

Routes4U Project

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Consultation on Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

Creation of new cultural routes and strengthening of certified Cultural Routes

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WORKSHOP 3 "FACILITATING COMMON IMPACT: MACRO-REGIONAL AND NATIONAL STRUCTURES TO STRENGTHEN THE CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE"

Moderator: LESZCZYNA-RZUCIDLO Magda, PhD, Expert on the Baltic Sea regional cooperation in "Pomorskie in the European Union" Association and Euroregion Baltic

INTRODUCTION

European Union macro-regional strategies (MRS) arise from a **need to find more targeted solutions to common societal challenges**. They are known as an integrated framework recommended by the European Council (EC) offering collective answers, who are believed to be more precise and more relevant for today's Europe. The strategies are also regarded as a qualitative leap fostering synergies for better regional governance. **EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) was the first macro-regional strategy introduced by the Commission in 2009**, connecting almost 85 million habitants from eight EU member states: Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. Without any doubt, the Baltic Sea is the connecting factor in our region, and it should be formulated and underlined in its cultural routes.

Baltic Sea region, due to its geographical location in the EU, is recognized as the peripheral region, and thus faces common environmental, economic and social challenges characteristic of outer areas. All of those are indicated in the jointly-agreed Action Plan for the Strategy. Action Plan includes some policy areas/horizontal actions to save the sea, connect the region and increase prosperity – each completed by concrete flagships as well as by precisely identified targets and indicators. **The main aim of the Strategy is to facilitate mobilization of relevant EU policies and funding associated to it, and coordinate the actions of all the stakeholders** - the European Union, EU countries, regions, significant number of pan-Baltic organizations, financing institutions and civil society representatives to promote the more harmonious development of the Baltic Sea Region.

The Routes4U project may be considered as one of the tools recently introduced by the EC to support the four macro-regions in achieving their goals set up in strategies Action Plans. The positive impacts of culture and creativity on the economy, employment, regional development and social cohesion are proven. The project was launched in 2017 in the framework of the joint programme between the Council of Europe and the European Union (DG REGIO). **The**

goal of the project is to intensify regional development through Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in the four macro-regions, including the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Nowadays we are witnessing the internationalization of cultural heritage– thus it is essential to handle it on the macro regional level.

One of the main aims of establishing new Cultural Routes in the BSR is to foster its development and enhance cultural identity that is proper to the Baltic Sea Region. **BSR is the area of diversity: by its nature and inhabitants; their origin, culture, languages, religions and history.** The Cultural Routes are bottom-up initiatives acknowledging this demand (often seen as a complex puzzle) and engage local authorities, citizens, civil society, national authorities and - thanks to the involvement of the EUSBSR – macro-regional structures like Policy Area Coordinators.

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, same as three other macro-regional strategies, has its cultural tourism dimension and regional development dimension reflected in the Strategy objectives and action plans of the Policy Areas. In the EUSBSR those are covered by the works of Policy Area Culture, Policy Area Tourism, Policy Area Innovation and Policy Area Education.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

Cultural Routes are an invaluable opportunity to raise awareness about the Baltic Sea Region shared cultural heritage and promote our brand broadly within our region and beyond. This requires **multilevel cooperation of various stakeholders** from local, across regional, through national and transnational level. Stakeholders must represent a vast area of expertise – not only linked to culture and tourism area but also entrepreneurs (especially SME's) and academia representatives. **Regional key players must act together and undertake joint actions to be able to continue reducing the social, economic and mental disparities in the region.** Baltic Sea Region is not a homogeneous area, but the last decade proved that it could work together as one united macro-region, also in the Cultural Routes framework.

The workshop aims at mapping the appropriate stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region who could further the development of the region through the emergence of new Cultural Routes and further development of the existing ones.

There is a **strong need for further coordination of the activities, multilevel governance and multi-dimensional cooperation.** This will enable greater synergies between the EUSBSR actors resulting in new areas of cultural interaction and new Cultural Routes. Thus, **another goal of the workshop is to define those areas of cooperation and propose a simplified governance structure facilitating and maximizing its impact.**

This also calls for the **stronger ownership of all involved stakeholders** including the EUSBSR governance structure and beyond. The list below, still not exhaustive, presents the key actors that need to cooperate stronger together, making the best use of institutions, available policies and funds and setting realistic goals for maximum impact.

