



Resolution adopted on 20th November 2008 by Euroregion Baltic Council expressing position towards an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Euroregion Baltic Council welcomes:

the European Parliament resolution of 16 November 2006 on a Baltic Sea Region Strategy for the Northern Dimension;

the declaration of the Council of Baltic Sea States of June 2007 on the development of a strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;

the invitation of 14 December 2007 of the European Council to the European Commission to present an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region to the European Council in June 2009;

the fact that the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region will be one of the top priorities for the upcoming Swedish presidency in the EU in the second half of 2009;

the four objectives of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region recommended by the European Commission to be: making the BSR environmentally clean, a prosperous place, an accessible and attractive place, and a safe and secure place;

the fact that the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region will be accompanied by a rolling Action Plan, specifying roles and responsibilities of the different actors in the region and thus making the Strategy effective and relevant, as well as by an implementation timetable;

the fact that the strategy Action Plan will be reviewed during the Polish presidency in the EU in the second half of 2011;

the fact that so-called flagship projects will be proposed with a view of implementing specific actions of the strategy.

Euroregion Baltic Council strongly believes that:

the proposed objectives of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region indicate the need for a horizontal integration through improved coordination between different EU sector policies;

the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region should help coordinate such EU policies as EU Growth & Jobs Strategy, EU Cohesion Policy, Integrated EU Maritime Policy, EU Sustainable Development Strategy, Energy & Climate Policy, Trans European Transport Networks, Rural Development Policy, Lifelong Learning policy and the Bologna process while the Northern Dimension framework provides the basis for the external aspects of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region;

the principle of solidarity and confidence between Member States should continue to be exercised in the process of drafting and implementing an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;

the principle of subsidiarity should remain the fundamental rule in the process of implementing an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;

an improved Open Method of Coordination should be a basis for the process of drafting and implementing an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, to allow a broader anchoring in the implementation of the Strategy and at the same time enhancing the horizontal integration between different sector policies;

it is of a great importance to consider the youth perspective and youth influence in the drafting and implementation process;

the Baltic Sea Strategy can only be successful if the Baltic regions of the Russian Federation, and in particular the Kaliningrad Oblast, are included in its implementation;

the selection of flagship projects into the strategy should be based on an open and transparent process which will follow clear guidelines and selection criteria;

a coordination structure should be established in order to implement and monitor the implementation of the strategy;

the Baltic Sea Strategy can only be successful if it is promoted and its goals as well as the information on the implementation process are communicated to the citizens of the Baltic Sea Region, which will help build common Baltic Sea Region identity.

Euroregion Baltic Council supports that the following areas of activity are included in the Strategy Action Plan:

1. Baltic Sea Region as an environmentally sustainable place,
2. Baltic Sea Region as an economically prosperous place,
3. Baltic Sea Region as an accessible and attractive,
4. Baltic Sea Region as a safe and secure place.

and highlights the need to make the Baltic Sea Region an area of integration and open dialogue.

In order to make the **Baltic Sea Region an area of integration and open dialogue**, the Strategy should propose actions facilitating extensive and intensive cooperation between societies and communities around the Baltic Sea Region. Such actions shall include but not be limited to:

- ▣ supporting the development of cross-border and interregional cooperation and such institutional platforms as Euroregions and EGTCs;
- ▣ strengthening existing networks at all levels, including such sectors as local and regional authorities, business, community associations, NGOs, schools, universities and other educational institutions by involving them in the Strategy implementation process;

- ▣ allocating more financial resources, simplifying project administration and increasing the promotion of available funding to support present and new forms of cooperation between the new generations in the Baltic Sea Region, e.g. people-to-people activities dealing with issues such as cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue, sports, arts, music, youth politics etc.;
- ▣ promoting non-discrimination, respect for human rights and equality, as well as combating racism.

In particular, Euroregion Baltic recommends a flagship project that will facilitate intercultural dialogue with particular focus on youth participation and mobility. The project would be oriented at activating youth in their participation in the revision of the EU Youth Policy and result in establishing of a Baltic Youth Summit. Its mobility component would be implemented within the framework of the European Voluntary Service and produce the output of a Baltic EVS programme promoting youth exchange in and between the Baltic regions, and with a particular focus on improving the intercultural dialogue between young people and on active youth participation connected to the Baltic Youth Summit and related activities on the sub-regional level. The project stakeholders should include youth organisations around the Baltic Sea Region (e.g. Euroregion Baltic Youth Board, BSSSC Youth Working Group, etc).

