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Macro-regional Strategies in the EU

- A New Form of Governance?

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Problem Field

In June 2009, the European Commission presented the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The Strategy aims at bringing several regions and countries of the European Union together in a so-called ‘macro-region’, without the term ‘macro-region’ being more clearly defined. Not until October 2009, during the time of writing of this project, the Commission formally defined and applied the concept of ‘macro-region’ with a position paper entitled *Macro-regional strategies in the European Union*.

What is now clear is that macro-regional cooperation represents a new type of EU policy that is not directly comparable to any of the existing forms of cooperation of the Union.

The EUSBSR envisages cooperation within four main headlines: To enable a sustainable environment, to enhance the Region’s prosperity, to increase accessibility and attractiveness, to ensure safety and security in the Region.

A detailed Action Plan connected to the Strategy specifies strategic actions and flagship projects to be carried out within the above-mentioned headlines.

At first sight, the EUSBSR seems to draw inspiration from other types of EU policies. A closer look suggests that the Strategy and the macro-regional concept as such have some unique features:

Contrary to e.g. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which is targeted at countries outside the European Union, the EUSBSR and macro-regional cooperation involves mainly EU Member States, and entails cooperation within already integrated EU policy areas.

Furthermore, while holding some of the characteristics of ‘traditional’ EU regional policy, macro-regional cooperation differs in the sense that it provides both a framework and a detailed Action Plan for cooperation within the above-mentioned four pillars.

The first impression of the EUSBSR suggests that macro-regional cooperation takes place somewhere between regional, national and supranational levels of governance.

However, it is unclear whether macro-regional cooperation provides something new, if so, in what way especially in relation to regionalism and governance.

The EUSBSR and the macro-regional concept itself raise a number of questions:

The Strategy put strong emphasis on the specific policies, but states explicitly that no new institutions will be created to ‘govern’ the strategy. Therefore, the reason behind creating a new strategy can be questioned.

Furthermore, it is interesting that the EU classifies the Strategy as a case for a macro-region, when the focus is on only a few specific policy pillars. In this respect, could the EU not have settled with a policy paper or an action plan, instead of a comprehensive strategy per se?

We find it interesting to analyse what macro-regional cooperation is characterised by and implies. Moreover, we would like to get closer to an explanation of what the ‘novelty’ of the concept of a macro-region really is.

This leads us to the following thesis statement:

- In light of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, what are the innovative features of the concept of a ‘macro-region’ and macro regional strategies?

1.2 Working Questions

On the basis of our thesis statement, we proceed by the following working questions:

Chapter 3:

- What are the characteristics of EU policies that encompass a regional framework?
- How did the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and macro-regional strategies come about?

Chapter 4:

- How can regionalism be framed in a cross-border perspective?
- What characterises different types of multi-level governance?

Chapter 5:

- In what way is the macro-region a new framework?
- What kind of governance characterises the EUSBSR and the macro-regional visions?
- With what purpose has the EU created the EUSBSR and envisioned future macro-regional strategies?

2.0 Methodology

In this chapter, we present the methodological choices we have made in the project.

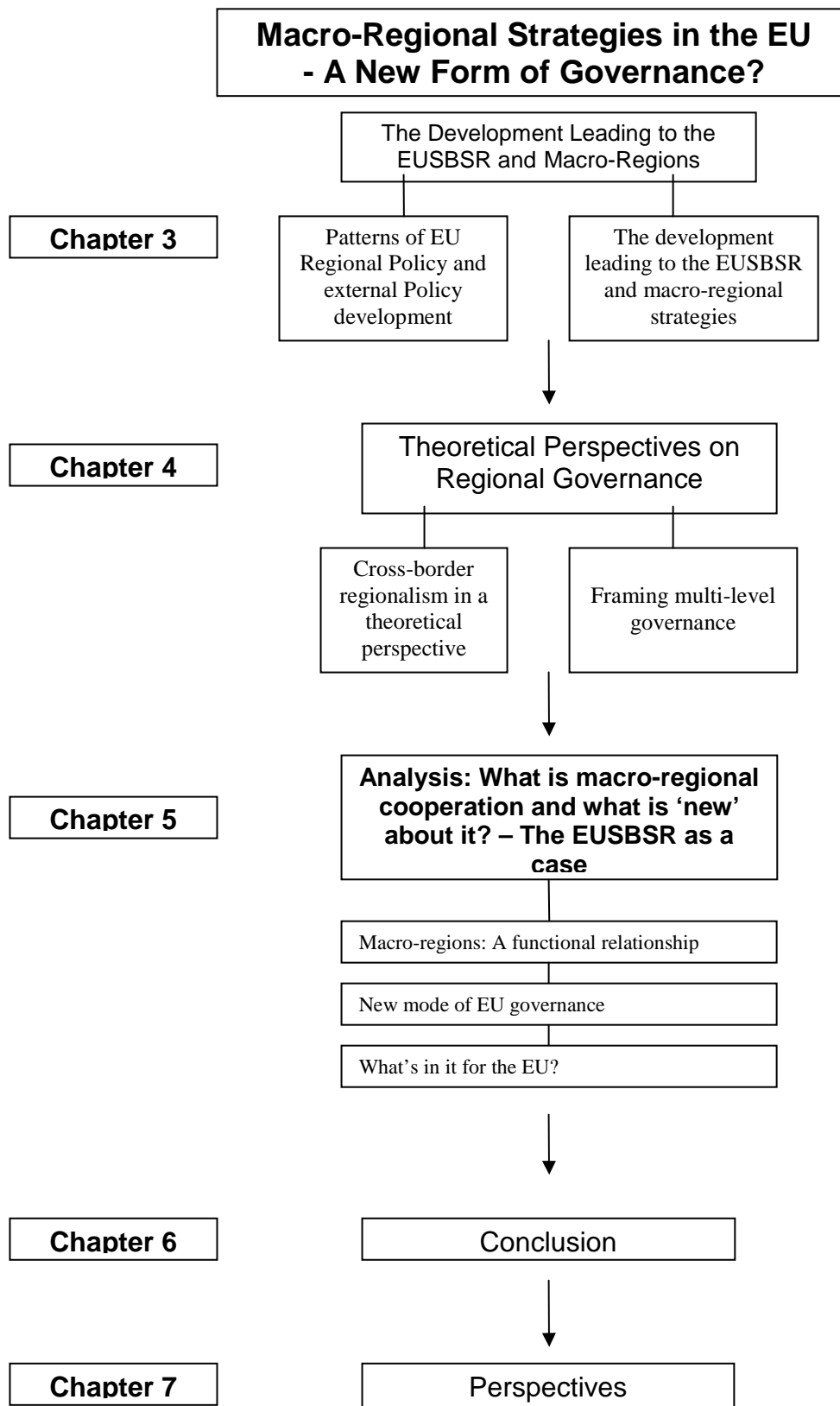
In section 2.2, we discuss our theoretical approach. In order to grasp the new macro-regional concept, we bring in a two-tiered approach, where we discuss regionalism in a cross-border perspective, as well as aspects of multi-level governance (MLG). We proceed by this approach, as

- 1) The macro-region is a new political space that is not directly comparable to an already existing type of region
- 2) We envision that the macro-region implies the use of elements from multi-level governance in a way that is different from other policy areas, where MLG exists.

In section 2.3, we outline the empirical choices we have made in the attempt to understand the mechanisms within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). Moreover, we have made interviews with regional stakeholders that have been part of the consultation process leading up to the presentation of the Strategy. Our interviews provide us with some practical insight in the main discussions of the EUSBSR that we, in our analysis, put in context to our theoretical discussion and the macro-regional concept.

Our overall approach to the project is inductive: We aim to discover what the novelty of the macro-regional concept is, and how it can be placed in relation to other EU policies and ways of exercising governance. To approach this issue, we attempt to identify similarities and differences between existing forms of EU cooperation and the macro-regional concept. Moreover, we discuss theoretical approaches to regionalism and MLG in order to frame the macro-region. In our analysis, we use the EUSBSR as a macro-regional case. We hypothesise that the macro-regional concept is unique and potentially sets a new agenda in the way the EU exercises governance. Therefore, we need to characterise the macro-region and analyse what its driving forces are.

2.1 Project Design



2.1.1 Explanation of Project Design

The following explains our project design.

In chapter 3, we discuss different patterns in EU Regional Policy and External Policy. This is done in order to draw attention to these specific elements in relation to what constitutes the idea of macro-regions and specifically the EUSBSR. Furthermore, the specific development leading to the EUSBSR is discussed in this chapter, with the purpose of framing how the idea of macro-regions came into existence.

In the following chapter, the focus is on the theoretical discussion of regionalism in a cross-border and multi-level governance. As the macro-region is a new concept, we find it relevant to discuss it in a two-tiered theoretical approach, in the sense that the macro-region is a new type of region as well as it opens up for a certain type of governance.

The analysis is divided into three parts in an attempt to analyse what makes the EUSBSR and the macro-regional concept something more comprehensive than merely an action plan, and yet different than other strategies and policies of the European Union. In the three-levelled analysis we examine to what extent the EUSBSR and macro-regional strategies provide with innovative features in relation to regionalism, governance and the role of the EU.

2.2 Theoretical Approach

This section outlines our theoretical approach and its implications for the project.

In the project, we analyse the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the new EU concept of *macro-regional strategies*. The macro-regional concept puts the notion of a 'region' within the EU in a new perspective. At the same time, it opens up for a new form of EU governance.

The first part of the chapter identifies elements that characterise cross-border regions and regionalism.

We combine approaches from both Theories of International Relations and more 'geographical' approaches to regionalism. The reasoning behind this approach has to do with the geographical *size* and the political *scope* of the macro-region, which we argue is a new type of cross-border region.

As the concept 'macro-region' is brand new in an EU context, there is no theoretical basis for its definition. On the basis of the EUSBSR and the Commission's position

paper *Macro-regional strategies in the European Union* (European Commission, 2009c), we define the macro-region in this way:

The macro-region is small compared to e.g. the EU as a whole, or another continent. The Commission states that the macro-region is “*an area including territory from a number of different countries or regions associated with one or more common features or challenges*” (European Commission, 2009c: 1). It is a cross-border region, in the sense that it involves countries that are mainly EU Member States. However, it is larger than a traditional cross-border region in that the macro-region involves a broader scope of smaller regions within countries, and involves regional as well as national and supranational levels of governance.

Although the region is territorially defined, the type of cooperation that is to take place within the macro-region is still not clearly defined. In other words, the macro-region is a region ‘in the making’. It is not a fully-fledged political entity, but the region is embedded within the EU. Moreover, the framework for the macro-region and the policy areas of cooperation has been designated by the EU.

Given the specific characteristics of the cross-border region, we find it relevant to discuss the concept in a ‘meta-regionalist perspective’¹. We bring forward this approach as we do not find that one particular theoretical approach covers the characteristics of the cross-border region, in the sense that it can be applied to the macro-regional concept. In other words, what does the term ‘region’ imply and how can it be understood in a context, where the EU creates macro-regions?

In the second part of Chapter 4, we discuss a multi-level governance (MLG) perspective. We find the governance aspect important, as it can help us define the novelty of the macro-regional cooperation. Hereby, we discuss the more practical aspects of regionalism: How does regionalism play out in practice, and what are the practical implications of MLG.

