



REPORT

*Circular and sharing economy as an answer to demographic changes
and environmental challenges in the Baltic Sea Region*

10th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 10th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), entitled *Circular and sharing economy as an answer to demographic changes and environmental challenges in the Baltic Sea Region*, was organised in Gdańsk on 12-13 June 2019. It was hosted by the Pomorskie Voivodeship together with Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation in close cooperation with the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Commission, HA Capacity and the Let's communicate project. The event was held at the Polish Baltic Philharmonic and the Królewski Hotel Conference Centre. It offered 5 plenary sessions, 19 seminars and Networking Village. A networking dinner was or-

ganised at the European Solidarity Centre.

Three reports were prepared for the Forum. All were available before the event. The aim of the reports [No time to waste. Unlocking the circular potential of the Baltic Sea Region](#) and [Circular Baltic 2030 - Circular Economy in the Baltic Sea Region and Beyond](#) was to stimulate discussions and to analyse the current state and possible future development of circular economy in the Baltic Sea Region. The aim of the [Better together. 10 years of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region](#) brochure was to summarize 10 years of the EUSBSR and to present its achievements.

2. SUMMARY OF THE PLENARY SESSIONS

OPENING SESSION

- Clean, healthy, rich and safe Baltic Sea

The Forum was opened by the Marshal of the Pomorskie Region Mieczysław Struk. Subsequent speakers included Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Commissioner, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Marcin Ociepa, Secretary of State in the Polish Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology, Martin Roger, Ambassador of Estonia to Poland and Roger Ryberg, Chair of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation.

Mr Struk, Marshal of Pomorskie Region, focused on the challenges brought by the 21st century. The Marshal believes urgent steps should be taken to make the best use of the existing positive potential in order to address and face the challenges and threats.

Ms Bieńkowska also focused on the challenges faced by our planet: climate change, ecology, global competition for resources. By 2050 we need to reform our economies completely. The EUSBSR is an example of strong partnership. The 10th anniversary of the EUSBSR is when we have to think about the future and ensure that we have a new action plan and funding for the strategy post 2021. We have to consider all challenges and difficulties and fight all of them at the same time. This means doing it together.

Mr Ociepa underlined that as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the EUSBSR, we should remember that the last decade has seen a multitude of new projects in

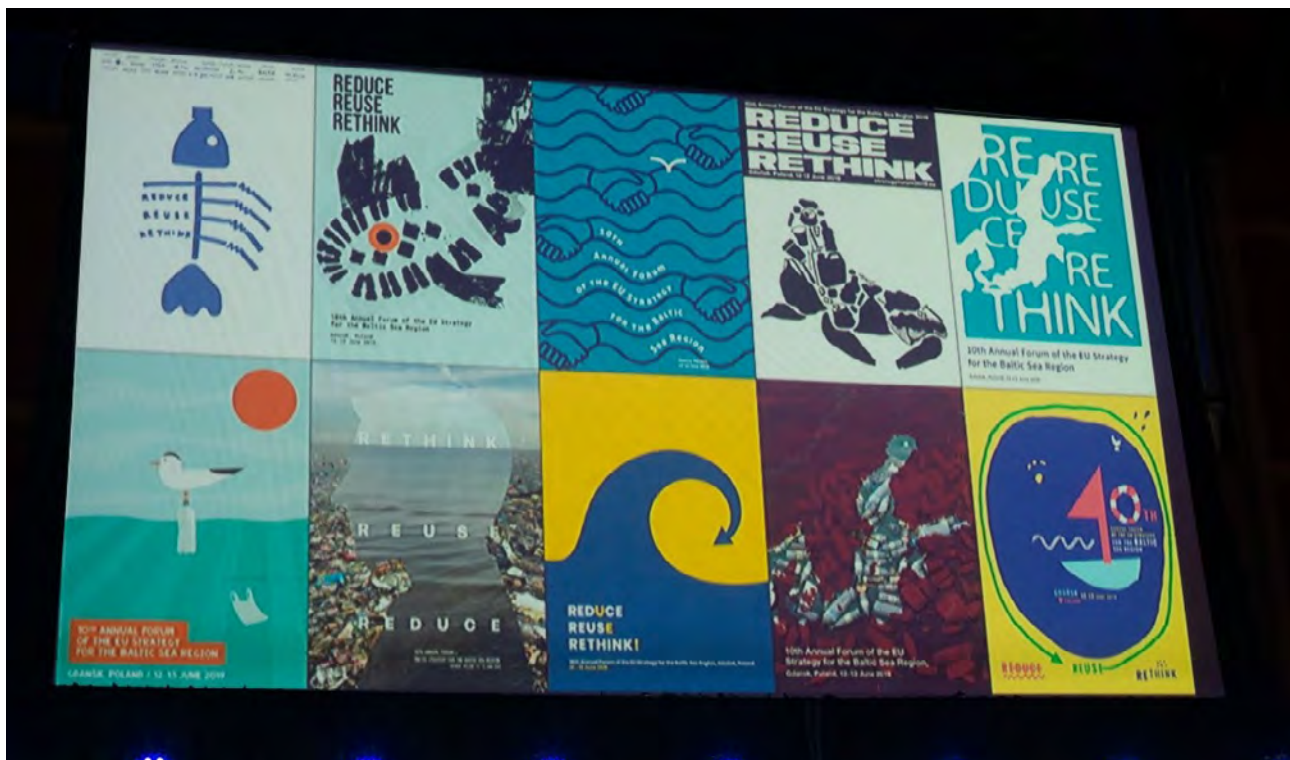
a number of sectors such as maritime economy, tourism and agriculture. Mr Ociepa underlined that thanks to our macro regional strategies we can face challenges that are too big for one nation or region.

The Ambassador delivered the speech of Jüri Ratas, Estonia's PM. It underlined the fact that circular economy is much more complicated than sustainable development.

