



CPMR BALTIC SEA COMMISSION NEWSFLASH | SEPTEMBER 2020

INTRODUCTION

Dear Members,

We are sending you this first **BSC Newsflash** to provide you with an update on recent CPMR Baltic Sea Commission activities and also up-coming events of relevance for Member Regions. The objective is to ensure good communication among the network, even though we cannot have physical meetings. Happy reading!

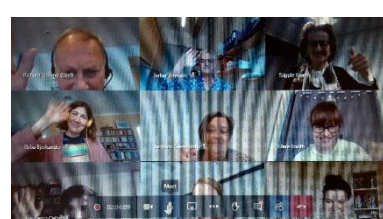
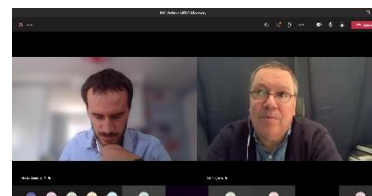
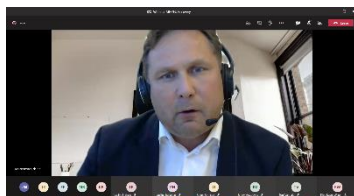
Your team at the BSC Secretariat

Lucille Ehrhart, Executive Secretary
Clare Booth, Policy Assistant

The Newsflash includes:

- ➔ **Articles** about latest BSC events
- ➔ A zoom on one BSC Member Region, including an interview with a political representative and a description of a project. For this first edition, we are pleased to have the **spotlight on Region Päijät-Häme**.
- ➔ An **overview of some workshops** in the framework of the **EUSBSR** and the **EWRC**
- ➔ A **calendar** of future BSC events

THE WORK CONTINUES ...ONLINE





BSC POLICY BRIEF: THE EU RECOVERY PACKAGE AND THE MFF

On 2 September 2020, Baltic Sea Member Regions, together with **Erik Bergkvist**, Member of the European Parliament, and the CPMR Secretariat, discussed the implications of the EU Recovery Plan for Baltic Sea Regions. This first Policy Brief marked the kick-off of the Baltic Sea Commission's activities for the new working year ahead.

The online meeting was also an opportunity to scrutinise July's agreement between the Member States on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF).

Among the topics discussed were the role of Regions in the Next Generation EU Instrument, the budgetary cuts in some key EU programmes, such as the Just Transition Fund. Discussion focused also on the future of European Territorial Cooperation programmes. A [BSC background document on the MFF and the Recovery plan](#) provided participants with an overview of the issues at stake.

[CPMR Secretariat also presented an analysis produced in July 2020](#). They stressed the risk of a weak territorial dimension in the Recovery and Resilience Facility, as regions may not be involved. They also informed participants about the calendar of the negotiations.

Read more about the event in the article [here](#).



THE ROLE OF BSC REGIONS IN THE REVISION OF THE EUSBSR ACTION PLAN – FINAL SESSION

On 9 September 2020, the Baltic Sea Commission Task Force on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) had its final session. The objective of the Task Force was to develop a local and regional perspective for the revision of the governance and the thematic scope of the EUSBSR Action Plan.

As well as the Chairs of the BSC Working Groups on Maritime Issues and Transport, the German Chair of the National Coordinators Group and several EUSBSR Policy Areas Coordinators attended the online meeting. In his opening speech, the President of the Baltic Sea Commission, **Jari Nahkanen**, underlined the importance of the EUSBSR for the work of the BSC and thanked the members of the Task Force for their work, enabling the voice of regions to be integrated in the revision process of the Action Plan of the Strategy.

Bringing together 35 participants, the meeting provided an opportunity to draw conclusions from the role of regions in the revision process of the Action Plan and to develop a regional perspective for the further implementation process.

Representatives of Member Regions from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Oulu, and Västerbotten presented the link between their respective work and the revised Action Plan. Furthermore, the Chair of the BSC Maritime Issues Working Group, **Tiina Perho** (Southwest Finland) welcomed the update of the Action Plan

and stressed the importance of working closely with Policy Area Tourism in the coming weeks to enable the recovery of the tourism sector in the Baltic Sea Region. The Chair of the BSC Transport Working Group, **Bosse Andersson** (Stockholm) welcomed the focus on decarbonisation and sustainable transport in the Action Plan.

On the same day, **Wolf Born**, Leader of the BSC Task Force, presented the work of the BSC Member Regions at the CPMR Task Force meeting on Macro-Regional Strategies, bringing together all CPMR Geographical Commissions. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss with representatives of the European Commission (DG REGIO) about the future development of Macro-Regional Strategies in light of the new programming period post-2020 but also to discuss the [CPMR Technical Paper on the main challenges for Macro-Regions in the post-2020 period](#).

Read more about the event in the article [here](#).



SHARING REGIONAL EXPERIENCE IN TRANSPORT PROJECTS

The Transport Working Group of the Baltic Sea Commission has produced a comprehensive [report](#), gathering examples of transport projects but also the lessons learnt from their involvement in projects. The report is based on the consultation of 15 Members from Sweden, Finland and Poland. This sharing of experiences helps regions to strengthen their knowledge and capacity building, as well as providing evidence for political conclusions in the field of transport.