Our point of departure is the distinction between two types of MLG as presented by Marks and Hooghe (Marks & Hooghe in Bache & Flinders, 2005: 17). Their distinction

¹ The concept was discussed in Manners & Whitman, 2003: 385: “*The European integration process of flexible territoriality combined with a pooling of sovereignty can be considered ‘meta-regionalism’ in that it goes beyond the macro-regionalism of creating a ‘quasi-continental region’ (Wæver, 1997: 298) but does not ‘merely replicate on a larger scale the typical modern political form’ (Ruggie, 1993: 172)*”

enables us to discuss how different parameters are present in regards to categorising the nature of governance existing within the EUSBSR.

2.2.1 Critique of Theoretical Approach

In our theoretical chapter, we discuss 'old' vs. 'new' regionalism.

We apply theories from 'old regionalism' in the theoretical section, where we discuss cross-border regionalism. This can be criticised, as theoretical approaches from 'old regionalism' deal with the global-system level and the state level (Schouten, 2008: 4). However, we find it relevant to include this perspective as an outline, as we argue that macro-regional cooperation takes place between the regional, national and the supranational levels. Moreover, the 'old' vs. 'new' regionalism distinction provides a basis for the discussion of cross-border regionalism. In the discussion of old regionalism, the focus is on perspectives from neo-realism, whereas we do not include the more liberal approaches such as neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism. Although these two approaches share a state-centric starting point with neo-realism, we want to emphasise the role of security in neo-realism, as opposed to the more identity-related points within 'new' regionalism approaches.

This approach provides a ground for examining cross-border perspectives in the second part of our discussion of regionalism.

In the second part of the discussion of regionalism, we bring in the concept of 'meta-regionalism', which does not have a clear² theoretical definition.

However, we find it useful in order to discuss regionalism in a cross-border perspective. This is because the macro-regional concept, which is the new phenomenon that we attempt to analyse, involves the supranational as well as the national, and the regional levels. Therefore, our argument is that the macro-regional concept cannot be grasped by looking only at it from either an 'old' or 'new' regionalism approach.

It can be criticized that we mix approaches from theories of international relations and 'geographical' approaches: Whereas theories of international relations focus on the region as a political system, the geographical approaches analyse the region in a spatial planning perspective.

² Manners & Whitman seek inspiration from Wæver when bringing forward the concept 'meta-regionalism'. However, the concept has not undergone a wider theoretical discussion as such

However, we find both of these approaches useful to include as we apply them in order to pinpoint specific elements that characterise the cross-border region. Moreover, these characteristics are used to analyse the EUSBSR and the macro-regional concept later in the project.

In regards to our application of multi-level governance a critical issue lies with MLG itself. It can be argued that MLG is not a theory as such, but is rather a method to explain how governance can take place at different levels. We find it useful to discuss how MLG can be seen in relation to the EUSBSR and macro-regional strategies. Moreover, we do not use MLG as a theory, but rather as a method to frame the governance structure in the EUSBSR.

2.3 Empirical Approach

In this section, we discuss the empirical choices made in the project. The information on the EU macro-regional concept is very limited, and the concept was formally introduced during the time of writing (European Commission, 2009c). We have therefore found it necessary to involve a number of different sources to be able to analyse what the macro-regional concept implies in relation to EU governance and how it can be understood in a wider context.

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is the first macro-regional strategy of its kind. The EUSBSR is therefore our case in relation to understanding how a macro-regional strategy is expected to be played out in practice, and how it is perceived by the different stakeholders. Having in mind that the EUSBSR was adopted only at the end of October 2009, the knowledge of what the Strategy will imply for the cooperation in the region is rather limited. However, the outline of the Strategy and perceptions of different stakeholders can help us identify the characteristics of macro-regional cooperation.

Already in November 2008, the European Commission launched a consultation process to get inputs to the upcoming EUSBSR. More than a hundred authorities, institutions, or individuals submitted position papers, in which they presented their suggestions to the upcoming Strategy (Website: European Commission – DG Regional Policy). Many of these views became part of the final Strategy (Schymik & Krumrey, 2009: 6).

The EUSBSR was presented by the European Commission in June 2009. Furthermore, the attached Action Plan outlines the activities that will be carried out within the framework of the Strategy.

The Swedish Presidency of the European Union of autumn 2009 has had the EUSBSR as one of its main priorities, and the Strategy was adopted by the Council on October 30.

Interestingly, the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Pawel Samecki, presented a discussion paper entitled *Macro-Regional Strategies in the EU*, outlining the European Commission's visions for macro-regional cooperation.

We take point of departure in these documents when discussing the concept of EU macro-regions in our interviews.

Our methodological approach has therefore been to discuss the regional concept in the EU before the actual conceptualisation of the macro-region, and steps taken in development of the EUSBSR and the Action Plan. All this is held up against the views presented by different stakeholders that have an interest in the region as a whole.

In order to draw a parallel between the EUSBSR and the macro-regional vision, we attempt to highlight similarities and differences to two other policies and frameworks, in which the EU has played a 'regional' role, respectively the Regional Policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This is done in order to comprehend the experiences, which have led the EU to create transnational macro-regions.

2.3.1 Interviews

An important part of the project has been interview stakeholders and actors who are working with the Strategy on a daily basis, or have been actively involved with designing the final outcome of the Strategy. By addressing stakeholders, we have been able to gather information about how they perceive the Strategy, and in which way they have been involved and how they expect the process to develop in the further working process.

The novelty of the EUSBSR means that knowledge and experiences with flagship projects, priority areas and the general framework of the Strategy are mostly only projections and not based on actual evaluations. However, stakeholders have still been

able to give us important insights into working methods and ways of governance regarding the Strategy.

In order to get a nuanced and varied collection of empirical data, we have interviewed three different stakeholders representing important groups involved with the Strategy. The stakeholders chosen for interviews were:

- Hans Brask, Director of Baltic Development Forum (BDF)
- Åsa Andersson, Head of the Swedish Nature and Baltic Sea Programme, World Wildlife Foundation (WWF), and
- Johan Friis, Head of Section, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA).

These actors represent either a level of political jurisdiction or an NGO. The two chosen NGOs, WWF and BDF represent different aspects of the Strategy, a job and growth orientated aspect and an environmental aspect. Furthermore both WWF and BDF have throughout the whole process of creating the Strategy perceived that they have had and continue to have a very close cooperation and participation with the Commission (Interview Andersson, 2009: A9; Interview Brask, 2009: A7).

The BDF is an NGO co-founded by former Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, and based in Denmark. Members of BDF include large companies, big cities, institutional investors and different business associations in the Baltic Sea Region. Their mission is “...to promote the Baltic Sea Region as an integrated, prosperous and internationally competitive growth region” (Website: Baltic Development Forum - Organisation) by facilitating partnerships and international contacts to create growth, innovation and competitiveness in the Baltic Sea Region (Website: Baltic Development Forum - Organisation).

Together with five other organisations, BDF were also among the 109 stakeholders that for the Commission’s consultation process submitted a joint position paper stating concrete suggestions for the Strategy. In association with their strategic partner, a Swedish innovation agency, VINNOVA, BDF expects to be greatly involved with a flagship project concerning innovation and possibly also the internal marked project led by Poland (Interview Brask, 2009: A12).

“The WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme” is a subdivision in WWF working with national WWF offices and partner organisations from Baltic Sea countries. In the

submitted position paper WWF clearly stressed the priority of the Baltic Sea ecosystem and stated *“This means that a strong environment policy with clear objectives should be a priority and not be compromised by other policies”* (WWF, 2009b: 2). The most important role of WWF now is to act as watchdog and make sure different projects are carried out and not forgotten, especially in regards to overfishing and eutrophication in the Baltic Sea (Interview Anderson, 2009: A2).

To get an official government view and a better understanding of the role the Member States have in regards to the Strategy, an interview with Johan Friis from The Division of Northern Europe at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was conducted. Denmark is expected to take considerable amount of responsibility in the implementation of the Strategy and will be responsible for coordination of four priority areas: *“4. To become a model region for clean shipping, 5. to mitigate and adapt to climate change, 8. Implementing the small business act: to promote entrepreneurship, strengthen SMEs and increase the efficient use of human resources and 14. To reinforce protection from major emergencies at land or at sea “* (Interview Friis, 2009).

In addition to this, Denmark will be co-coordinator on two other areas and work on several flagship projects as well (Interview Friis, 2009).

Views representing the supranational level in the shape of the European Commission, which drafted the Strategy, are not included by an interview with the Commission. However, on the 25th of November 2009 Colin Wolfe, Head of Unit ‘Territorial Cooperation’ in DG REGIO, and Jan Høst Schmidt, chief executive for the European Commission Representation in Denmark both attended a panel debate as guest speakers at the Nordic Council of Ministers in Copenhagen (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009). Here, we posed questions, a thereby also secured more empirical data from a different level of jurisdiction than the national level.

The interviews have influenced our work with the project to the extent that they have provided us with information on the EUSBSR that was not in our possession beforehand. The interviews have had an impact on the value we assign to the different elements of our analysis, but have not influenced the overall framework.

In the analysis, we refer to the individual answers to the questions. As an example, a reference to answer 4 in the interview with Hans Brask will look as follows: (Interview Brask, 2009: A4).

2.4 Critique of Empirical Approach

In regards to gathering information via in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, it can be criticised that additional interviews were not conducted. The extent of useful empirical data would likely have been strengthened had different regional authorities been interviewed, as they too have considerable responsibility in implementing specific projects. However, Baltic Development Forum (BDF) represents not only an NGO, but also a regional actor, as they have put forward a joint position paper together with, among others, the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) that represents sub-regional authorities.

Other relevant interview candidates would have been a representative from the Swedish government in charge of the prioritisation of the EUSBSR in their EU presidency. This could have given important insight into especially the cooperation with the Polish Presidency of autumn 2011, and how they intend to prioritise the Strategy.

In regards to the Strategy, it is both an empirical and analytical challenge to examine such a recent area that has only just been adopted by the EU Council and where hardly any of the objectives in shape of flagship projects or other tasks have even begun the implementation process. Responsible stakeholders are at an early planning stage and have not yet had many practical experiences with the Strategy's framework. Therefore analysing a strategy that has not yet been implemented poses a number of challenges. Instead of attempting to predict the future, we compare elements of the Strategy to other events, where the EU has played a role as a regional actor and weighed in on differences and similarities.

2.5 Limitations

The following section will define the areas, which we have knowingly chosen not to include in the project and why.

The reasoning behind the choice of the Baltic Sea as case lies in the fact that the Baltic Sea Region is the first to be officially labelled a macro-region. Although a number of

other similar structures are evident in various other cooperative initiatives involving the European Union, they have not been identified as macro-regions. Furthermore, we have applied the case of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), as it seems to be a front-runner in the attempt to extend the initiative to other European regions.

We have also decided not to cover the role of Russia in the EUSBSR. The reason is mainly that this issue, although interesting, is very wide and would overshadow the chosen subject of macro-regions.