The Chairman of BSSSC underlined that the aim of BSSSC is to advocate the needs of the subnational level and make the voice of youth heard in the framework of EUSBSR. Mr Ryberg stressed that one of the goals of the conference should be to include youth into the strategy because we cannot talk about the future without taking the ones who will inherit this future. One of the tools of that involvement was the organization of the [Baltic Sea Youth Camp](#) from 8-12 of June, back to back with the EUSBSR Annual Forum.

The welcoming speeches were followed by video messages from Corina Crețu, Commissioner, Regional Policy and Karmenu Vella, Commissioner, Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

Next, the Baltic Poster Contest award ceremony took place. The contest was open to people aged 18-35 who are citizens of states-participants of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.



The last part of the opening session was a presentation of the Report *No time to waste. Unlocking the circular potential of the Baltic Sea Region* given by Adam Czerniak, Chief Economist, Director for Research at Polityka Insight. During his speech Mr Czerniak presented

the main recommendations for stimulating a transition towards a circular economy. The most important thing is that all stakeholders should be involved in that process.

I PLENARY SESSION

Going circular - a pathway to well-being in the Baltic Sea Region

The first plenary session focused on securing growth and prosperity for the Baltic Sea Region. The session began with a speech on *Securing long-term prosperity for the Baltic Sea Region by means of circular economy* given by Normunds Popens, Deputy Director-General at DG REGIO. Mr Popens highlighted that the EUSBSR was the first strategy to promote the functional area approach at the macro-regional level, an innovative idea ten years ago. The strategy was established because the Baltic Sea was polluted and needed everyone to become involved. Mr Popens underlined that circular economy offers new possibilities for improving people's lives and that cooperation will be one of the key-words for the next programming period.

The speech was followed by a discussion. The panellists

debated whether the EUSBSR could be an example for other regions on how to implement circular economy and whether circular economy could play an important role in solving the Baltic Sea area's environmental problems. Mr Wyszowski from Global Compact Network Poland argued that the Baltic Sea could become a plastic-free sea because of the countries around it. With their great record of environmental protection, Baltic Sea states could in fact achieve this goal.

The panellists agreed that there is a big need for innovation. Encouraging people to be more sensitive to circular economy is also important. It was concluded that the future looks bright because countries are talking together.



II PLENARY SESSION

Business-driven approach to circular economy in the Baltic Sea Region

The second Plenary Session was devoted mainly to business and the practical implementation of circular and sharing economy. The session began with a presentation on *Circular business models as an important contribution to SDGs' implementation in the Baltic Sea Region* given by Ralfs Nemiro, Minister of Economics, Latvia. Mr Nemiro commented on circular economy business model types and provided a few examples from Latvia. The Minister underlined that it is governments' role to overcome the challenges in the BSR. Mr Nemiro also noted that countries should cooperate and turn challenges into opportunities.

The next speech was given by CEO of Global Utmaning, Tove Ahlström. Ms Ahlström elaborated on why we need circular economy and presented the [*Report Circular Baltic 2030 - Circular Economy in the Baltic Sea Region and Beyond*](#).

The presentations were followed by a discussion. Panellists brought forward several issues and concerns related to the circular economy in the Baltic Sea region. The role of education, youth, public procurement and consumers was discussed. Ms Romenska from EXPRA noted that the middle generation has lost the ability to avoid waste. All the panellists agreed that at the moment we should count on children and that a lot depends on proper education.

It was also mentioned that a shortage of raw materials will be the biggest challenge for BSR states. Additionally it was noted that it is important and challenging for policy makers to involve the industry into the discussions in order to help them to move towards circular business models.

The panellists underlined the role of sharing best practices and the need for open access to data and knowledge.



III PLENARY SESSION

Demography and circularity in the Baltic Sea Region: interdependent or disconnected?

The third plenary session was dedicated to exploring the relationship between demography and circularity in the Baltic Sea Region. The first speaker, Kjell Nilsson, Director of Nordregio, presented the *State of the Baltic Sea Region with regards to Demographic and Economic Development*. Mr Nilsson stated that by 2030, the Nordic Region is expected to have almost 30 million inhabitants and this population increase will be mainly in the densely populated urban areas. It is also worth pointing out that this is an ageing region. Another important issue is migration. Migration leads to population growth and can help to boost workforce and slow population ageing.

Martin Rummelein - one of the organizers of the Baltic Sea Youth Camp talked briefly about this initiative. The Baltic Sea Youth Camp was a four-day festival with 100 young people from 11 Baltic countries. The participants talked about ideas for the EUSBSR and EU policy in the

future. Martin presented some outcomes of the camp. They were concerned with education and career choices, mental health, digitalization, pollution and the most important one was to get the youth into the EUSBSR.

During the debate, the panellists stated that the most important aspects on the labour market were digitalization and new ways of employment such as freelance work or virtual work.

Due to the ageing of society, silver economy plays an increasingly important role as older people form part of the workforce. Nowadays people need to stay in employment longer, because i. a. of the pressure on pension systems. As a result, educational patterns and the labour market must change. Therefore, employers are sometimes required to change the type of employment. Panellists indicated that retraining does not always support this.



CLOSING SESSION

Looking into the future

The final session started with a few statements on EU budget for 2021-2027 from Jean-Pierre Halkin, Head of Unit in DG REGIO. Mr Halkin underlined that future EU budget will support research, innovation and smart specialization. It will also have a green dimension on climate, renewable energy and resource efficiency. Mr Halkin also mentioned that policies of member states participating in the Strategy must be coordinated.

The Final Session shared some reflections on the future of the EUSBSR after 10 years of its implementation. Ms Liepa noted that we should avoid territorial, sectorial and structural fragmentation. The EUSBSR helped to develop a new format for collaboration in Europe. It was mentioned that macro-regional strategies are about co-operation. It was agreed that the level of ambition in the EUSBSR should be maintained but we need to deliver good planning and good communication. All panellists

agreed that the language of policies must be clear and improved.

The Forum finished with short summing-up speeches given by the Secretary General in Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation Ann Irene Saeternes and Marshal of the Pomorskie Region Mieczysław Struk.

