



30TH BSPC: FOURTH SESSION

Addresses and reports

Speaker: **Mr Jari Nahkanen**, President of the Baltic Sea Commission of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR BSC)

Dear President of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Mr Pyri Niemi,
Dear Members of BSPC,
Dear Secretary General,

On behalf of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, let me thank you for your kind invitation to attend this important event. I have appreciated very much the contributions and inspiring exchanges we heard today. It illustrates the significant contribution your organization has made, for the development of the Baltic Sea Region, over the year.

Warm congratulations for your long-standing and successful parliamentary cooperation for 30 years! I wish you all the best for the years ahead.

In a couple of days, the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission will also celebrate its 25 years of regional cooperation. Since 1996, we have worked to facilitate cooperation across regions and worked to ensure stronger Baltic Sea Region perspective in EU policies. Today, Regions from the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission are still working together, in a trustful and solidarity spirit, to promote a prosperous Baltic Sea Region.

Importance of cooperation between BSPC and CPMR BSC

Close political dialogue between local, regional and national actors is crucial to achieve this common goal. The numerous challenges the Baltic Sea Region is going through, require indeed tight cooperation and open dialogue between all levels of governance.

That is why, I am delighted to be among you today. Few weeks ago, our Executive Committee was also very pleased to exchange with Mr BSPC President, Mr Pyri Niemi, to discuss Baltic Sea issues, and further cooperation.

Overview of key policy work of the CPMR BSC over the year

This year, the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Members has focused on contributing to EU Green Deal Agenda, by fostering local solutions in different sectors. Let me give you a glimpse of concrete examples of our policy work, which we believe, requires strong multilevel cooperation.

Concrete examples of policy work

Firstly, promoting “Sustainable Blue Economy” in the Baltic Sea Region. The Baltic Sea is under lot of pressure, and Sustainable Blue Economy would help to improve the status, from promoting sustainable fishing, and ports as hubs for clean energy. Our Member Regions, which are mostly coastal regions, have taken an active role in the development of a new EU Sustainable Blue Economy, engaging dialogue with both the European Parliament and the European Commission.

Secondly, promoting “Connectivity” in the Baltic Sea Region. It is important to develop good transport infrastructure, and ensure territorial accessibility for all regions, including the most peripheral. Our Member Regions are therefore following closely the revision of the TEN-T regulation by the European Union, which is an opportunity to connect further the Baltic Sea Region.

Thirdly, facilitating cross-border cooperation. The border closures, due to the pandemic, has been hard for people living in border regions, with negative sides effects. It is important to preserve strong cross-border cooperation even in this trouble time. The new Interreg programmes, that are under preparation, should focus on “people to people projects”, since trust has been harmed these past months.

Fourthly, promoting sustainable and healthy Baltic Sea Region. The fight against climate change is a top priority. [*The multiple natural disasters, that unfortunately all parts of Europe suffered over the Summer, from terrible water flows in Germany or recently in Sweden, to forest fires in Greece, are again reminding us of emergency to take ambitious and quick actions*]. Our Energy and Climate Working Group has been working on sharing local solutions to promote sustainability. We hope for further synergies with the BSPC Working Group on Climate Change and Biodiversity, to exchange more knowledge and develop joint solutions.

A key policy work, that require also ambitious and close cooperation between the Regions and the Member States, is the Arctic, which is under deep pressure. What happens in the Arctic doesn't stay there, and affect all parts of the Baltic Sea Region,

the EU and the world. The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, had followed closely the development of a new EU Arctic Policy, expected to be finished by the end of this year.

To finish, contributing to a sustainable recovery for the Baltic Sea Region is key priority. NextGenerationEU, (the recovery plan for Europe) is a major opportunity for the Baltic Sea Region, and the EU as a whole to recover from the current crisis and create the conditions for sustainable, inclusive competitiveness.

As national governments submitted few months ago their Recovery Resilience Plans, we called them to act together with Regional Authorities to prepare and implement the Plans and to include in the plans a cross border dimension to enable a balanced territorial development. The current pandemic crisis has taught us one important lesson: No one is big enough to succeed on their own. Cooperation and shared values are the pillars of our common future.

Conclusion

Coming to the end, I would say that Member Regions from the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission are looking forward to deepen cooperation with the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference.

Together, and other stakeholders present today, we can achieve great things for the Baltic Sea Region and its citizens, ensuring no territory is left behind!

Thank you for your attention.