It can be a problem that neither the EUSBSR nor the macro-regional outline by the Commission opens up for the inclusion of an external dimension. Especially, the macro-region could have been a useful framework for relations with Russia, given the overall functional and ‘low politics’ approach that lies in macro-regional cooperation. However, since a major part of the Strategy focuses on the facilitation of implementation of EU legislation, the participation of Russia in the EUSBSR cooperation would mean compromising this objective. In other words, if Russia were to be included as an equal partner in the macro-regional cooperation, the Union would have to give up the label “EU Strategy”.

Furthermore, we have chosen not to discuss the Northern Dimension (ND) in the project. ND is an EU initiative launched in 1997 as a framework to create cooperation between both EU and non-EU countries in the northern periphery of Europe. There are striking similarities between the ND and the EUSBSR, and some of the focus areas of the ND are also priority areas in the EUSBSR. However, as our main focus is on the macro-regional concept, we do not attempt to make a comparative study of the ND and the EUSBSR. Furthermore, an important difference between the ND and the EUSBSR is that the EUSBSR is an internal strategy, whereas the ND emphasised the external relation and notably relations with Russia.

3.0 The Development Leading to the EUSBSR and Macro-Regions

This chapter consists of two sections, examining respectively the development of European regional strategies within and outside the European Union, and the development leading up to the creation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the introduction of the macro-regional concept.

The first section discusses the different forms of regional cooperation within and outside the EU. It has the purpose of identifying different steps that have been taken by the Union, which have focused on ‘the region’ as a framework for a certain type of policy. Here, we distinguish between developments at the ‘internal’ and ‘external’ scale. The objective with this section is to link some of the main characteristics of EU internal and external regional cooperation to the macro-regional concept.

The second section focuses specifically on the development leading up to the creation of the EUSBSR. We discuss the different steps that characterised this development, and how it led to the forming of this Strategy. This is relevant in relation to our analysis, since the EUSBSR has become the first macro-regional strategy.

3.1 Patterns of EU Regional Policy and External Policy Development

The following concerns the EU’s approach towards regions and regional cooperation.

This is outlined through an ‘internal’ and ‘external’ scale. The Internal scale identifies the Union’s measures towards regions within the EU. The nature of Regional Policy and its consequences for the regions is discussed.

The external scale concerns the Union’s relations towards its neighbourhood. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is an example of a framework for cooperation in a specific region. The characteristics of this cooperation are discussed with specific attention to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).

Regional cooperation within the EU

Historically, the regions of Europe were somewhat neglected during the emergence of nationalism and the nation-state in the 19th century (Applegate, 1999:4). The nation state hereafter became the most important actor on the political scene until the national crisis in the 1970's where an uprising of regional self-assertion was evident in a number of European nations (Applegate, 1999:8). This was especially the case with regional movements, such as the Basques, Scots, Walloons, and Catalans.

Later, the emergence of the European Union and European integration especially on the area of economic regulation had a positive mobilising effect on regions. Some regions find that the EU has made decentralisation possible hereby developing the regional scope of governance (Keating and Hooghe in Richardson, 2006: 271-272). The important judicial aspect is the EU's principle of subsidiarity, which is of great relevance for regions as well. The Maastricht Treaty in 1993 institutionalised the principle of subsidiarity stating that *"It intended to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made as to whether action at Community level is justified in the light of the possibilities available at national, regional or local level"* (Treaty of the European Union, 1992: art. 5). The later elaborated definition in Protocol (no. 30) of The Treaty of Amsterdam specified the role of the principle of subsidiarity, and thereby also the role of the regions (Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997: Prot. 30). Furthermore, the Lisbon Treaty explicitly points to the regions in noting: *"Before proposing legislative acts, the Commission shall consult widely. Such consultations shall, where appropriate, take into account the regional and local dimension of the action envisaged"* (Treaties Consolidated Versions 2009: protocol no. 2: art. 2). Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty gives the Committee of the Regions the right to bring a case before the European Court of Justice if it believes the principle of subsidiarity has not been maintained (Treaties Consolidated Versions 2009: protocol no. 2: art. 8).

Additionally, the EU has also equipped the regions with economic resources through the EU's Regional Policy subsumed under the structural funds. Today, structural actions cover about one third of the entire EU budget (Website: European Commission - DG Budget).

The Regional Policy and the various funding regimes was set up with the objective of constructing a mechanism to rectify regional imbalances due to predominance of agriculture, industrial change and structural unemployment, while ensuring efficient

allocation of Union funds (Website: European Commission -DG Regional Policy). Furthermore, the structural funds policy brought about a ‘programming approach’, in which clear policy goals were outlined, and a pluri-annual development schemes were introduced (Conzelmann, 1998: 2).

The aim of EU Regional Policy was to involve as much as possible the regional and local interests as well as partners in the business world, labour and voluntary groups. Furthermore, there was a wish to bring the regions closer to the EU and Union policies via the introduction of a link between policy areas within EU such as environmental policy, technology and education, and the regions’ spatial policy (Hooghe & Keating in Richardson, 2004: 279). This has spurred to a new thinking of governance between the EU and the regional level. As an example, in June 2009 the EU’s Committee of the Regions (CoR) launched a public consultation process to the discussion of building a “Europe in Partnership” following the CoR’s White Paper on multi-level governance (Committee of the Regions, 2009). Moreover, the concept of ‘territorial cohesion’ has gained a place in the discourse surrounding EU Regional Policy, suggesting a more comprehensive approach to the European regions despite the many disparities in the very different regions; both in terms of size, political autonomy, and resources.

In a Green Paper from 2008, the Commission argues for a strengthened cross-regional coordination of policies with the purpose of tying the European regions closer together. As an example, the Commission puts emphasis on “common challenges”, the creation of “synergies”, and argues for an “integrated approach” to many of the issues facing the Union’s regions (European Commission, 2008b: 4).

The above outlines the internal dimension in the EU’s regional policy by explaining some significant economic, political and institutional mechanisms or policies that have been created by the EU to purposely enhance the role of regions.

The External dimension: ENP and Euro-Med

The European Union has introduced a regional scope in its external dimension as well. Through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the Union has introduced a framework within which to govern relations towards neighbouring states. The objective is to draw countries into an integration process without them necessarily becoming full members of the Union (Website of the European Commission - European Neighbourhood Policy).

The ENP is a common policy framework covering all involved ENP-countries bordering the EU either by land or sea. However, the Action Plans are formed as

bilateral agreements between the EU and the respective ENP-country. The Action Plan set out the objectives for progress in each individual country, and covers cooperation on specific policies. The policy areas of cooperation range from issues related to energy policy to education policy (Website of the European Commission - European Neighbourhood Policy. The basis for the EU's external action, in this respect, is the projection of the Union's *acquis communautaire* with the objective to bring the neighbouring countries closer to the European Union. According to Sandra Lavanex & Frank Schimmelfennig, the EU thereby aims at extending the Union's internal rules to countries that are not EU members, while at the same time avoiding the discussion of EU membership (Lavanex & Schimmelfennig, 2009: 793). Furthermore, the EU aims at bringing the ENP countries closer to the Union by promoting EU norms and practices (Lavanex & Schimmelfennig, 2009: 807)

Another relevant initiative from the EU, which was established nearly ten years before the launch of the ENP, is the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and later the Mediterranean Union which was officially re-launched in 2008, having previously been known as The Barcelona Process (Website of the European Commission - External relations). The Mediterranean Union is now an extensive cooperative partnership between the EU and 16 Mediterranean countries involving matters on economic and political issues.

Originally, the EMP was a non-legally binding agreement and the Barcelona Declaration consisted of 3 "baskets" of overall subjects to be achieved through implementation of activities (Lannon & van Elsuwege, 2007:35). These subjects are also to be found as cooperative objectives in the ENP and thereby in the ENP Action Plan signed by all the countries in question as well as the EU (European Commission, 2007). The intention of the Mediterranean Union is to extend the field of cooperation on to issues of environment, solar-power energy, development of ports and city transport. To achieve this six priority projects have been identified:

- the de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea
- the establishment of maritime and land highways
- civil protection initiatives to combat natural and man-made disasters
- a Mediterranean solar energy plan
- the inauguration of the Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia and the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative focusing on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

(Website of the European Commission - External relations)

Four of these six priority projects are similar to areas that have also been identified as priorities in the EUSBSR, where e.g. issues of de-pollution of the Sea and development of small and medium-sized business initiatives are also included.

However, the range of political scope of the EMP is rather limited compared to the Baltic Sea Region, due to disagreements and cooperative problems between the participating countries (Wójcik, 2008:15).

The EMP is interesting because of its external dimension in EU policy that “*promotes projects of regional, sub-regional and transnational value across different sectors*” (European Commission: External relations, 06.12.09) in areas of environment, energy, infrastructure and education, all very similar to the new Baltic Strategy.

3.2 The Development leading to the EUSBSR and Macro-regional Strategies

The Baltic Sea area has for a long time been under the attention of the Union. (European Commission, 1994: 3). With the end of the Soviet Union the position towards the former soviet states changed. The area has a history as a dynamic cultural and trading area. The potential value of a connection between the industrialised Western Europe and the developing Eastern Europe was evident at the time. Poland and the Baltic countries had rich agricultural resources, but were finding it difficult to sell their products, as most neighbouring countries were in the same position. Furthermore, there were great expectations for the potential of investments in the Russian economy (European Commission, 1994: 3).

With the accession of Sweden and Finland in 1995, the interest in the Region grew and bilateral agreements with Poland, the three Baltic countries and Russia were established (European Commission, 1994: 2).

The Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) was introduced in 1992 as a forum in which to coordinate the cooperation between the states and was created to accommodate relations and complement the bilateral agreements. The objectives of the CBSS are widespread and they define these themselves as: “... *the CBSS identifies political goals, creates action-plans, initiates projects and serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas concerning regional issues of common interest*” (Website: CBSS).

Afterwards a large number of other organisations such as the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and Baltic Development Forum (BDF) were established with the purpose of facilitating cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.

In 1997, the EU Northern Dimension initiative was launched by the European Union to increase cooperation among EU countries as well as Norway, Iceland, and last but not least Russia. Having both an internal and an external dimension, the cooperation is based on five priority areas of non-military security: economic cooperation, infrastructure, natural resources, environmental cooperation and border crossing (Tassinari, 2004: 205). Although still existing, the initiative has been criticized for being stagnant, partly due to lack of financing and involving too many policy areas of cooperation (Tassinari, 2004: 210; Archer, 2002: 31)

In 2004, a group of members of the European Parliament, some of which represented Baltic Sea Region Member States, formed an informal Intergroup named “Baltic Europe”. The group’s aim was to promote the interests of the Baltic Sea region in the European Parliament. In November 2005, the group published and presented the working paper: *An EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* to the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso.

Interestingly, the European Parliament took up the ideas from the working paper and a separate strategy on the Baltic Sea Region became part of the Parliament’s resolution on the future of the Northern Dimension. Following this resolution, the Parliament devoted more attention to the Region and in November 2006 the *Legislative Resolution of the European Parliament related to the Strategy in the Baltic Sea Region within the Northern Dimension* was presented. In the resolution, the European Parliament “*Urges the Commission to come up with a proposal for an EU Baltic Sea Strategy in order to reinforce the internal pillar of the Northern Dimension (...)*” (European Parliament, 2006:4) hereby urging the Commission to take steps leading to a deepening of regional integration rather than security oriented discussions.

