



**EUSBSR**  
EU STRATEGY  
FOR THE BALTIC  
SEA REGION



HORIZONTAL ACTION  
'NEIGHBOURS'

<http://ha-neighbours.eu/>

## Memo

EUSBSR Horizontal Action Neighbours  
6<sup>th</sup> Coordination Group meeting

13<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 16:30 - 19:00

Orchidea room

Hotel Hanza

Gdansk, Tokarska 6

**Present:** Juhani Ailio, EUSBSR / HA Neighbours  
Daria Akhutina, EUSBSR / HA Neighbours  
Viktoria Hladii, Centrum Balticum Foundation  
Mika Akkanen, City of Turku  
Elena Belova, Leontief Center  
Anders Bergström, Norden Association  
Alexey Ignatiev, Development Agency Kaliningrad  
Irina Karelina, Leontief Center  
Krzysztof Kirdzik, Eastern Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland  
Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp, Ministry of Justice and for Europe and Consumer Protection of the State of Brandenburg  
Kristina Pingoud, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland  
Ann Irene Saeternes, Eastern Norway County Network  
Gabor Schneider, Swedish Institute  
Sanni Turunen, Ministry of Environment, Finland  
Camilla Wristel, Swedish Institute  
Bettina Rafaelsen, COWI / Review of EUSBSR  
Olga Zuin, CBSS Baltic 2030 / HA Climate  
Olga Korchemkina, Federal Service for Labour and Employment of the Russian Federation  
Wiebke Seemann, NDPHS Secretariat/ PA Health  
Silvija Geistarte, NDPHS Secretariat/ PA Health  
Raul Malk, Estonia EUSBSR National Coordinator  
Mikko Lohikoski, Union of the Baltic Cities

### 1. Welcoming words and introduction of participants

The meeting started at 16:52.



EUROPEAN  
REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
FUND



**TURKU**  
**ÅBO**





**EUSBSR**  
EU STRATEGY  
FOR THE BALTIC  
SEA REGION



HORIZONTAL ACTION  
'NEIGHBOURS'

<http://ha-neighbours.eu/>

The participants have introduced themselves.

Daria Akhutina and Juhani Ailio presented HA Neighbours and its activities to the participants.

## 2. Results of HA Neighbours Stakeholder' Survey

The meeting continued by Juhani Ailio and Daria Akhutina presenting the results of the HA Neighbours Stakeholder survey (see attachment 1).

During the comments round after the presentation, it was noted by **Ann Irene Saeternes**, Eastern Norway County Network, that it's not clear that there are EUSBSR HA Neighbours focal points in other countries around the BSR. Non-EU countries could benefit more from knowing about these focal points and cooperate with them.

## 3. Revised version of HA Neighbours Action Plan

Juhani Ailio presented the ongoing progress of updating the Action Plan for HA Neighbours for 2020-2022 (see attachment 2). After the presentation, participants presented their comments:

- **Silvija Geistarte, NDPHS Secretariat:** asked about the source of data for the survey
- **Daria Akhutina** mentioned that the data was a bit outdated, and the situation with Russian partner improved even more since the analysis took place. However, the process is still ongoing, and non-EU countries are still to be surveyed
- **Ann Irene Saeternes**, Eastern Norway County Network: mentioned that there is also funding programmes in the North BSR (Barents region) besides e.g. Interreg, such as national funding for cross-border projects and Neighbourhood instrument programme Kolarctic. Thus, there is a need to divide between different "Neighbours" because they are not uniform and there are certain peculiarities in each of the 4 countries. When analyzing the cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, focus shouldn't be made solely on the joint funding opportunities, the view should be broadened.
- **Elena Belova**, Leontief Center: mentioned that in Interreg BSR there are 33 projects and 35 partners with regular partners from Russia, and many more associated partners. Russian participation is quite broad

## 4. Tour de table

After the briefing, the participants gave their inputs:





**EUSBSR**  
EU STRATEGY  
FOR THE BALTIC  
SEA REGION



HORIZONTAL ACTION  
'NEIGHBOURS'

<http://ha-neighbours.eu/>

- **Camilla Wristel**, Swedish Institute: announced that Swedish Institute has made a decision on the new seed money participation with increased participation from Belarus and Russia. In addition, new programmes were launched on the cooperation with non-EU members. Results on the calls for funding will be out this summer.
- **Gabor Schneider**, Swedish Institute: called for the ideas and advice for development and improvement of the Swedish Institute's Baltic Leadership Programme.
- **Olga Zuin**, CBSS Baltic 2030/HA Climate: highlighted multiple successful examples of concrete cooperation, among which - active cooperation of CBSS Baltic 2030 with Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and Norway. The central focus of the CBSS Baltic 2030 Strategy is Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, Baltic Youth 2030 grants seed money for youth participation for the nonEU neighbours of EUSBSR. On 25-26 September 2019 - The Greener Agriculture for a Sustainable Sea Conference - GRASS 2019 will take place in Warsaw, Poland, in the framework of the Coalition Clean Baltic, gathering stakeholders from around the Baltic Sea Region including Russia, Belarus, Ukraine.  
HA Climate actively cooperates with PA Secure in the framework of CASCADE project, working on disaster risk reduction.
- **Krzysztof Kirdzik**, Eastern Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland: stated that Poland actively supports cooperation in the framework of CBC funding programmes. For instance, there is ongoing active cross-border cooperation with Kaliningrad.  
However, there's an issue of the lack of information. While the regional cooperation is highly valued, the of information regarding the opportunities and possibilities for such cooperation needs to be improved. There's a chance and willingness to involve more actively Russia and Belarus into cooperation, and there's a great potential for that.
- **Alexey Ignatiev**, Development Agency Kaliningrad: pointed out about active ongoing cooperation in the framework of CBC Poland-Lithuania, as well as with the Nordic countries and Germany. When talking about Baltic Sea region cooperation, it should be clarified what part of Russia is talked about. Within the region of North-Western Russia, for instance, some regions are quite remote and are really far from the Baltic Sea itself. Talking about strategies, the way for EUSBSR and North-Western Russian strategies to meet and cooperate, the Russian territories involved should be limited to Leningrad oblast, Kaliningrad and St Petersburg.
- **Silvija Geistarte**, NDPHS Secretariat/ PA Health: stated that PA Health is active and busy at the moment. PA Health Strategy post 2020 is being prepared, and the priorities are being gathered from strategic partners to include into the new strategy.  
Communication is an issue for PA Health as well. It is intended to be solved by development of the communication strategy, which is currently in the making. PA Health also from now on has a



