



EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Culture

Steering Group meeting minutes

Date: 16/04/2024

Time: 09:30–15:30 CET

Location: online

Participants

1. Baiba Mūrniece, Ministry of Culture of Latvia
2. Magdalena Kleszczewska, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Poland
3. Franziska Kapteina, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Areas, European Affairs and Consumer Protection of Land Schleswig-Holstein
4. Kadri Jauram, Ministry of Culture of Estonia
5. Tarja Hautamäki, Regional Council of Ostrobothnia, Finland
6. Jesper F. Schou-Knudsen, Agency for Culture and Palaces, Denmark
7. Zuzanna Przyrkowska, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland
8. Karolina Bagocenko, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania
9. Dörte Törper, Ministry of General Education and Vocational Training, Science, Research and Culture of Land Schleswig-Holstein
10. Lara Knigge, Ars Baltica
11. Pirjo Hamari, Baltic Region Heritage Committee
12. Blagovestka Riiser, European Commission, DG Regio
13. Felix Schartner Giertra, Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat
14. Kazimierz Musiał, Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat
15. Krista Petäjäjärvi, Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDCP)

Moderation and chair: Baiba Mūrniece



Agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Approval of the agenda
3. PA Culture coordination briefing
4. SG members briefing
5. (7.*) Policy Paper on Culture and Sustainability
6. (5.*) Interreg BSR
7. (6.*) Revision of the Action Plan of the EUSBSR
8. AoB and date for next meeting

*The order of the agenda was changed during the meeting

1. Opening of the meeting

- *Baiba Mūrniece* opened the meeting.
- A short round of introductions followed. There were three new SG members present: *Kadri Jauram (Estonia)*, *Dörte Törper (Germany)* and *Jesper F. Schou-Knudsen (Denmark)*. *Karolina Bagocenko* acted in place of *Daiva Parulskiene*, the Steering Group member of Lithuania.
- *Baiba Mūrniece* continued by introducing the agenda of the meeting and gave the floor to the PA Culture coordinators.

2. Approval of agenda

- The agenda was approved.

3. PA Culture briefing

- *Magdalena Kleszczewska* presented the recent activities of PA Culture coordination team and the different **reports that were handed in** to Interreg BSR, the National Coordinators Group of the EUSBSR and the European Commission in the recent months. She also informed on **events** the PA Culture coordination attended, some EUSBSR and some stakeholder-related. She then closed the presentation with informing the Steering Group on **future activities** planned for 2024 such as the “Culture makes cities stronger” event on April

24th in Warsaw and online, and the **Innoculture Conference** which will take place on 18th and 19th November in Gdansk.

4. SG members briefing

- *Jesper F. Schou-Knudsen* spoke of the [new strategic framework for Denmark's International Cultural Collaboration](#). He pointed out that the framework poses a paradigm shift from cultural diplomacy to addressing global changes via culture and artists. Other Steering Group members were very interested in this and asked the Danish SG member to send information on it after the meeting.
- *Baiba Mūrniece* took up the point and stated that there are also efforts in Latvia to **make greater use of culture in external relations**. She pointed out that the global agenda has a heavy influence not only in Europe but also in its cultural and creative sector. A key question from this would be how culture and arts and its financial support should be constructed and balanced in this context.
- *Kadri Jauram* from **Estonia** stated, that she felt that Creative Europe is taking up a lot of these global tendencies and creates many new initiatives based on them. Co-initiatives therefore would receive less and less attention. She also informed about an **upcoming meeting of the cultural ministers in Estonia**. Topics will include artificial intelligence and the protection of cultural heritage in times of crisis. This last point will especially be addressed with the attending UNESCO representatives. Measures such as the listing and registration of important cultural objectives and the creation of digital copies are to be discussed. During the **presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States 24/25** Estonia is planning to thematize **sensitive cultural heritage**.
- *Zuzanna Przytkowska* confirmed the Polish interest in questions regarding unwanted heritage and stated, that any ideas that would come out of activities regarding this would be of relevance to them. On the Polish side, the ministry is involved in preparations for the **presidency of the EUSBSR, Council of the EU and CBSS**.
- *Karolina Bagocenko* informed about [International Conference 'Towards the recovery of the culture sector of Ukraine'](#) from 6 - 7 June 2024 in **Vilnius, Lithuania**. The conference is high level, including international actors and actors of the culture and creative industries.



