EU STRATEGY FOR **THE BALTIC SEA REGION**

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) was the first EU macro-regional strategy to be adopted by the European Commission and endorsed by the European Council in 2009.

The Strategy unites eight EU Member States around the Baltic Sea, representing **80 million** inhabitants or nearly 16% of the EU population:

8 EU Member States: Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany (Berlin; Brandenburg; Hamburg; Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; Schleswig-Holstein), Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

The Strategy welcomes cooperation with non-EU countries from the region, namely Belarus, Iceland, Norway and Russia in actions and projects of common interest.

The Strategy is built around three objectives:

1) Save the Sea;
2) Connect the Region;
3) Increase Prosperity.

The objectives guide an array of policy areas, as well as cross-cutting topics:

SAVE THE SEA:
- Bioeconomy – Agriculture, forestry and fisheries;
- Hazards – Reducing the use and impact of hazardous substances;
- Nutri – Reducing nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels;
- Safe – To become a leading region in maritime safety and security;
- Ship – Becoming a model region for clean shipping.

CONNECT THE REGION:
- Energy – BEMIP Action Plan (for competitive, secure and sustainable energy);
- Transport – Improving internal and external transport links.

INCREASE PROSPERITY:
- Culture – Culture and creative sectors;
- Education – Education, research and employability;
- Health – Improving and promoting people's health, including the social aspects;
- Innovation – Exploiting the full potential of the region in research, innovation and SMEs, utilising the Digital Single Market as a source for attracting talent and investment;
- Secure – Protection from land-based emergencies, accidents and cross-border crime;
- Tourism – Reinforcing cohesiveness of the macro-region through tourism.

Four horizontal actions focus on capacity building, climate change, cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries and spatial planning.

Regional and urban policy

EUSBSR
EU STRATEGY
FOR THE BALTIC
SEA REGION

THE RESULTS ACHIEVED SO FAR

The EUSBSR has achieved a variety of results. As a key achievement, it has brought together stakeholders across countries, sectors and levels. New networks and projects of macro-regional relevance have been created and existing ones intensified. The Strategy has also contributed to policy shaping and development (e.g. in the fields of energy, navigation, environment and climate change), to a better implementation of existing legislation and to the further development of synergies and complementarities between existing cooperation frameworks in the region. By providing a strategic framework, it has brought legitimacy to macro-regional cooperation and increased recognition of the challenges and opportunities in the macro-region.

SOME CONCRETE EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- The quality of Baltic Sea water is improving and nutrient inflows are being reduced through the implementation of projects such as **PRESTO** and **Interactive water management (IWAMA)**;
- Business development and integration are being stimulated in the Baltic Sea region thanks to closer cooperation between companies and students which is being promoted through projects like the **Baltic Training Programme**;
- Maritime safety and accident prevention in the Baltic Sea is being improved by carrying out projects like **Efficient, Safe and Sustainable Traffic at Sea (EfficienSea)** and its follow-up **EfficienSea2** which focus on developing and testing infrastructure and services for e-Navigation.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Countries in the Baltic Sea region are front runners in Europe for innovation and competitiveness, and are benchmarks in Europe for many aspects of socio-economic development?

- The Curonian Spit, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Baltic Sea region, is home to the highest drifting sand dunes in Europe, with an average height of 35 metres, and the highest dune over 60 metres in height?

- The 16-kilometre-long Øresund Bridge crossing the Baltic Sea and connecting the Danish capital of Copenhagen and Sweden's city of Malmö is the longest combined rail-and-road bridge in Europe, consisting of a bridge, an artificial island and a tunnel?

- The Baltic Sea is relatively isolated from other seas, having only a narrow connection to the North Sea and it takes approximately 30 years for the Baltic Sea waters to get fully exchanged?[1]

1) First version of the State of the Baltic sea report – June 2017

MORE INFORMATION

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region:
www.balticsea-region.eu/

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