Even though there were no Swedish MEPs in the Baltic Europe Intergroup, it was Sweden that took the promotion of the Baltic Sea region to the next level. At the 14th Ministerial session of the CBSS, Carl Bildt - the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden - suggested the development of a Baltic Sea Strategy in order to promote the Region as a priority area for the EU (Kalnins, 2007: 1).

Furthermore, also primarily on the initiative of Sweden, the Council called upon the

Commission to outline a strategy for the Baltic Sea Region at the latest by June 2009 (European Council, 2007: 17; Ryba, 2008: 1-4).

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was presented by the Commission on the 10th of June 2009, calling for primarily an internal strategy, which to some extent countered with the Parliament's wish for a strategy covering both internal and external policy areas (Bengtsson, 2009: 3).

No later than four months after, the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Pawel Samecki, presented a position paper entitled *Macro-Regional Strategies in the European Union*, in which the Commission lays out its definition and understanding of macro-regions in an EU context (European Commission, 2009c). The paper can be seen partly as a response to the questions that were raised in relation to the EUSBSR. Furthermore, in October 2008 the former Commissioner for DG REGIO, Danuta Hübner, stated that a similar strategy is needed for the Danube region (European Commission, 2008a).

3.3 Summary

EU regional governance is relevant to discuss when accounting for the macro-regional concept, since macro-regions potentially contain elements of both European and non-EU regions and policies.

In this chapter, we have distinguished between 'internal' and 'external' scales of EU regional governance. We have identified elements of particular importance with regards to EU Regional Policy. We have argued that the principle of subsidiarity plays an important role when defining the European regions' relationship to the EU. Furthermore, we have argued that the economic impact of the Structural Funds needs to be taken into account when discussing the role of the regions. Moreover, aspects of multi-level governance (MLG) have found their way to EU Regional Policy, and the Committee of the Region's launching of a consultation process to discuss MLG in a regional perspective.

Regarding the 'external' scale, we have discussed key characteristics of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). A common framework and objectives outlined in action plans characterises these external policies and are in many ways similar to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). Furthermore, it has been argued that integration of the Acquis

Communautaire, and expanding EU norms and values in countries outside the Union are key driving forces to the external scale policies.

In the last part of the chapter, we have discussed the development leading to the creation of the EUSBSR and the introduction of the macro-regional concept. It has been argued that the fact that we have reached this level of development is the result of a large number of small steps taken first by the Baltic Europe Intergroup, and later by Sweden that embraced the idea of a Strategy and pushed for the Council to decide on calling on the Commission to present an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in 2009. Moreover, this development has led to the creation of the macro-regional concept, which will be discussed later in the project.

4.0 Regionalism and Multi-level Governance in a Theoretical Perspective

This chapter introduces theoretical approaches that we have chosen to employ to analyse the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). We have included different theoretical perspectives to be able to analyse the horizontal level, concerning the nature of the framework envisioned in the Strategy, and the vertical level concerning the governance structures to take place within the framework.

In the attempt to describe the regional framework we have made use of regionalism and cross-border regionalism, which is discussed in the first section of this chapter.

The second section discusses the theoretical perspectives on multi-level governance (MLG) structures.

4.1 Cross-Border Regionalism in a Theoretical Perspective

In the following, different theoretical approaches to regionalism are discussed in a cross-border regionalism perspective. This is relevant, in order to characterise and analyse the new form of cooperation that is envisioned within the EUSBSR and macro-regional strategies later in the project. The first part of the section discusses regionalism by distinguishing between ‘old’ and ‘new’ approaches. In the second part, regionalism is discussed in a meta-regionalist approach with focus on a cross-border regional perspective.

4.1.1 Regionalism in a Theoretical Perspective

There are many different theoretical approaches to regionalism. It is common to distinguish broadly between ‘old regionalism’ and ‘new regionalism’ (Söderbaum & Hettne, 1998; Tassinari, 2004).

Common for the approaches within the framework of old regionalism is that the state is regarded as central to the understanding of a region (Tassinari, 2004: 20).

In a neo-realist perspective, the state acts with the purpose of maximising its gains. The region can thus be seen as an alliance, which makes it possible for the state to tackle external political pressures (Tassinari, 2004: 20). This perspective suggests that regions are formed as means to deal with issues of geo-political character. As regards a neo-

realist perspective, “*regionalism is understood by looking at the region from the outside-in*” (Hurrell, 1995: 47). This suggests that externalities, rather than internal common features, shape and define the region. Rather, the driving forces behind regional cooperation are processes of othering and exclusion (Browning & Joenniemi, 2004: 236³). Moreover, the security dimension can be a prerequisite for regional cooperation, as it works as a driving force in order to counter external political pressures. This is argued to be the reason for increased cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region immediately after the EU enlargement in 2004, when the Baltic States and Poland became members of the Union (Browning & Joenniemi, 2004: 244).

‘New Regionalism’, on the other hand, includes more dynamic approaches. In this sense, regionalism is formed through a bottom-up process (Tassinari, 2004: 25). Moreover, the focus is no longer solely on the state, but also on the community surrounding the region. The ‘commonality’ of social groups with a stake in the region can be said to play a role in the construction of the region (Paasi, 1991: 24 in Tassinari, 2004:29).

Within the concept of ‘security communities’, this commonality or we-feeling among actors in the region involves an identity-building process. As argued by Karl Deutsch, a security community rests on three major pillars: Integration, sense of community and peaceful change (Deutsch, 1957: 5 in Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2006: 69). This approach stresses the point that regionalism relies on the construction of specific values that form a framework of interdependence among regions. Therefore, regionalism depends on more than merely a cooperation based on common enemies. Moreover, the process of regionalism is taking place from the inside-out, in the sense that the internal characteristics (values and identity etc.) rather than the external characteristics (othering) define the region. Furthermore, in cases of strong interdependence the security community may increase regional cohesion and make the region an autonomous entity. In the understanding of Hurrell, regional cohesion is “*when the region becomes the organising basis within the region across a range of important issues*” (Hurrell, 1995: 44).

4.1.2 The Relevance of a Meta-regionalist perspective

In a cross-border regional context, it can be argued that it is more relevant to discuss regions from a meta-regionalist perspective. Such a perspective may provide a more

³ Browning and Joenniemi are not neo-realists, but they comment on neo-realism in a regional perspective in the article

dynamic approach than the 'old'/'new' regionalism distinction. In this project deal with regions 'between' member states that have already been institutionalised within the EU. Thus the issue of sovereignty is argued to be less prominent. Moreover, in our understanding, the meta-regionalist perspective builds on the precondition that there are different layers of governance in place, in which the supranational, the national, and the regional level all play a role in the process of governing the region.

Furthermore, cross-border cooperation combines internal cohesion and external unity, and perspectives from both of these dimensions should be taken into consideration when discussing what cross-border regions are constituted by, and what the driving mechanisms are.

Moreover, in this perspective there are potentially both processes of inside-out regionalisation and outside-in regionalisation. This means that since the cross-border region is sort of 'in between levels', it may be directed from above (e.g. by the EU), as well as from below by regional stakeholders. Related to this is that there may be driving forces promoting regionalisation from within the region and from outside the region.

In a meta-regionalist view, regions are defined by 'territoriality rather than sovereignty' (Wæver in Manners & Whitman, 2003: 385) and are formed according to the level and scope of cooperation within the region, rather than being defined as a politically sovereign unit. In this sense, it is interesting to look at the elements that constitute the cooperation within cross-border regions.

As argued by Peter Schmitt-Egner, a cross-border region is an *action space* (Schmitt-Egner, 2001: 69). This means that regionalism is to a large extent defined by the activities of cooperation in the region. In other words, this underlines the importance of **functionality**. The perspective of 'action regions' also suggests that the cross-border region entails a strong '**identifiability**' and is able to carry out activities on its own. The prerequisite for this is a number of commonalities (historical, socio-economic and cultural) and a regional identity with common institutions (Schmitt-Egner, 2001: 74). Esko Antola also pays attention to the social construction of the region, when discussing regionalism in the perspective of politically designed regional arrangements. He argues that a region: "(...)*has a strong element of a self-defined community of interests*" (Antola, 2009: 12). Thus, in order to further regionalism, actors need to be able to identify with the region.

In contrast to the above, Markus Perkmann argues that a cross-border region is defined as a process of ‘political’ construction in which commonalities are not a precondition for how the region functions in practice (Perkmann, 2003: 157). Moreover, it is possible to create strong cross-border cooperation among regions in countries that do not necessarily share a common history or culture. On the contrary, ‘a history of alienation’ between regions can actually provide the starting point for cooperation. In this sense, the importance of history and culture should not be underestimated, but should be understood as ‘dynamic’ rather than ‘fixed’. Moreover, the argument is that it is the common challenges that create the basis and willingness for cooperation.

This point is backed up by Andrew Hurrell: “*There are no ‘natural’ region, and definitions of ‘region’ and indicators of ‘regionness’ vary according to the particular problem or question under investigation*” (Hurrell, 1995: 38).

Overall, this approach suggests that emphasis shall be put on the discourse constructing new processes of cooperation in order to determine a strong degree of regionalism. Moreover, the importance of how political actors perceive the idea of a region and regionness in the particular case is central to this understanding of regionalism. One could argue that this is particularly central to the discussion of cross-border regions; there may not be a specific CBR identity, and therefore the understanding of the region and issues of **political interdependence**, in the sense of ‘what policy areas of cooperation bring the region together’, need to be emphasised.

Söderbaum argues that “*a region can be a region more or less*” and the region should therefore not be taken for granted (Söderbaum & Hettne, 1998: 9; Schouten, 2008). One could add a point made by Perkmann, who argues that cross-border regions often take shape of informal or ‘*quasi-judicial*’ arrangements (Perkmann, 2007: 863). In other words, the region is defined by certain characteristics, but does not necessarily have a “*distinct identity, institutionalised actor capability, legitimacy, and structure of decision-making*” (Söderbaum & Hettne, 1998: 10). Although this point was made in an article discussing different levels of ‘regionness’ in an overall perspective, it becomes relevant in a cross-border perspective, where we do not deal with a full-fledged region. Rather, the cross-border region is bound together by a complex web of cooperation, whereby the cross-border region gets characteristics or points of reference attached to it: The cross-border region is constituted by the cooperation that takes place within the

region. This web of cooperation gives the region identifiability as well as it shows the strength/weakness of the region as an entity.

Furthermore, this point of ‘region in the making’ underlines Söderbaum and Hettne’s approach that the region and regionness should be seen as a process rather than an outcome.

This point can be exemplified in relation to institutions: Regions within the EU are involved in a number of different institutional arrangements. Interreg⁴, The Northern Dimension, and the Nordic Council of Ministers, are examples of such cooperation among countries in the Baltic Sea Region. Various institutional arrangements exist within different cooperation schemes that range across policy areas and across regions. Furthermore, some of these cooperation schemes overlap, hereby all parts of the region are not necessarily part of the different institutional arrangements in the region. Additionally, these arrangements can change in structure and importance over time.

