

Cultural identity of the Baltic Sea Region is not only about the sea

What would you show to your Australian friend visiting the Baltic Sea Region for the first time? With this question the participants were lead to discuss their views of the identity of Baltic Sea Region (BSR) in the [ONE BSR](#) workshop “*Contribution to the Baltic Sea Region cultural identity*”. Which places would you visit and why? And what are your personal stories behind these places?

Organized in the occasion of the *Kick-Off Event for the new Priority Area Culture in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)* on 18 April in Berlin (Germany), the ONE BSR project’s 2nd Policy Round Table brought up several aspects of the region’s culture and identity. The story-telling method used in the workshop encouraged everyone to share their memories and opinions on what makes the area meaningful for them.

“It was interesting to see, how different people, from various parts of the Baltic Sea Region, have similar experiences and ideas which they think are important for the Baltic Sea Region’s cultural identity”, says Franziska Schindler from ARS BALTICA Secretariat, one of the organizers of the workshop and the whole Kick-Off event.

Obviously, the Baltic Sea came up in many discussions as the most important link between the different parts of the BSR. As the participants pointed out, in past it was easier and quicker to move around the area by boat than on land. But also nowadays the citizens and visitors of the BSR perceive the sea as one of the main characters of the area’s identity.

Also the geographical location in the North was mentioned – bringing along dark and long winters as well as light and magical summer nights.

A bit surprising was that many participants started to talk about the common food culture around the Baltic Sea: many countries are using the same ingredients for their national dishes (e.g. herring), preparing them just slightly differently in each side of the BSR.

The workshop “Contribution to the Baltic Sea Region cultural identity” was one of the four Policy Round Tables organized during the ONE Baltic Sea Region-project. The aim of the Policy Round Tables is to evoke discussion on the common identity and collect ideas for a portfolio of BSR images and identities produced in the end of the project.

Read more about ONE Baltic Sea Region–project at www.onebsr.eu and www.facebook.com/pages/One-Baltic-Sea-Region/396238183791125

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Baltic Sea Region
Programme 2007–2013



Part-financed by the European Union
(European Regional Development Fund)



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