**VI Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region**

**ACHIEVING E-QUALITY by CONNECTING the REGION**

**15-16 JUNE 2015, JŪRMALA, LATVIA**

**CONCEPT:** The VI Annual Forum offers the participants to focus on the overarching theme of “e-quality”: a play on word with a double meaning:

* e-quality as in digital/electronic quality: digital single market, regional connectivity, etc.;
* equality as in better connections and exchange of best practices to achieve overall balanced development of the Baltic Sea Region.

**The theme of the connectivity has a four-fold rationale:**

* (1) Stronger integration within the Baltic Sea Region;
* (2) Forming synergies between various Policy Areas/Horizontal actions;
* (3) Exchange of best practices within the region and between other macro-regions;
* (4) Creating links between the EUSBSR and the general public.

**Participants**: Up to 550 participants are planned to attend the event, including the Latvian President/ Prime Minister, Commissioners and ministers from countries in the Baltic Sea Region.

**The Annual Forum will be accompanied by:**

* Back-to-Back Meetings;
* Events, participation and appearances in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (campaign “My Sea” (Mana Jūra), “Nature Concert Hall”, and Civic Alliance - Latvia).

The Annual Forum will also include a Networking Village (including the Speaker’s Corner).

**Several horizontal principles shall be used:**

* the EUSBSR should be reflected in each plenary session/workshop (how the EUSBSR is/could help to achieve certain objectives, etc.);
* each session/workshop should more focus on HOW things could/should be done and less on WHAT needs to be done; the same topic/problem should be presented from different angles;
* inspiring project examples/good practices should be presented, as actions speak more loudly than words;
* lively panel discussions, not too many long presentations, time for interactive discussions with the audience;
* gender and country balance should be respected.

**Possible Moderators**:

* TBC

**Programme**

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| **Time** | **Sessions** | **Title/-s** | **Preliminary content** | **Comments** |
| Sunday, 14 June |  |  |  |  |
| 14:00-17:00 (TBC) | **Early Registration** |  | Early registration “Registration and Information Desk” at the venue – Dzintari Concert Hall | Arrival of participants, set up of Networking Village |
| 17:00 (TBC) | **Opening reception for early arrivals (attendance optional)** |  | Presentation about the campaign “Mana jūra/ My Sea”. Venue – Jūrmala City Museum (TBC). | Event taken care by the NGO ‘Foundation for Environmental Education’ |
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| Monday, 15 June |  |  |  |  |
| 08:30-11:30 | **Back-to-back meetings** |  |  |  |
| 08:00-11:45 | * **Registration**
* **Networking Village activities**
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| 11:00-11:45 | **Buffet Lunch** |  |  |  |
| 11:45-12:30 | **Opening session** | Welcome to Jūrmala, Latvia! | Welcoming messages by Latvian President or Prime Minister, Commissioners and ministers from several countries in the Baltic Sea Region, Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden (TBC).  | Webstreaming; Run by the 2 moderators |
| 12:30-14:00 | **Plenary session 1** | “Next steps in implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region”(FUTURE) | Initial vision, current situation and future of the Strategy. As speakers to invite some of the “fathers of the Strategy”, for example President Ilves and PM Stubb (MEPs in 2005) together with the Commissioner Corina Creţu.Political endorsement of the revised EUSBSR Action Plan. Focus on what and how things need to be done in the nearest future (2015-2018). Focus more on solutions instead of problems/challenges; development of synergies, etc.  | Speakers: max 4 WebstreamingRun by the 2 moderators |
| 14:00-14:30 | * **Coffee break**
* **Networking Village activities**
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| 14:30-15:00 | **Introduction to Plenary session 2** | Presentation of BDF “Political State of the Region Report 2015”  | TBC | TBC |
| 15:00-16:30 | **Plenary session 2** | “Competitive Baltic Sea Region”([COMPETITIVENES](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competitiveness)S) | The session would highlight the importance of the Blue Growth in the region, as well as touch upon the essential lessons concerning sustainability and the interaction between different systems. A message that this is an area where solidarity between Baltic Sea states is essential and that this cooperative regional approach has in part supported the growth of the Baltic economies in general. | Speakers: max 4WebstreamingRun by the 2 moderators |
| 16:30-18:00 | **Parallel thematic workshops** | 1. E-inclusion for Social and Economic Opportunities

(INCLUSION) | Can be looked up from different perspectives such as: a) rural-urban dimension; b) accessibility of men and women; young and elderly people; disabled people; c) possibilities for job opportunities, etc.). It is more about people having equal access to information and social and economic opportunities. | Speakers: max 4 |
| 1. Regional Energy Cooperation for Economic Development

(ENERGY) | EUSBSR contribution to reaching EU2020 strategy and 2030 energy and climate policy objectives; focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources challenges and way forward through deployment of low carbon technologies and effective financing mechanisms; biofuels, LNG; results of the study research 'Energy sector solutions through the prism of the EUSBSR', etc. complementarities with other sectors (PA Agri, HA Sustainable development, etc). | Speakers: max 4 |
| 1. United in Diversity: (dialogue/diversity)
 | 'United in diversity' is the motto of the EU. It signifies how Europeans have come together, in the form of the EU, to work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and languages; a workshop focusing on soft connections in the BSR; although we are different, but there is something that unites us (for example, youth unemployment is currently an issue in the region); might be presented from academic perspective, journalists, youth representatives (Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue, Baltic University Programme); maybe bring representatives of different generations (youth, elderly people, etc.). NORDPLUS programme.This workshop also could focus on the diversity, mobility and connections among the youth in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond giving a possibility to exchange an experience with other macro-regions. | Speakers: max 4 |
| 1. How to do business with/within the EUSBSR

