



Review of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Joanna Held

Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU

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EU Strategy for the BSR



Plan of presentation

- I. Background
- II. General progress of the EUSBSR
- III. Lessons learned
- IV. Assumptions for the review of EUSBSR
- V. Council Conclusions as recommendations for improvements
- VI. Danish PRES – follow up
- VII. Macroregional strategies within Cohesion policy 2014-20 regulations

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background and specificities



Factual background:

- Concept initiated by EP by in 2005 (Baltic Europe Intergroup of EP)
- Actively undertaken by SE PRES in 2009 – adoption
- Review initiated by PL PRES after 2 years of implementation
- Hopes for continuation of commitment by DK PRES and subsequent ones

Specificities:

- Highly innovative concept of territorial cooperation (vast geographical scale vs complex governance)
- Voluntary approach = very soft regulatory framework – pros and cons
- Rule of 3 ‘nos’
- Integrated framework to address common challenges in the macro-region and contribution to EU economic, social and territorial cohesion

Consequences:

- Must rely on coordinated approach, synergy effects and more effective use of EU and other funds.

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implementation progress



Progress since autumn 2009 - governance:

- 3 meetings of High Level Group
- 2 meetings on implementation and financing (Riga, Gdańsk)
- 18 meetings of Laboratory Group for the EUSBSR
- 2 Annual Fora (Tallin, 2010; Gdańsk, October 2011)

Prospects for nearest future:

- Predicted influence of macroregional strategies for the Cohesion Policy 2013+ (transnational OPs and strategic documents) but expected also on other EU policies.

Expected outcomes:

- Strengthening of coordination of EU and national policies having territorial impact
- Higher effectiveness of European Territorial Cooperation.

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lessons learned



Experiences of the so far process – stakeholders point of view:

- strategy as a **new possibility for international cooperation** within clearly identified territory,
- chance for **mutual learning**, rising the development level of macroregion and diminishing discrepancies between regions of a common territory,
- lack of distinctive **leadership**,
- weak **strategic approach** in the document,
- involvement of stakeholders based on a **voluntary basis**,
- need for **strengthening communication** between key actors and to outside audience.

Views for macroregional concept:

- vivid **debates** from the MSs' side on new macroregional strategies, (eg. Mediterranean Sea; Adriatic Sea&Ionian Islands; Alpine Region; Atlantic Space),
- EC and Council position on need for **verification of results** of existing strategies.

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lessons learned



Challenges identified by main stakeholders:

- Acquiring **partners** in the region,
- Limitations in **financing** the projects (increasing knowledge of PACs on sources, better system of information for future programming period),
- **Coordination** within EC and providing links to other EU **policies**,
- **Information** policy towards society, institutions (in particular regional and local).
- Unifying **criteria of FPs** (clear and formal setting of criteria for approving new FPs).
- Sense of **ownership**.

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lessons learned



Achievements identified by main stakeholders:

- Involvement of **all MSs of macroregion** towards common activities within certain areas,
- Provision of **synergy effects** within thematic areas,
- **New forms of cooperation** on various platforms by institutions in BSR,
- Working out very effective and informal ways of **cooperation between co-coordinators** of certain Priority Areas,
- Obtaining **funds** by various FPs mostly **from ETC** programmes (14).

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lessons learned



New projects identified:

- **Baltic Deal** works with farmers across BSR to reduce nutrient run-off and eutrophication
- **Clean Ship** significantly reduces pollution from vessels
- **“LNG Feasibility study”** develops sustainable Short Sea Shipping
- **BaltAdapt** prepares a regional climate change adaptation plan
- **BSR Stars** increases innovation capacity through its support for innovation, clusters and SME-Networks
- **ScanBalt Health Port** promotes the Baltic as a globally leading and prosperous “Health Region”
- **Baltic Transport Outlook** provides structured planning support for transport infrastructure in the Region

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lessons learned



New momentum to existing projects:

