

## Suggestions of speaking points for Jari Nahkanen

- I want to start by thanking Mr Jörgen Petterson, President of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, and our host Ms Gun-Mari Lindholm for inviting me to your annual event.
- It is a pleasure and a privilege to address an audience that has made such an important contribution to improving cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region for so many years.
- I am happy to address you on the topic that we need more action. Because we do. **We all know that** the Baltic Sea is in a bad condition. We have to realise that we have made progress over the years by joining efforts and having a joint framework, such as the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. But we need more. **We need more co-operation** in the Baltic Sea in the future. **Not less.**
- **The Baltic Sea Commission** is one of the six geographical commissions of the **Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions**, an interest organisation and think-tank with 160 regions as members across Europe. In the Baltic Sea we are made up of 19 regional authorities from around the Baltic Sea.
- I am proud to say that in our core competences, cohesion policy, maritime affairs and transport, we are seen as one of the main influencers in the Brussels Arena. Being a political network we have the last year had meetings

with Commissioner Juncker on the Future of Europe, we are in constant dialogue with DG Regio concerning regional development, DG Move concerning sustainable transport connections and on the topic of a healthy Baltic Sea, our brussels based secretariat works on a daily basis with DG Mare and DG Climate.

- **In May and June this summer**, The European Commission published its legislative proposal for the EU budget for the post-2020 period. **Even if all the countries in the Baltic Sea Region are not part of the EU, the policy and tools for implantation matters for the cooperation in the Baltic Sea.**
- **The Action Plan of The EU Strategy of the Baltic Sea Region is also up for revision this coming year. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea puts a clean Baltic sea at its core. The Maritime Working Group of the Baltic Sea Commission is actively involved in the revision.**
- Next week, I will be in Brussels and together with members of the European Parliament, we will discuss with representatives of the EU institutions, researchers and stakeholders about the State of the Baltic Sea and the progress achieved and still remained.
- The many flagships active within the Policy Area of Hazard in the Baltic Sea will be presented and we will jointly discuss if the framework of the Baltic Sea Strategy has pushed progress. My main messages will be the same in the European Parliament next week as they are here today.

-> We need more action.

-> We need to ensure we have the sufficient funds for implementation.

-> We need to ensure that we have a governance system that allows different priorities in different parts of the Baltic Sea.

- **If we want to build a strong European Cooperation and European Union, if we want the environmental policies to bring value - emphasis must be put on implementation.** Much of the action we have heard about here today from previous speakers are taken by actors on local and regional level and we need to safeguard that the framework of policy and instruments support this.
- The negotiations that start now about the next programme period in the EU are not only about numbers in a budget. They are about the precondition for actors to get involved. And the tools and funds on local and regional level are proposed to decrease.

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- **The subsidiarity principle states that decisions and priorities should be taken as close as possible to the citizens. This enables different priorities in the north of the Baltic Sea compared to the south. I will give you an example on what this mean in a regional political aspect.**
- **In the northern parts of the Baltic Sea, where I come from, we have to constantly remind ourselves that much of what we place in Arctic policy is**

relevant and interconnected with Baltic Policy. This is fundamental when we talk and make proposals about the climate change and environmental issues, the Baltic is part of the Arctic and also the Baltic sea is affected by global warming.

One discussion in the arctic parts of the Baltic sea we have, is the problem of so called black carbon or the fine particles of soot. It causes ice melting and warming of the Arctic. Black carbon emissions are estimated to be worse than greenhouse gases. Black carbon means fine particles that are generated by incomplete combustion, for example in traffic and old-fashioned power plants. Reducing the use and emissions of black carbon is not only an environmental issue but also a health issue. **The reduction of black carbon emissions in the Baltic sea region is realistic through cross-border cooperation.** A Baltic Interreg programme will not give emphasis on this as the cross-border programmes has been able to do.

**When the commission proposes to merge the maritime cross-border programmes, in an eagerness of more effective administration, they loose the essence of effective governance.**

- And here is a problem: **For the first time ever in an EU Budget proposal, the amount of funds that is directly managed by the European Commission, is bigger than the amount that will be managed by the Member States and Regions.** The mechanisms and also the political priority setting is being centralised to either capitals or Brussels. This is not the right direction if we want functional implementation.

