



EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Hazards

Steering Group meeting

Date: 10/06/2024
Time: 10:00–12:00 CEST
Location: online

MINUTES

1. Welcome and adoption of meeting agenda

The Chair welcomed the participants and declared the meeting open.

In addition to the Steering Group members and observers, a number of guests were invited to join the meeting. As a result of the SG decision on 28/2/2024, two youth representatives from the Baltic Sea Youth Platform, part of CBSS, were invited as guests to the Steering Group meeting. The aim is to invite a youth organisation as an observer, however, the Baltic Sea Youth Platform is not eligible to become an observer. For this reason, the SG decided to invite youth representatives from the Baltic Sea Youth Platform as guests until further notice.

The agenda was approved without the amendments.

2. Approval of decision on presidency

According to the Rules of Procedures, adopted on 4 October 2023, the presidency of the Steering Group should rotate among the Steering Group members, following the EUSBSR National Coordinators Group presidency rotation.

From July 2023, Latvia has held the presidency in the National Coordinators Group. In the Steering Group for Priority Area Hazards, however, there is currently no Latvian member. Sweden continued chairing the Steering Group meeting in 2023, and Poland chaired the joint PA Hazards and PA Nutri Steering Group meeting on 28 February 2024. Poland will take over the presidency of the National Coordinator's Group in July 2024. Therefore, the suggested decision is to appoint Poland as chair already until the end of the Polish presidency in the National Coordinators Group.

Proposal for decision:



The Steering Group for Policy Area Hazards decides to appoint Poland as chair as of 10 May 2024 until 30 June 2025.

The Steering Group approved the decision.

3. Information from Policy Area Coordinator

- a. PAC informed on results from the **workshop on contaminated sediments and internal loading** held in Stockholm on 28 February. Participants were SG members from PA Hazards and PA Nutri, and experts. This was a first exchange, mapping out needs and common priorities. One main conclusion was that there is a need for a joint platform addressing these issues. A separate report with conclusions has been sent out.
- b. **State of play - Baltic Sea Region PHARMA platform activities.** A call for topics was launched by BSR PHARMA early 2024. The call aims to collect topics for a webinar that will be organized in Q3 2024. Replies from the call showed clear interest in the updated Groundwater and Water framework directives, and the new urban wastewater treatment directive. These issues will be discussed to finetune topics and identify knowledge gaps, which will be brought up in a roundtable discussion with national experts as well as EU sectoral agencies later on. PA Hazards will support these activities.
- c. **PAC informed on reports submitted:**
 - i. Progress report on the PA Hazards+PA Nutri joint project sent to Interreg BSR on 1/2/2024
 - ii. PA Hazards report to the National Coordinators Group on 2022-2023 submitted on 29/2/2024.
 - iii. European Commission is preparing its 5th report on the implementation of Macro-regional Strategies. It concerns the period of mid-2022 until end of 2023. PA Hazards contributed (29/4/2024).

The Steering Group took note of this information.

4. Overview of PIE-related projects to send to BSR PHARMA Platform

The Baltic Sea PHARMA platform was invited to the SG meeting on 4 October 2023. One aspect highlighted in that discussion was that there were fewer projects and targeted calls related to pharmaceuticals in the environment (PIE). The SG then decided to collect national projects and initiatives related to PIE, in order to support the BSR PHARMA Platform. These were presented and discussed by SG members in today's meeting.

FI representative provided information on 5 projects: MEDGOF (testing passive samplers in Gulf of Finland), APRIORA (risk-based prioritization of quarternary treatment at WWTP), PREMIER (prioritization and risk evaluation of medicines in the environment), and PharGTrans and TransPharm dealing with green transformations in the pharmaceutical sector. See attached presentation for more information.



HELCOM highlighted its project [PharmaSea](#)

PAC presented some initiatives provided by the Swedish Chemicals Agency, that could not attend the meeting:

- Swedish E-health agency plans a publication of a summary/database of all pharmaceutical substances with possible environmental impact, in kg active substance per substance. A clearer classification of what substances will have an environmental impact is needed.
- Swedish Environmental Protection agency has granted ca 220 million SEK since 2018 to municipalities for cleaning of pharmaceutical waister. The group collecting and disseminating knowledge on strategic level ("Beställargruppen för avancerad rening) has been granted further financing in 2024.
- Planned projects for 2024: 1) Compilation of data from municipal projects on cleaning pharmaceuticals. 2) Continue evaluation of effect on environment before and after advanced water treatment, including analyses of water and biota.