The seminars were selected from nearly 30 proposals. They were assessed by the organisers against a set of criteria. One of the requirements was that they should support the thematic focus of the Forum. Seminar organisers were given priority if they e.g. engaged two or more co-organizers, covered cross-cutting issues or included diverse speakers.

The detailed descriptions of the seminars with names of the panellists and presentations are available on the Forum's [website](#).



3. SUMMARY OF THE SEMINARS

Day 1, Wednesday, 12 June 2019, 15:15 - 16:45



Circular economy and health: it's mainly good news

The main goal of the seminar was to show the benefits for human health and wellbeing of the transition from linear to circular economy. During the seminar speakers discussed the health benefits of circular economy such as less disease thanks to cleaner air and various solutions implemented in urban planning supporting better life-styles.

One of the most important issues is to help people to understand that health is not only the health sector but all sectors that influence our life and wellbeing.

During the seminar Medveten Konsumtion (Swedish non-profit organization), OLIO initiative, Health Care Without Harm, Stockholm Environment Institute SEI, Tallinn and Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being were presented. The presentations were followed by a discussion and questions from the audience.

Enhancing business-driven circular economy

The seminar focused on factors driving or hampering the regional process of moving toward circular solutions. Cir-

cular economy needs both a top-down political engagement and a bottom-up discovery process in the regions for circular possibilities. Speakers talked about policy mechanism for waste management, public procurement and innovation, agricultural-driven circular economy, consumer role in circular economy, experiences on value-chain and stakeholder analysis in circular economy. The discussion addressed the role of the public sector and the role of good practices pointing out that consumer activism which shapes public opinion is a strong tool for making change happen.

How smart specialisation strategy is translated through modern cluster work? Cases Lapland and Kanta-Häme Region, Finland

During the workshop two speakers introduced examples of Finland's progress in transiting from a linear economic model to circular economy. Jukka Teräs from Nordregio presented the case of Lapland - the northernmost region, which succeeded in adapting a smart specialisation strategy (S3) into regional growth. Despite its development pattern which is based on industries such as mining, metallurgy, forestry and tourism, Lapland has been fostering its clean nature in a circular economy model. Jukka emphasised the role of communication as an undervalued aspect of Lapland's success. The second speaker - Mona-Anitta Riihimäki introduced experiences from the Kanta-Häme region. She highlighted the role of education and multidisciplinary as key factors in the process of translating smart specialisation strategies into concrete business and R&D activities that promote economic development and sustainable lifestyles.

Industrial symbiosis as a key to circular economy in the Baltic Sea Region

During the seminar five projects were presented: Creating Automotive Renewal, Reviving Baltic Resilience, WASTEMAN - Integrated Sustainable Waste Management Systems decreasing pollution discharges in the South Baltic area and the World Maritime University activities in the BSR and cooperation between the Department of Invertebrate Zoology and Parasitology (University of Gdansk) and ATLANTNIRO Russia (Kaliningrad). The presentations were followed by a panel discussion.

While the Baltic Sea is the most regulated sea, it is also one of the most polluted bodies of water. This shows that regulation is not enough and the question is how it should be implemented. Technical solutions and changing behaviour are equally important. Environmental issues cannot be solved by changing administrative regulation only. This is where interregional and international cooperation become key. Education across all levels is possibly the way to initiate change and make it happen but everybody must contribute.

No time to waste. Unlocking the circular potential of the Baltic Sea Region - findings from the Report

During the seminar speakers presented conclusions from the report "No time to waste. Unlocking the circular potential of the Baltic Sea Region". The authors of the report showed an analysis of the current and possible future development of circular economy in the Baltic Sea Region. Two speakers said that increasing circularity is the only way to keep Baltic Sea Region economies growing without hampering the environment and inducing further climate change. What is more the authors tried to answer the following questions:

- What have Baltic Sea Region countries already achieved?
- What still needs to be done?
- What targeted policies can accelerate the transformation?

Towards a digital bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region

Can you imagine waking up in the morning and instead of picking your clothes from the wardrobe you print them on a 3D printer from biodegradable substances? This can be an example of bioeconomy as we transition into a digital circular economy in the near future. Today, digital bioeconomy works well, the forest industry is an example (digital models of forest assets which are helpful in forest management and protection) as well as construction (wood as a renewable building material). This trend will be disseminated, whether consumers and producers like it or not. The task for politicians is to set the right, sustainable regulatory frameworks and implement incentive mechanisms for bioeconomy now.

Day 2, Thursday, 13 June 2019, 10:45 - 12:15



Blue and green bioeconomy in the BSR from a youth perspective

The clue to the seminar was that it was not about the youth, but it was to hear the youth's voice on an urgent matter which is bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region.

The most important messages that the young people wanted to convey could be summarized in four main points, expressed and described by their representatives from different BSR countries:

1. Young farmers have the biggest potential to change current farming practices.
2. Young farmers are the driving force of carbon farming.
3. Teach students to take action on the bioeconomy revolution.
4. Simple life hacks can boost the bioeconomy.

The conclusions from the presentations by the youth, followed by roundtable discussions involving all participants, underlined that awareness is the key to driving sustainable changes.

Blue Economy Investment Opportunities for Baltic Sea solutions (previous title Blue Economy Investment Platform for Baltic Sea solutions)

The main goal of the seminar was to present Blue Investment opportunities for SMEs and start-ups in the Baltic Sea region and examples of cooperation between public entities, experts and entrepreneurs.

First of all possibilities of investment through several programmes were presented: LIFE, Interreg BSR, Horizon 2020 and EMFF Blue Calls.

Next, a platform for SMEs was presented. It was created in order to facilitate financing and matching. An offer prepared by the Nordic Investment Bank focused on Blue Economy was also explained.

During the last part of the seminar an example of a blue economy project was presented - Sotenäs Symbiosis (Sweden). The Sotenäs Symbiosis Centre, together with partners from businesses, academia and other actors,

has been actively working to implement and develop an industrial symbiosis network in Sotenäs, since 2013. Through facilitation, a number of synergies between industrial actors in the industrial symbiosis network have been realized. The results suggest that both environmental and socio-economic benefits have a large potential value for the region - increase in jobs, additional synergies, visitors and outreach in the scientific community.

