

Building a resilient Baltic Sea Region - perspectives and possibilities

A follow-up meeting to Annual Forum 2024 held in Visby on 16 to 18 June 2025

Last year's EUSBSR Annual Forum brought more than 600 minds together to shape the future of the Baltic Sea Region. Several of the discussions were starting points for new partnerships, new initiatives for cooperation. Many of them included partners from Ukraine.

To **support the development processes underway**, we hereby invite you to a follow-up meeting to AF2024 on the **theme of civil and societal preparedness in the Baltic Sea Region**. This is done against the background of the security situation in Europe and the importance of further strengthening cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region. We also invite Ukrainian colleagues from whom we can learn how to build resilience.

The programme offers **a mix of inspiration and co-creation** focusing on gathering expert stakeholders from different sectors and multiple levels. It welcomes those already engaged in Baltic Sea Region initiatives as well as those interested in joining existing efforts. Additionally, National Coordinators and Policy Area Coordinators from the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region are invited. The foreseen result of the work are policy briefs, new initiatives and new projects feeding into the thematic priorities of the updated EUSBSR Action Plan.

THEMATIC AREAS

Building a resilient society requires individuals as well as institutions. The cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region has a long history, characterized by mutual trust and common democratic values. Hence, resilience does not need to be built from scratch but can benefit from already existing relations and cooperation in the region. The Annual Forum 2024 focused on security, resilience, and sustainability. Some of the topics discussed at the Annual Forum will be revisited upon at this meeting:

1. **Sustainable energy supply:** Ensuring energy security and regional resilience as key components of civil preparedness – addressing vulnerabilities and building capacity to maintain energy supply during crises.
2. **Resilient food systems:** Exploring how sustainable food supplies can be secured through increased self-sufficiency, reliable international trade, and robust value chains – all essential for societal preparedness in times of disruption.
3. **Resilience of critical societal functions:** Exploring how to ensure the continuity of essential services such as electricity, water and food supply, medical supply, healthcare, and financial systems on local and regional levels during crises. This includes both the robustness of physical infrastructure and the capacity of institutions to operate under pressure
4. **Resilience at the individual level:** Focusing on how to strengthen citizens' personal preparedness, including their ability to prepare for and act during crises, manage stress, and maintain mental wellbeing in crisis situations.

PROGRAMME IN BRIEF

The programme starts with an evening reception hosted by Region Gotland on 16 June. A full-day programme on 17 June is followed by an evening reception hosted by the Governor of Gotland. The programme continues 18 June and is finalized with a lunch. The programme is free and includes lunches and coffee breaks. Please note that travel and accommodation expenses are to be covered by the participants themselves.

PARTICIPANTS

The meeting involves stakeholders working with transnational and national development processes within the four given thematic areas. The meeting focuses on active participation aiming at strengthening existing collaboration, with widening participation and by using synergies between ongoing development processes, initiatives and projects. We welcome different perspectives to be represented, multilevel and cross-sectorial.

DETAILED PROGRAMME

MONDAY 16 JUNE

Afternoon Arrival in Visby

18.30 Reception at Clarion Hotel Wisby hosted by Region Gotland

TUESDAY 17 JUNE

- 09.00 OPENING
Ms. Anna Hagström, EUSBSR National Coordinator, Prime Minister's office
Ms. Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, Governor of Gotland
- 09.20 INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES – A BALTIC SEA REGION OUTLOOK
A panel discussion setting the scene for the days in Visby: The panel will focus on the current state of the region and challenges with and need for resilience and preparedness.
- Speakers
- Ms. Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, Governor of Gotland
 - Dr. Ieva Birka, University of Latvia (tbc)
- 10.00 INTRODUCTION TO WORK IN GROUPS
The Policy Area Coordinators for respective PA Energy, PA Bioeconomy and PA Secure will introduce the four groups. The topics to be discussed and how the discussions in Visby will feed into the implementation of the EUSBSR Action Plan.
- 10.30 WORK IN 4 PARALLEL GROUPS
Participants have chosen one of the following groups for the workshop part of the programme: (1) Sustainable energy supply, (2) Resilient food systems, (3) Resilience of critical societal functions, and (4) Resilience at the individual level
- 12.30 LUNCH
- 13.30 PERSPECTIVES ON PREPAREDNESS AND CRISES MANAGEMENT
All are needed when building a resilient and secure Baltic Sea Region. Groups of stakeholders are contributing with different perspectives and competences. At this panel discussion the following groups are represented, civil society and youth organisations, businesses, local and regional administrations. The dialogue will both cover collaboration today, building preparedness and what will be needed in times of crises.
- Speakers
- Mr. Sigge Eriksson, Acting President, The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations
 - Business representative
 - Ms. Annika Rinne, Finnish National Rescue Association (tbc)
 - Mr. Lars-Göran Uddholm, Head of Security and Preparedness, Region Gotland
 - Representative from a local administration
- 14.30 WORK IN 4 PARALLEL GROUPS
- 16.30 LESSONS LEARNED FROM UKRAINE
At the same time as the countries of the Baltic Sea Region support Ukraine in all possible ways they also learn from Ukraine what a full scale invitation requires of the society at large, from citizens, administrations in cities, regions and on the national level. How can energy and food supply be maintained? How can other services to citizens be maintained? We will listen both to the Swedish perspective and the Ukrainian one.

Speakers

- Representative from the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
- Dr Oleksandra Keudel, Associate Professor, Vice-Chair for Science at the Social Sciences Department, Kyiv School of Economics, Associate at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute (online)

17.30 CLOSING OF DAY 1

18.30 RECEPTION IN THE GARDEN AT THE GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE

WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE

09.00 NAVIGATING CHALLENGES IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS - CONFLICTING GOALS, PRIORITIES AND COORDINATION
In crises management goal conflicts are inevitable, priorities and coordination needed. In this panel representatives from both policy making and research will discuss these challenges.

Speakers

- Mr. Filip Reinhag, Regional Councillor and Chairman of the Health and Medical Services Committee, Region Gotland and President of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)
- Two representatives from other Baltic Sea Region countries

10.00 WORK IN 4 PARALLEL GROUPS

12.00 CLOSING REMARKS

12.30 LUNCH

REGISTRATION

Welcome to register following this [LINK](#). **The registration close on 23 May.** Please don't make any plans for travels and accommodations until your registration has been confirmed. Please note that the number of participants for this meeting is limited to 70 participants. We encourage you to register early and provide a brief statement outlining your interest and contributions to the discussions.

UPDATES

All speakers are not yet confirmed and there might also be minor changes in the programme. Updates will be published on the Swedish Institute website, <https://si.se/en/events-projects/building-a-resilient-baltic-sea-region-perspectives-and-possibilities/>



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