



Adopted by BSSSC Board 15 October 2014 Jurmala, Latvia

BSSSC STATEMENT REGARDING THE EU-COMMISSION PAPER ON GOVERNANCE OF MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES

The EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has put renewed focus on the BSR – with Europe wide interest – and this has encouraged regional cooperation. A successful implementation of the strategy increases the competitiveness of the whole region. The local, regional, national and European levels need to play an active part in the EUSBSR, as well as organisations, institutions and private partners. The implementation processes therefore have to be open and inclusive to ensure the anchoring of the strategy at all levels.

The BSSSC welcomes the commission paper on governance of macro-regional strategies and believes that this is a crucial topic for the success of the strategies. The need to have political leadership and clear responsibilities at every level of government is evident.

The BSSSC though regrets the fact that the paper's main model of governance is based on Member States, national contact points and experts, and calls for the establishment of a more flexible and adaptable system of governance, involving politicians at all levels, actors working on the ground, and notably regional and local authorities, who are much closer to citizens' concerns.

The driving role of regional and local governments should be highlighted in the implementation of macro-regional strategies – both regarding political leadership and ownership. With their knowledge of the specific conditions in their territories, stakeholders at the regional and local level are vital to produce concrete results and added value from the macro-regional strategies.

BSSSC welcomes the proposal to improve mechanisms to ensure full engagement of non-EU countries at all levels as well as the better use of the work of existing regional organisations at the appropriate level. The BSSSC constitutes a suitable platform for involvement of actors from Russia and Norway in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the BSR.

BSSSC urges the EU-institutions and Member States to better underline, when adopting the Governance Structure of macro-regional strategies later this autumn, the role of actors at all levels of governance while facilitating implementation of macro-regional strategies. In order to develop a real multilevel governance system, there should be stronger focus on involvement of regional and local actors in formulation of objectives, in the overall design and review as well as in governance of each priority area.

The BSSSC will continue its active participation in the process of implementing, monitoring and reviewing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and asks the European Commission to continue to keep a hand on the wheel also in the years to come.