- **Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan** – greater integration of the three Baltic Sea States into the European energy market
- **“Sludge-trucks”/ “Oily water carriages”** – better technologies developed by the Baltic Master II project which involves **15 ports** in the Region
- **Sustainable agriculture** – Baltic Compass; Baltic Manure; Baltic Deal
- **Transport projects** – TransBaltic; East West Transport Corridor II; Scandria

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lessons learned



New and developing networks EUSBSR provides:

- New framework for the maritime community: **HELCOM; CBSS; BSSSC**
- Better links for cooperation on sustainability issues with **CBSS Experts Group Baltic 21**
- Networks' opportunities for **Nordic Council of Ministers**
- New approach to foster the cooperation in the sectors of **cross-border crime and transport**
- New links for **Northern Dimension** framework (**NDPHS**)
- Better development of **BONUS Programme** (budget of **EUR 100 million**)

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lessons learned

Alignment of funding sources – so far efforts:

- European Regional Development Fund (**ERDF**) – new selection criteria (SE); calls targeted to promote the Strategy (BSR Programme);
- European Fisheries Fund (**EFF**) – MSs 2010 annual implementation reports include a specific chapter on contribution to the implementation of the EUSBSR
- European Social Fund (**ESF**) – priority of transnational activities in calls for project proposals (SE, DK, EE)
- **European Parliament** – EUR 2.5. million for TA
- **EIB/NIB** – loans for flagship projects

Factual results:

- Most of projects obtaining funds from ETC OPs (mostly BSR OP)
 - Within mainstream OPs (national and regional level) only passive earmarking
 - Misunderstandings between MAs and Strategy implementing stakeholders so far
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assumptions for the review



Basis for the review - community settings:

- „...Commission to present a progress report to the Council by June 2011” - European Council Conclusions, 29/30 October 2009
- „...political discussions foreseen under the Polish Presidency of the European Council in the second half of 2011 will constitute an opportunity for a more fundamental review of the Strategy” – indicated in the EC Interim Report on the EUSBSR (December 2010)

Focus of the review:

- EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as such - as more comprehensive works on the macroregional concept and evaluation of added value envisaged for 2013 (Council Conclusions for the EU Strategy for Danube Region - GAC, April 2011)

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assumptions for the review



Preparatory phase of the review:

- Consultations at **national ground**
- Informal working consultations with countries (May/June):
 - Member States of macroregion
 - other interested MSs
 - third countries involved in EUSBSR implementation
- Consulting **regional level** (June/July):
 - Committee of the Regions - via Interregional Group „Baltic Sea Regions”
 - EU regional offices – via Informal Baltic Sea Regions Group
- **European Parliament** co-operation - hearings:
 - Baltic Europe Intergroup (May), Environment Committee (June), Budget Committee (July)
- Consulting the ***INTERACT*** Laboratory Group on the EUSBSR

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assumptions for the review

Key thematic issues initially identified by MSs:

- strengthening coordination between **sectoral EU and domestic policies** with territorial impact relevant for the Strategy for greater synergies,
 - clarifying and strengthening **roles** of key **stakeholders**,
 - underlining **EC role in strategic coordination** and as a guard of the added value,
 - more transparent **monitoring system** and introducing targets,
 - better **alignment of funding** and improving information channels on existing sources of finances,
 - improving **communication** system and visibility,
 - strengthening the **ownership** at all levels and political support,
 - **greater synergies** between the EUSBSR and other cooperation platforms active in the region,
 - **exchange links** between **EUSBSR and other** macroregional strategies (EU Strategy for the Danube Region).
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assumptions for the review



Key messages from EC Report on EUSBSR implementation – 22 June 2011:

- Importance of maintaining **political momentum**
- Need for a **greater commitment**
- Development of **targets** and **evaluation process**
- Improvement of **communication**
- Significance of **cross-sectoral cooperation**
- Challenge of further **alignment of funding** and **technical assistance**

Key messages from EC Report + from international consultations
- basis for drafting
Council Conclusions on EUSBSR review

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process of the review



Formula of the review – phase of political discussions:

- *Friends of Presidency (FoP)* – working group in the Council re-activated in July
- Aim: agreement on the Council Conclusions - relevant review elements
- Works conducted mid July - mid November 2011
- Adopted at GAC 15 November
- Strong support from MSs of macroregion, mostly: SE, EE, DE, FI
- Wide interest of remaining MSs, mostly: IT, FR, BG, RO
- **Result:** well balanced text, quite detailed, practical and tangible recommendations, firm ground for concrete improvements.