- On behalf of Latvia, *Baiba Mūrniece* spoke about the **Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC**, an international coalition of UN Member States aimed at building political momentum for the recognition of culture as a uniquely powerful force in climate change policy. The group is working towards the inclusion of culture in sustainable documents. The goal of the EU states is to formulate a common message. She also reported on the [Nordic-Baltic ministerial declaration on the role of culture and cultural heritage for democratic and resilient societies](#) and the contained [joint declaration, committing to closer collaboration to address the increasing challenges facing the cultural sector](#). She then pointed out the existing OMC Groups on [libraries](#) as well as [stimulation of the green transition of the CCS](#). The Open Method of Cooperation (OMC) is a practical and structured way to bring together representatives from EU Member States to encourage the exchange of good practices regarding the design of policies and funding schemes. The method fosters a common understanding of issues and helps to build consensus on solutions and their implementation.
- *Blagovestka Riiser* from DG Regio reminded the Steering Group of the upcoming MRS Days on the 12th and 13th of June. She also informed the coordinators that representatives of BSP should be invited to all SG meetings as they use the information from the meetings in a dialogue with other Pas.
- *Krista Petäjjärvi* from NDPC first introduced their latest projects, CCI4Change and Creative Circular Cities. She also mentioned the AWAKE's project's roundtable "Arts and Wellbeing" of which the [recording is available online](#). The roundtable offered valuable insights on entrepreneurial opportunities for artists and cultural workers. She then spoke about the task of making Interreg appealing to the cultural sector. Finally, she also informed the participants of the [Faro Convention International Conference](#) which connects to the Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2005).
- *Felix Schartner Giertta* from CBSS informed about the developments in their currently running Interreg project BSR Cultural Pearls.



- *Pirjo Hamari* of the BRHC informed the Steering Group of their last committee meeting as well as a regional seminar. She then pointed out that the presidency of the BRHC will go to Estonia in June along with the presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. She then introduced the members to a questionnaire on heritage in times of crisis.

5. Interreg BSR

- *Magdalena Kleszczewska* talked about the new developments in Interreg BSR. Regarding PA Culture, she informed the SG that the current projects to support the EUSBSR governance will be running until the end of 2024. The MA/JS already proposed to extend the current projects for 2025-2026. A further extension for 2027-2028 will be discussed in 2026. Between June and September, the PACs will be asked to develop their work plans and budgets together with the SG. The MC will decide on the approval of the projects' extension in November 2024.
- She also informed about the upcoming projects platforms call to be launched in summer 2024.

6. Revision of the Action Plan of the EUSBSR

- *Franziska Kapteina* informed the participants on the upcoming revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan. The elaboration of the timeline is still in process. The BSP develops PA templates that will be distributed in September. The PA coordinations will then work on their respective updates and meet in October and November for exchange with the other PACs. **By the end of the year, each Policy Area Steering Group is meant to approve the draft actions** after which the National Coordinators Group will evaluate these plans.
- The BSP is planning to hold several **activities designed to support the work on the PA sections of the Action Plan**. There will be an online session for all of SG members in September. It is aimed at explaining and activating the SGs and their role in the update process.
- The three **main objectives of the EUSBSR**: Save the sea, Connect the region and Increase prosperity will most probably stay the same as they are as they are the defining aspects of the strategy. The current **sub-objectives**, including “connecting people in the region” and “improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region” as the most relevant



ones for PA Culture will be subject to changes depending on the developments in the region. They have been modified over time due to changes in circumstances and challenges. However, it was already said, that the **update process will focus first and foremost on the Policy Areas and their actions and indicators for the upcoming years. Each Policy Area develops two to four Actions that contribute to achieving the EUSBSR objectives.**

- The current Actions of PA Culture concentrate on CCI, cultural values and cultural heritage. The coordination pointed out that **new actions will have to be worked out in three steps:** First in thinking about the current objectives of the Policy Area Culture, then by aligning these objectives with the sub-objectives of the strategy and finally by transferring the result into actions. The process got a first kick-off by a **Mentimeter**, meant to get an idea of the currently most important objectives.

7. Policy Paper on Culture and Sustainability

- *Franziska Kapteina* then moved on to discussing the policy paper on sustainability and culture, which is a work in progress. Its main objective is to explore the links between culture and sustainability.
- Structurally, it starts with looking at the **central terms on a conceptual level and defining them** for the context of the paper.
- The next step includes an **overview of respective documents** on the interconnection of culture and sustainability that already exist in the transnational and international context.
- It then is oriented in to explore and list different **connecting points of culture and sustainability** such as sustainability as a chance of preservation of culture or culture as a tool for engagement and communication regarding sustainability.
- The paper will then aim to list **practical examples and actions** from these connecting points e.g., New European Bauhaus projects that explore sustainability in culture.
- Next steps will include narrowing the focus of the paper and the collection of more practical examples from the national states and the



BSR also via the SG. Future perspectives include the question how the paper could be used and if it should include policy recommendations as well as an open possibility to include other important aspects.

- *Krista Petäjärvi* from NDPC said it is important to create knowledge and asked how the paper can serve its purpose. The target group of the policy paper will need to be clearly defined. It is a huge topic which requires very good practical examples. As one has to be cautious with definitions, it is necessary to enter into dialogue with existing models. The overview of how policymakers, policies in BSR recognize culture and sustainability is needed. The focus should therefore be on good examples as well as possibilities to get funding for the cultural sector from other programs via implementing cross-sectorial topics.

8. AOB

- The final event of the Latvian presidency of the EUSBSR is on the 30th of May in Riga
- This year's MRS Days are scheduled for the 12th and 13th of June.
- Next Steering Group meeting is scheduled for 18th November in Gdansk, back-to-back the InnoCulture conference.