Meeting of the Steering Group of the Policy Area TRANSPORT

(1st in 2026 / physical)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 11 2026, 09:30-11:30 (EEST)

Tallinn, Estonia

1. Welcome Words and Tour de Table

PAC Annabel Keerd (Ministry of Climate, Estonia) opened the meeting at 09:30.

- Tour de Table

Participants: Ms Annabel Keerd (PAC, Ministry of Climate, EE), Ms Miglė Panasenkienė (PAC, Transport Innovation Association, LT), Ms Sonja Palhus (Executive Secretary CPMR BSC), Mr Mikael Nyberg (Ministry of Transport and Communications, FI), Ms Susanne Skovgaard (Trafikverket, Swedish Transport Administration, SE), Mr Teemo Toomsalu (Ministry of Climate, EE), Mr Jānis Laivenieks (Ministry of Transport, LV), Mr Johan Magnusson (European Commission, DG REGIO), Ms Nina Kvello (European Commission, DG REGIO), Mr Seppo Mäkinen (Traficom, FI).

2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes from the last SG meeting

- Agenda approved, no comments nor additional proposals
- Minutes from the last meeting approved.

3. Administrative arrangements

3.1 Composition of the Steering Group

Mr Jānis Laivenieks has been nominated as a new Latvian representative as of November 2025.

Mr Dmitrij Zadojenko and Ms Kristina Mickevičiūtė have been nominated as new Lithuanian representatives as of November 2025.

4. Updates from DG REGIO

Mr. Johan Magnusson (EC DG REGIO) provided an overview of the activities carried out by the European Commission. He highlighted three main topics:

- **Update on macro-regional strategies**

Mr Johan Magnusson provided an overview of developments across EU macro-regional strategies. He informed participants that Europe currently has four macro-regional strategies and announced that preparations are underway for the fifth one – the Atlantic Macro-Regional Strategy. He also updated participants on the ongoing EUSBSR Action Plan revision process and informed that Norway is expected to become the ninth full member of the Strategy.

- **Discussions on the future EU Cohesion Policy framework**

Mr Johan Magnusson presented the current state of discussions on the future EU Cohesion Policy framework. He explained the ongoing legislative process involving the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament. He highlighted that the proposed European Regional Development Fund regulation includes a specific reference to macro-regional strategies and their importance. He also noted that negotiations are expected to continue throughout the coming year before the final framework is agreed.

- **Macro-Regional and Sea Basin Strategies Days 2026**

Mr Johan Magnusson informed participants about the upcoming Macro-Regional and Sea Basin Strategies Days, which will take place on 8–9 July in Brussels. He presented the main topics of the event, including the new Atlantic Macro-Regional Strategy, EU enlargement, social sustainability, resilience and civil preparedness, and encouraged stakeholders to participate.

5. Introduction to CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Ms Sonja Palhus introduced the work of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission (BSC), presenting its policy priorities, organisational structure, and the 2025–2027 Work Plan adopted at the General Assembly in August 2025. The presentation outlined the Commission's vision for the Baltic Sea Region and the role of its Working Groups in implementing the Action Plans. Key priorities include strengthening regional connectivity, promoting sustainability, climate neutrality and energy resilience, enhancing innovation and competitiveness, supporting security and stability, and contributing to a healthy Baltic Sea.

6. Discussion I

How can PA Transport and CPMR work together more effectively?

Ms Annabel Keerd asked how PA Transport and CPMR BSC could cooperate more effectively in the future. Noted that cooperation has so far mainly focused on providing coordinated inputs to the EU Ports Strategy and the Industrial Maritime Strategy. Suggested making greater use of CPMR's political networks to strengthen links between PA Transport activities, projects and policymakers.

Mr Jānis Laivenieks highlighted that PA Transport and CPMR represent different but complementary groups, bringing together experts, public authorities and politicians. Emphasised

the need to strengthen communication between experts and political decision-makers and suggested that closer cooperation could help bridge existing gaps between policy development and implementation.