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Council Conclusions

Key elements:

- enhancing existing **political support** for the Strategy at all levels,
- including the **EUSBSR on Council agendas** (relevant sectoral formations),
- strengthening **coordination between policies** with a territorial impact and thematically relevant to the EUSBSR,
- facilitating the alignment of **funding in the 2014-2020** programming period,
- strengthening the **roles of key stakeholders** (TF, guide fiches, handbook),
- strengthening **monitoring** by introducing targets and indicators (TF),
- improving **communication systems**, promotion and visibility of the Strategy,
- integrating **multilateral structures** in the macro-region, strengthening cooperation with third countries and providing links with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and possible future macro-regional strategies.

Most controversial issues: alignment of funding, targets.

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phase after PL PRES – formal process



Involvement of Danmark as a MS of macroregion, taking over the Presidency (provision of follow up and successful implementation of the review):

- Finalisation of targets and indicators at Strategy level
- **EC Communication** – submission March/April (positioning EUSBSR within wider context of EU 2020 and within EU policies 2014-2020, review recommendations),
- **Council Conclusions** submitted and negotiated by DK PRES – adoption at May 2012 GAC,
- Finalisation of **targets** and indicators at **Priority Area level**,
- Review and **update of Action Plan** (verification of projects, introducing indicators, etc.)

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looking into future



EC legislative package Cohesion Policy 2014-2020:

- embeds the macroregional strategies for the first time
- manner seems to be insufficient
- provisions on the level of CSF, PC, OPs but additional specific indications only towards the ETC goal
- option rather than obligation
- no specific hints on how to embed the strategy in OPs in practice
- creates a chance for change but no guarantee.

Horizon for new macroregional strategies:

- EC less willing to serve as a coordinator – more responsibility towards MSs
- Most advanced concept Adriatic Sea&Yonnian Islands – but political situation influences
- More firm position of EC expected towards end 2013 – evaluation of added value

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phase after PL PRES – practical ground



Questions we are concerned at the moment - governance:

- What is most important **function of EUSBSR**? Balance between implementing infrastructural projects and systemic/regulatory changes in the BSR?
- How to ensure **durability** of Flagship Projects? (tend to have dispersed effects)
- How to ensure **synergy effect** between Flagship Projects results and EU policies in 2014+?
- Embedding EUSBSR in **2014+ Multiannual Financial Framework** – interministerial dialogue in MSs
- Which **instruments** can be **most effective** in implementing EUSBSR?
- How to make **EU policies** (other than cohesion policy) **involved**?
- How to improve **wider involvement** (regional, local authorities, NGOs, private sector)?
- How to ensure stable and effective **communication channels**?
- Which EUSBSR experiences could be useful for **other macro-regions**?

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phase after PL PRES – practical ground



Questions we are concerned at the moment – specific sectors (innovation example):

- How can EUSBSR increase level of **BSR competitiveness** faced with new global challenges?
- Does BSR need a **common innovation strategy**? Would the Strategy overcome “the innovation gap” in the BSR?
- What **new elements** were added by EUSBSR to so-far standards of international/trans-regional cooperation **in the area of science/innovation, r&d**?
- How to ensure the **involvement of entrepreneurship sector** in implementing the EUSBSR, especially in the scope of innovation potential development?

Thank you for your attention!



Joanna Held

Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU

Joanna.Held@msz.gov.pl