Close plastic tap - Plastic does not belong to environment!

We treat seas and oceans like landfills - 70% of the drifting waste in the Baltic Sea is plastic (40 tons), which takes 100-1000 years to decompose. Microplastic (less than 5 mm) is eaten by marine animals and then by humans.

The European Commission prepared an Action Plan and proposals for legislative changes (to the circular economy package in 2015). The regulation itself is not enough, consumption patterns should be changed (we use 1 million single-use pouches per minute, the average time of using them is 12 minutes), we need education to move away from single-use plastic products. It is necessary to adopt rules: not only actions towards recycling (which should be economically effective), but also longer life of products, activities at the local level, use of sustainable raw materials - without toxic substances.

HELCOM (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission) prepared a Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter in the Baltic Sea (adopted in 2015), covering activities at regional and national level in the field of general improved waste prevention and management, sewage disposal, reclamation and reducing the pollution of the marine environment.

The main problem is that plastic is too cheap for manufacturers.

Eco and sharing tourism (tourist butterfly effect)

Best practices were presented in the field of sustainable transport and accommodation solutions for tourism. The issue of food waste in the tourism industry was also discussed. MEVO, Eco Share, Eco Car and Hydrogen bikes are projects which show how different types of vehicles can support public transport and reduce the number of cars used in cities by tourists. These vehicles are easy

to use and the rental fees are affordable. The solutions implemented in some hotels (Accor, Scandic) do not compromise on the quality of service. What is more, following the eco trends may be used in marketing communications and used as part of competition between hotel companies. Waste food management is not only a problem of environmental nature, it's no less a financial issue. It is clear that we simply serve too much food (during conferences, in hotels etc.) and it is important to know why we get this wrong.

Pressures, chances and the changing future in sustainable production and consumption of food

The seminar presented good practices in Circular Public Procurement. It began with a debate about the definition of green/circular/sustainable procurement and its role in the process of protecting biodiversity. The panellists agreed that we must think big but start from small steps e.g. less food waste, less mono packaging, no single use plastics, potable water available for free or one type of coffee cup (material, sizes). How we procure things can change people's habits via public/social services, such as eating more vegetarian/vegan meals, selling or donating left-over meals. The technical specification of public procurement could include criteria such as not allowing the use of disposable plastic dishes or having to use seasonal fruits or vegetables. We can also expect that the service provider at the request of the customer ensures such food distribution that enables the client to determine the composition and size of the portion. It is achievable especially when we have clear goals and centralised public procurement procedures. Some examples of public tender criteria were presented.

Good practices: Finnish public catering in schools, social economy entities in Rybnik (social cooperative "Zikrą", "Manufaktura Smakowitości"), catering services in a Plavinu region school were presented.

Reduce, reuse, rethink: connecting EU macro-regions

EU macro-regional strategies (MRS) are frameworks for more functional, focused and efficient regional development and for better coordination and cooperation within a certain geography. The MRS are influenced by developments happening in Europe.

How to cooperate to prepare a cooperation platform to

learn and exchange practices (experience, connections, learn and practice how to use experiences from other countries). What to do so that societies live longer and healthier lives. It is important that the labour market is changing and we have the possibility to eat healthier and stay in good health longer.

We need to prepare action plans to develop a working platform with young people where we could use their ideas and harness some ideas and initiatives from the Baltic Youth Camp. It is important to connect macro-regions.

This workshop aimed to share views on the trends across Europe that impact work in macro-regions and across those. Its objective was to exchange views on how we can better use existing resources, connect and secure collaboration mechanisms to promote regional cooperation.

Safe nutrient recycling for cleaner Baltic Sea

One of the many environmental challenges facing the Baltic Sea, the most serious and difficult to tackle with conventional approaches is the continuing eutrophication. During the seminar the speakers presented the status of the strategy, which the Baltic Sea Region has committed, through HELCOM, to elaborate - "Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy". The aim is to reduce nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea to acceptable levels and to mitigate eutrophication. PA Nutri actions concentrate on promoting measures and practices that support nutrient recycling and reduce nutrient losses, as well as on promoting cost-efficient nutrient removal and sustainable sludge handling in waste-water treatment. Dialogue among all sectors, reliable nutrient load data, cooperation with non-EU Member States and investigation on cost-efficient nutrient reduction mechanisms are required in order to meet the targets.



Day 2, Thursday, 13 June 2019, 13:15 - 14:45

Circular Economy in cities - strategy for development

During the seminar an introduction of the Urban Agenda partnership on Circular Economy and the action plan of 12 important actions were presented. The seminar focused on the work on Circular city governance, Circular Urban Resource Management for cities and the use of Resource Centres to promote repair, reuse, recycling and development of new business.

During the second part of the seminar three examples of circular solutions were presented: from Flanders, The Hague and Oslo showing the cooperation between public administrations and NGOs.

Circular Flanders is the hub and the inspiration for the Flemish circular economy. It is a partnership of governments, companies, civil society, and the knowledge community that will take action together. Some of the projects of Circular Flanders were presented, their aim is to put circular economy into practice.

Next the practical solutions from the municipality of The Hague were presented - dealing mostly with recycling and reuse in the city which established a function of commodity broker.

And finally, examples from Oslo. The City of Oslo has ten "Mini recycling stations" managed by the Agency for Waste Management which aim to place a focus on waste reduction, re-use, repair, and recycling.

Lifelong Learning for Smart Specializations

The objective of the seminar was to show the concept of *lifelong learning* as a tool for combatting labour market difficulties, a result of demographic challenges in the Baltic Sea Region.

As it was stated in the principle: "It must be ensured that everyone has a chance to renew their competence and skills in all life situations". Thanks to such an approach the Baltic Sea Region may tackle various limitations to its innovativeness and lessen the negative impact of the ageing population.

