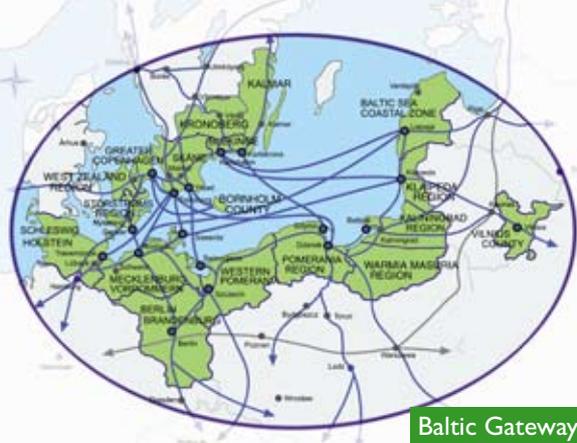




Blekinge – a strategic position in the Baltic Sea region

Position paper and input from Region Blekinge
to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region



Baltic Gateway



Euroregion Baltic



Baltic Master



East West Transport Corridor



The action plan – input from Region Blekinge

Region Blekinge wishes to submit the following proposals to the measures included in the action plan complementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region.

1. Maritime safety and sustainable development

BalticMaster Region Blekinge was lead partner for the maritime safety project Baltic Master, which won the European Regional Maritime Champion Award 2007, being the best EU maritime project. The action plan adopted in the Baltic Master project contains the following priority measures:

- Integrate a local and regional perspective in the maritime safety work
- Initiate a pro-active on-land contingency planning activities
- Improve implementation of current legislation and international regulations
- Develop coastal zone planning in the whole Baltic Sea area
- Prepare concrete proposals for protected areas under the PSSA regime (Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas)

- Intensify and improve monitoring of ships movement in the Baltic Sea www.balticmaster.org

Region Blekinge proposes that the measures elaborated by the Baltic Master project shall be integrated in the upcoming action plan of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy.

2. Transport and communication

In the recent period Region Blekinge has led and participated in several large transnational transport projects within the framework of the BSR Interreg IIIB programme. This work has been very successful.



East West TC is a transport corridor between Esbjerg in Denmark via Öresund to Vilnius in Lithuania, which records the highest traffic volumes and growth rates in the east west direction in the South Baltic Sea area. The Karlshamn-Klaipeda ferry link stands for the only Ro-Ro connection between Sweden and Lithuania. The corridor is a part of the Northern Transport Axis.

www.eastwesttc.org

Region Blekinge proposes that the investments featured by the upcoming Motorways of the Sea project for the Karlshamn-Klaipeda link are approved for implementation, while the East West TC Action Plan and development of a Green corridor concept becomes included in the action plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region.



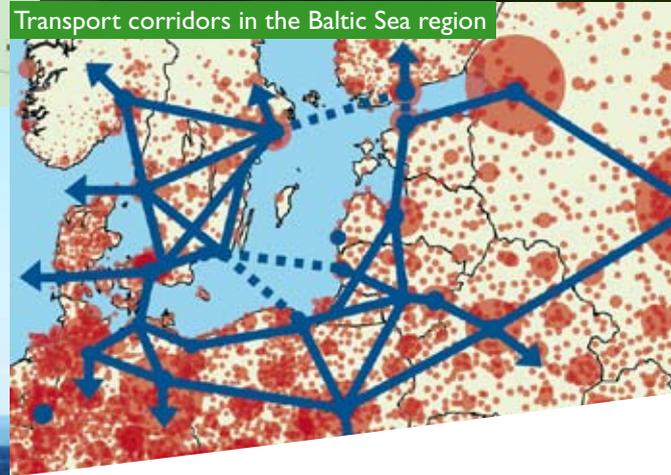
Baltic Gateway Quick Start Programme and the Baltic Gateway PLUS project has been anchored among regional political leaders in the South Baltic Sea area. The project results and a continued political cooperation on transport issues in the South Baltic Sea area are incorporated in the upcoming Interreg IV project TransBaltic which intends to prepare and implement a transport action plan for the whole Baltic Sea region. www.balticgateway.se

Region Blekinge proposes that the implementation of the TransBaltic project becomes included in the action plan of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy.



