**4th Working Meeting on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region**

Proposed concept for parallel session on Environment (including energy efficiency and renewable energy)

Date: 11 April 2013 11:00–12:45 and 13:45–15:15

Venue: Aalto University Dipoli Congress Centre, Otakaari 24, 02150 Espoo, Finland

Participants: approximately 50

**The objective of the 4th Working Meeting on the EUSBSR:**

The session will address cooperation, synergies and complementarities between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the different national and regional programmes and activities planned for 2014-2020 and which may strengthen efforts to achieve joint objectives.

**The objective of the working session:**

*The EU Environmental policy*

# The European Commission has proposed a new EU Environment Action Programme to 2020. It draws on a number of recent strategic initiatives in the field of environment, including the [Resource Efficiency Roadmap](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:DKEY=615217:EN:NOT), the [2020 Biodiversity Strategy](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011DC0244:EN:NOT) and the [Low Carbon Economy Roadmap](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0112:FIN:EN:PDF). It should secure the commitment of EU institutions, Member States, regional and local administrations and other stakeholders to a common agenda for environment policy action up to 2020.

# While many EU Member States are struggling to cope with the economic crisis, the attendant need for structural reforms offers new opportunities for the EU to move rapidly onto a more sustainable path. The new environment action programme points the way towards making the most of these opportunities.

# The Environmental Action programme 2020 also includes references to the marine strategy framework directive. EU environmental policy links directly to efforts in the Baltic Sea Region to improve the environmental status of the Sea, and in this perspective, the Baltic Sea Action Plan and the EUSBSR can be seen as building blocks in reaching the European environmental objectives.

*Environmental issues in the Baltic Sea Region*

*The latest decades’ large-scale investments in waste-water treatment plants and key decisions on cleaner shipping have had an important impact on decreasing the nutrient load. However, to save the sea, further and continued action is needed, especially in the agricultural sector, on which progress in nutrient loads reduction greatly depends now. Full implementation of the relevant EU legislation is necessary in restoring the ecosystem status of the sea. This legislation includes the Water Framework Directive, Nitrates Directive, Urban Waste Water Directive, Industrial Emissions Directive, as well as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.*

The text above is taken from the Priority Area NUTRI in the updated EUSBSR Action Plan. It shows that although progress has been made in reducing nutrient loads into the Baltic Sea, still efforts need to be made in order to reach the objective of saving the Sea. Efforts need to be made in fully implementing EU legislation, and EU and national funds could also play an important role in promoting this objective.

The environmental state of the Baltic Sea Region and in particular of the Baltic Sea is one of the key concerns underpinning the commitment of the Baltic Sea region Member States to formulate a joint strategy.

Whereas cooperation to reduce harmful environmental impacts has already existed in the Region for many years, notably through HELCOM, the EUSBSR has a potential to strengthen the efforts made by Member States to save the Sea and improve the general environmental status in the macro-region.

After the launch of the EUSBSR, the EU 2020 strategy has been launched, with its emphasis on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In this light one can see the programming preparation now in progress as a logical part of a bigger framework as illustrated below.

The session will address cooperation, synergies and complementarities between the EUSBSR and different country specific and cooperation programmes and activities foreseen for 2014-2020. The leading question for the discussion is:

***How can the country specific activities complement each other in order to ensure and accelerate:***

* implementation of the most urgent and impact producing measures of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan;
* maritime traffic safety and spill over pollution prevention and remediation measures in the Baltic Sea;
* the transition of the Baltic Sea region into a low carbon economy.

In the table below, some examples are given on how some of the actions under the EUSBSR "environmental priorities" correspond with national position papers, the thematic objectives specified in the regulation proposals for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and correspondences with Baltic Sea Action Plan. This approach could be explored by partnership agreement coordinators and managing authorities to search for complementarities of action in order to identify which kind of actions could have the strongest impact in terms of improving the environmental state of the macro region.

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| **The EUSBSR Activities** | **Position Papers** | **Thematic objective (CPR regulation)** |
| Improving waste water treatment | Investment in the waste and water sectors  Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency | Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency  Strengthening research, technological development and innovation |
| Environmentally friendly farming practices | Further environmental protection in agricultural, fisheries and maritime sectors  Support sustainable management of natural resources on which land and sea based  Activities depend, halting biodiversity loss and keeping the open landscape | Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency  Strengthening research, technological development and innovation |
| Maritime spatial planning | Promote Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management | Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency  Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management  Strengthening research, technological development and innovation |
| Increase the use of renewable energy sources and promote energy efficiency | Increase share of renewable energy sources | Low carbon economy |

*Proposed objectives for the session are:*

1) To explore how programmes and activities in the Baltic Sea region will address joint environmental objectives.

2) To explore complementarities between programmes and activities foreseen by Member States linked to the "environmental" Priority Areas of the EUSBSR.

3) To encourage necessary coordination and cooperation processes between the Member States in order to maximise synergies and minimise fragmentation of efforts.

**Some guiding questions for the discussions:**

1. What are our planned environmental actions (in country specific and cooperation programmes)?

2. How do they reinforce the EUSBSR objectives and/or the Priority Areas?

3. Within our priorities, *how do we* collaborate with partners in the Baltic Sea region?

4. Within our priorities, *how would we like* to collaborate with partners in the Baltic Sea region?

* What do we need and what can we offer?

**Moderation:** *Bjarke Wiehe Bøtcher,* Priority Area Coordinator for the Priority Areas SAFE and SHIP of the EUSBSR Action Plan

HELCOM (tbc)

**Proposed agenda of the session:**

11:00 – 11:45 Introduction: objectives of session, short intro to the EUSBSR and Priority Areas with particular focus on environmental objectives

11:45 – 12:45 Example 1 presentation followed by a discussion (20+30 min)

12:45 – 13:45 Lunch

13:45 – 14:45 Example 2 presentation followed by a discussion (20+30 min)

14:45 – 15:15 Comments from the Priority Area Coordinators from the Priority Area NUTRI, Priority Area SHIP and HELCOM

Comments from Member States on the environmental priorities in programming and to what extent it is connected to the EUSBSR

Can we draw conclusion on cooperation opportunities and work to be done with regard to stimulate Baltic Sea region cooperation?

Is this cooperation likely to give value added for both - programmes and the EUSBSR?

What is the way forward?