During the seminar, several interesting points were raised, some of which defined the seven principles of the employee of the future (1. Has a flexible work envi-

ronment, 2. Can customize own work, 3. Shares information, 4. Uses new ways to communicate and collaborate, 5. Can become a leader, 6. Shifts from knowledge worker to learning worker, 7. Learns and teaches at will), which were a good reference point for further discussions of the gaps in the current economy; the place and role of SMEs and how lifelong learning is put into practice in one of the model countries - Finland.

Localising circular economy - creative solutions for the challenges of our time

The seminar was an inspiration to accelerate the transition to circular economy models by demonstrating the existing effective practices in the region in order to adapt the frameworks with a creative approach.

During the seminar solutions were presented, including: cooperation of the public, non-governmental organizations, administration and business, changing consumption and production patterns (including the possibility of virtual testing of business models and individual measurement of the environmental footprint).

We need to introduce creative solutions to all sectors, including the public sector, such as design thinking. This will help improve efficiency in various ways. It is necessary to expand the activities by disseminating good practices and cooperation.

Recognising potential - easing the way for migrants

There were presentations of the experience of the Danube Region Information Platform for Economic Integration of Migrants, PlurAlps Project, the Knowledge Platform on Newly Arrived Refugees and Migrants within PA Education of the EUSBSR. This was followed by a discussion showing different perspectives on integration of migrants. The crucial role of education of migrants was emphasised, including differences between groups of migrants in terms of educational attainment. Services providing information on health service, labour market and official matters using simple instructions are helpful for migrants and enlarge their potential. Also language learning services are offered. While running this type of

projects public sector partners are important to maintain continuity of the projects (e.g. employment offices).

“Sustainable Working Life in the Baltic Sea Region”, focusing on demographic change, labour market and future work

The seminar aimed to provide a holistic cross sectoral overview of the current challenges in the labour market. In upcoming decades, the countries in the BSR will face considerable challenges with regard to ageing population and new requirements of the labour market regarding skills and qualifications. It is common interest for labour mobility to improve because it benefits employees and national economies.

We live longer and we stay healthier longer. At the same time labour markets are changing, becoming less stable requiring the workforce to frequently upgrade their

competences in order to be able to stay in the present job or to meet the requirements of a new one.

We need to think about our future and about engaging this really important topic for everyone nowadays.

What will demographic changes bring to BSR accessibility?

During the workshop the speakers presented solutions for shared mobility for both densely and sparsely populated areas and spatial planning tools. Most speakers represented mobility projects. The speakers showed the new mobility patterns - shared community cars, transport on demand for rural citizens and also complex and integrated mobility systems in metropolitan areas. The aim is to balance available resources and maintain or even increase mobility with regard to territorial cohesion, quality of life and sustainable economic development.

4. MEDIA COVERAGE

With support of the European Commission 14 journalists from 7 states took part in the Forum. In total, more than 25 journalists participated in the Forum's events. Journalists took part in a study visit presenting selected EU funded projects (PURE H2 - Hydrogen Purifying Unit and Filling Infrastructure, Creation of the metropolitan Bike system MEVO, Complex system of energy management in Hevelianum and use of renewable resources). On the first day of the Forum there were interviews with Mieczysław Struk, Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship,

Roger Ryberg, Chair of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation and Jean-Pierre Halkin, Head of Unit, DG Regio. At least 17 reports were published or broadcast in media with regional, national or international coverage.

In addition to traditional media, social media were included in spreading the knowledge about the Forum. Hashtags #ReduceReuseRethink, #eusbsrforum2019, as well as #EUSBSR were used by the participants, there was also an event on Facebook.



5. NETWORKING VILLAGE

The possibilities of networking are one of the most important aspects of annual fora. The organisers provided space for the Networking Village, which was coordinated by HA Capacity. The Networking Village provided main-

ly information about EUSBSR, HACs/PACs and flagships. It gave an opportunity to discuss ideas for cooperation within the framework of the EUSBSR or to ask questions on how to get involved in EUSBSR cooperation processes.

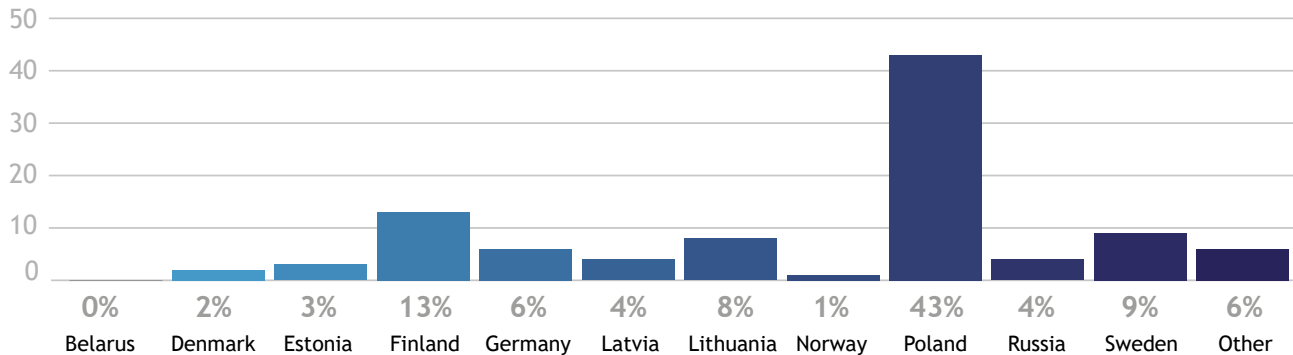


6. SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION SURVEY

The Forum had 774 participants with a survey response rate of around 30%.

