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des Landes Schleswig-Holstein

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Frau
Vorsitzende des
Europaausschusses
des Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landtages
Astrid Höfs, MdL

im Hause

Ihr Zeichen: /
Ihre Nachricht vom: /
Mein Zeichen: /
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28. November 2008

Sehr geehrte Frau Vorsitzende,

wie bereits in der Sitzung des Europaausschusses am 19. November 2008 angekündigt,
übersende ich Ihnen wunschgemäß die Unterlagen zum Tageordnungspunkt
„Ostseestrategie“.

Mit freundlichem Gruß

gez.
Uwe Döring

Anlagen

BSSSC proposal for a flagship project within the framework of the EU Commission's initiative for an EU Baltic Sea Strategy

Five-Point Action Plan ,Clean Baltic Shipping'

Political framework

The European Maritime Policy determined in EU Commission's Blue Paper and Action Plan is based on an integrated approach which corresponds substantially with the four objectives which the Commission determined for the Baltic Sea Strategy. As the implementation of the European Maritime Policy requires a regional focus its implementation should be an essential component of the Baltic Sea Strategy.

An important goal of the Baltic Sea Strategy should be to develop the Baltic Sea Region into Europe's maritime best practice region by 2015 as demanded by the BSR Conference on Maritime Policy 2006 in Kiel and affirmed by the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in 2007.

The Baltic Sea is an essential foundation for life and prosperity in the Baltic Sea region. One of the greatest challenges to be tackled by the region is the sustainable restoration of a good ecological state of the Baltic Sea. An important contradicting factor is the increase of maritime activities in the region, in particular the constantly increasing maritime transport.

Project idea

The notion is to draw up an action plan in coordination with representatives of the relevant organizations for shipping, ship owners, port management, environmental and marine protection and other relevant stakeholders in order to foster sustainable shipping. A timetable for an implementation in the foreseeable future has to be part of it.

Key components:

1. Establishment of standardized facilities for **shore-side electricity supply for ships** at berth in preferably all relevant ports of the Baltic Sea region by 2015
2. Introduction of **environmentally differentiated fairway and/or port dues** in all relevant ports of the Baltic Sea region in order to set incentives for a Baltic Sea

shipping with low emissions, sustainable waste water and ballast water management, usage of environmentally friendly technologies and propulsion systems with e.g. improved energy efficiency, high safety standards etc. (basis: development of harmonized criteria for clean shipping)

3. Voluntary agreements with cruise ship companies and port organizations in the BSR in order to achieve a **voluntary ban of waste-water discharges** and the granting of sufficient port reception facilities (Clean Cruising)
4. **Awarding best practice prizes** for exemplary clean shipping projects and trend-setting port performances in terms of environment
5. Introduction of **Labels for Clean Baltic Shipping and Sustainable Port Management**.

Objectives and expectable results

The proposed measures aim at conducting maritime traffic activities in the Baltic Sea region in a sustainable and environmentally compatible way. If successful, this can serve as a role model for other European regions. The package of measures is suitable to substantially contribute to the objective to develop the Baltic Sea region into Europe's maritime best practice region by 2015. In such a way the Baltic Sea region could become a forerunner leading the way to raise international standards concerning clean shipping and sustainable port organization.

The outcome should be:

- Substantial reduction of nitrogen, sulphur and greenhouse gas emissions in the port cities of the Baltic Sea region through usage of shore-side power supply for ships.
- Minimum sewage pollution from ships
- Improvement of air-quality in port cities
- Protection of the Baltic Sea against nutrients from cruise ship sewages in order to contribute to reduced eutrophication
- Image benefits for the tourism industry through clean cruise shipping activities and cleaner air in port cities due to shore-to-ship power supply
- Fresh impetus for R&D with regard to clean ship and clean port technologies and conceptions
- Branding the Baltic Sea region as a pilot region for prosperity and sustainable development

Experts/Possible partners

Apart of the relevant stakeholders from politics and business (organizations for ship owners, shipping, port management etc.) there are already experts whose preliminary work and cooperation efforts have to be valued and involved, e.g.:

- Baltic Ports Organization
- HELCOM
- GAUSS mbH - Environmental Protection and Safety in Shipping (R&D projects and consulting services in terms of Quality Shipping)
- Swedish Maritime Administration (environmentally differentiated fairway dues in Swedish ports)
- Public utility company Lübeck (lead partner of INTERREG III B project “NEW HANSA of sustainable ports and cities”)
- Union of the Baltic Cities (lead partner of INTERREG IV B project proposal “SPICES - Supporting port innovations and cities enhancing sustainability”)

Rationale

According to the Baltic Maritime Outlook 2006 maritime transport operations measured in ton kilometres will double within 20 years from 2003.

Maritime transport is one of the most environmentally compatible transport modes.

However, with the growing number and size of ships the pollution load from maritime transports becomes increasingly problematic to the environment. The reduction of pollutant and climate-relevant emissions from shipping and in general the protection of the environment from maritime transport activities is a strict necessity, acknowledged as such also by shipping and port organizations.

With regard to the specific vulnerability of the Baltic Sea adoption and implementation of international agreements generally come too late and are insufficient to strongly protect the Baltic Sea in the necessary way. Voluntary initiatives which exceed the established laws can be capable of dealing with the specific requirements of the region. To ensure adequate acceptance measures proposed should be shaped - jointly with the project partners - in such a way that competitive disadvantages may be excluded.

Preparing an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - A Contribution from Germany

I. General Remarks

Germany strongly welcomes the invitation by the European Council of December 2007 to the EU Commission to present an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region.

Following the EU enlargement of 2004, all the Baltic Sea's littoral states – with the exception of Russia – are now members of the European Union. This offers new possibilities for the Union to strengthen the competitiveness of the region and to address regional challenges. An EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region should support these overall objectives.

Challenges for the region, that should be addressed in the strategy, include in particular:

- competitiveness: the location of the Baltic Sea region at Europe's geographical periphery requires that it must strive harder than other macro regions to remain competitive internationally;
- environment: the fragile – and deteriorating – ecological status of the Baltic Sea itself and of its surrounding area, as well as the growing impact of climate change, call for joint efforts to safeguard it for future generations, including multidisciplinary research;
- transport infrastructure: there are still serious gaps in the region's transport infrastructure;
- cohesion: economic disparities which, despite favourable trends, still exist between its eastern and its western half due to half a century of political and economic separation need to be overcome and the negative effects of demographic change on regional cohesion need to be addressed.

II. Cross-cutting Objectives

A future EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region should aim to:

- treat the Baltic Sea as a common responsibility of the European Union;
- advance the economic and spatial integration of this macro region into the EU, inter alia by joint implementation of the EU *acquis communautaire*, thereby also benefiting the EU as a whole, advancing the Lisbon strategy and the Sustainable Development Strategy;
- reduce economic disparities within the region, thus contributing to EU cohesion;
- seek regional coherence and regional synergies between the existing EU policies, programmes and projects, thus making them more effective while also raising their transparency and visibility to EU citizens in the region;
- take stock of existing regional and sub-regional programmes, in particular Interreg and cross-border cooperation programmes, with a view to streamlining their administration and seeking synergies between them;
- explore possibilities to link EU programmes and projects with funds from regional and international financing institutions, e.g. by using funds from INTERREG and EU Framework Research Programmes (such as ERA-Net BONUS) as seed money;

- set an example of how the European Union may deal with a region's challenges from a transnational and cross-sectoral perspective;
- contribute to enhanced EU-Russia cooperation on Baltic Sea region issues.

III. Overall Framework and Building Blocks

Despite a separation lasting several decades, the Baltic Sea region has quickly re-established communications and networks across the sea in the last eighteen years. At the same time, the EU has become much more visible in the region through a multitude of policies and programmes. An EU Baltic Sea Strategy will thus be able to build on several existing efforts, in particular the (Interreg) Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007–2013, the reformed Northern Dimension (adopted in 2006 and defining priorities for Northern Europe as a whole), the EU Maritime Policy (adopted in 2007); the Reform Declaration of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (adopted in 2008 and setting out regional priorities), as well as the Baltic Sea Action Plan of the Helsinki Commission (adopted in 2007 and targeting the marine environment).

