

# EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

[31 August 2009]

## Introduction

The European Commission adopted a [Communication](#)<sup>1</sup> on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region on 10 June 2009. This followed a [request from EU Member States](#). This is the first time that a comprehensive Strategy, covering several Community policies, is targeted on a 'macro-region'.

Eighty flagship projects are listed in the accompanying [Action Plan](#)<sup>2</sup>, which will be reviewed regularly.

### Why is a Strategy needed?

Since the EU enlargement of 2004, challenges facing the Region have increased. Escalating environmental threats, gaps in economic development and poor transport accessibility are issues which need to be tackled urgently. Many of these problems can only be addressed through better coordination and joint action. The EU is well-placed to facilitate this.

### What is the aim of the Strategy?

The Strategy aims at coordinating action by Member States, regions, the EU, pan-Baltic organisations, financing institutions and non-governmental bodies to promote a more balanced development of the Region.

The four **cornerstones** of the Strategy are to make this part of Europe more:

1. **Environmentally sustainable** (e.g. reducing pollution in the sea);
2. **Prosperous** (e.g. promoting innovation in small and medium enterprises);
3. **Accessible and attractive** (e.g. better transport links);
4. **Safe and secure** (e.g. improving accident response).

All these parts have some connections to maritime issues. The **Action plan** includes altogether 15 **Priority areas** within there are 80 **cooperative actions** which have **flagship projects**.

The Priority area 13 is *"To become a leading region in maritime safety and security"*. Finland is coordinating this area. This includes e.g. a cooperative action *"Ensure that vessels, in particular those transporting energy products and other dangerous cargo, are up to the highest maritime safety standards"*. This has a flagship project *"Speed up re-surveying for major shipping and ports"*, see more in the MWG Report under Agenda item F1.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/baltic/com\\_baltic\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/baltic/com_baltic_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/baltic/action2009.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/baltic/action2009.pdf)

Several [convergence, competitiveness and co-operation programmes](#) are co-financed from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the Baltic Sea Region in the period 2007-2013.

The Finnish Government has approved its Baltic Sea Safety Program 2009 - 2014, with the aim to improve the safety of navigation on the Baltic Sea by various developing actions within interantional cooperation.

### **What happens next?**

The proposal is now being discussed by the European Parliament and Member States. Agreement is expected by the end of the year. It is also one of the priority issues for the Swedish EU Presidency (second half of 2009).

The EU strategy will be discussed at the HELCOM MARITIME meeting on 24 - 26 November 2009 in Germany.

### **Actions for the BSHC 14<sup>th</sup> Conference:**

The BSHC 14<sup>th</sup> Conference is requested

- to take note on this Report
  - to decide actions as seen appropriately
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