4.1.3 Summary

We have argued that an outside-in approach characterises ‘old’ regionalism, in the sense that external pressures play a strong role in defining regional cooperation. On the other hand, ‘new regionalism’ approaches focus on regionalism as a bottom-up process, with specific focus on regional commonalities as determining the cooperation. However, we argue that in order to understand the complexity of cross-border regionalism, we need to put forward a ‘meta-regionalist’ approach that takes into account functionality, identifiability and political interdependence rather than security or identity.

Furthermore, it has been argued that the cross-border region is a dynamic entity that can be defined as a ‘region in the making’ and not as an outcome.

Moreover, these three elements make us able to discuss cross-border regionalism in relation to the EUSBSR and macro-regions in our analysis.

4.2 Framing Multi-Level Governance

In order for us to develop an analytical framework whereby to better understand the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and discuss what makes it unique, and

⁴ Interreg is an EU initiative which aims to stimulate interregional cooperation within the Union (Website of the European Commission – Regional Policy – Key Objectives)

why the EU decided to create it, it is necessary to discuss the Strategy in a governance perspective.

Throughout the process of creating the Strategy the European Commission has cooperated with and involved actors at the regional, national and supranational level of politics together with numerous stakeholders from different sectors in order to create EU's first macro-regional strategy. The final outcome of the Strategy and its action plan also reflects a continuation of this working method. It includes a net of multi-tiered actors and stakeholders at all levels having to carry out the objectives of the Strategy exemplified as flagship projects (European Commission, 2009b).

To better analyse and comprehend this complicated and intertwined relationship, which characterises the policy-making in regards to the Strategy, the theoretical approach of multi-level governance (MLG) is useful in our project. MLG explains the EU and its way of doing governance by looking at more than just national politics or politics between states (Bache & Flinders, 2005: 1-2).

This chapter therefore explores theoretical approaches to MLG, its potential and boundaries in connection to identifying and understanding the method of governance present with the EUSBSR and potentially future macro-regional strategies.

4.2.1 Theoretical Approaches to Multi-level Governance

Theoretical approaches to MLG perceive the EU as a political system rather than explain a European integration process. In this sense the development of MLG was back in the 1990's a new approach and stood in contrast to other, at the time, dominating EU integration theories such as neo-functionalism or intergovernmentalism. MLG instead focuses on ways to capture some of the decision-making dynamics occurring in the European Union (Bache & Flinders, 2005:1-3; Piattoni, 2009: 163-165).

MLG, as developed by Gary Marks, defined the concept as “*a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers – supranational, national, regional and local*” (Marks in Bache & Flinders, 2005: 3). The notion of territorial tiers is significant and draws the attention to the fact that MLG not only include national and supranational levels of policy-making to be of importance, but also regional and local levels have to be factored in when analyzing EU decisions (Piattoni, 2009: 166).

This means that “multi-level” thus refers to the “*increased interdependence of governments operating at different territorial levels*” (Marks in Bache & Flinders, 2005: 3), whilst the “governance” aspect explains the increasing interdependence between political governments and non-governmental actors at all territorial levels. The relevance of non-governmental organisations and ad-hoc networks are of a particular trademark to MLG and shows how groups such as e.g. sub-national governments, expert committees, civil society groups and voluntary associations are highly relevant actors who are able to exert influence in EU decision-making. They not only engage in policy-making in the periphery or on the demand of national governmental bodies, but are indeed present when it comes to policy-implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Piattoni, 2009: 166-167).

A core argument of MLG is the belief that central governments are inadequate when it comes to efficiently accommodating problems of too much diversity. Meaning that policy-issues are so differentiated and varied e.g. management of world economic crisis' at a global level to questions of school funding at the local level, or in this case, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, that governance must exist and can be created at multiple levels of jurisdiction in order to be efficient and encompass the

increasingly globalised policy areas in today's society (Hooghe & Marks in Bache & Flinders, 2005: 16).

Distinguishing between two types of MLG

Gary Marks and Liesbet Hooghe further theorised MLG by theorising a Type 1 and type 2 multi-level governance. A closer examination of these two types of MLG is relevant for our project as to better understand the sort of governance present when discussing governance in regards to the EUSBSR.

The first type of MLG, type 1, is theoretically rooted in federalism, where focus lies with central government and its collaboration with sub-national governments instead of specific policy areas.

Characteristic for type 1 MLG is a spreading of authority to jurisdictions at a limited number of levels of governance with no intersecting membership between the levels. In other words, there may be more levels of governance in play e.g. the supranational (EU-level), national and regional levels. However, there is a clear division of powers and 'who does what', and the different levels do not interfere with each other.

Moreover, these jurisdictions are 'general-purpose', which means that the decision-making powers have more or less clear-cut defined areas of management that exists over a long period of time and are also designed to last. This makes the governance institutions sticky and difficult to change (Hooghe & Marks, 2003: 7-8). Additionally, type 1 can be characterized as 'consolidationalist', in the sense that there is a general approach to governance between the different levels. The levels of jurisdiction usually consist of a well-known basic governance structure, an elected legislature, an executive and a court system at every level, although complexity varies according to level. Another important aspect of MLG type 1 is the acknowledgement that the nation-state is being challenged by transnational movements, public-private partnerships and large political or financial corporations, but not to the extent of total abolishment of the state. The nation states and its territorial power are still very strong and continue to be so (Hooghe & Marks in Bache & Flinders, 2005: 20-21).

Type 2 MLG also has some of its roots in federalism, but predominantly it is scholars of neoclassical political economy and public choice theory who inspired the type 2 MLG approach. The idea is that "...each public good or service should be provided by the jurisdiction that effectively internalizes its benefits and costs" (Hooghe & Marks,

2005:11). In other words, it is not necessarily the neatly planned federal framework like with type 1, which makes for the best solution of policy organisation.

Rather, the idea behind type 2 is that the policy framework has to be adjusted to the particular issues and objectives of the specific policy area or region. Moreover, this can be called a ‘fragmentationalist’ approach.

Related to a cross-border perspective, Hooghe and Marks argue that certain EU regional policies operate within a type I architecture, but could be better functioning had they been subject to a more flexible framework (Hooghe & Marks in Bache & Flinders 2005: 26). This is argued to be the case of the Interreg-programme, since resources and organisational capacity can vary across borders and the possibilities of effective cooperation are therefore obstructed. Another problem, it is argued, is that these regions are more general-purpose in character than organized with the purpose of solving specific functional tasks. The argument here is that a more ‘open’ mode of governance, yet with task-specific objectives, would create more effective problem-solving.

In contrast to MLG type 1, the jurisdictions in MLG type 2 are usually vast specialised independent jurisdictions with intersecting membership that are created to solve specific problems. They are usually very loosely made and very flexible in design in order to meet the needs and preferences of citizens in a very ad-hoc and functionally manner. The jurisdictions can also easily be dissolved when their need for existence has expired.”*The number of jurisdictions is potentially vast, rather than limited; in which jurisdictions are not aligned on just a few levels, but operate at numerous territorial scales; in which jurisdictions are task-specific rather than general-purpose; and where jurisdictions are intended to be flexible rather than durable*” (Hooghe & Marks, 2005: 9).

4.2.2 Summary

In this section, MLG has been discussed with specific focus on the distinction between ‘type 1’ and ‘type 2’ modes. The distinction offers contrasting forms of MLG. MLG is apparent within EU regional policy, and the cross-border region is confronted with issues relating to the type 1/type 2 distinction.

The distinction is especially relevant to the macro-regional concept, as macro-regions potentially share features with both types.

In the analysis, we will aim to identify elements from the two types of MLG in the EUSBSR and the macro-regional concept in relation to the discussion put forward in this section.

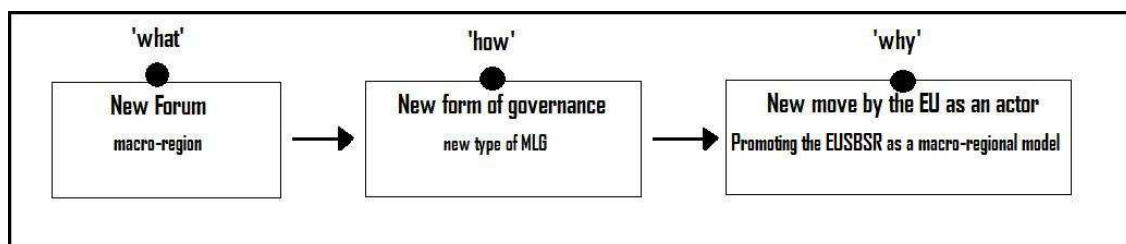
5.0 What is Macro-Regional Cooperation and What is 'New' about it? – The EUSBSR as a Case

In the previous chapters, we have discussed internal as well as external dimensions of EU regional policies in a region-specific perspective. Furthermore, we have discussed regionalism in a cross-border perspective and aspects of multi-level governance that could potentially play a role in a macro-region.

We argue that the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the macro-regional concept bring in a number of new features.

In the analysis, we identify where, and to what extent the EUSBSR and the macro-regional concept provides something new regarding three different interrelated components. Our approach is illustrated in model 1 below and is as follows; in the first part, we analyse *what* the macro-region is and what it is constituted by. With the EUSBSR as a case, we argue that macro-regional cooperation is characterised by functionality, which can be identified in a number of aspects. The macro-region is a new forum in which a new type of governance takes place, and is therefore connected with the second box (model 1). Therefore, the second part of the analysis discusses *how* the governance structure in the macro-region is constituted. It is argued that the EUSBSR draws on elements from multi-level governance, but is furthermore unique in some aspects and can be characterised as a new form of governance. Bearing in mind this new form of governance, we argue that the EU sees the macro-region as a structure to be replicated in other European regions. The second part is therefore connected to the third part of the analysis, which examines the reason why the EUSBSR and the macro-regional concept has been created. The main argument is that it is a new framework that allows the EU to play a role as an actor. Moreover, the EUSBSR is a model for a macro-region, which indicates that there are more macro-regional strategies to come.

Model 1 Build-up of the analysis: Connecting novelties in terms of *what*, *how* and *why*



5.1 Characterising the macro-region – a functional relationship

In chapter 4.1, we discussed different approaches to regionalism in both an ‘old’/‘new’ regionalism distinction, and in a meta-regionalist perspective. The macro-region is something different than a cross-border region, but share characteristics with the cross-border region. Additionally, the macro-region involves a broad spectrum of actors:

With the EUSBSR as our example, it can be argued that the macro-region ‘cuts across’ the regional, national level and ‘EU’ levels of cooperation: The regional level is represented by both governmental and non-governmental organisations working with policies within the Baltic Sea Region. The national level is represented by the Member States in the Region, and the European Commission represents the EU-level and has the role of initiating the macro-regional cooperation and monitoring the process of implementing the Strategy. This supports the point stressed in section 4.1 in relation to meta-regionalism that a macro-region is ‘in between levels’.

This variety of actors involved makes the macro-region unique in an EU perspective, as it allows for top-down, bottom-up as well as horizontal processes of cooperation. In section 5.2, we return to discuss the particular governance process.

5.1.1 A functional relationship

With regards to the EUSBSR, macro-regional cooperation envisaged within the framework of the Strategy will partly be based on already existing integrated EU policies. The Commission has identified four *key challenges*⁵ that can be covered by policies of more or less internal character. On the other hand, external aspects of cooperation in region, which one could initially have thought would have been included in the EUSBSR, will be dealt with within the Northern Dimension framework (European Commission, 2009a: 2-3).