Baltic Link

Transport corridors in the Baltic Sea region



The ferry connection Karlskrona-Gdynia connects the EU transport corridor nr. 6 in Poland with the Swedish Baltic Link Corridor from Karlskrona to Gothenburg. The ferry connection served by Stena Line has seen a dramatic increase of traffic in recent years. This means an increased need of further investments in the infrastructure to meet the future traffic demands.

www.baltic-link.se

Region Blekinge proposes that the investments featured by the upcoming Motorways of the Sea project for the Karlskrona-Gdynia link are approved for implementation, while the development measures in the corridor become included in the action plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region.

3. Political cross-border co-operation

Establishing durable networks at all levels has a fundamental importance. The cooperation shall include such sectors as local and regional authorities, business, community associations, NGOs, schools and universities.

One example is Euroregion Baltic (ERB), a political cooperation structure in the South Baltic Sea area in which Region Blekinge is one out of eight active member regions from five countries.

www.euroregionbaltic.eu

Region Blekinge proposes that the action plan supports in various aspects the development of political cross-border co-operation and such institutional platforms as euroregions and EGTCs.

4. The new generations

Children and youth are the key to the future of the regions. Interest in the neighbouring countries around the Baltic Sea shall be stimulated among the now growing generation so that they may contribute to the long-term regional development and integration. One good example is ERB Youth Board.

www.euroregionbaltic.eu

Region Blekinge proposes that the action plan comprises measures and financial instruments for the support of present and new forms of co-operation between the new generations in the Baltic Sea region.

5. Kaliningrad Oblast

Russia, and especially Kaliningrad Region, is and will continue to be an important and natural social, economic and environmentally liable part of the South Baltic Sea area. Kaliningrad Region is also one of the founders and active members of Euroregion Baltic and Interreg projects such as Baltic Gateway PLUS and RED.

Region Blekinge proposes that Kaliningrad region receive appropriate address in the Baltic Sea Strategy so that the integration of Kaliningrad Region becomes a natural part of civil, environmental, social and transport development in the South Baltic Sea area. For that purpose Euroregion Baltic is an evident and noteworthy platform for constructive cooperation of political authorities at the regional level.

The strategy – input from Region Blekinge

1

Division of responsibilities

Region Blekinge believes that the measures in the action plan shall be as concrete as possible and shall have a clear division of responsibilities between the local, regional, national, cross-border, EU and international level.

2

Financing

Region Blekinge believes that it is important to coordinate available financial resources in the Baltic Sea region. It is essential for the local and regional authorities who will carry out the measures in the action plan that they will be provided with the financial means to do so.

3

Importance of the local and regional levels

Region Blekinge believes that the strategy shall be worked out and implemented in close cooperation with the local and regional levels, in particular with the coastal regions. The Commission has to use the knowledge and networks at the local and regional level and use these as tools for the strategy implementation.

4

EU Cohesion Policy

Region Blekinge believes that the Cohesion Policy strengthens the local and regional actors as EU programmes generate resources for enhanced cooperation across the national borders. The EU Cohesion Policy is therefore essential for durable growth at the local and regional level.

5

The role of Russia

Region Blekinge believes that the Russian Federation in general and Kaliningrad Region in particular shall be addressed in the EU Baltic Sea Strategy so that the integration of Kaliningrad Region becomes a natural part of the development in the Baltic Sea region.

6

Marine ecosystem of the Baltic Sea

Region Blekinge believes that sustainable fishing and environmental policies in the Baltic Sea region are of utmost importance for Blekinge as an attractive coastal region.

7

Organised crime

Region Blekinge believes, due to Blekinge's strategic position for transport and communications, that the combating of various forms of organised crime, which often accompany intensive ferry traffic, should have high priority.

8

Security policy

Region Blekinge believes that security and safety issues shall either directly or indirectly be tackled upon by the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region.

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