

# Policy Area Culture Steering Group Meeting, September 22, 2021

Time 14:00–15:50

Participants: see list at the end of document

Co-Moderator: Zuzanna Przytkowska

Co-Moderator: Dr. Kaarina Williams

Minutes: Jacqueline Edwards

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## I. Introduction of participants and confirmation of the agenda

Zuzanna opens the meeting, she and the deputy director of the department, Agnieszka Grunwald welcomes the participants on behalf of the Polish Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport. She reports that after the revision of the Action Plan, published 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021, there is the need to implement the new strategy framework and to address new challenges in the governance of EUSBSR Policy Area work.

An introduction round follows.

## II. Discussion and decision about the forthcoming structure and operation mode of the Steering Group: Rules of Procedure and Annex document

Kaarina explains the decision-making procedure.

The first point to be discussed is the invitation of neighbouring countries to become observers in the Steering Group. This concerns Norway, Iceland and Russia.

Milda asks for a definition of the differences of status: full member, observer or guest status.

Zuzanna explains the different types of roles. The observer status, which is the status at stake for the neighbouring countries, includes taking part in meetings but having no voting right. It is more of an advisory role.

Anja adds that the observers would not be included in the rotating presidency system.

Milda inquires why the three mentioned countries were chosen.

Zuzanna explains that the EUSBSR criteria put an emphasis on Baltic Sea countries. Belarus has not received an invitation due to known political reasons.

Laura expresses her concerns regarding observer status of Russia.

Blagovestka adds that as the mentioned countries are not full members of the EU they can only be included upon invitation. However, their engagement is seen to be very important from an EU COM point of view.

Kaarina emphasises that these countries are very important for PA Culture work and for cooperating on a practical level. She also points out that within the PA Culture Coordination support Interreg contract, PA Culture has dedicated itself to involve more neighbouring countries. PA Culture is also

part of the newly established Baltic Leadership Programme launched by the Swedish Institute and the Council of the Baltic Sea States, where cooperation between EUSBSR and Russia is in the focus. An observer status would offer a better framework to deepen this cooperation.

Laura explains that she has to restrain from the vote, as she has no mandate to decide upon the aforementioned points.

Zuzanna points out that for a decision a unanimous vote is required. Therefore, the decision-making will be turned into a written procedure. The second voting point regards inviting Pan-Baltic organisations to the Steering Group, suggestions as listed in Annex point 2. Here too, a written voting procedure will follow in due time to take the decision.

Zuzanna elaborates on further elements of the new Rules of Procedure. One of them is the rotation of the Presidency in Policy Area work. The suggestion is, to adapt the rotation schedule as in the EUSBSR National Coordinators Group. This means that the rotation in the upcoming years is as follows: Lithuania until July 2022, then Sweden 22/23 followed by Latvia 23/24 and then Poland 24/25.

When you take over a Presidency, assistance from the PA coordinators is assured. It is also an opportunity for the presiding country to influence the agenda setting. The Presidency has the possibility of own contributions and focussing on certain thematic areas for the development of PA Culture. This new situation enables PA Culture to grow and find best solutions working with the Presidency.

No participant voices a disagreement to the Presidency in general.

### **III. A brief review to the last events of the PA: workshop on Creative Industries in May 2020 and workshop on funding opportunities in June, including a follow up in September**

Szymon and Anja present the last PA Culture events

Szymon mentions the workshop on Cultural and Creative Industries that was held in May in a hybrid form in Szczecin with a constant presence of around 50 – 60 online participants. As a summary of the workshop a document containing common position and recommendations was sent to the ministries of culture and other relevant institutions.

Anja mentions the match making-event that should have taken place in June but had to be cancelled due to lack of participants. This event was re-scheduled for October. However, it is a challenge to initiate project partners matchmaking online. The current seed money projects of PA Culture will be invited to see, if further partners are needed and could be matched with the respective projects.

