



# OPEN LETTER TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## 'Future of maritime cross-border programmes'

Dear European Commission and all stakeholders who will decide on future shape of the cross-border cooperation programmes,

On behalf of the Managing Authority of the South Baltic Programme ('programme') I would like to present you an information material about the programme and the effectiveness of 11 years of maritime cooperation between five Member States. The brochure presents joint actions of coastal regions as well as the status of implementation and achievements of the programme. Taking into account latest proposals about geographical coverage for cross-border cooperation, we consider this material to be also a position paper, which responds to context of future existence of maritime cross-border cooperation. In order to emphasize our position towards the new vision of European cooperation across borders, we communicate the following demands:

### **Working together to prepare the new programming period**

Being out of concern for the future of the programme, we express the wish to further cooperate in the course of the preparation of regulations for new programming period. Applying the principle: 'nothing about us without us', we are willing to share our vision and opinion of regions, stakeholders, institutions and citizens involved in the implementation or benefiting from the programme. As the Managing Authority we propose meeting with representatives of the European Commission regarding the future of cross-border programmes.

### **Respecting interest of small regions**

Local communities and institutions have significantly better chance to build maritime cooperation on the sub-regions level than on transnational level. Taking into account that a huge number of small communities (of less than 20 000 inhabitants) located in area covered by both cross-border and transnational programmes is more interested in cooperation in a local partnership instrument, we should not penalise them by reducing number of maritime cooperation programmes. In the capacity of the Managing Authority, it is our duty to express objections to such activities.

Bearing in mind the on-going work on the legislative package for post-2020 EU Budget and Cohesion Policy, we express our willingness to continue cooperation within the framework of the South Baltic cross-border programme.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jerzy Kwieciński'.

**Jerzy Kwieciński**  
Minister of Investment and Economic Development