction costs and uncertainties surrounding the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). He outlined developments in port infrastructure supporting offshore wind farms and military mobility, highway reconstruction, onshore power systems and ferry ramps. Digitalisation activities included an updated Maritime Single Window and ongoing eFTI implementation. Decarbonisation of domestic ferries remained a priority. In aviation, maintaining sufficient connectivity was challenging due to high and volatile fuel prices, while the growing network of direct flights was driving the need to expand Tallinn Airport's terminal capacity.

Ms Annabel Keerd asked Mr Teemo Toomsalu about developments concerning drones in Estonia. He referred to a recently established expert group working on security and resilience but indicated that he could not share further details.

Ms Gudrun John-Ruff (DE) highlighted Germany's focus on sustainable, resilient and interconnected transport networks, military mobility and charging infrastructure for heavy-duty vehicles. Maritime priorities included sustainability, digitalisation, connectivity and resilience. Germany continues to expand charging infrastructure for cars and electric trucks, including fast charging along federal motorways. Aviation faced competitiveness challenges due to comparatively high location-related costs, with connectivity remaining below pre-pandemic levels. She also requested more up-to-date information on Steering Group meetings and activities on the EUSBSR PA Transport website. Annabel confirmed that further meeting minutes will be added.

Mr Mikael Nyberg (FI) presented a short paper outlining proposed priorities for the next government term, 2027–2031: growth, safety and security, and trust. He highlighted maritime and air connectivity, military mobility and work on a roadmap for drone development. Safety and security priorities included cyber threats and transport system resilience. Trust covered media, literature, misinformation, and public transport services which need subsidies due to high expenses. He noted ongoing railway projects, efforts to increase the share of public transport and the need to strengthen climate action as Finland is putting effort into reaching the UN Sustainable

Development Goals. Military mobility, connectivity and charging infrastructure for heavy-duty vehicles were identified as relevant areas for cooperation within PA Transport. He also thanked the coordinators for being active at events.

Mr Jānis Laivenieks (LV) noted uncertainty following the parliamentary elections, with the appointment of a new transport minister still pending. Latvia was preparing a long-term strategy to 2050 and a plan aligned with the next MFF. Rail Baltica remained a key priority, with financing a major challenge and military mobility funding being considered for elements such as bridges and multimodal stations. He outlined the procurement of passenger trains, potentially supporting a cross-border connection with Estonia, and the development of stations as multimodal hubs with rail-based last-mile connections. Other plans included advancing digitalisation, including eFTI. He also mentioned a joint application with Estonia to upgrade sections of Via Baltica and the role of regional roads in military mobility. In conclusion, he thanked the coordinators for the work.

Mr Marc Binzenhoefer asked whether Latvia and PA Transport cooperated with Rail Baltica. Ms Annabel Keerd explained that PA Transport was not directly involved in specific parts of the project, although the Estonian Ministry of Climate is involved. Ms Miglė Panasenkienė referred the Lithuanian perspective to Mr Dmitrij Zadojenko, who subsequently outlined Lithuania's transport priorities.

Mr Dmitrij Zadojenko (LT) highlighted Rail Baltica, Via Baltica and other TEN-T projects as Lithuania's priorities, with an emphasis on military mobility, safety, security and resilience. He noted that future plans would depend on negotiations on the next MFF, particularly given rising project costs and limited funding. His unit was currently focusing on preparations for Lithuania's forthcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU.

8. Any other business, next meeting & conclusion

Lead PAC Annabel Keerd informed that the next Steering Group meeting is expected to take place in 2027, with the date to be communicated by email. The draft Work Plan would be shared with members for approval before the end of the year. The presentation slides would also be circulated, and members were invited to contact the coordinators with any further questions.

Ms Annabel Keerd thanked all participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.

The SG meeting was closed at 14:00 CET.