



Uudenmaan liitto
Nylands Förbund

Memorandum
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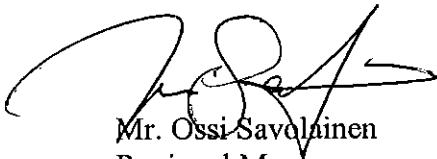
PERSPECTIVES OF THE HELSINKI REGION ON MAJOR BALTIC SEA POLICY CHALLENGES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Uusimaa Regional Council, representing the interests of the 24 municipalities in the Helsinki Region, wishes to outline with this memorandum major policy challenges that require European and regional levels to work together. The Council creates conditions for wellbeing, economic development and a safe, attractive physical environment for its citizens, as well as promotes the Baltic Sea Region as a leading knowledge hub in Europe.

We believe that many of the policy challenges that unite Europe and our region can be solved through coherent and logical policies for cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. From this perspective, we have four visions of the Baltic Sea: A Healthy Baltic Sea; New Hansa of the Baltic Sea; Baltic Sea, Region of Competence; and Baltic Sea as a Welfare Region. With the limited funding resources currently available for the necessary cross-border actions, we consider it necessary to increase the impact of EU funding through a more efficient and results-oriented approach.

This paper serves as an invitation from the Helsinki Region for further cooperation and, in particular, it provides our input to the EU's Baltic Sea strategy.

The input outlined on the next page corresponds to the objectives of the Helsinki Region's Baltic Sea programme and it obtains the political support from the Region. We invite you to have a further look at it on <http://www.uudenmaanliitto.fi/index.phtml?l=en&s=1152>.



Mr. Ossi Savolainen
Regional Mayor
Uusimaa Regional Council

Uusimaa Regional Council would like to emphasize following issues as our contribution to EU's Baltic Sea strategy:

Preventing climate change

Regarding greenhouse gas emissions, there is a great potential for cooperation and shared projects in Europe such as how to remedy the threats of the dispersion of the urban community structure, which are increased by the traffic volumes, and the emissions caused by the heating of the buildings. Helsinki Region is and will continue to be involved in technology projects; among others increasing the share of renewables in energy use, increasing combined heat and electricity production, energy saving, and flood prevention projects as well as other adaptation projects. The EU should continue to develop the right conditions for further actions in this field.

Helsinki Region is currently developing its own climate strategy within the framework set by European and national action plans.

Improving the state of the marine environment and marine safety

The most polluted sea in Europe is currently the Baltic Sea. Despite great investments, e.g. in wastewater treatment plants, a lot of challenges demanding the cooperation of states and regions remain. Helsinki Region aims to decrease diffused pollution by developing technology and communication systems. In addition Helsinki Region focuses on the development of open sea oil spillage prevention readiness and capacity as well as marine traffic safety. The possibilities for EU actions in this field are manifold.

Strengthening the business environment

Benefiting from economic globalization requires actions to strengthen the capacity of local actors in Europe to network with international – in particular Asian – business as subcontractors or as strategic partners. In order to “glocalize” the economic growth offered by globalization, a global business environment should be strengthened in the Baltic Sea region.

Europe's internal and external transport infrastructure must be able to meet the challenges of globalization. In this context, the development of the Baltic Sea Motorways of the Seas and the Rail Baltica with extensions to St Petersburg and Berlin are of utmost importance.

Developing knowledge-based clusters

The Baltic Sea region, as a leading region of competence in Europe, is a particularly good testing site for developing models of cross-border cluster cooperation necessary for attaining critical mass in Europe. Cooperation is vital both for European territorial cohesion and for the Baltic Sea region, which otherwise runs the risk of being left behind the West European pentagon area and global competitors. Productisation is a specific challenge faced by many of the advanced European knowledge regions such as Helsinki Region.

Creating a welfare region

Due to demographic change, many regions in Europe, including Helsinki Region, will need additional workers and experts to sustain economic performance and welfare services. Helsinki Region thus welcomes EU actions in the field of labour mobility, and would like to pay particular attention to the removal of bottlenecks related to the recruitment and integration of foreign workers. Aging is a common challenge for European countries; therefore European cooperation is needed to find and to assess new models, service structures and technology solutions in welfare services.