- New political priorities and Britain's exit sharply reduce the EU finances. This combination puts us in the place that the EU is expected to do more, but with less funds.
  - The EU Commission has not had an easy task to come up with a proposal. Instead of making real priorities they have used a cheese-slicer – meaning that also the Interreg (today only 2,75 % of the Cohesion Policy Fund) has been reduced in both percentage and actual numbers.
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- **The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission is highly concerned that the Commission has proposed to reduce the budget for Interreg, despite its added-value for fostering cooperation across Europe.** There is a risk that Interreg will not be able to deliver due to very limited financial resources. **We are calling for a strong and well-resourced European Territorial Cooperation.**
- We are also deeply concerned that **the new architecture for maritime cooperation** proposed by the Commission, diminishes the programmes that are close to local and regional actors. We oppose the scenario to **integrate Interreg maritime cross-border programmes into transnational programmes**, which means getting rid of the South Baltic, Central Baltic and Botnia-Atlantica programmes, which have brought tangible results.
- I thank you again for inviting me. I believe politicians on national, regional and local level must engage even more in the discussions on what future EU we want. I want more. The action is needed for the Baltic Sea, as well as for our competitiveness and connectiveness.

- **I want** to conclude this intervention by saying that **the Baltic Sea Commission is happy to continue a dialogue with the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference** on how we can push for more cooperation and Action for a clean and healthy Baltic Sea. *////FINISH////*

#### PANEL DEBATE comments, EXAMPLE:

I am amazed of the much action that today is funded by Interreg. Interreg is crucial.

For example, the BLASTIC project – one of the flagships of the Baltic Sea Strategy. It aims to reduce plastic waste and hence, the inflow of hazardous substances into the Baltic Sea.

A central goal of the project is to compile a list of pathways and sources as well as recommendations for cost-effective measures to combat marine litter in e.g. the waste and water sector on a municipal level.

The results will contribute to a checklist on best practices to prevent marine litter to be used by the municipal authorities.

During the year 2017, BLASTIC's foremost activities has been on raising awareness for the general cause. To educate a younger audience, a booklet intended to be used in schools and kindergartens was published and was translated to all partner country languages.

This project will be presented by Pärnu and Stockholm in the European Parliament next week.

#### PANEL DEBATE comments, number 1

##### *On Save the Baltic Sea for real*

As I referred to next week's event in Brussels, it is called *Save the Baltic Sea for real*. The informal Baltic Sea group in the European Parliament, the EUSBSR, Seas, Rivers, Islands and

Costal Areas, SEARICA, and the Baltic Sea Commission of the CPMR will organise an event in the European Parliament on 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2018. The idea is to discuss about hazardous substances such as chemical and plastics and the threats they pose in the Baltic Sea region.

PANEL DEBATE comments, number 1

### *On the UN Sustainability Goals*

It is highly accepted that the main implementation of the Sustainability Goals happen on local and regional level. When we talk place based innovation, we talk about innovation on clean tech, circular economy, e-services for a better functioning health system etc. Innovation and sustainability goes hand in hand. In the Baltic Sea Commission we have initiated a close cooperation with Euroregion Baltic and Council of the Baltic States.

PANEL DEBATE comments, number 2

### EU membership fee and profits of EU membership

The single European market is the most important market for countries like Finland and Sweden. The European Union is also the most important arena for foreign policy co-operation too. EU is a good investment which gives a fair return on investment too in various ways. In the context of this negotiations actors and politicians inside of government and outside MUST take the opportunity to engage in this discussions and further develop our cooperation. If our medial debate only is about the membership fee than the citizens of our countries loose out of the discussion on what we need the EU and enhanced cooperation for. I encourage you to be part of this discussions.

## PANEL DEBATE comments, number 3

### About nationalists' trends in EU at the moment

The unity of the EU is in a test. Populist right-wing parties rise in different countries and offer easy solutions to complex problems. Alternative medias offer alternative truths and people without media literacy are in trouble. Migration, security and defence are some of the areas that we discuss needs to be managed more together. We need to increase co-operation of national emergency supply agencies that ensures the security of supply of various issues for the functioning of the society under all circumstances. The forest fires in Sweden and Finland demanded help not only from countries in our closest neighbourhood but from all over Europe. Cooperation makes us stronger and more resilient.

## PANEL DEBATE comments, number 4

### About the possibility of working together at different levels

Today, more than ever we need cooperation and cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region and in Europe. For example, in the North Sweden and Finland border regions, we should do more to save natural salmon. In the Finnish national Fishing strategy, we have decided to shift focus from planting fish to maintaining and restoring the natural reproductive cycle.

## PANEL DEBATE comments, number 5

### About connection Baltic to arctic and low carbon economy

Our industry and commerce is heavily dependent on good logistical connections both in the motorways of sea and land and also in air. Therefore, fostering the development of connectivity and EU's single market plays a central role in our work. Even though our industry is vital importance for our possibilities to live here, it is also consuming a lot of energy and resources. We live in the rural region close to nature and we are constantly developing ways to diminish the environmental load of the industry. Understanding the



vulnerable arctic environment contributes to the actions of saving the sea for example with circular economy solutions. We welcome EU commission's targets to reduce co2 emissions of transportation and energy.