Member Regions of the Transport Working Group have shared experiences in five transport areas; Freight, Land use and Transport Planning, New structure for Sustainable Travel, Infrastructure, and Decarbonisation of the Transport Sector and Alternative Fuels. The report also shows how Regions have worked actively with public transport, mobility as a service (MaaS) and car sharing services to reduce emissions from the transport sector and streamline transport and community services.

Bosse Andersson, Chair of the BSC Transport Working Group (Stockholm Council), said that *“regions have learned a lot from each other. Beyond the description of transport projects, the added value of this exercise was to collect experiences and also to identify difficulties encountered during these projects, so that we can do better in the future! We noticed that Regions often have the same challenges but have different strategies and capacities to overcome them. With this work, Regions can identify areas of cooperation and also build their capacity when it comes to the development and implementation of transport projects”*.

Read more about the report in the article [here](#).

SAVE THE DATE
CPMR BALTIC SEA COMMISSION GENERAL ASSEMBLY: 21 OCTOBER 2020

- Due to the health situation, the Baltic Sea Commission has been **postponed to the 21 October**. For the first time, it will be an **online meeting**.
- **Registration** for the BSC General Assembly is open! Please register via this [link](#)
- All **Working Papers** will be sent out to Member Regions two weeks prior to the General Assembly.
- Among **guest speakers**, there will be **Miapetra Kumpula-Natri**, Member of the European Parliament and **Ambassador Grzegorz Poznański** and Director General of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat.
- In the framework of this year's General Assembly, the **elections will take place for the President and the two Vice-Presidents of the Baltic Sea Commission for 2020-2022**. A new **Executive Committee** will also be nominated.



 **CPMR BALTIC SEA COMMISSION**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
CPMR BALTIC SEA COMMISSION**

.....

SAVE THE DATE

21 OCTOBER 2020

ONLINE MEETING

.....

 cpmr-baltic.org  [@CPMR_BSC](https://twitter.com/CPMR_BSC)

PÄIJÄT-HÄME

INTERVIEW WITH KRISTIINA HÄMÄLÄINEN



→ Chairwoman of the CPMR Finnish delegation (until October 2020).

→ Vice-President of the Regional Board of Päijät-Häme and Lahti.

How is your region involved in the sustainable transition in relation to the Green Deal Agenda?

KRISTIINA: Päijät-Häme region is committed to ambitious goals on mitigating climate change. The aim is to reach carbon neutrality by the year 2030. This requires significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions at all sectors as well as increasing carbon sinks.

Päijät-Häme Regional Council strives to achieve the climate goals together with municipalities and other stakeholders. Key stakeholders are presented in a regional climate coordination group and work is on-going to draft a road map to carbon neutrality.

Päijät-Häme Climate Road Map includes a regional vision and concrete actions to reach climate neutrality. Climate work and the circular economy are real actions in Päijät-Häme, not just promises. As a region, we are proud to have the European Green Capital of Lahti in 2021. It is an international recognition of the pioneer.

The Päijät-Häme Road Map to Circular Economy describes the regional vision and concrete activities to achieve common goals. The road map is also part of the regional development strategy. The vision of Päijät-Häme is to be “the successful resource efficient region” in 2030. The road map process to define vision and goals involved stakeholders like regional and municipal authorities, higher education institutions, a regional development corporation, and private and public companies. The road map is updated annually in cooperation with regional stakeholders. The road map is recognised as a good practice at EU level.

What is the focus of Päijät-Häme in terms of EU Transport Policy to improve the connectivity of the Region?

KRISTIINA: In Päijät-Häme, we lean heavily on the European TEN-T network and the core and comprehensive networks outlined by the EU (see <https://vayla.fi/web/en/transport-system/ten-t>). The focus should be on improving and upgrading the existing network, not on creating unnecessary and expensive new ones. Also, we support the extension of the North Sea - Baltic core network corridor from Helsinki to Finnish/Swedish border, via the existing core network. We see the TEN-T network in Finland and its European-level Core Network Corridors as a solid base for long-term planning, which ensures functional and cost-effective transport connections at all levels.



TENT-T Core Network in Finland (Päijät-Häme region in dark blue, road in red, railway in red and black, waterway in light blue).

How has your Region been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak and what are the perspectives to overcome the crisis?

KRISTIINA: The consequences of COVID-19 are mass unemployment and social challenges. Päijät-Häme is in the “rust belt” region of Southern Finland. It has not found significant growth in industry or services in the 21st century.

The region has less European Union funding for regional development than regions with the same challenges. The share of SMEs in Päijät-Häme is large and the number of family businesses is relatively high. There are many differences between these companies in how they have been able to react to the changes in operating conditions caused by COVID-19 and the sharp decline in demand. The challenge for the province is the availability of a highly skilled workforce, especially in SMEs. In industry, the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the order backlog are visible with a delay.