### **IV. Outlook on next events: Annual Forum of EUSBSR, cultural events in the framework of the forum**

Anja presents the workshop by PA Culture for the Annual Forum 2021, where the PA Culture Seed Money project Culture4Climate will present its results and perspectives for future development. This will take place online only on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Milda describes the EUSBSR Annual Forum event planned by the Lithuanian EU Department on the New European Bauhaus initiative. It will explore, how the NEB can be implemented in the Baltic Sea

Region. It unites different cultural fields such as housing, art, well-being, city-planning and is therefore seen as a highly relevant topic. A panel discussion will be held online on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021. More detailed information can be found on EUSBSR website.

#### **V. Preparation of the forthcoming workplan for PA Culture Activities (see presentation attached)**

Anja explains the future funding for PA Culture coordination.

The Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme funds the PA coordination work. The next call for PAC support will be opened later this year, details of the framework conditions are still discussed in the respective bodies but PA Culture coordinators collected the latest available information for the meeting.

The application for financial support of PA Culture future activities must include a detailed work plan.

That is why the PA Culture coordinators would highly appreciate the involvement of the Steering Group into the development of the PA Culture work plan in the next years. This includes topics to be raised and formats of events etc.

Kaarina states that the new funding period requires a new application. The timeframe is so far unknown, but the deadline for submission is to be expected in Spring 2022.

Anja emphasises, that a stronger role for the steering group in planning the upcoming activities and formats is needed. PA Culture coordinators expect good impulses and new ideas from Member States, Pan-Baltic organisations and Flagship projects. Anja elaborates, that she has already made an enquiry with the Flagship Leaders over the summer. This seemed very promising; many good impulses have been received already.

However, the suggestion is to organize a brainstorming and planning online-workshop in December or January to collect the ideas of the SG and further actors.

Blagovestka mentions that the timeline is still quite unclear, as the Implementing Acts have to be signed first. In the new regulation the implementation of macro-regional strategies is mandatory.

A mapping process has been encouraged to take on the ideas for further strategical development of macro-regional strategies. Blagovestka requests for this issue to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Milda would like to know what kind of criteria have to be addressed in order to become a flagship project.

Blagovestka says that a flagship concept is no longer part of the current Action Plan.

Kaarina explains that a flagship project used to have an easier access to funding. However, this is no longer the case. PA Culture can still use the terminology but it has no effects on the funding decisions anymore.

Anja summarizes the discussion by saying that PA Culture is starting “from zero” again in many ways. This is an opportunity for PA Culture to change. The fresh start into a new Action Plan can now be filled with ideas and well-known challenges can be tackled. PA Culture will also receive funding for project development within the new funding period. Besides the usual events, some money for initiating projects will be available. PA Culture will organize a workshop with an interactive setting for brainstorming in December/January. Ideas can be born and put forward at any time.

**VI. Introduction of the newest developments in the “Baltic Sea Cultural Cities and Regions” project**

Kaarina shares the newest developments

**VII. Any other businesses**

Zuzanna announces that from the beginning of the year 2022, the role of the PA Culture co-coordinator in Poland will be taken over by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, which is highly experienced in running international cooperation projects. A shift from the Ministry to its supervised Institute is expected to improve mutual cooperation. The shift will be made swiftly.

Zuzanna ends the meeting with a recollection of the decision taken to launch a written voting procedure on the two topics discussed under Agenda Point II.

Participants:

**Agnieska Grunwald**, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport of the Republic of Poland

**Zuzanna Przykowska**, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport of the Republic of Poland

**Szymon Jałkowski**, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport of the Republic of Poland

**Kaarina Williams**, Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection of Land Schleswig-Holstein

**Anja Uhlenbrok**, Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection of Land Schleswig-Holstein

**Jacqueline Edwards**, Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection of Land Schleswig-Holstein

**Idun Bredhahl Genborg**, The Agency for Culture and Palace Denmark

**Heili Jõe**, Estonian Ministry of Culture

**Tarja Hautamäki**, Region of Ostrobothnia

**Milda Vakarinaite**, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania

**Laura Okdaldere**, Ministry of Culture Republic of Latvia

**Christoffer Lärkner**, Swedish Ministry of Culture

**Blagovestka Riiser**, European Commission, DG Regio