Thus, the element of security policy linked to the ‘old regionalism’ approaches is no longer evident, as sovereignty has already been pooled from the involved Member States to the EU level on the relevant policy areas. This opens up for cooperation based on functional interdependence rather than security. This is stated in the Strategy, which outlines that the Baltic Sea Region: “(...)is a highly heterogeneous area in economic,

⁵ European Commission – The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: Four pillars “*To enable a sustainable environment; To enhance the Region’s prosperity; To increase accessibility and attractiveness; To ensure safety and security in the region.*”

environmental and cultural terms, yet the countries concerned share many common resources and demonstrate considerable interdependence” (European Commission, 2009a: 2). As argued by Bengtsson, the Commission’s rationale of the macro-region’ is framed by the rationale of solving common problems hereby promoting interdependence between the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea (Bengtsson, 2009: 2). Our interviewees agree to the existence of a functional interdependence within the Baltic Sea Region. Hans Brask from Baltic Development Forum (BDF) argues that the macro-region provides a way to solve problems more effectively than it is possible when all EU member states are part of the process (Interview Brask, 2009: A2). Åsa Andersson from the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) points out that a macro-regional strategy is a way to ensure the implementation of specific EU legislation, since the geographical scope of the macro-region entail that actors across the region share common challenges (Interview Andersson, 2009: A3).

Johan Friis from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasises that the EUSBSR is first and foremost project-based (Interview Friis, 2009: A2). In this sense, the macro-region provides a framework that ensures that all actors involved have incentives to establish cooperation, since they are all interested and affected by the issues in focus.

To sum up the above mentioned points, it can be argued that the macro-region represents a new type of regionalism, in that it is both a new tool and a new forum for pursuing EU objectives.

The ‘new regionalism’ approaches, can be regarded as being in line with the European Commission’s visions for macro-regions. The importance of commonality can be related to the concept of cohesion which we argued in chapter 3.1 to be central to the discourse surrounding EU Regional Policy. As was argued, this is reflected in the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, in which the Commission underlines the interdependence between regions in Europe (European Commission, 2008).

The Commission’s idea is that there are a number of policies of urgency and importance in a long-time perspective that need to be treated in a regional European perspective as it is of common interest to the regions. The EUSBSR focus on maritime safety is an example of such a policy, where there is a need for common action within the region. All countries in the Baltic Sea Region are dependent on the Baltic Sea, and the lack of actions taken by one country to e.g. prevent oil-spill will have an effect on the other countries bordering the Sea. Brask argues: *“There are concrete issues that have to be*

solved. The Baltic Sea is one of the world's most polluted seas. It is a problem that has to be solved" (Interview Brask, 2009: A18).

Added to the above-mentioned point, we argue that the macro-region is a functional region based on political interdependence and issues of region-specific identifiability. However, a macro-region does not imply a specific regional identity as such. This point is supported by Brask, who underlines the 'horizontal actions'⁶ of the EUSBSR that are intended to spur regional coherence and orientation. In other words, it is more relevant to speak of a Baltic identifiability rather than a regional Baltic identity. For the moment no Baltic identity exists (Interview Brask, 2009: A7).

5.1.2 "No new institutions, no duplication of activities"

The Commission has clearly stated that "no new institutions" should be involved to implement the Strategy (European Commission, 2009a: 10). Moreover, the Commission has underlined that creating new institutions in the case of the EUSBSR "*would be superfluous and perhaps wasteful*" (European Commission, 2009c: 3)

On the other hand, it can be argued that a clearly defined institutional framework is needed in order to pursue the objectives put forward in the strategy. While most national governments would like to entrust the Commission a strong role in monitoring the implementation of the Strategy, the Commission sees its own role as a 'facilitator' rather than a 'leader' of the Strategy (Schymik & Krumrey, 2009: 10). Andersson would like to see a strong Commission as well, in order to ensure effective implementation of EU legislation within especially the Common Agricultural Policy and Fisheries Policy (Andersson, 2009: A4).

We argue that the decision not to create a new body to implement the EUSBSR has to be seen in connection with the Commission's functional approach to macro-regions. The idea is to have a so-called "integrated approach", which means that the macro-regional strategies are cross-sectoral as well as cross-level strategies (Wolfe, 2009). Had a new strategic body been put in place, this could have been seen as merely another institution in the region that could lead to institutional overload. Furthermore, by focusing more on policy than institutions, the Commission aims at handing more responsibility over to the Member States, when it comes to the implementation of the

⁶ Besides the four key challenges outlined in the EUSBSR, a number of horizontal actions are outlined. The objective with the horizontal actions is to increase regional cohesion and make the Strategy function more effectively (European Commission, 2009a; 2009b)

strategy. As was argued by Friis, the Member States are thereby given a new role and potentially more responsibility to ensure the implementation of EU objectives, within regional policy (Friis, 2009: A4).

Overall, the idea of “no institutions and no duplication of activities” has to be seen in line with the macro-regional mindset where macro-regions are an attempt to organize the implementation of EU Regional Policy in a new way, but not to invent new policy or new institutions.

5.2 Creating new governance

As have been discussed in section 4.2 and 3.1 the inclusion of different levels of governance is often applied in EU policies.

This is also the case in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and is evident within the Strategy and within the process leading to the creation of the Strategy.

The roles and jurisdictions of the different stakeholders are to some extent outlined. In this chapter, we have identified these and employed the two different types of multi-level governance (MLG) discussed in chapter 4.2 to be able to draw parallels between them and discover what kind of MLG that defines the relationship between the different levels of governance in the EUSBSR.

Furthermore, we illustrate the relationship between the different levels of governance and the top-down/bottom-up process in the EUSBSR. This is done mainly to identify what the actors contribute with in the EUSBSR governance process.

5.2.1 The Employment of MLG-types in the EUSBSR

We examine where MLG type 1 & 2 can be identified in relation to the EUSBSR.

Task-Specific Jurisdiction versus General-Purpose Jurisdiction

As argued in section 5.1, the EUSBSR is based on a rather functional relationship. The key priorities outlined for the EUSBSR are to a large extent region-specific. The most prominent example is the Strategy’s focus on environmental policy. Here, the Baltic Sea constitutes a natural framework reference for all stakeholders in the Region. This seems to suggest that at an overall level the EUSBSR share elements with MLG type 2.

Meanwhile the approach to apply macro-regions in different parts of Europe shows a tendency of a general-purpose framework. The reason being that if macro-regions are to be a widespread framework, the concept should be somewhat diffuse in order to fit in different areas and circumstances.

Hereby, the EUSBSR involves policy areas that are rather general-purpose in character, and could have been priority areas in any other European region. Moreover, part of the policy cooperation envisaged within the EUSBSR can be traced to the EU's Lisbon agenda⁷, such as the notions of innovation and sustainability. Additionally, the Strategy involves horizontal issues that serve a more general purpose. As an example, one action aims at "cooperation on the transposition of EU directives" (Commission, 2009b: 68).

Intersecting Membership

The Strategy, although not trying intentionally to compromise the existing levels of governance, does include actions, which could be seen as attempts to blur the boundaries between levels of governance. Hereby, there is an informal intersection of membership. As argued by Hans Brask, the EUSBSR combines regional integration with EU integration (Interview Brask, 2009: A2). Thus, it can be argued that the macro-region, in the case of the EUSBSR, can be seen as a new pathway of policy-making that intersects different levels of governance.

Moreover, the EUSBSR can be regarded as an attempt by the European Commission to commit the stakeholders to regional cooperation, and thereby also turn regional stakeholders' loyalty in the direction of the EU. This is evident in cases such as the involvement of NGO's in flagship-projects operated by the Member States, where the placement of responsibility and monitoring is on the high level of the Member States⁸. Furthermore, the Commission has not wanted to create an overarching institution responsible for the Strategy's implementation. These examples all point out that the intention behind the Strategy is to involve as many levels as possible while delegating a sense of ownership and responsibility to all levels of governance (Interview Friis, 2009: A21). This seems to suggest that the EUSBSR, in regards to intersecting memberships, can be placed in between MLG type 1 and type 2. The Strategy aims at involving the different stakeholders in several parts of the process and thereby letting the stakeholders intersect in different levels of governance, while at the same time retaining a hierarchical structure of governance.

⁷ European Commission, 2000

⁸ In most cases the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (Friis, 2009: A19)

Levels of Jurisdiction

Intersection occurs between the different levels of jurisdiction there is no sign of shifting the levels of jurisdiction – in fact the formal roles of the Commission and the Member States are designated in the Strategy (Commission, 2009:10). Furthermore, the Commission's decision not to employ an overarching institution responsible for the implementation of the Strategy limits the number of juridical levels to the preexisting. This is somewhat evident in the MLG type 1 with its static and limited number of juridical levels.

The Strategy also contains elements from MLG type 2. This is apparent within the four priority areas encouraging a cross-sectoral approach, in the sense that there are overall priority areas, which cannot be handled within one specific policy area or by a specific type of stakeholder. Moreover, it opens up for the inclusion of many different types of stakeholders. The concept of employing specific flagship-projects show a somewhat experimental approach that allows a great variety of actors to participate.

System Architecture

The EUSBSR and the position paper on macro-regional strategies outlined by the Commission does not provide with any attempt to change the existing levels of jurisdiction. As was discussed in section 5.1 no new institutions have been created with the Strategy. On the other hand, many different stakeholders have been involved in the composition of the Strategy and development of the Action Plan through the public consultation process and stakeholder-meetings with the Commission (Annex 4). Thereby the governance process opens up for a flexible design (MLG type 2).

However, it can be argued that a new level of governance is introduced with the EUSBSR and macro-regions. The Member States are entrusted a leading role in the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy and will be participating in a 'high-level group' with the Commission. Thereby, a new, more 'political' role is assigned to the Member States within EU Regional Policy, in the sense that the Member States will have to ensure progression with the implementation of the Strategy. In this sense, the Member States are provided with a 'top-down tool' to keep the lower levels⁹ committed to implementing the objectives of the Strategy.

⁹ Government agencies, regions, and NGO's involved in the EUSBSR as priority area coordinators or involved in flagship projects (Interview Friis, 2009: A23; A25).

As to the architecture of the governance structure, as mentioned above, a strong wish to include different levels of governance has been evident in the Strategy and the process leading up to it.

However, it is important to remember that the Strategy was constructed and enforced through a top-down management by the Commission.

According to our interviewees, the “traditional” EU Regional Policy in the Baltic Sea area lacked a coordinated action plan, management scheme and political commitment. They suggest that a high level of jurisdiction is what was needed (Interview Brask, 2009, A19; Interview Andersson, 2009: A4; Interview Friis, 2009: A25).

The kind of MLG used within the Strategy does include areas of both types of MLG mentioned in chapter 4.2, which seems that the EUSBSR is based on a combination of the two rather than resembling only one.

This combination of structure is also evident when examining the top-down/bottom-up relationship of the actors in the Baltic Sea Region.

5.2.2 Governance in the EUSBSR

The top-down arrangement, combined with the Commission’s wish to include the smaller levels of governance and other stakeholders outside the governance-structure, suggests a new kind of governance mixture stretching across MLG types 1 and 2 .