In the short term, COVID-19 has had the hardest impact on wellness and event services as well as travel and experience production. Before the

coronavirus pandemic, the tourism industry grew, especially in numbers of international tourists.

Päijät-Häme is a net supporter of the state economy, losing more than EUR 100 million annually to the regional economies of other provinces. There are only a few government jobs in Päijät-Häme. The biggest obstacle to the growth of the region is the small number of university and college study places and especially the lack of bachelor-level education. This is reflected in tax revenues and income levels. The financial problems of redundant workers are immediately visible in the province.

The unemployment rate in the region was finally recovering from the highs of the recession years, but now it has risen again to almost 19 per cent (July 2020). Together with stakeholders, we have gone through initiatives to boost the regional economy. The operating environment of industry will be developed. One key is new growth and better quality in the service sector. We will develop the sustainable accessibility of the area and create more nature and tourism revitalisation measures. One focus is also exercise and sports and how that creates vitality and business in the Lahti area.



Päijät-Häme team involved in CPMR and BSC

From left: Ms Laura Leppänen, Regional Mayor; Ms Kristiina Hämäläinen, Chairwoman of the CPMR Finnish Delegation and Vice-President of the Regional Board of Päijät-Häme; Mr Juha Hertsi, Regional Development Manager; Ms Jaana Martikainen, Acting Director, Regional Planning; and Mr Harri Kuusela, Project Manager of Next2Met Interreg Europe project.

PROJECT CORNER

NEXT2MET



The CPMR is involved as a communication partner in an Interreg Europe Project called *Next2Met* together with regional authorities from Finland, Austria, Spain, Ireland, Poland, and Germany.

The project, which focuses on the **attractiveness of next-to-metropolitan regions by means of soft digitalisation**, has now been up and running for a year. The unfortunate coronavirus outbreak has further underlined the significance of these regions in terms of safe, functional, and meaningful places for living and working. This is expected to be manifested in the emerging "new normal" themes, such as solutions for remote working, digital services, citizen participation, and smart transport.

The idea of "soft digitalisation" as a means of increasing regional attraction is in the core of the *Next2Met* approach – it might be a waterproof definition for it will not be reached, but it can also be that the process with its side effects is more valuable than the outcomes as such. The journey will surely be interesting!

Please stay tuned for more developments of *Next2Met* by following the project on social media and visiting the website: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/next2met/>

First Policy learning event in Lahti

On 14-15 January 2020, Next2Met partners and stakeholders came together for their first Policy Learning Event in Lahti. This two-day event aimed at fostering an interregional exchange in order to

increase the attractiveness of the regions through soft digitalisation measures.



Second Policy learning online

On 14 May 2020, Next2Met partners and stakeholders came together for their second Policy Learning Event during an online meeting hosted by the Office of Lower Austria Federal Government. This Policy Learning Event triggered various discussions for further collaborations.

More than ever in the context of COVID-19, this meeting also enabled all participants to reflect on the essential role of digitalisation for the peripheral regions of Europe. This moment was an opportunity to get inspiration from other stakeholders, to discuss the transferability of the projects, and to exchange some recommendations across Europe despite COVID-19 restriction measures.



OVERVIEW OF UPCOMING EVENTS

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE 29 September, online



This conference is organised by the European Commission and cover topics such as fishing pressure, pollution, climate change etc.

Programme and Registration [here](#).

EUSBSR Annual Forum Plenary 20 October, online

Registration open via this [link](#).



EUSBSR Annual Forum Workshops Now until 10 October, online

Programme of the workshops accessible [here](#).

Among the interesting range of workshops, we draw your attention to the following workshop:

Baltic meets Arctic – young people in the heart of sustainable future

30 September 2020, 13:00–15:00 CET



Four of the Baltic sea countries: Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Russia are also Arctic states with Arctic regions and the Barents Euro-Arctic region directly touches the Baltic Sea. More information on the workshop and registration [here](#).

European Week of Regions and Cities 5-22 October, online

Registration to EWRC [here](#).

Main programme accessible [here](#).

The CPMR BSC will participate in the workshop on macro-regional strategies organised on 14 October from 11.30 to 13.00 CET Time. During the meeting, the BSC will present the work of the BSC Task Force on EUSBSR.

Joint the event!



CPMR General Assembly 29 October, 10h00-13h00 CET

For the first time, the CPMR will hold its General Assembly online. Joint the event!

Registration before 15 October via this link [here](#)





UPCOMING CPMR BSC EVENTS

6 OCTOBER 2020

BSC Executive Committee
Online

14 OCTOBER 2020

Workshop EWRC
Online

21 OCTOBER 2020 - morning

BSC General Assembly
Online

27 OCTOBER 2020

BSC Transport Working Group
Online – more info [here](#)

29 OCTOBER 2020

CPMR General Assembly
Online

27 JANUARY 2021

BSC Executive Commission
Satakunta (TBC)

Keep track of our activities on the
[BSC website](#)



cpmr-baltic.org



[CPMR_BSC](#)

