

**EG Chairs and ITAs
Seventh Meeting
Oslo, Norway
29 September 2008**

Reference	EG Chairs and ITAs 7/5/Info 1
Title	Information about the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
Submitted by	Secretariat
Summary / Note	This document presents the information available on 21 August 2008 at the European Commission's website, at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/baltic/index_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/baltic/events_en.htm .
Requested action	For reference

“EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

The European Commission is preparing an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region on the request of the European Council.¹ The aim of the Strategy will be to **coordinate the efforts of various actors in the Region** (Member States, regions, financing institutions, the EU, pan-Baltic organisations, non-governmental bodies etc.) so that by working together they would **promote a more balanced development** of the Region.

After the 2004 enlargement, the potential and the challenges of the Baltic Sea Region have attracted more attention. There are wide differences in economic development between the EU Member States. The whole region is also facing major challenges like the demographic change and the pollution of the Sea. The common problems of the Region call for cooperation of the whole Region.

The Strategy will aim at **four main objectives**:

1. to improve the **environmental** state of the Baltic Sea Region and especially of the Sea;
2. to make the Baltic Sea Region a more prosperous place by supporting balanced **economic development** across the Region;
3. to make the Baltic Sea Region a more **accessible and attractive** place for both its inhabitants, for competent labour force and for tourists;
4. to make the Baltic Sea Region a **safer and more secure** place.

¹ [European Council Conclusions of 14 December 2007](#), point 59: "Without prejudice to the integrated maritime policy, the European Council invites the Commission to present an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region at the latest by June 2009. This strategy should inter alia help to address the urgent environmental challenges related to the Baltic Sea. The Northern Dimension framework provides the basis for the external aspects of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region."

The Commission services, with Directorate General Regional Policy leading the work, will present the first draft of the Strategy in the last trimester of 2008 and consult the stakeholders during several events to be organised in the Baltic Sea Region. The draft will be published on this website in December 2008.

The Strategy will be presented to the European Council in June 2009 and be one of the main priorities of the Swedish EU Presidency during the second half of 2009.

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.



Links to other EU activities related to the Baltic Sea Region can be consulted here:

- [Maritime Policy](#)
- [Northern Dimension for cooperation with third countries](#)
- [European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument \(ENPI\) for cross-border cooperation with Russia](#)
- [Actors in the Baltic Sea Region](#)

“Events

- **Kaunas, Lithuania, 18-19 September 2008:** [BSSSC Annual Conference](#), including a roundtable on the accessibility and attractiveness issues in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy
- **Stockholm, Sweden, 30 September 2008:** Stakeholder conference
- **Gdansk, Poland, 13 November 2008:** Roundtable on environmental issues in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy
- **Copenhagen, Denmark, 1-2 December 2008:** Baltic Development Forum Summit, including a roundtable on economic development issues in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy
- **Helsinki, Finland, 9 December 2008:** Roundtable on the safety and security issues in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy
- **Rostock, Germany, 5-6 February 2008:** Stakeholder conference.”