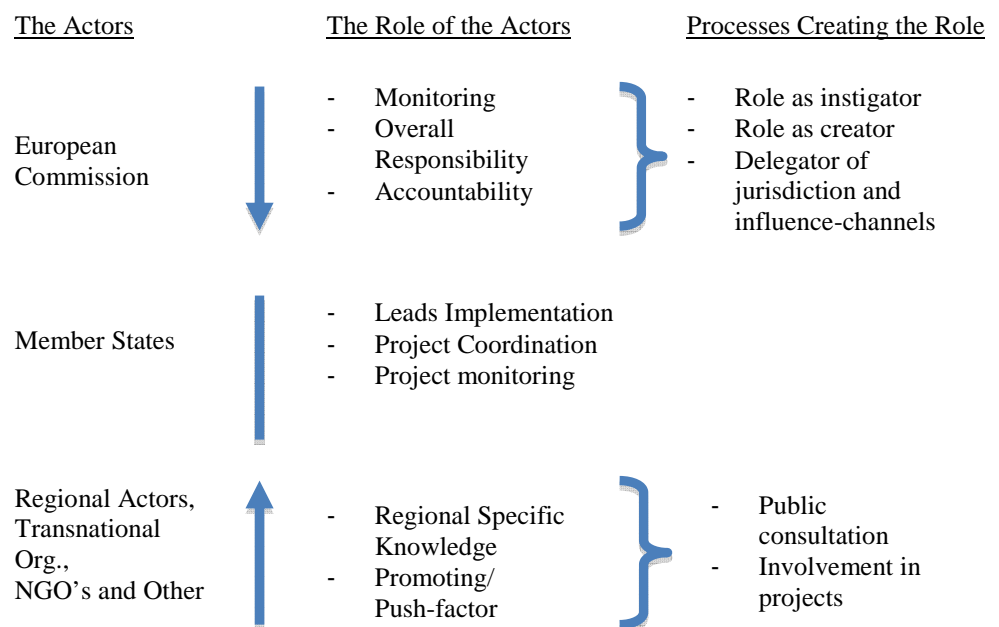
In model 2, we illustrated the structure of the EUSBSR and the roles delegated by the Commission to the different levels of governance. Furthermore, the figure shows processes that have taken place during the creation and implementation of the Strategy and how these processes have influenced the role of different actors. The arrows illustrate where the governance structure is managed via top-down processes, and where bottom-up processes take place.

The left row identifies the different actors. The middle row (The Role of the Actors) refers to the role of the different actors in the governance process of the EUSBSR: “who does what”. Some of these roles are clearly stated in the Strategy, and some are based on points made during the interviews.

The processes that have been influential in forming the roles of the stakeholders are illustrated in the right row. These processes also show the areas in which top-down and bottom-up processes have been applied.

The European Commission has through the process of initiating and creating a strategy enforced its role as authority. It has utilised this authority in the process of delegating jurisdiction and roles to itself and the other stakeholders in the region. Hereby, the Commission and the Member States are clearly the top-down actors in the structure. Meanwhile, with the Commission's wish to integrate the lower level stakeholders into the process, through the public consultation and their involvement in projects, is the channel through which the regional actors and NGO's can influence the framework – making it a bottom-up process.

Model 2: The Top-down/bottom-up structure of the EUSBSR



The involvement of the EU in the EUSBSR signified a strong hands-on approach in the governance of the Region. The reasoning behind the involvement of the EU, besides that of simplifying and making the architectural structures more efficient, has according to Brask been to strengthen the role of the EU, and make itself more relevant for the citizens, businesses and organisations of the Baltic Sea Region (Interview Brask, 2009: A2).

In the early stages of creating the Strategy, the Commission invited the regional actors and NGO's and transnational organisations involved in the area to give their position on how the Strategy should take form, and which issues they found were most important to address. By doing so, the Commission wanted to involve stakeholders and open up for

stakeholders to re-position themselves, making sure that different views were voiced in the Strategy. The reasoning behind was, to be sure to encompass most wishes from especially the different Member States and hereby secure continued commitment as the Member States might pursue the initiative if they found they might gain from it. It also gives the Member States an incentive to take more responsibility for EU Regional Policy.

The attempt to incorporate so many different objectives in the Strategy could entail that it could become too weak, as it might become too differentiated in its objective and too wide stretching.

Meanwhile, the Commission was interested in the position of regional actors, NGO's etc. as they could contribute with their expertise in the regional arena (European Commission, 2009:10 & Wolfe, 2009). The inclusion of stakeholders on all levels of governance, and especially stakeholders outside the governance-structure, could also be an indication that the Commission wants to ensure the survival of the Strategy on a long-term basis. Therefore, it attempts to engage different stakeholders, who could be vital in continuously calling attention to the Strategy and "push" the Member States to implement the relevant actions.

The role of the Member States in the EUSBSR governance signifies one of the most remarkable novelties of macro-regional cooperation. The Member States, first and foremost the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, meet with the Commission in the so-called High-Level Group', where the future process of the Strategy is discussed (Interview Friis, 2009: A19). As argued by Brask, this brings in an independent political level to EU Regional Policy (Interview Brask, 2009: A2), which is something that we have not previously seen.

5.3 What's in it for the EU?

In the previous two sections of the analysis it has been discussed how and in what way the Strategy is a new form of internal EU governance in a cross-border regional context. With this in mind it is interesting to take a step back and examine the bigger picture behind EU's decision to create the Strategy and discuss what is in it for the EU and what consequences might follow.

In chapter 3, we argued that several different small steps led to the design of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the EU's vision for macro-regional strategies. During the process leading up to the EUSBSR, there was a considerable variation between the interests put forward by the European Parliament (mainly the Baltic Europe Intergroup), the Council, and the Commission. From potentially having an external dimension, the final outcome of the macro-regional frame of the EUSBSR was almost solely an internal EU Strategy, partly focusing on strengthening the internal market and having more effective transposition of EU-directives. (European Commission, 2009a: 10).

At the same time different events have played a role in creating the Strategy. The development of EU Regional Policy gave incentives to increase cooperation in the region. And the cooperative frameworks established within other similar regional-networks outside EU such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) provided an example on the structure of the framework. Where the EUSBSR is unique, is in its specific focus on internal EU policies and the desire to promote macro-regions in other parts of the European Union.

5.3.1 Olympic circles in the EU

The conceptualisation of macro-regions can be regarded as a natural next step in the EU's approach to 'the region' as a framework. Furthermore, the EU wants to draw benefits from creating macro-regions.

Moreover, The Commission has also emphasised that the EUSBSR “(...)offers the opportunity to (...) deliver real benefits for the region (the EU, red.) as a whole” (European Commission, 2009a: 11). The EUSBSR thus has to be seen as an example for possible future macro-regions internally as well as externally, hereby inducing the enhancement of EU's role on the global scene. This point is underlined by Joenniemi, who argues that the EUSBSR is the first example of a macro-regional strategy and a new instrument for the EU to achieve its own objectives (Joenniemi, 2009: 4). He argues that: “... macro-regions are not merely depicted as something that the Commission has to relate to and digest because of bottom-up pressure from within such regions themselves: they are instead put forward as an integral aspect of the essence of the Union. This is indeed a matter of strategy” (Joenniemi, 2009: 4).

This idea of macro-regions in the EU is not an entirely new. Several scholars have studied this topic (Browning & Joenniemi, 2001 in Tassinari, 2004: 201); among them is Esko Antola who foresees a Europe of Olympic circles (Antola, 2009: 8-12). He argues that the increasing heterogeneity of the EU, caused by a Union of 27 Member States, will entail that EU is pushed towards a differentiation process leading to a differentiated integration model for different regions. This will ultimately result in a Europe in different speeds (Antola, 2009: 8-9). Hans Brask recognises this tendency: *“Innovation policy in the Baltic Sea Region is very different from innovation policy in Bulgaria and Romania.”* (Interview Brask, 2009: A2). He therefore sees a need for differentiated policies across the EU in order to improve the relevance of the policies of the Union.

According to Antola, the Olympic circles will in the future, due to increasing regionalization, become five ‘mega-regions’ covering respectively the Mediterranean region, the central European countries within the Visegrad cooperation¹⁰, the Danube region¹¹ and the circle of Western Europe¹² and the Baltic region (Antola, 2009: 10-11). Some of these regions all have an external dimension as well, in the sense that they potentially cover countries from outside the EU (Antola, 2009: 10).

Characteristics for the emerging Olympic circles are that they all operate within the EU, but at the same time have an important external dimension in the sense that they shall attract the interest of bordering actors, thereby creating a flexible system, where countries can belong to more than just one Olympic circle (Antola, 2009 :13).

It is still too early to foresee whether the Baltic Sea Strategy will feature as a blueprint for the EU in the future, and whether Olympic circles will be the framework, in which to solve policy issues and create European integration in a successful manner.

However, Johan Friis mentions that the Council of the European Union has requested a similar strategy to be drawn up for the Danube region, which is expected to be presented in 2010.

As for additional macro-regional strategies, these will be initiated for the Mediterranean, North Sea and the Alpine Region if the Baltic Sea project and the

¹⁰ The Visegrad Cooperation dates back to 1991 and consist of Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. The cooperation is founded on the basis of common history, values, traditions, religion and identity (Website: Visegrad Group - About)

¹¹ The Danube region falls under the framework of the Danube Commission originating in 1948. It covers 13 countries, that all have the Danube river in common (Website: Danube Commission)

¹² The circle of Western Europe refers to a future strong region covering Germany, France and the Benelux countries (Antola, 2009: 10).

Danube project turn out to be successful (Interview Friis, 2009: A2). Andersson also mentions that she hopes the EU will use the EUSBSR as an example to follow (Interview Andersson, 2009: A1).

With all of the above in mind, the ENP cooperation, the Mediterranean Union, the concept of Olympic Circles and the likelihood of future macro-regional strategies, it is not far fetched to argue that the EUSBSR, although still a pilot project, is a new step for the EU to secure better implementation of EU policy and ultimately more European integration.

5.3.2 The other side of the coin

A concern of countries outside the Baltic Sea Region could be that EUSBSR might become too autonomous. This means that a potential downside to a successful EUSBSR and the promotion of other macro-regions will possibly mean an EU in different speeds, as mentioned above. By strengthening the Baltic Sea Region the EU runs the risk of creating a power-region much stronger than the rest of the EU, which in some way stands in contradiction to the idea of creating cohesion in the European Union as a whole. However, our overall impression is that the EUSBSR has not been controversial. According to Colin Wolfe from DG REGIO, the focus on the Baltic Sea Strategy has not brought about jealousy from other Member States. Quite the contrary, Member States have been very interested in learning how a strategy could be relevant in their region (Wolfe, 2009).

Stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region are mainly positive about the potential of the EUSBSR. As argued by Hans Brask the EUSBSR can be used as a starting point to make a 'regional Lisbon Strategy' for the EU. Hereby, the Union opens up for a region that is able to pursue objectives faster than other regions, while at the same time realising that it is very difficult to set common standards for all European regions. Moreover, he argues that the Strategy has not been created with the intention of splitting up the EU (Interview Brask, 2009: A2, A12).

This point is backed up by Åsa Andersson, who argues that macro-regional strategies could prove to be an effective tool to deal with issues that are not relevant to the entire EU. This especially concerns problems related to agricultural and fishery policies (Interview Andersson, 2009: 1).