Some – essential - parts of the future Strategy will require cooperation with non-EU countries, in particular Russia as a Baltic Sea littoral state and Norway as a like-minded stakeholder in the region. It is therefore advisable to involve these countries already in the conceptual stage, thereby increasing their readiness to assist in later implementation. This can best be achieved by inviting them to provide contributions at preparatory events – such as the anticipated round tables and stakeholder conferences – and bilaterally to the EU Commission.

A future EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region should:

- identify those EU internal policies, programmes and projects which could benefit from a regional implementation and/or may offer cross-sectoral synergies in the region;
- choose areas of action where the EU, in terms of policy and/or financing, can be expected to offer the most value added to ongoing regional activities;
- decide on a limited number of objectives for the Strategy to remain manageable and realistic, while also providing a strong and agreed focus to the regional activities of the EU Commission and Member States;
- translate the objectives into concrete actions with a defined time-frame, e.g. through a multi-annual action plan, thereby being both transparent to the general public and – in terms of results – measurable to stakeholders;
- select a small group of larger actions as lead actions to provide the Strategy with regional and European visibility;
- determine those areas where involvement of non-EU countries, such as Russia as a littoral state, Belarus and Ukraine as states in the water catchment area and Norway as a like-minded regional stakeholder, is beneficial for the success of the Strategy, and invite their participation in actions and dialogue in those areas;
- involve existing regional networks and organizations (with their approval) in the elaboration and implementation of the Strategy, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Helsinki Commission, the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation and Baltic 21, while taking into account that non-EU states and entities are members of these structures, and avoid setting up additional structures when this would create duplication;

- apply variable geographical limits depending on the subject, e.g. involve non-EU countries which are part of the Baltic Sea water catchment area when addressing water issues;
- respect the principle of subsidiarity in the Strategy's design and realization;
- focus on full implementation and harmonized interpretation of EU legislation, in particular with respect to the environment, fisheries and maritime safety.

IV. Sectoral Aspects

Notwithstanding the EU Commission's intention to take an integrated and cross-sectoral approach in setting objectives for the EU Baltic Sea Strategy, actions proposed will often be single-sector actions, each contributing to a multi-sectoral, overall objective. For this reason, the ideas offered below are arranged by sector (if possible) and (roughly) in the sequence which the Commission has so far indicated: sustainability, prosperity, accessibility/attractiveness and safety/security.

1. The **environmental status of the Baltic Sea** remains a serious concern, as past measures have slowed, but not stopped, the deterioration of its water quality and the degradation of its biodiversity. A future collapse of the marine ecosystem cannot be excluded if current trends continue. However, two initiatives to reverse these trends have recently been decided on:

- the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) which entered into force on 15 July 2008, and
- the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) adopted by the Helsinki Commission in November 2007 which addresses the issues of eutrophication, biodiversity, hazardous substances and maritime activities, representing the most challenging threats to the Baltic Sea marine environment. The BSAP strives to restore the good ecological state of the Baltic Sea marine environment by 2021 and is focussed on concrete targets and timetables towards this end.

An EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region should not duplicate or dilute these efforts by proposing new (i.e. alternative or additional) targets or measures, nor develop a (competing) road map for the marine environment. Instead, it should assist implementation of the MSFD and the BSAP – and thus contribute to making the region a best practice model with regard to marine policy components - by:

- encouraging close cooperation between national authorities in preparing their national marine strategies which are required by the MSFD, with a view to increased compatibility and exchange of best practices;
- examining all possibilities to use existing EU financing instruments for relevant projects;
- examining the technical and administrative possibilities to increase involvement of regional and international financial institutions in relevant projects, and suggest adjustments to funding rules and regulations where these hinder project application;
- supporting, in particular, efforts to improve emergency and disaster response, to increase safety in oil shipping and to reduce water pollution by ships, offshore installations and landbased sources.

