



## IMPACT OF MACROREGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE EU:

### Civil Protection and the EUSBSR Priority Area Secure

#### **Press Statement:**

*Launch of Priority Area Secure within the EU Strategy of the Baltic Sea Region and a discussion event ,Impact of Macroregional Cooperation in the EU: What Leadership in Civil Protection Can Do? Baltic Sea Region Example' 21 February 2013, 18:00-19:30 at the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU, Brussels*

**22 February 2013** the European Commission disseminated the reviewed [Action Plan](#) to the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), the first EU macroregional strategy that was adopted in 2009. On the evening before, **21 February 2013**, an event was hosted in Brussels, at the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU – a discussion **Impact of Macroregional Cooperation in the EU: What Leadership in Civil Protection Can Do?** – where panellists from the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU, as well as the European Commission (DG REGIO and DG ECHO) joined representatives of civil protection authorities from eight Baltic Sea region EU Member States (Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Denmark, Germany) to inquire how the EUSBSR has had an impact on civil protection cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

**This event provided a face to Baltic Sea region cooperation in the area of civil protection**, and was the first public event of **Priority Area Secure**, one of priority areas of the EUSBSR. PA Secure highlights one of several new elements introduced during the review of the EUSBSR Action Plan, the process that was launched following adoption of the EU [General Affairs Council Conclusions](#) on 26 June 2012. The main novelty adopted during the review process was the introduction of a separate priority area to address **potential land-based hazard risks in the Baltic Sea region**. According to the earlier version of the action plan, civil protection related priority areas (numbered 13 and 14), articulated the emphasis on maritime safety and security, with one exception of civil protection against land-based disasters being a subject of just one flagship project. **The new PA Secure represents Baltic Sea region cooperation in protection from emergencies and accidents on land.**

Development of an extensive approach toward land-based civil protection cooperation issues in the reviewed EUSBSR Action Plan reflects **general trends in the region on macroregional disaster management and prevention issues**. The year 2012 saw an increased level of interest within the area of civil protection cooperation in the Baltic Sea region addressing macroregional risk scenarios. This marked a significant shift from a paradigm of a highly connected (mainly through bi- and trilateral agreements between Member States) region to a macro-region that is ready to launch a process of developing a



**common approach toward macroregional risk, from an all-hazard based perspective.** In January 2012 the first project of such kind was launched – [14point3](#). This project, as a EUSBSR flagship project, became a study case of how a political framework can be utilized to address current issues in the region.

„The key to the success of the EUSBSR, as well as to individual areas within the strategy, is to let the institution follow the way each area develops itself. Symbiosis of EUSBSR and civil protection cooperation in the Baltic Sea region has proven to be a good example of such evolutionary approach to cooperation,“ – said Anders Lindholm, councillor responsible for Regional policy and State aid, who also follows the EUSBSR at the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU.

The main political setting to organize cross-border civil protection dialogue in the Baltic Sea region is the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) [Civil Protection Network](#), convening annually on Directors-General level. As such ,it mainly evolves through discussion and exchange of political priorities of each CBSS Member State in matters of civil protection. **The EUSBSR framework, however, provided a complimentary platform to re-emphasize and re-draft patterns of existing cooperation, introducing a macroregional dimension not only on a political level but also on operational expert level.** This was not a coincidence, for the EUSBSR itself draws a significant emphasis on a bottom up approach and involvement of stakeholders on various cooperation levels.

The importance of latter was emphasized by Colin Wolfe, Head of Competence Centre on Macro-regions and European Territorial Cooperation in the DG for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission. According to him, macro-regional strategies in the EU provide a setting to develop an „in-between engagement“, linking National Member States level and overall EU 27 level. „When the idea of the EUSBSR was born, it evolved around a goal to provide a common framework which can mobilize policy makers to address together matters such, among others, civil protection or environment; this was followed by a need to link up thinking and priorities in distributing funds, arranging programmes and setting up projects,“ explained Mr Wolfe.

Ian Clark, Head of Policy and Implementation frameworks unit at DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, European Commission, assessed recent shift in Baltic Sea region civil protection cooperation under the new PA Secure from a broader EU civil protection and disaster management cooperation perspective. In his view, the way how this cooperation is now coordinated in the Baltic Sea region, places its stakeholders in a position to join forces in the development of their policies; this, in turn, relates to the fact that the region as such may be in a privileged position to access funds that have been assigned through regional programmes. To take a leading position in such a setting would be to also look into general disaster management priorities in the EU. These could provide a good knowledge base from the Baltic Sea region to inform the rest of the EU; building capacities in risk assessment; cross-sectoral activities between civil protection and research; raising awareness to policy level and to the general public; and finally a common approach from BSR countries to international negotiations in disaster management, such as the [Hyogo Framework](#).



Ad hoc assessment of macroregional cooperation impact in the EU in terms of Baltic Sea region civil protection cooperation, organized by the EUSBSR PA Secure, resulted in a common agreement that it is still early to draw quantitative figures on both, the increase of civil protection level in the region and on what amount of resources have been saved as a result of that. The next step for the EUSBSR itself is indeed to finalize the process of defining its targets and indicators. When it comes to land-based civil protection and PA Secure, however, the quantitative increase in cooperation initiatives of fully macroregional dimension is already visible (from one to four). This increase is currently resulting in mobilized actions aiming to inform policy makers of the current trends, needs and concerns of civil protection area in the Baltic Sea region and beyond.

*The event 'Impact of Macroregional Cooperation in the EU: What Leadership in Civil Protection Can Do? Baltic Sea Region Example' at the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU was organized within the framework of one of the flagship projects listed under the new PA Secure, a project Baltic Leadership Programme in Civil Protection, initiated and implemented by the Swedish Institute. Besides the two flagship projects that are coming to an end (Baltic Leadership Programme and 14point3), PA Secure is currently working to launch at least three new initiatives. It also works horizontally, continuing a recently started dialogue with the new EUSBSR Horizontal Action (HA) Sustainable Development (on Climate Change Adaptation issues), HA Neighbours (cooperation with Russia), and HA Multilevel Governance.*

*PA Secure is coordinated by Sweden and the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat.*

**More information:**

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