In order to make the **Baltic Sea Region environmentally sustainable**, the Strategy should propose actions protecting the extremely vulnerable marine environment of the Baltic Sea. Such actions shall include but not be limited to:

- ▣ reducing hazardous discharge in water from small diffuse sources;
- ▣ preventing the expansion of invasive species and over fishing;
- ▣ coastal zone planning in the whole Baltic Sea area;
- ▣ preparing concrete proposals for protected areas under the PSSA (Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas) regime and negotiating with the Russian Federation, within the IMO framework, the recognition of the Baltic Sea area as a PSSA;
- ▣ cooperating with all partners from the Baltic Sea Region catchment area.

In particular, Euroregion Baltic recommends a flagship project that will facilitate improved management of water resources through Water Users Partnership and local and regional preparedness for participation in the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, aiming at decreasing the pollution water within the Baltic Sea Region, as a prerequisite for a sustainable development of the region. The project would result in the development of methods for good, effective and transparent river basin based water management, with a strong involvement from local and regional stakeholders and with the aim to reduce the outflow of nutrients and hazardous substances. Within selected pilot areas methods for effective river basin based water management and sustainable development would be designed, tested and evaluated, and pilot measures for decreased environmental load conducted.

In order to make the **Baltic Sea Region economically prosperous**, the Strategy should propose actions increasing the region's competitiveness through interregional cooperation. Such actions shall include but not be limited to:

- ▣ progressing the completion of the single market with stress on projects offering better regulation, screening, and codifying procedures, as well as eliminating existing customs and transit barriers;
- ▣ intensifying cooperation among scientists and in the R&D sector;
- ▣ promoting educational projects, including cooperation between universities and schools (common research);
- ▣ enhancing labour market mobility with particular focus on the mobility of students and researchers;
- ▣ implementing the triple helix concept facilitating a competitive business development;
- ▣ providing monitoring of the effective and harmonious implementation of the EU Services Directive and Technical Standards and Regulations Directive.

In particular, Euroregion Baltic recommends:

a flagship project that will promote the development of innovative small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as knowledge transfer between research institutions, industry and the economy;

a flagship project encouraging young entrepreneurship and cross-border cooperation between young entrepreneurs, by exchange programmes including scholarships and traineeships in cooperation with business sector, universities, incubators and science parks.

In order to make the **Baltic Sea Region accessible and attractive**, the Strategy should propose actions that could combine economic growth and sustainable environmental-friendly transport of goods and passengers. Such actions shall include but not be limited to:

- ▣ urging the development of cross-border sections of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) leading to improved modality and cooperation in competitive logistic networks; within the ERB area it is of special interest to develop the transport corridors East West TC, Baltic Link and Baltic Tangent among others;
- ▣ facilitating different activities in transport corridors to support the accessibility and attractiveness (i.e. tourism) within the Baltic Sea Region;
- ▣ introducing TEN-T also as sea corridors for short-sea shipping binding TEN-T ports and corridors at shore together;
- ▣ facilitating studies into transport and infrastructure needs in the regions, regarding an increased number of maritime connections (e.g. ferry routes) and tourism growth;
- ▣ supporting the development of the regional airports, crucial in a competitive development of the region and access to human capital;
- ▣ promoting sustainable development of the small and medium-sized ports and competitive coastal navigation, and ensuring free navigation among all sea ports situated along the Baltic Sea;
- ▣ strengthening measures aimed at building common Baltic Sea Region identity through promotion of cultural and natural heritage and supporting the creation of sustainable tourism products respecting its protection needs.

In particular, Euroregion Baltic recommends a flagship project that will facilitate cooperation aimed at protection of cultural heritage and thus contribute to increased regional attractiveness leading to a growth in sustainable tourism.

In order to make the **Baltic Sea Region safe and secure**, the Strategy should propose actions benefiting security of the Baltic Sea Region inhabitants in terms of maritime safety, civil security and energy security. Such actions shall include but not be limited to:

- ▣ advocating joint measures in preventing and handling accidents at sea and on land, e.g. setting up cross-border crisis centres;
- ▣ improving integration of existing surveillance systems and monitoring of ship movement in the Baltic Sea;
- ▣ developing guidelines, documentation and working documents on implementing the Integrated EU Maritime Policy (Blue Book) in the Baltic Sea Region;
- ▣ preventing and fighting organised crime, human trafficking, terrorism and infectious diseases;
- ▣ strengthening joint initiatives undertaken to ensure energy security;
- ▣ improving waste and sludge handling in ports;
- ▣ developing common approach to maritime security.

In particular, Euroregion Baltic recommends a flagship project that will implement the Baltic Master Project Action Plan calling for the initiation of a proactive on-land contingency planning activities, development of coastal zone planning in the whole Baltic Sea area, including regional development and spatial planning, and prevention and preparedness for ship accidents. This cooperation is based on integrated local and regional perspectives in the maritime safety work and establishes a new model for managing the marine environment with increased co-ordination between the concerned authorities. The project should include stakeholders from all levels of society.