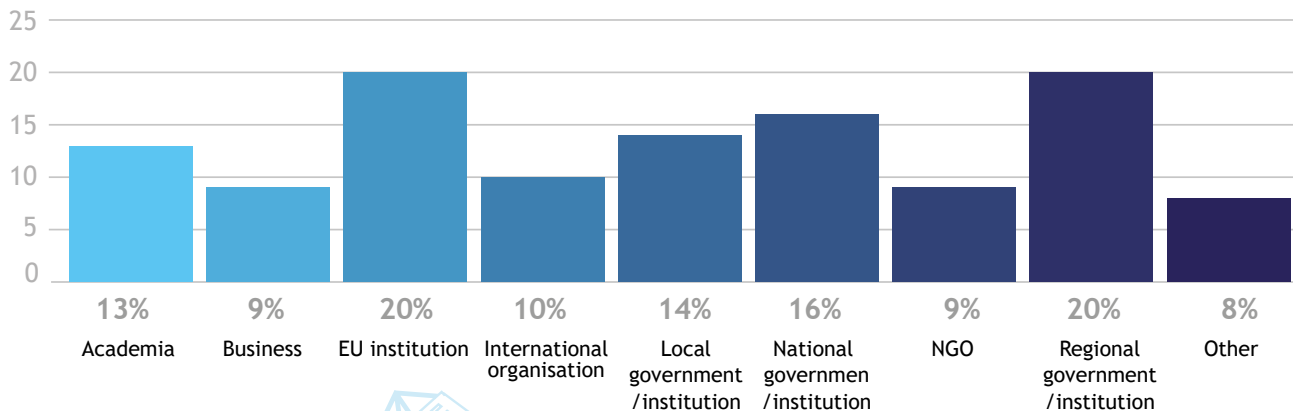
The largest group of participants - 43% representing Poland was followed by 13% coming from Finland and 9% from Sweden.

Which country are you from?



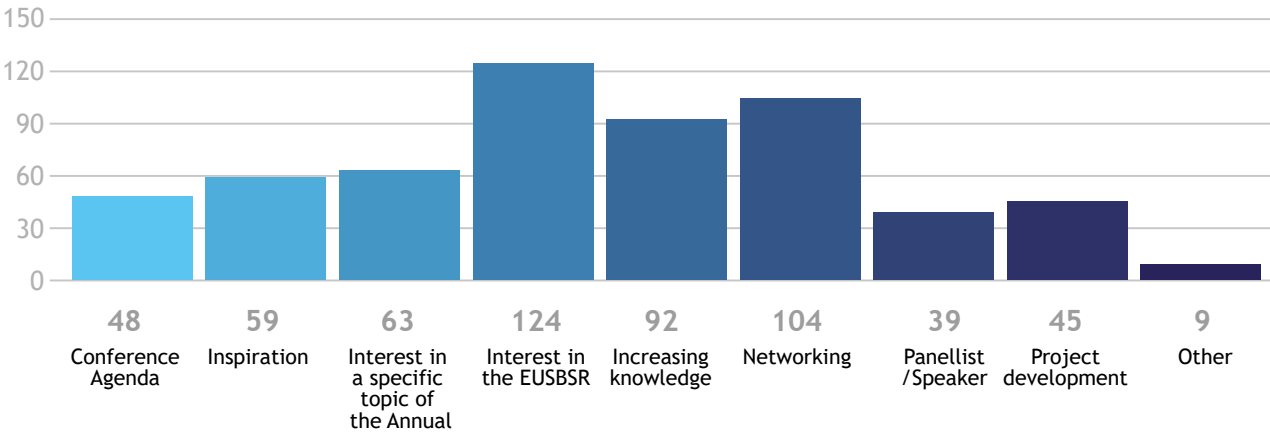
The largest group of participants (20%) represented regional institutions, nearly 16% national institutions and 14% local ones.

Which sector are you working in?



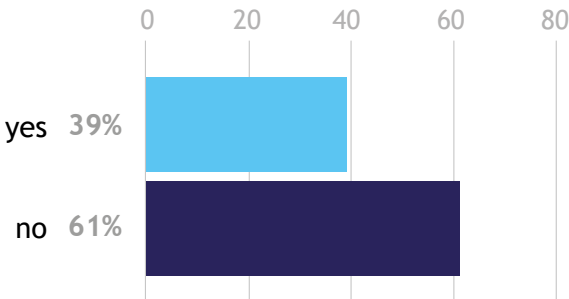
Most participants arrived to attend the Annual Forum motivated by their interest in EUSBSR (124 participants), networking and increasing knowledge.

Why did you choose to participate in the Annual Forum? (Multiple answers possible)

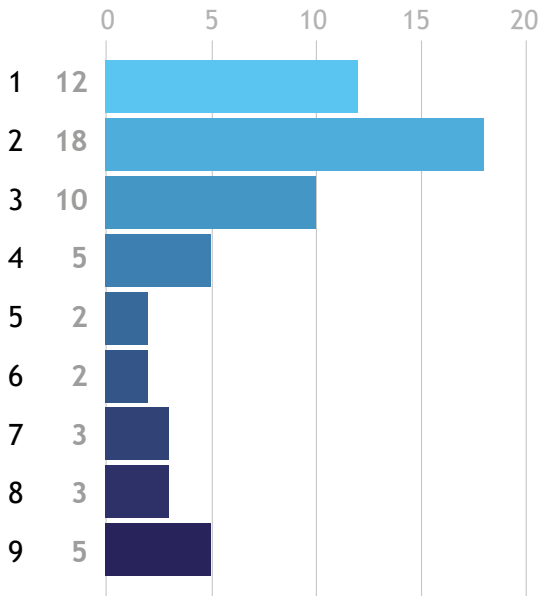


Most of the participants (almost 61%) have not attended any of the previous editions of the EUSBSR Fora. 20 participants attended more than 3 Fora before.

Have you participated in the Annual Forum of the EUSBSR before?

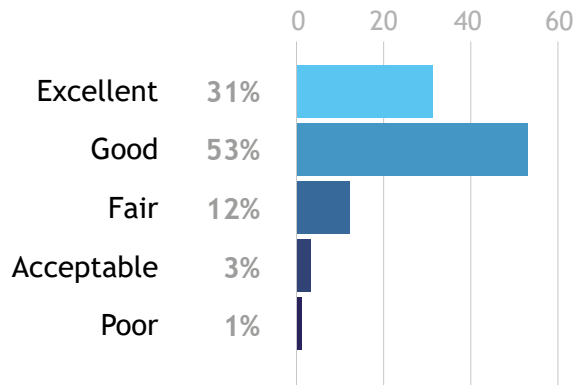


How many Forum/ Fora have you participated before?



