

“Reuse, reduce, rethink” - 10th Annual Forum of EUSBSR focused on circular economy



Details

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The main theme of the 10th EUSBSR Annual Forum, organized in Gdansk on June 12-13 2019, was circular and sharing economy, and how these can provide an answer to demographic changes and environmental challenges.



More than 700 participants from governments, international organisations, NGOs, universities, local and regional administrations and businesses attended the Forum and shared their ideas on how to develop the regions and face the future challenges.

Annual Forum as an opportunity to put more emphasis on circular economy in the EUSBSR

The opening session of the Annual Forum addressed the main theme of the Forum, circular economy, and what it could mean to the well-being of the Baltic Sea. The welcoming words were given by **Mieczysław Struk**, Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship, **Elżbieta Bieńkowska**, Commissioner, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, **Marcin Ociepa**, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology of Poland, **Martin Roger**, Ambassador of Estonia to Poland (delivers speech of PM of Estonia Jüri Ratas), **Roger Ryberg**, Chair of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation, **Corina Creţu**, Commissioner, Regional Policy - video message, and **Karmenu Vella**, Commissioner, Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries - video message.

In all of the welcoming speeches, circular economy was seen as important. The Baltic Sea Region has a good basis but more focus is needed to maintain its position as a forerunner. In addition, circular economy is a concept that needs everyone's contribution because no one can do it alone, as pointed out by Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska. This is also a good example why macro-regional cooperation matters.

Annual Forum was also seen as a good opportunity to reflect where we are with circular economy and how to make it stronger in the EUSBSR.



In the opening session, the winners of the International Baltic Poster contest were also awarded and a report “No time to waste. Unlocking the circular potential of the Baltic Sea Region (<https://strategyforum2019.eu/documents/810774/2291961/No+time+to+waste.+Unlocking+the+circular+potential+of+the+Baltic+region.pdf/bf58b8e2-1cad-486f-bd95-f3cd00185771>)” was presented by **Adam Czerniak**, Chief Economist, Director for Research at Polityka Insight.

Watch the opening session video here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrZNa47ioNo&feature=youtu.be>).

Read more about the opening session here (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2019/06/14-06-2019-baltic-sea-forum-2019-no-time-to-waste-to-save-our-planet).

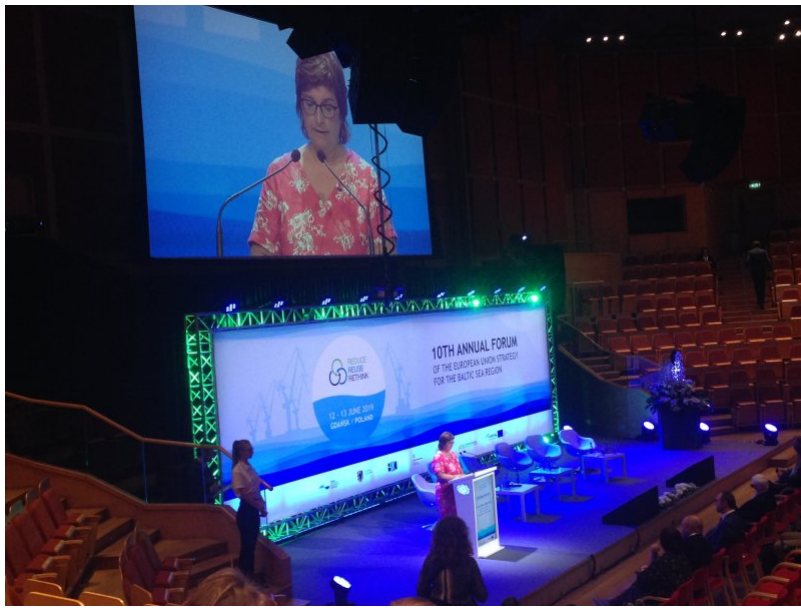
From well-being of the sea to business and demographic changes

The three plenary sessions were dedicated to discussing circular economy from the viewpoint of environment, business and demographic changes.

In the first plenary “Going circular - a pathway to well-being in the Baltic Sea Region”, the keynote speech was delivered by **Normunds Popens**, Deputy Director-General, DG REGIO. The panelists discussed if EUSBSR could be an example to other regions of implementing circular economy.

The second plenary, “Business-driven approach to circular economy in the Baltic Sea Region”, addressed the question how to use EUSBSR to increase circular economy related investments in the region, and how to improve cooperation between public and private sector. The keynote was delivered by **Ralfs Nemiro**, Minister of Economics of Latvia.

“Demography and circularity in the Baltic Sea Region: interdependent or disconnected?” was the title of the third plenary that tackled the questions of aging population, migration and labour mobility and how circular economy could provide an answer to these challenges. The keynote was delivered by **Kjell Nilsson**, Director of Nordregio.



The final session of the Forum concluded that as EUSBSR turns 10 years, we have reached a state of maturity but we should not stop developing. Communicating the Strategy is more and more important, and particularly informing decision makers why proposed actions are worth doing. In these 10 years, we have succeeded in bringing citizens together and created a new way of cooperating. For the future, we need a good action plan and work on inclusiveness to keep up this work.

Watch the plenaries on Youtube:

Plenary 1 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nLUDkgt16E&feature=youtu.be>)

Plenary 2 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9a9l6Wcgw8&feature=youtu.be>)

Plenary 3 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCLSCAit9w0&feature=youtu.be>)

Final Session (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmR7Yk216FQ&feature=youtu.be>)

19 parallel seminars to cover EUSBSR and circular economy

In addition to the plenaries, the Forum programme included diverse parallel seminars on circular economy and a networking village to meet EUSBSR stakeholders. In connection to the Forum, EUSBSR Horizontal Action Capacity organized a Participation Day on June 11 2019 for stakeholders interested in joining the EUSBSR. To increase youth participation, a Baltic Youth Camp was organized on June 8-10 where EUSBSR was an essential part of the discussions.

After the Forum, EUSBSR National Coordinators had a meeting, and as the Chairmanship rotates, Finland will take over the Chair from Denmark on the 1st of July.

Find photos from the Annual Forum here (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/182083578@N06/with/48078512297/>).

The Forum was hosted by Pomorskie Voivodeship and organised in close cooperation with the Baltic Sea Subregional Council, Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, European Commission and other partners. The Annual Forum was co-financed from the programme of Interreg Baltic Sea Region.