Interreg BSR secretariat underlined that relevant projects can be found under PA Health, related to for example antimicrobial resistance.

SG members underlined that this exercise was a one-time occurrence, and that the main responsibility for collecting examples remains with the BSR PHARMA Platform. SG decided to send the information to the platform. The SG furthermore decided to receive regular updates on the platform either from PAC or by inviting the platform occasionally to the SG meetings.

5. Project presentation: NonHazCity 3

Heidrun Fammler, from Baltic Environmental Forum, presented the project NonHazCity 3. It builds on previous NonHazCity projects, aiming to create toxfree environments through roadmaps and methodologies. While the first projects were targeting municipalities and the general public, this project is targeting the building sector and individuals renovating, in order to create toxfree, circular and climate-neutral buildings.

The project has created a [Building Material Catalogue](#) for Toxfree construction, which has been sent out for comments and feedback from experts. Feedback can be sent to Heidrun.

Another tool developed is the [Check\(ED\) app](#), aiming to support individuals in making better choices, and.

Lastly, the project has installed the [NonHazCity Building Award](#), aiming to honour outstanding construction policies in the Baltic Sea Region. Nominations are open. Please see attached ppt for more information.

SG members are encouraged to disseminate the information above. Simona Jakaite (Baltic Sea Youth Platform) suggested to make use of the upcoming Regeneration youth meeting in August.

6. Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme to discuss post-2027 (60 min)

There are several processes ongoing relating to the EU Multifinancial Framework post 2027, including stakeholder consultations organised by Interreg programmes. The Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme secretariat is currently organising stakeholder consultations, including an online



consultation open until 31 May. In addition, consultations are held with SG members, and Interreg BSR Secretariat was invited to this meeting for this purpose. The programme supports many projects around the Baltic Sea, including efforts to address hazardous substances, and is highly relevant to PA Hazards.

The discussion was structured around questions:

1. In which topic do you see the biggest need and potential for transnational cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region?

Some conclusions from SG Hazards:

- Need for cross-sectoral projects, avoid creating silos for topics. Include holistic approach to chemicals, where collaboration could support implementation of existing strategies, developing work on chemicals that are not enough regulated and developing (local) strategies.
- Focus on upstream measures, to prevent chemicals from getting in the water, and on
- circularity: New products, sustainable design - connection to green deal.
- New HELCOM action plan for hazardous substances that is expected to be finalized by the end of the year, and priorities list of substances.
- Awarenessraising (of politicians and general public) still important

2. What works well?

- Pilots are working well. Cooperation level among public authorities on local level has increased.

3. What are the major obstacles to good transnational cooperation in the BSR? Are there things that you would like to do under Interreg but cannot? Why?

- Bring in national actors, relevant policy-makers, and work cross-sectoral to address climate change.
 - **What could facilitate your work with counterparts in another country? Share creative ideas!**
- Cross-topical projects/calls across priorities, small sums for project preparation, new classification of target groups and stakeholders. Youth not visible at all.

4. What would be the transnational cooperation project of your dreams in the BSR?

- Youth platforms with experts, working with awareness, maybe together with HELCOM?

7. AOB and date for next meeting

At least two meetings will be held in the autumn, possibly more, to address the revision of the EUSBSR Annual Action Plan. A Doodle will be sent out concerning next meeting.



PARTICIPANTS

Denmark		
Estonia		
Finland	Finnish Environment Institute	Jukka Mehtonen
Germany		
Latvia		
Lithuania		
Poland (chair)	Bureau for Chemical substances	Magdalena Frydrych
Sweden	Ministry for Climate and Enterprise	Anders Wallberg
PAC	Swedish Agency for Maritime and Water Management	Louise Floman
Observer	HELCOM	Lotta Ruokanen
Observer	Baltic Environment Forum Deutschland	Heidrun Fammler
DG REGIO		
BSP	BSP	Anja Karppinen
Guest	Baltic Sea Youth Platform	Arnas Murauskas
Guest	Baltic Sea Youth Platform	Simona Jakaite
Guest	Interreg Baltic Sea Region Joint Secretariat	Elena Kolosova
Guest	Interreg Baltic Sea Region Joint Secretariat	Eeva Rantama
Guest	Interreg Baltic Sea Region Joint Secretariat	Laura Ligazzolo