Key-players and actors involved to facilitate the Cultural Routes cooperation:

- **EUSBSR Policy Areas representatives:**

- **PA Culture** coordinated jointly by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland and the Ministry of Justice, Cultural and European Affairs of Land Schleswig-Holstein

(Germany). They are supported in the implementation by the BSR cultural initiative ARS BALTICA, and the Nordic Council of Ministers and other BSR relevant stakeholders, as well as Ministries of Culture, from the BSR region. PA Culture focuses on promoting and visualizing BSR culture and creative industries, on preserving and showcasing its cultural heritage and on improving and facilitating cultural cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region;

- **PA Tourism** coordinated by the Ministry of Economics, Employment and Health of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Its actions include facilitating networking and clustering of tourism stakeholders promoting the establishment of a Baltic Sea Tourism Center. PA Tourism also aims at mobilizing the full potential for sustainable tourism of the Baltic Sea region by facilitating coordination with stakeholders through joint workshops and by stepping up communication;

- **PA Innovation** – coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Baltic Institute of Finland endorsing BSR innovation capacity which could be utilized by the Cultural Routes, i.e. by facilitating digitalization of the distribution channels in the tourism sector;

- **PA Education** coordinated by the Norden Association in Sweden and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and promoting an entrepreneurial mindset, and thus boosting tourism businesses and creating permanent jobs.

- **Council of the Baltic Sea States via Baltic Region Heritage Committee (BRHC)**, formerly operating as the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States, the committee is composed of nominated representatives of state authorities in charge of national heritage management in ten countries and was established back in 1998. The BRHC promotes the potential of cultural heritage as a strategic resource for developing the Baltic Sea Region. Its members represent the national bodies in charge of cultural heritage from 8 EUSBSR countries, Norway and Russia, which have not yet selected member.
- **Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC)** is bridging cultural and creative projects with regional support networks and enabling cross-border cooperation among Nordic and Baltic EU countries, Iceland, Norway and Russia. NDPC focuses on improving operational conditions for cultural and creative industries, closing the gap between various sources of funding and strengthening cooperation between project owners, business communities, public sector and international institutions operating in Northern Europe;
- **National authorities** represented by the Ministries of Culture including the BRHC, Ministries of Tourism, Ministers of Economic and Rural Development;
- **Council of Europe**, as the initiator of the Cultural Routes programme and partner in Routes4U joint programme (EPA on Cultural Routes) – these projects are increasingly becoming a focal point for transnational cooperation and networking;
- **European Commission** - partner in Routes4U joint programme (DG REGIO);
- **Municipalities** also those engaged in **networks like Union of Baltic Cities** or fostering their cooperation via networks like **Euroregion Baltic**;
- **Representatives of museums, cultural centers, tourism agencies**;
- **Representatives of the networks certified “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”** – network governance managers, network project initiators;
- **Academia representatives** preparing research on cultural heritage and Cultural Routes;
- **Economic stakeholders (SMEs)** related to the existing and planned Cultural Routes;
- **Flagship leaders** selected by the EUSBSR Pa Culture and PA Tourism;

- **Civil society organizations.**

Engaging all these actors in the governance of the EUSBSR Cultural Routes cooperation may seem like a **complex process** and requires guidelines and recommendations, i.e. from the workshop attendants and experts.

KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

- How to orient national actors towards more transnational cooperation? How to enable a shift from national priorities to macro-regional aims?
- How to ensure the regular, efficient cooperation and exchange between the actors at all levels: municipal, regional, national and transnational? Do we need Cultural Routes Steering Committee on EUSBSR level (thematic governance structure)?
- How to ensure the presence of committed key-players at all levels and achieve their stronger ownership? Do we need the Cultural Routes ambassadors in the EUSBSR?
- How to engage civil society actors and make them more aware of the Cultural Routes and its positive impact?

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