

Säästva arengu foorum 2014
28.10.2014 Tallinn
R. Mälk

Eesti vaade Läänemeremaade Nõukogule ja Läänemere Agenda 21-le

Your Royal Highnesses,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends of the Baltic Sea,

It just happens that this year Estonia holds a leading role in nearly every cooperation organisation in the Baltic Sea region where we participate.

Since January, Estonia is the chair of Baltic 3 Cooperation and coordinator of the eight member state regional co-operation Nordic-Baltic Eight. Estonia's demanding chairmanship of the Council of the Baltic Sea States started in July and will continue until June 2015. Furthermore, Estonia assumed its role as the chairing country in two thematic cooperation organisations HELCOM and VASAB in July. During the second half of this year Estonia coordinates the work of National Contact points of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. And we may add that Finland, Russia and Estonia have the Year of the Gulf of Finland 2014. To sum it up, 2014 is for Estonia a **Baltic Sea Year**. And when it is "Estonian view" in the title of the presentation, it is *de facto* the "view of the Presidency" which works to serve all participants and make things happen.

At the very heart of Baltic Sea Region cooperation is our shared and joint responsibility for the Baltic Sea. The Council of the Baltic Sea States has prioritised the sustainable development since 1996 when it decided to launch an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region.

Recently, the Member States adopted CBSS three new long term priorities that will guide the future work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States:

- Regional identity,
- Safe and secure region and
- Sustainable and prosperous region.

Under its new long term priority "Sustainable and prosperous region", the Council seeks:

- to ensure further mainstreaming of sustainable development at all levels and in all policy sectors, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects;
- to support the transition of the Baltic Sea region towards a competitive, blue and green economy;
- to support further action to reach a good environmental status and a healthy ecosystem supporting a prosperous Baltic Sea Region;

- promote sustainable and blue and green technologies and initiatives in order to protect the ecosystems and biodiversity of the Baltic Sea region;
- to strengthen the region's capacity to adapt to climate change and the resilience capacity of ecosystems and societies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The environmental sector alone cannot protect the Baltic Sea. For example, the problems of eutrophication lie in the agriculture, forest and transportation sectors. The environmental sector cannot, on its own, safeguard that the Baltic Sea Region is an Environmentally Sustainable Place. If we want to tackle climate change, then we have to help communities to transform into low carbon societies and to prepare our people to adapt to climate change.

In 2010 the Foreign Ministers of the CBSS countries endorsed the Strategy for Sustainable Development 2010–2015 that addresses four dimensions of sustainable development: climate change, sustainable consumption and production, sustainable urban and rural management and education for sustainable development.

The overarching objective of the CBSS Sustainable Development Strategy 2010–2015 and the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21 is to promote and facilitate the holistic cooperation and dialogue across the sectors and borders, between politicians and practitioners.

There is ongoing evaluation process of Expert group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21. As Leader of the Horizontal Action "Sustainable development" in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Action, Baltic 21 functions as the main cooperation platform for sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region.

The Baltic 21 is not only the environmental arm of CBSS, it is a greenhouse of projects and initiatives promoting the sustainable solutions in the areas mentioned before. So it also means that in Estonia its partners are not only Ministry of Environment and different agencies from that system, but also many other partners. Among them notably the State Chancellery, who is dealing with general coordination related to the sustainable development and implementation of the Estonian national sustainable development strategy until 2030. Similar coordination problems stand in other member states.

There are some examples of cross-sectoral collaboration within the Baltic 21:

- The **BALTADAPT** project that elaborated the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the BSR, followed up by the Council decision to establish a BSR-wide Climate Change Adaptation Stakeholder Platform to strengthen dialogue across national and sectoral borders. Among the partners is University of Tartu Marine

Institute.

- The project **Bioenergy Promotion** elaborated the policy recommendations for the BSR countries on sustainable production and use of bioenergy.
- The Baltic Waste Management Council was established in the frame of the **Reco Baltic 21 Tech** project in order to elaborate a joint Waste Management Strategy and the Investment Concept for the BSR countries. It involved several partners from Estonia: Port of Tallinn, City of Narva and others.
- A Green Public Procurement Network has been set up in order to increase the level and uptake of green public procurement in the Baltic Sea Region. Estonia is an associated partner.
- Baltic 21 is cooperating with the Zennström Foundation on organising the series of sustainable tourism round-tables.

The new CBSS long-term priorities document is also **emphasizing** the importance of taking steps towards an integrated maritime policy with competitive, environmentally sustainable and safe maritime traffic. Expert Group on Maritime Policy promotes dialogue between regional actors in the maritime field. During next months this group has also to conclude its work review. Estonia is from now represented in this Group by Estonian Maritime Administration and it means more practical approach.

In fact, the region is much more coherent than it used to be just a few years back. Just in September we had VASAB ministerial conference in Tallinn. It adopted a document aimed to progress also in the area of maritime spatial planning. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Action Plan and the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan from 2013, as well as the new CBSS long-term priorities from 2014 reflect more coordination and coherence among actors in our region. CBSS would welcome closer cooperation and collaboration with HELCOM on issues such as maritime policy and climate change adaptation.

In addition, we would like to see increased synergies on sustainable development among the four regional councils in the north – Nordic Council, Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council and CBSS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is the role of the CBSS Presidency to talk more about documents and institutions, list projects. But the real results are of course achieved by numerous partners, networks, stakeholders, people around the Baltic Sea who make the things happen.

By the Friends of the Baltic Sea,

Thank You