**TURKU**  
**ÅBO**





**EUSBSR**  
EU STRATEGY  
FOR THE BALTIC  
SEA REGION



HORIZONTAL ACTION  
'NEIGHBOURS'

<http://ha-neighbours.eu/>

dedicated person responsible for communications. Healthy ageing project, which includes Russian partners, received funding from SI.

- **Anders Bergström**, Norden Association: reported on the progress of HA Capacity and PA Education.
  - HA Capacity: the new strategy for HA Capacity is currently being developed. It is planned to add even more capacity building, also in the plan is to choose HA Capacity flagship projects and HA Neighbours could help with its expertise. HA Capacity is trying to look into the way steering groups work in general and how to improve those.
  - PA Education: this policy area has 5 flagships at the moment, such as BSN, Baltic Sea labour forum, one project on integration of migrants etc. It can be discussed together with HA Neighbours how to improve activities and increase capacity building in PA Education
- **Ann Irene Saeternes**, Eastern Norway County Network: delivered on the progress of EUSBSR cooperation in Norway.
  - Norway became observer in the National coordination group 2018, and this has been important for the awareness and involvement of National level into activities of EUSBSR. Thus, it is important to keep Norway in the National Coordination group also in the future to support the EUSBSR work in Norway. Involvement of Norway into the EUSBSR is at the moment based on the participation in the Let's Communicate project (through development of EUSBSR web-information for Norway on [www.interreg.no](http://www.interreg.no), organizing various communication campaigns, seminars and meetings). Especially storytelling, good examples and project information prove to be a good way to inform and involve actors - using the connection to the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme.
  - Norway is working to get more Norwegian Ministries/Agencies and other relevant bodies into the steering groups/platforms of the PAs - using the Let's Communicate project. The plan is to promote the EUSBSR to actors in Norway in combination with available Interreg funding, finding relevance and connection between EUSBSR and concrete BSR project cooperation.
  - Norway currently has the chairmanship in the BSSSC (till end of 2019). This has been a good opportunity to raise awareness and involve more actors into the BSR cooperation. BSSSC has been co-organisers of this year's EUSBSR Annual Forum.
- **Mikko Lohikoski**, Union of the Baltic Cities: pointed out that participation of all levels of governance should be enhanced.
  - One of the challenges - Russian local authorities aren't too active in seeking cooperation. Involving Russian partners is important and will help both sides, it's a win-win situation





**EUSBSR**  
EU STRATEGY  
FOR THE BALTIC  
SEA REGION



HORIZONTAL ACTION  
'NEIGHBOURS'

<http://ha-neighbours.eu/>

## 5. Back-to-back to Annual “Forum Strategov” in St. Petersburg - **EUSBSR Event**, 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2019

**Elena Belova** from Leontief Center presented Forum Strategov (see presentation slides in attachment 3).

Forum Strategov is a strategic event that gathers numerous stakeholders from North-Western Russia, thus it should be utilized to enhance NW Russia + EUSBSR strategic cooperation. For that reason, HA Neighbours is planning an event/workshop in the framework of Forum Strategov to enhance cooperation of Russian and Belarusian partners.

Among the questions discussed at the event could be, for instance, capacity building, communication issues and how to involve regional authorities and cities into the discussion.

HA Neighbours will accept ideas for what should be discussed and raised at Forum Strategov event of HA Neighbours until the end of August.

- **Camilla Wristel**, Swedish Institute: asked about the format in which this even would be.
- **Daria Akhutina**, EUSBSR / HA Neighbours: elaborated that it can be meeting, workshop, matchmaking activity to include stakeholders and actors from Russia, Belarus to participate in the BSR cooperation
- **Mikko Lohikoski**, Union of the Baltic Cities: mentioned that Forum Strategov is an excellent framework for cooperation and meeting stakeholders
- **Anders Bergström**, Norden Association: added that it would be good idea to select best practices and showcase how Russian stakeholders are involved in the cooperation

## 6. Any other issues

**Ann Irene Saeternes**, Eastern Norway County Network: highlighted that in the new Interreg programming period 2021 - 2027 it would be important to involve Russia as early as possible for more effective cooperation and projects implementation. HA Neighbours should try to facilitate dialog between Russia and EU Commission to be able to include Russian partners right away when the new Interreg BSR Programme will be operational.

## 7. Conclusions and end of the meeting

The meeting concluded at 18:43.