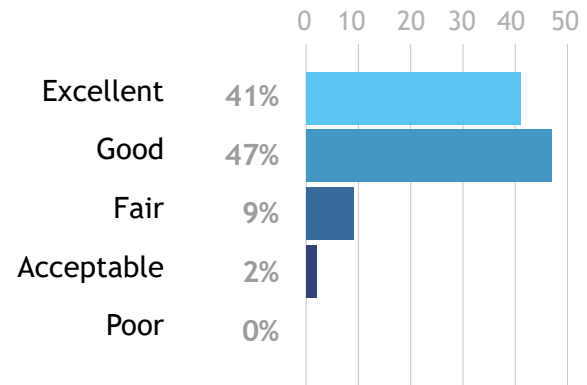
Almost 85% of participants rated the organisation of the Annual Forum as good and excellent.

How would you rate the organisation of the 10th Annual Forum?



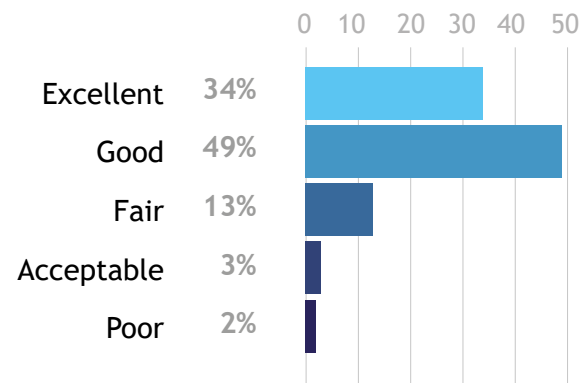
88% of participants rated the practical information provided prior and during the Annual Forum as good and excellent.

How would you rate the Practical information provided prior and during the event?



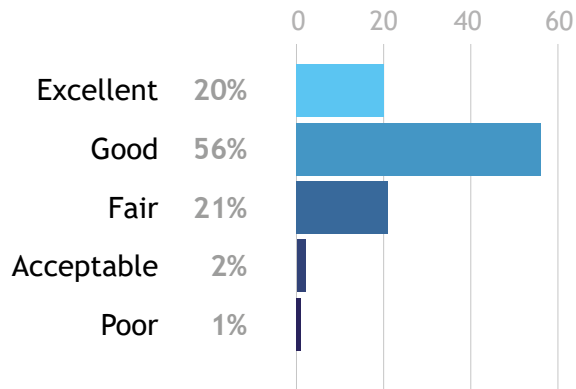
Most of the participants (83%) found the topic of the 10th Annual Forum to be relevant and pertinent to the challenges in Baltic Sea region.

How do you assess the relevance of the 10th Annual Forum's general theme Circular and sharing economy as an answer to demographic changes and environmental challenges in the Baltic Sea Region?

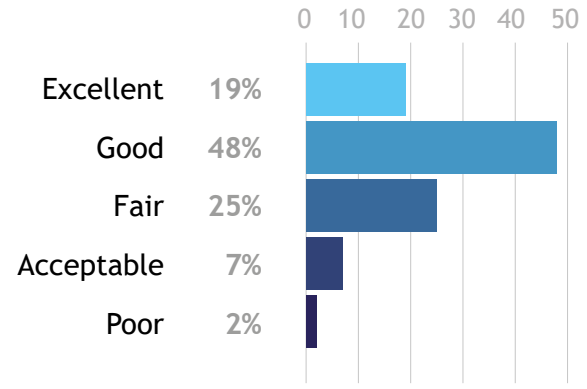


The thematic choice of the plenary sessions and their overall quality were rated as excellent and good by 76% and 67% of the respondents respectively.

How would you rate the thematic choice of the Plenary Sessions?

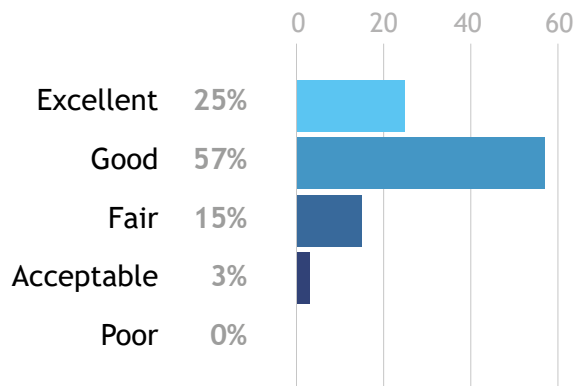


How would you evaluate the overall quality of the Plenary Sessions?

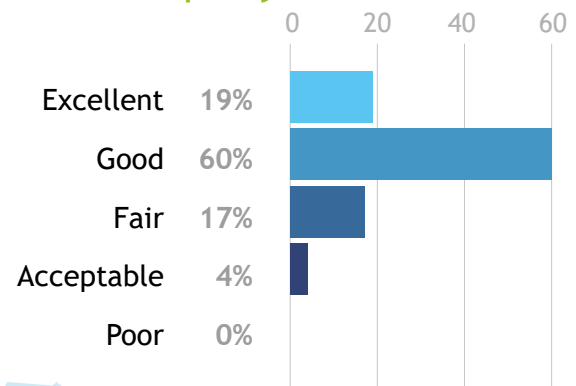


A vast majority of the respondents - 82% - rated the thematic choice of the seminars as excellent and good. Similarly, 79% respondents rated the quality of the seminars as excellent and good.

How would you rate the thematic choice of the seminars?