2. In the **fisheries sector**, sustainability has become a hotly debated topic. The Strategy should in this context:

- promote discussions on more efficient control measures to ensure that fishing quotas are fully respected;

- suggest additional areas of study with a view to safeguarding and replenishing existing fish stocks in the Baltic Sea.

3. Other issues of **environmental protection and sustainable development** should also be considered for inclusion in the Strategy. Renewable energies, energy efficiency and sustainability education are examples of issues which are important for stakeholders in the region. The experiences gained both in the regional Interreg programmes and in the Baltic 21 (regional) network for sustainable development could be beneficial in this context and their structures could be used to implement some aspects of the future EU Baltic Sea Strategy. Progress on these issues will require close scientific cooperation within the region. In this context, the multidisciplinary research of the ERA-Net BONUS programme is a substantial contribution which should be supported within the 7th EU Framework Research Programme and within national Baltic Sea research programmes.

4. The Baltic Sea region will be affected to a considerable extent by **climate change**. The following actions are suggested for inclusion in the EU Baltic Sea Strategy:

- project-based initiatives which improve the data base, enhance collective research efforts and support regional awareness; transnational Interreg projects, currently under preparation, could be used towards this end;
- development of a regional adaptation strategy, making use of the data which the extensive “BALTEX Assessment of Climate Change for the Baltic Sea Basin” (BACC) has provided in early 2008;
- initiation of a regional mechanism to better coordinate national and sub-regional measures which address climate change.

5. **Energy cooperation**, of high priority for the European Union, also has regional aspects which should be addressed within the EU Baltic Sea Strategy. Of particular interest are:

- measures to improve regional energy security by better linkage of national energy grids;
- measures to improve diversity of supply by exploring in more depth the potential of renewable energy sources (wind, water and biomass) and technologies to store their output.

6. When designing the future EU Baltic Sea Strategy, account should be taken of the **EU Maritime Policy** adopted in December 2007. The future EU Baltic Sea Strategy could contribute to the EU Maritime Policy at the regional level and strive to make the Baltic Sea region a maritime model region in Europe. Such an approach will have to strike a successful balance between resource use and protection; it will require the involvement of existing regional organizations, as well as other marine and maritime stakeholders, and will have to avoid duplication with other (actual or intended) activities of the EU Maritime Policy.

7. An important component of maritime policy (but also of land-based policies) in the region is **spatial planning**. The EU Baltic Sea Strategy could:

- assist regional efforts on integrated sea use and coastal zone development and planning, such as those undertaken in the region’s spatial planners’ network “Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea” (VASAB);
- support the development and implementation of national strategies for integrated coastal zone management.

8. Given the limited size of many national markets in the region, the Baltic Sea region would benefit from a fully **functional EU internal market**. It is of particular interest to the

business community that legislation agreed upon in Brussels is later implemented and interpreted nationally in such a way that differences between national rules do not unduly increase the cost of doing business in the region. While national considerations are sometimes unavoidable in rule setting, there is certainly room for improved regional coherence, i.e. for a more harmonized application of the EU *acquis communautaire* by governments in the Baltic Sea region, in particular in areas relevant to business. Initiatives in this field are therefore welcome, as are Sweden's proposals to:

- extend the ongoing Nordic cooperation on the implementation and interpretation of the EU Services Directive to other states in the region and, where useful, even beyond the region;
- extend the above regional approach of administrative cooperation on implementation and interpretation of Community legislation to other areas relevant to business, though without the introduction of cost-intensive data collection;
- exchange experiences on the operation and further set-up of national contact points (which are foreseen by the Services Directive, the Internal Market Information System and a forthcoming Regulation on Mutual Recognition);
- continue supporting the Baltic Sea Market Surveillance Network and consider extending it to more product areas, in line with the entry into force of new Community legal instruments on market surveillance;
- introduce regional cooperation on standardization with the involvement of industry, though with the understanding that countries in the region are also active in European and international standard-setting and need to continue introducing and applying the standards agreed upon there;
- Promote the use of the SOLVIT network - which acts on possible inconsistencies between EU legislation and national practice at the request of citizens or companies – among the region's EU business community.