Ms Sonja Palhus explained that CPMR combines the work of politicians and experts, ensuring that policy discussions are supported by technical knowledge. Suggested exploring opportunities for future joint activities and referred to CPMR policy work, including digitalisation-related topics. Also noted existing links with Port of Hamburg initiatives.

Ms Susanne Skovgaard noted that there are many valuable results coming from projects and stressed the need to make better use of them. Suggested presenting project outcomes in a simple and understandable way so that politicians can easily use this fact-based information in their work and decision-making. Added that this is an important role for PA Transport.

Mr Seppo Mäkinen suggested presenting project results, indicators and impacts in a more consolidated and accessible way to demonstrate their value for policymakers and society. Referred to successful cooperation in joint project promotion activities, including participation in Connecting Europe Days.

Ms Migle Panasenkiene presented outcomes from the Lithuanian national coordination meeting, where representatives of ministries and EUSBSR policy areas discussed synergies and cooperation opportunities. Noted that the initiative was highly appreciated and is expected to continue annually. Also presented a study visit involving Finnish organisations, focusing on intermodal transport, the Kaunas Intermodal Terminal, cooperation between universities and transport stakeholders, and opportunities for future collaboration and student exchanges.

Mr Johan Magnusson highlighted CPMR's strong network of regional politicians and noted that this is a valuable asset for the Baltic Sea Strategy. Emphasised the importance of involving not only national but also regional and local politicians in EUSBSR activities. Suggested that CPMR could help channel PA Transport's work and priorities to regional political levels, while also bringing regional concerns, ideas and priorities back into the strategy process. Noted that such cooperation could strengthen the political visibility of the strategy and create a two-way communication channel between policymakers and regional stakeholders.

How can PA Transport become a more strategic partner in shaping the EU's transport agenda?

Mr Johan Magnusson noted that PA Transport has extensive knowledge about transport developments and challenges in the Baltic Sea Region. He stressed that the key question is how this knowledge can be channelled into the EU policy context. He suggested joining forces with transport-related priority areas from other macro-regional strategies, as many transport challenges are common across regions. Mr Johan Magnusson emphasised that influencing policy increasingly requires engagement with the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, where many important decisions are taken. He also encouraged PA Transport to remain visible, actively participate in policy discussions and continue making its voice heard at the European level.

Mr Mikael Nyberg noted that PA Transport has a strong advantage through its projects, which provide concrete work and practical results. He stressed the need to better disseminate project outcomes and lessons learned. While he was not concerned about PA Transport's relevance in transport policy discussions, he highlighted the importance of keeping the Strategy and Action Plan adaptive and agile, allowing priorities to be adjusted quickly when needed. He also underlined the value of feedback from regions and municipalities in ensuring that actions remain aligned with emerging needs and priorities.

7. Occurred Events

Ms Annabel Keerd presented the events where PA Transport attended:

- EUSBSR Annual Forum 2025, 29-30 October, Sopot, Poland
- Baltic Sea Green Shipping Corridors project kick-off meeting, 3-4 December, Stockholm, Sweden
- EUSBSR Live Meeting 2026, 14-15 April, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Meeting of the Coordination Commission for the Implementation of the EUSBSR, 21 April, Vilnius, Lithuania
- Visit of the Finnish Delegation to Vilnius and Kaunas Railway Intermodal Terminal,

8-9 April, Lithuania

- Advancing Green Corridors: Workshop on Energi Transition and Decarbonisation in Maritime Transport, April 22-24, Hamburg, Germany

8. EUSBSR Action Plan Update

Ms Annabel Keerd presented the ongoing work related to the update of the EUSBSR Action Plan, including the main actions and activities supporting its implementation. She also provided an overview of upcoming EUSBSR events and key opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

9. Discussion II

Where do you see linkages between our actions and your national priorities?

Ms Susanne Skovgaard noted that security is becoming increasingly important in Sweden following the country's accession to NATO. She stated that there is now a strong focus on resilience and dual-use infrastructure for railways, roads and ports within long-term infrastructure planning. She added that, while climate and innovation remain important priorities, security considerations are increasingly becoming an integral part of infrastructure development.