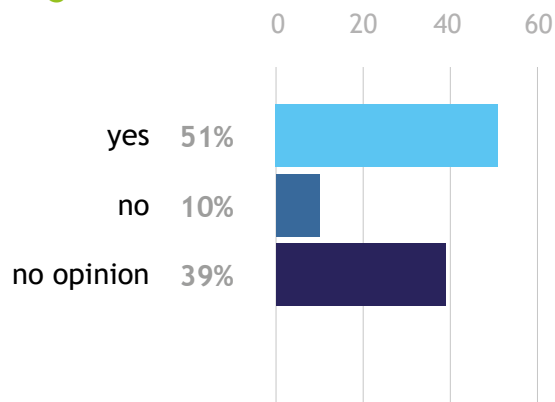


How would you evaluate the overall quality of the seminars?



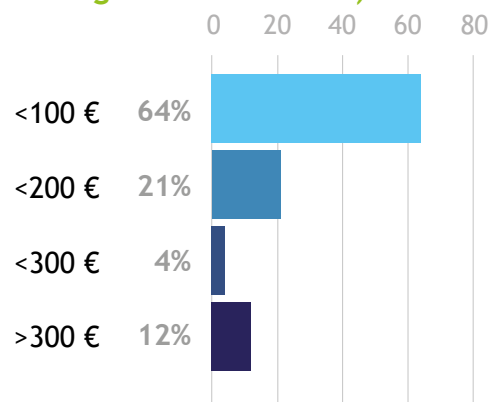
51% respondents found the Networking Village practical and useful, 39% had no opinion on this aspect and to 10% the Networking Village did not appear useful.

Did you find the Networking Village useful?



More than a half of the respondents (64%) spent less than 100 euro in Gdansk during the 10th Annual Forum (excluding accommodation).

How much did it cost you to stay in Gdańsk during 10th Annual Forum (excluding accommodation)?



In total, the evaluation questionnaire questions were answered by 232 delegates. The respondents rated the contents of the Event, including the topics and the quality of the plenary sessions and seminars, as well as the organisational and technical aspects of the Event as excellent and good. In their recommendations for future editions of the EUSBSR Forum, the delegates most often suggested that more emphasis should be on a more practical approach to the subjects presented, with specific examples supported by facts and data presented, as well as solutions to problems. Furthermore, the respondents stressed the role of the young - students and representatives of academia. Their contribution should be an important part of future discussions.



- Thematic choice
- 61% newcomers
- Involvement of youth
- Moderator
- Organisation and planning
- Programme, including open calls for seminars
- Edible plates, vegetarian & vegan menu
- Medical service ensured
- Savings: water and meat



- Too little interaction with participants
- Plenary sessions too long
- More youths, governmental VIP representatives to be engaged, women as speakers
- Lunch so late
- Lack of practical examples, too much theory
- Plastic at Gala Dinner

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ORGANIZERS

Advice for future organisers of the EUSBSR Strategy Forum, outside the host organisation:

- I. Efficient decision making structure.**
 - Create good partnership.
 - Involve all generations and especially youth in the planning process.
- II. Regular and inclusive communication with participants - “SAVE THE DATE”.**
 - Prepare participants on theme, scope and overall idea of the Forum.
 - Use multipliers when communicating, i.e. more people helping to spread information in their respective networks and in different languages.
 - Use the event to communicate the work of the EUSBSR. Link the programme to the strategy in every way possible to make it more relevant.
 - Use interactive tools in a planned and strategic way, e.g. website for interviews and films, social media and other digital tools such as mobile apps.
- III. If arranging parallel seminars with an open call, make sure to communicate the idea behind it.**
 - Decentralize ownership by allowing PACs, HACs, NCs, and other key stakeholders to organise their own activities.
- Make sure to have clear templates for seminar calls; inform and advise seminar organisers well in advance.
- Make sure to have diverse representation among speakers and moderators, e.g. gender, sectors and country representation, by setting clear criteria.
- IV. Keep the programme light to leave time for networking.**
 - Remember that networking is one of the main reasons for attending.
- V. Plenaries should be inclusive, with political involvement on a high level.**
 - Avoid themes specific to only one policy area.
 - Invite not more than 3-4 panellists into the panel debate.
 - Remember about audience involvement.
 - Choose the moderator(s) in a wise way; be clear in the communication and expectations.
 - Be aware of specific requirements related to political VIP presence, and also last moment cancellation.

Advice for future organisers of the EUSBSR Strategy Forum, within the host organization:

- I. Don't underestimate the time and effort needed.**
 - Take twice the amount of time allocated for organization.
- II. Plan the Forum in an inclusive way.**
 - Ensure that different voices are heard during the planning phase.
 - Consult the previous Fora's organisers, it helps.
- III. Ensure variety in seminars.**
 - Set clear rules for seminar coordinators beforehand and be consistent.
 - Coach seminar organisers ahead of the Forum to ensure variety in speakers, activity design, etc.
- Be in line with the main thematic focus of the Forum.
- IV. Engage inspiring speakers.**
 - Don't allow speakers to make too long presentations.
 - Invite speakers from other regions, also from outside the EU.
 - Be creative when it comes to invitations.
- V. Rethink seriously the feedback.**
 - Disseminate in every possible way the Forum conclusions for EUSBSR.
 - Appreciate high added value of back to back meetings.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The main topic of the 10th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR “*Circular and sharing economy as an answer to demographic challenges and environmental problems in the Baltic Sea region*” for two days brought us closer to a circular world, not only through interesting eco plenary sessions and seminars but also thanks to the vegetarian menu, eco-transport (solar boats, hybrid cars, electric bikes) and edible plates. We tried to present practical examples of eco-friendly behaviours, so much needed for the environment.

The Forum organisers wanted to implement the event in a sustainable way. The electronic version of the reports should be another reminder of the need to protect our forests and save paper.

Clearly, circular economy is not just an idea, it is a necessity in our daily lives. Key EUSBSR implementers can now rethink the revision of the Action Plan and redefine the aims and objectives of the future strategy. The Forum should also be treated as a preparatory step towards the next EU multiannual financial framework 2021-2027, in which circular economy as a horizontal issue should find its important place.

The future is unknown, but it's up to us to create it. We hope the next Host of the 11th EUSBSR Forum 2020 will follow this idea and the Baltic family will make its contribution to worldwide circularity.