Furthermore, the Strategy could:

- promote and assist further development of recent best practice examples from the region such as innovative labour-market concepts, service-oriented e-government and a strong knowledge focus in economic decision-making.

9. Another consequence of small national markets is the key role which **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** have to play in the Baltic Sea region's growth and innovation. Initiatives in this area, such as a "think small" perspective in public procurement or a linkage of national SME cluster programmes across borders, are therefore welcome, though existing European networks should not be duplicated regionally in terms of their SME support activities. The (Interreg) Baltic Sea Programme 2007–2013 puts special emphasis on SME support and would thus fit well with an SME focus in the Strategy.

10. **Science, education and innovation** are among the key drivers for the Baltic Sea region's competitiveness. The Strategy could assist these by:

- promoting research infrastructure tailored to the specific strengths of the region;
- promoting clusters of excellence in the region;
- initiating innovation networks with a view to encouraging product and process innovation, in particular in SMEs;
- supporting exchange programmes for scientists and students in education and higher education.

11. The **EU Cohesion Policy**, focussed inter alia on transport infrastructure and the environment, will continue to play an important role in the Baltic Sea region, where it is needed in particular to tackle development disparities and strengthen competitiveness. The

implementation of Cohesion Policy is led by Community Strategic Guidelines at the EU level and by supplementary National Strategic Reference Frameworks at the national level. However, there are so far no policy documents which would offer guidance for the macro-regional level, e.g. the Baltic Sea region. This gap may (and should) be prominently addressed in the upcoming Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion which the EU Commission prepares. In this context, an EU Baltic Sea Strategy could:

- promote the Baltic Sea region as a best practice pilot or test region with respect to the Territorial Cohesion Green Paper.

12. A future EU Baltic Sea Strategy should also draw on the EU Territorial Agenda and on the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities. Here, efforts at the macro-regional level need to be supplemented by the promotion of competitive **cities and sub-regions**. There is a clear need to involve cities and sub-regions in implementing the Strategy not only concerning sectoral issues but also with regard to creating and maintaining an attractive business environment, promoting city and sub-regional cooperation as well as urban-rural partnership. Major issues are the development of networks of Baltic Sea metropolises and cities as engines for development, the promotion of best practices of small and medium-sized cities as actors of the knowledge society and the promotion of new approaches to urban-rural cooperation and partnership. Moreover, there is a need to promote energy-efficient urban structures, to approach tourism as a development factor and to use the cultural and natural potential of cities and sub-regions. An EU Baltic Sea Strategy could:

- make use of events organized by Baltic Sea regional networks such as those of sub-regions (BSSSC), cities (UBC) or metropolises (BaltMet) to promote networking and cooperation of cities and sub-regions and present best practice examples;
- create a competition between Baltic Sea cities and sub-regions on “regions of knowledge” as part of the respective EU initiative;
- develop guidance on urban networking and urban rural partnership as part of the long-term perspective on the Baltic Sea region’s spatial development which is under preparation by the region’s spatial planning network VASAB;
- support project development concerning competitive Baltic Sea cities and sub-regions in the framework of the transnational (Interreg) Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007–2013.

13. The **transport** infrastructure will play a crucial role for the future competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region, even without the substantial growth in trade flows anticipated. A close (regional) look at ongoing efforts, such as the revision of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) guidelines and the suggested Northern Dimension Transport and Logistics Partnership, will therefore be highly useful to assess progress, identify obstacles and suggest joint activities where needed. Concrete actions could include:

- developing measures to promote North-South connections between the Baltic and the Adriatic Sea via Poland and Germany, as well as East-West connections from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine to the EU;
- considering the extension of TEN-T corridors to Baltic Sea ports in order to ease trade flows within and beyond the region;
- promoting short-sea shipping from the Eastern to the Southern and South-western Baltic Sea coast in the understanding that these links represent (together with the onward combined rail links) the most important part of the so-called Northern Axis which connects the Baltic Sea region to central parts of Europe; the development of more efficient links with Russia and Norway should also be considered in this context;
- developing pilot intermodal green corridors, as considered by the European Commission in its 2007 Freight Transport Logistics Action Plan, for the Baltic Sea region;

- assisting the implementation, in the Baltic Sea region, of EU initiatives such as the “Motorways of the Sea” and the anticipated “European Shipping Space without Borders”, which strive to simplify goods traffic and strengthen ports as efficient links between ship and rail, both of them environment-friendlier means of transport;
- encouraging the development of proposals to simplify procedures in ferry shipping between EU countries across the Baltic Sea, as well as between those EU countries, Russia and Norway;
- supporting the regional implementation of anticipated EU Commission measures on improved usage of e-freight;
- assisting in further development of long-distance railways linking Baltic Sea ports to inland destinations;
- developing (region-specific) guidance on transport corridors and transnational development zones, linked to the long-term perspective on the Baltic Sea region’s spatial development currently under preparation in the framework of VASAB, the regional spatial planning network;
- examining (with a view to facilitating) the involvement of regional and international financing institutions in the region’s future transport projects;
- identifying the obstacles which have so far limited the success of the “Motorways of the Sea” concept in the Baltic Sea area and suggest remedial measures;
- considering support for transnational Interreg projects addressing regional transport issues.

14. **Tourism** plays an increasingly important role in the region’s economy. While the EU Commission does not possess specific policy competencies in this area, some of its instruments are supportive of tourism development and should therefore be examined with a view to their potential in promoting and developing the Baltic Sea region’s tourist sector, including cultural and cultural heritage aspects. Cross-border or multi-country initiatives, such as the European Route of Brick Gothic or the Baltic Fort Route, could serve as examples of how to brand the region abroad.

15. Also of considerable relevance for the future of the region is its **demographic development**. Adaptation strategies will in future be necessary for many areas in the Baltic Sea region and regional development strategies will need to be adjusted to demographic change. A future EU Baltic Sea Strategy could :

- develop new approaches to mitigate and adapt to demographic change;
- examine and adjust regional development objectives accordingly.

16. The **fight against organized crime** has been a successful regional activity undertaken in the framework of the Task Force on Organized Crime in the Baltic Sea Region (BSTF) since 1996. Through the EU Commission’s BSTF membership and through participation by Europol and Eurojust, strong linkages between EU activities and regional activities already exist. Apart from the implementation of the BSTF Regional Strategy 2008–2010, which was adopted at the Council of the Baltic Sea States’ summit of Heads of Government in June 2008, no additional activities appear to be necessary at this point.

Brussels, 10 April 2008

**Position Paper
of the Interregional Group „Baltic Sea Regions“
of the Committee of the Regions
on
an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region**

The Interregional Group “Baltic Sea Regions” of the Committee of the Regions,

- *bearing in mind* the European Parliament resolution of 16 November 2006 on a Baltic Sea Region Strategy for the Northern Dimension,

- *bearing in mind* the declaration of the Council of Baltic Sea States of June 2007 on the development of a strategy for the Baltic Sea Region,

- *bearing in mind* the invitation of 14 December 2007 of the European Council to the European Commission to present an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region at the latest by June 2009,

- *bearing in mind* that the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region will be one of the top priorities for the upcoming Swedish presidency in the second half of 2009,

1. *welcomes* the fact that the European Commission has taken up work on a stocktaking report with a view to drafting the Strategy, *recognizes* the importance of a European perspective on the circumstances of the Baltic Sea Region, and *stresses* its support for the upcoming Swedish presidency in its willingness to promote the implementation of the Strategy;

2. *considers* necessary to ensure the implementation of the strategy by initiating an Action Plan with concrete benchmarks for a sound success control;

3. *emphasises* that an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region should complement, support and constitute a framework for existing cooperation efforts;