(BUSINESS) | Several Council Conclusions talk about the need to further engage the private sector in the EUSBSR. A key question during the session: How the private sector can be engaged? Representatives from private companies in the BSR could be invited as speakers; to hear what is interesting to them (PA Tourism/PA Innovation/PA SME/PA Shipping, etc.).  | Speakers: max 4 |
| 1. Maritime and coastal tourism (TOURISM)
 | Cultural heritage aspect might be touched as well; links between environment and tourism: the recently-published Communication on Coastal & Maritime Tourism refers to water quality issues as limiting factors for tourism and affect the options for sustainable growth in related jobs. Invite Jūrmala City Council as participants. | Speakers: max 4 |
| 18:00-19:30 | **Back-to-back meetings** |  |  |  |
| 19:30-22:00 | **Networking Dinner** |  | Dinner for all registered participants and invited guests. | Venue: *Havana Club*Performance by *Dabas Koncertzāle* (Nature Concerthall) |

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| TuesdaY, 16 June |  |  |  |  |
| 9:00 – 11:00 | **Registration** |  |  | For second-day arrivals a 2-hour opportunity to get registered. Registration desk also serves for an “Info Centre.” |
| 09:00-10:30 | **Parallel thematic workshops** | 1. Cultural (re)turn – widening the scope of a creative society

(CULTURE)  | Workshop focusing on cultural and creative industries (CCI); spill-over effect of culture and creativity – creative industries, social innovation, cultural heritage, soft power and regional identity. CCIs are, at the dawn of the 21st century, undergoing considerable change as a result of increased digital technologies, the economic crisis of the past several years; despite the considerable potential of CCIs, estimated to be responsible for over 3% of the EU's gross domestic product and jobs, they remain undervalued and unrecognised; they are able to increasingly contribute to employment and growth across Europe. | Speakers: max 4 |
| 1. The EUSBSR in the programing period 2014-2020: funding of the EUSBSR (PROGRAMMING & FUNDING)
 | Results of the INTERACT Point Turku study ‘Cooperation methods and tools applied by ESIF programmes to support implementation of the EUSBSR’ could be presented; overview of how embedding is implemented in practice; coordinated joint calls, etc. Includes also EEA/Norway grants opportunities. | Speakers: max 4 |
| 1. Cross-sector and cross-border maritime spatial planning

(SPATIAL PLANNING) | The Forum will take place around the 1st anniversary of the MSP Directive being adopted by the EP and half way through the period for EU Member States to transpose it into national legislation and identify competent authorities to implement its requirements. There is a lot of 'joined-up thinking' that could be done in relation to the MSP angle, including the links to national law and policy priorities, but also what Directive terms like 'land/sea interactions', 'taking account of the ecosystem-based approach' and the requirements relating to public participation and cross-border cooperation might mean in practice. | Speakers: max 4 |
| 1. Re-designing the Future – New Ideas for Health Care and Services

(HEALTH) | E-health, telemedicine, m-Health – mobile apps (diagnostics, health literacy, support for chronic patients), tele-consultations in healthcare demographical changes etc., e-Medic project example. | Speakers: max 4 |
|  |  | 1. Science and knowledge - closer integration of research ideas

(SCIENCE) | Mobility, brain drain, innovative education (e-education, coordinated university programmes and dual degrees, etc.). A moderated discussion between local authorities, industrialists and researchers to enable the concrete benefits from science and innovation to be explained. | Speakers: max 4 |
| 10:30-11:00 | * **Coffee Break**
* **Networking Village activities**
 |  |  | Presentations of young scientists at the Networking Village. |
| 11:00-12:30 | **Plenary Session 3** | “E-quality and e-connectivity in the Baltic Sea Region” (DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY) | Overarching theme of the session is e-quality (how we ensure the well-being and equality of the people in the region by promoting digital culture) and e-connectivity. Invite the commissioner for the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip and other high-level speakers. It is also possible to invite the speakers from the Digital Agenda Assembly (taking place in Riga June 17-18). To discuss the Digital Single Market Strategy and the benefits of a macro-regional approach, the Baltic Sea Region as a possible model and the role of the EUSBSR. | Speakers: max 4 WebstreamingRun by the 2 moderators |
| 12:30-13:00 | **Closing Session** |  |  | Run by the 2 moderators |
| 13:00-14:00 | * **Buffet lunch**
* **Networking Village activities**
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| 14:00-18:30 | **Back-to-back meetings** |  |  |  |

**Speaker's Corner (as a part of the Networking Village):**

* Different innovative solutions based on ICT, digital services;
* Exchanging knowledge and best practice on the practical implementation of RES and EE policies and legislation in the BSR;
* Marketing and communication of the EUSBSR *(The language used in the communication of the Strategy has been somewhat difficult; how to improve the communication of the strategy in many senses: to present in attractive way; simple language understandable by ordinary people; communication at different levels: macro-regional level; national level; streamlining of the EUSBSR with other BSR initiatives (close ties to other initiatives should be emphasised both visually and in the day-to-day work (-ing) language; the EUSBSR being synchronised with other logos/brands rather than being singled out) professional can be invited etc.); a well-known journalist in the BSR could be invited as a speaker).*