Mr Mikael Nyberg noted that many current transport policy discussions are increasingly shaped by wartime preparedness and resilience considerations. While Finland continues to pursue

climate objectives, progress in the transport sector remains challenging. Resilience has become a dominant priority, including the security of transport infrastructure, telecommunications, digital networks and services, with cybersecurity emerging as a key concern. Looking ahead, Finland would like to see resilience and security remain important themes within Baltic Sea Region cooperation, while also supporting growth and competitiveness. However, the priority is to ensure preparedness and security first.

Mr Teemo Toomsalu explained that Estonia's transport strategy extends until 2035. While climate and transport objectives remain important, current priorities have shifted towards resilience and crisis preparedness. Estonia is also preparing crisis response plans and will soon officially open a new EU-funded berth in the Port of Paldiski, which is already in operation.

Mr Jānis Laivenieks noted that Latvia has recently restructured its innovation support system. Innovation funding is now increasingly focused on projects with dual-use applications that can support both civilian and defence needs. As a result, innovation policy is becoming more closely linked to resilience, security and wartime preparedness. This creates new opportunities for the transport sector, where many infrastructure and technology solutions can serve both civilian and defence purposes.

Which mechanisms can be used to link policy development and real-life implementation?

Mr Teemo Toomsalu highlighted that, at the national level, it is important to make wise and strategic decisions on how available public funding and resources are allocated to support the implementation of different innovation and development priorities.

Mr Mikael Nyberg stressed the importance of practical demonstrations and site visits, noting that "seeing is believing." He suggested that stakeholders should have more opportunities to visit companies and innovative projects to observe solutions in practice. As an example, he referred to a visit to an aerospace facility where an electric aircraft was demonstrated. He emphasised that one of the region's key strengths is the availability of concrete examples and tangible innovation projects that can be showcased to others.

10. Running, ending and new project

Co-Coordinator Miglė Panasenkienė (TIA) presented an overview of ongoing, recently completed, and a newly initiated project relevant to PA Transport. A brief introduction was provided for each project, highlighting its objectives and contribution to the objectives of PA Transport and the EUSBSR.

Ongoing projects: BSR Urban Mobility Platform Project, eFTI4eu, eFTI4ALL, eFTI4LIVE, Circular Ports – Deploying Circular Economy in Port Environments, PortSHAZ – Enhanced Eco-Efficient Cargo Operations, Project to develop proof-of concepts for the uptake of H2 derivative fuels (H2Derivatives@BalticSeaPorts).

Ending: Project BSR HyAirport, Baltic Sea Green Shipping Corridors (Seed project), ADMIRAL project, Project New North- Transport, Logistics and Security of Supply, Project Baltic Sea region Active mobiliTy Solutions – in darkness and all-weather conditions (BATS), Project Sustainable flow of goods and decreased CO2 emissions of transportation (Sustainable Flow).

New project: eFTI-CONNECT

11. Discussion III

Are you aware of any new projects that are support our actions? Would you be ready to share transport related news with the SG and indigate their linkage to our actions?

Mr Teemo Toomsalu: a new project is expected to start soon CEF REFLOW.

Ms Susanne Skovgaard: Referred to a Swedish example presented in the transport sector and highlighted the existence of many connections and common interests between stakeholders. Suggested strengthening cooperation with the transport sector and involving relevant stakeholders more actively in future meetings and discussions.

Mr Seppo Mäkinen: noted that transport receives limited attention in maritime spatial planning discussions, which are largely focused on environmental issues. He highlighted challenges in integrating transport considerations into planning processes, improving cross-border cooperation, and ensuring that the impacts of offshore developments on maritime transport are adequately assessed. He stressed the need for stronger engagement with maritime spatial planning stakeholders and better representation of transport interests in planning and policy discussions.

12. Any other business, next meeting & conclusion

A stronger collaboration with PA Spatial Planning could be beneficial. As a first step, we could consider inviting them to our next meeting.

The SG meeting was closed at 11:30.