4. *highlights* the fact that the Strategy must reflect the specific circumstances of the Baltic Sea Region;

5. *calls* for a coherent policy in order to tap the existing high economic potential of the Baltic Sea Region while at the same time supporting the improvement of the environmental status of the Baltic Sea, thus contributing to the sustainability of the region and the implementation of the agendas of Lisbon and Gothenburg;

6. *notes* that regional and local authorities of the Baltic Sea Region have a key role to play in areas such as energy, transport and infrastructure planning, research and development, and environmental measures;

7. *calls* for the involvement of the existing governmental and non-governmental Baltic Sea organizations and other stakeholders in the drafting and implementation of the Strategy, thus making use of their expertise and experience and of the high level of integration of the Baltic Sea Region with its long tradition of political and project-based cooperation in order to further develop the region as a role model and blueprint for European regional cooperation;

8. *stresses* the necessity of cooperation with Norway and Russia as the only non-EU Member States of the region in the Strategy as early as possible because a coherent and sustainable Strategy requires an institutionalized dialogue and cooperation with all states of the Baltic Sea Region;

9. *notes* that there is a developed cooperation between local and regional authorities of the Baltic Sea Region, and *stresses* the importance of deepened cooperation at the national level between the states of the Region on the matters of the Strategy;

10. *emphasises* the need to coordinate the Strategy with the activities and policies of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the other Baltic Sea organizations and the Northern Dimension so that the Strategy would fit into the context of the political reorientation in the Baltic Sea Region, thus giving an additional impulse to optimize existing cooperation structures that would also benefit the implementation and acceptance of the Strategy;

11. *welcomes* the preliminary considerations of the European Commission to use an objective based and cross-sectoral approach in the drafting of the Strategy which would correspond with the approach of the integrated European Maritime Policy and therefore will – particularly as maritime activities characterize the Baltic Sea Region – have to be an important element of the Strategy by establishing structures and instruments of implementation of the Maritime Policy in the Baltic Sea Region;

12. *considers* the enhancement of competitiveness, of prosperity, of the ecological situation and the quality of life in the Baltic Sea Region to be the overall objectives of the Strategy, and *calls* on the European Commission to consider the following aspects in relation to the Strategy:

- a) to implement the integrated European Maritime Policy within the Baltic Sea Region and to develop the Baltic Sea Region into Europe's maritime best practice region as claimed by the Kiel Conference on Maritime Policy in 2006 and affirmed by the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in 2007;
- b) to establish – due to the critical status of the Baltic Sea and in accordance with the EU Marine Strategy Directive – the Baltic Sea Region as a pilot area with stricter timetables and content, notably by supporting the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan;
- c) to establish a new cross-sectoral approach with a coordinated and coherent regional implementation of EU legislation and policy, as called for in the integrated European Maritime Policy with the EU Marine Strategy as its environmental pillar;
- d) to include all sectors that have significant importance in order to improve the environmental status of the Baltic Sea, e.g. land-based activities such as agriculture, transports and energy production; further action in various areas will also have to be considered in order to meet the regional needs, including measures within relevant EU policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy;
- e) to enhance the efforts of mitigating global warming and at the same time elaborating strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change;
- f) to achieve a sustainable and less vulnerable supply of energy in the Baltic Sea Region by e.g. promoting renewable energies and improving energy efficiency;
- g) to develop transport and communication infrastructures by reducing the distances within the region (improved east-west communication) and the region's distance to Central Europe (improved north-south communication);
- h) to develop common and harmonised politics for SMEs in order to capitalize on the many small innovative firms in the region;
- i) to create better conditions for research and development (R&D), not only making the Baltic Sea Region more attractive for R&D, but also for the individuals involved, thus placing the region in a position to attract creative collaborators;
- j) to encourage student exchanges within the region; suggests that the universities in the region cooperate in networks and move towards a division of labour in order to foster centres of excellence capable of competing at international level;
- k) to counter the downsides of increased mobility by supporting and complementing the efforts of fighting human trafficking and other forms of organized international crime in the area.