Moreover, it can be added that the fact that the EUSBSR is so functional and 'action

plan-minded' in its framework might diminish the risk of EU developing in different speeds.

5.3.3 Principle of subsidiarity in relation to the EU as an actor

Both Brask and Andersson argue that the size of the EU makes it difficult to design policies that are relevant to all 27 Member States (Brask, 2009: A2; Andersson, 2009: A1). Therefore, EU policies might not be specific enough to deal with problems related to smaller geographical areas, which is why the concept of macro-regions could be beneficial. This is in line with the principle of subsidiarity, which indicates the importance of making EU policies relevant to the citizen by down-scaling policies, where possible, to a regional or local scale.

The EU's role as an actor in relation to macro-regional strategies, seem to pose a potential challenge in relation to the principle of subsidiarity. As argued in chapter 3.0, the subsidiarity principle plays a strong role within EU Regional Policy. By the governance structure in the EUSBSR analysed in section 5.2, the prominent role of the Member States, as a top-down actor, brings in a new dimension to solving region-specific issues. The Member States' role within the EUSBSR could seem to infringe the principle of subsidiarity that should allow problems to be solved at the lowest level possible. With the Strategy, the Member States now become active players in pursuing the EU's regional objectives, and thus interfere with the role of regional stakeholders. On the other hand, the regional specific nature of the Strategy could be seen as an attempt to realize the subsidiary principle regionally. In this perspective matters concerning the Baltic Sea or the surrounding Member States are handled as close to the lowest level possible rather than through regional decisions taken in Brussels.

Much depends on how the content and formal governance structure of the EU's first macro-regional strategy will function in practice. Yet, a new body or institution to deal with the implementation of the EUSBSR, which some regional stakeholders wished for (BSSSC et al., 2008: 10; WWF, 2008b: 4; Local Government Denmark, 2008: 5) and scholars pointed to (Schymik & Krumrey, 2009: 9; Bengtsson, 2009: 6), could have taken on this potential problem.

5.3.4 Macro-regions from an EU perspective: Balancing aspects of “deepening” and “widening”

In section 4.1 and section 5.1 the aspect of identity was touched upon and it was argued that macro-regions rely on a cooperation based on functionality and region-specific identifiability, rather than regional identity per se. Given that the EU has a vision to create several macro-regional strategies, it is interesting that the issue of identity is to a large extent left out of the EUSBSR. Especially since both EU regional policy and external strategies have had an identity aspect, as was argued in chapter 3. An example is the EU’s idea to create a ‘ring of friends’ around Europe with the European Neighbourhood Policy (Khasson, Vasilyan and Vos in Orbie 2009: 217). It can be argued that the reason why this is not the case with EU macro-regional strategies is that it is first and foremost an internal strategy.

Even though the EUSBSR Action Plan touches upon the subject of a regional identity, this is done briefly and it is safe to say that creating a regional identity is not an essential element in the whole concept of a macro-regional strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. In the case of the EUSBSR, a possible reason for this could be that an identity-component could seem like a step towards ‘detachment’ from the EU or decentralisation of EU policies. This is not the case with the EUSBSR.

Although there is no wish to create a “region within the region”, the macro-regional strategy is an instrument through which the EU, given similarities between the included countries and due to the supposedly improved conditions for closer cooperation, can pursue its objectives in an effective way. In other words: functionality before identity.

Interestingly, our interviewees open up for the idea that a strong functional cooperation may actually lead to a ‘we-feeling’ in the future.

Hans Brask is not quite sure how to deal with the issue of identity. On the one hand, he is somewhat doubtful as to whether one could speak of a regional identity in the Baltic Sea. On the other hand, he supports a horizontal level of cooperation where functional and practical issues such as awards and public debate forums are created. This could potentially be steps leading to the formation of a regional identity for the Baltic Sea Region (Interview Brask, 2009: A16). Brask is referring to the horizontal actions that are listed in the Strategy’s Action Plan, where *Build a regional identity* is listed at the very end (European Commission 2009b: 71). The EUSBSR Action Plan states that

opinion surveys and marketing campaigns, promotion of cultural heritage and a common history book are among the initiatives to be realised, in order to build a regional identity in the Baltic Sea Region (European Commission, 2009b: 71).

When adding up the above-mentioned points of ‘EU in different speeds’ and ‘identity’, we argue that the EU aims to balance ‘deepening’ and a ‘widening’ objectives with the macro-regions.

The EU has an objective of deepening. This is done by cooperation on EU policies regionally in a more effective manner by an “integrated approach”, which means that it takes cooperation within several policy areas to deal with the objectives put forward in the Strategy. Moreover, it opens up for governance at different levels (EU, national, and regional) and across sectors (governmental and NGO’s).

The widening objectives, we argue, concern the idea of creating a Europe of Olympic Circles, where the EUSBSR is a model for macro-regions strategies to be launched in other European regions and serve as a tool for the EU in pursuing the Union’s own objectives.

The European Commission expects that macro-regional concept will bring added value to the EU. With the foresights of establishing macro-regions elsewhere within the EU, common model, protocols and guidelines stemming from these cooperative structures might be able to be exported to other parts of Europe outside the immediate setting in which it was originally thought out. Hereby added value would be created and the regional cooperation could be beneficial to the rest of Europe as well.

6.0 Conclusion

This project discusses and analyses the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the EU's macro-regional ambitions in light of its unique governance structures and cross-border regional affiliation.

We conclude that The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the outline for macro-regional strategies represent a new and innovative approach. In the analysis, we identify three inter-linked aspects of novelties that we argue exemplify innovative features of the macro-regional Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

We argue that the concept of macro-regions constitutes a new forum for cross-border regional cooperation that cuts across the EU, national, and regional levels. The EUSBSR is to a large extent an internal strategy. It is based mainly on functional cooperation and characterized by identifiability and the politically interdependence among actors. The fact that no new institutions have been set up to implement the Strategy should be seen in line with the attempt to strengthen functional cooperation among involved stakeholders solving specific tasks set out in the Strategy.

The governance system that characterises the EUSBSR is actually one of the most innovative features in the macro-regional strategy, and what makes it more than just a strategy paper or an action plan. The macro-regional forum creates the basis for a new form of EU governance, which cannot be characterised as either multi-level governance type 1 or 2, in the distinction of Hooghe & Marks. In many respects the governance structure in the EUSBSR holds similarities with both types, but has some unique features as well.

Elements of top-down as well as bottom-up governance have been identified in the EUSBSR. Most remarkable is the role of the Member States in the implementation of the Strategy, which adds a new political dimension to EU Regional Policy, and bottom-up process by the inclusion of stakeholders in the design and content of the Strategy.

The governance patterns of the EUSBSR imply region-specific as well as more general elements, and could therefore serve as a model for other macro-regional strategies, which is what is constituted in the idea of Europe of Olympic circles. Furthermore, we have argued that macro-regional strategies could prove to be an effective way of solving region-specific problems in line with EU objectives. We argue that the macro-regional strategy is tool for the EU to exert its role as an actor.

Furthermore, we conclude that it is important to keep a balance between the ‘deepening’ and ‘widening’ aspects of the strategy, in order to make the framework of the EUSBSR an applicable model for other European regions.

7.0 Perspectives

The project identifies new features that constitute the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).

However, the continuance of the Strategy on a longer term is based on several factors that might create obstacles to the effective implementation of the Strategy. The progress is dependent on continued political willingness and commitment. This is especially relevant, since no new institutions or funding has been provided along with the Strategy.

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has in the last six months received considerable political attention from especially the EU level, which is not least due to the Swedish decision to prioritise the Strategy in their EU presidency in autumn 2009. Poland has announced that a review of the EUSBSR will be made during the Polish Presidency in autumn 2011. According to our interviewees, the success of the Strategy is linked to the focus remaining on the Strategy, also after Swedish and Polish presidency, in order for the Strategy not just to become a political agreement without clear follow-up activities. Our interviewees argue that the Strategy has to be dealt with at a high political level including Heads of states (Interview Andersson, 2009: A4).

A further dimension concerns the global financial crisis. When the concept of a macro-regional Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was first outlined in 2005-2007, the financial situation in the Baltic Region was positive and portrayed a potentially financial prosperous and capable region (Brask, 2009: 10). Since then tables have significantly turned with a financial crisis hitting especially the Baltic economies extremely hard. Brask argues that focus on the financial crisis could overshadow the commitment to implement the Strategy. Resources could instead be spent on fulfilling other needs and objectives than the ones set out in the Strategy (Brask, 2009: 10).

Additionally, the lack of funding of the Strategy could also affect successful implementation of the different objectives. The Strategy clearly states that there will be no additional funding: *“The Commission is not proposing additional funding or other resources at this time”* (European Commission, 2009a: 11). Instead funding of actions and projects will come from already existing funding instruments (European Commission, 2009a: 11).

The above pitfalls could potentially endanger the successful implementation of the EUSBSR and are at the same time lessons to be learnt for future macro-regions.

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Annex 1: Interview with Hans Brask, Director, Baltic Development Forum (6 November 2009)

A1: Jeg er meget enig i alt det, der er skrevet (tidsskriftartikler om EUSBSR, red.), og man kan jo anlægge en kritisk tone, som er det, forskere skal gøre – eller man kan anlægge en mere pragmatisk tilgang, og det er det, jeg selv har anlagt og som også anlægges i denne ”State of the Region”-report: Det er så godt, som det nu kan være her og nu. Fordi strategier i EU har aldrig været noget, hvor man springer lige ud, og så har man en genial strategi, som bare er en strategi, som man kender det teoretisk. Alt bliver jo lavet inkrementelt, som en del af en masse kompromisser. Jeg har aldrig set en strategi i EU, hvor man siger, at det var som man kunne forvente med klart definerede problemstillinger, klart definerede prioriteringer og målsætninger, og sådan noget osv. Og når vi anlægger en mere pragmatisk tilgang, er det fordi at vi lever af denne region, og hvis vi gik ud og sagde: ”sikke noget lort”, ville folk nok blive lidt overraskede! Og især også fordi vi arbejder sammen med det svenske EU-formandskab. Vi har lige afholdt vores store topmøde i Stockholm den 5-6. oktober, hvilket var i samarbejde med det svenske EU-formandskab, og de har jo virkelig brugt rigtig mange kræfter på det her. Men jeg vil sige, at jeg anerkender mange af de akademiske vinkler, der er anlagt, og jeg er sådan set enig i dem alle sammen.

Q: Men hvorfor er der brug for en strategi? Der er jo masser af regionalt samarbejde i forvejen?

A2: Jeg har selv baggrund i EU-systemet og har siddet på den danske repræsentation i Bruxelles, og har siddet i Udenrigsministeriet og haft med Lissabon-dagsordenen og Østersøregionen at gøre. Så jeg har lidt en tilgang via EU-systemet og i stigende grad via regionen selv og via Bruxelles. Det som er helt genialt og interessant ved denne strategi er først og fremmest, at det er den første, vi har af sin art. Det vil sige, at det er noget, der bidrager til EU’s institutionelle udvikling, synes jeg. Det andet er, at det jo også er en konsekvens af EU’s udvidelse og at EU i stigende grad bliver fragmenteret og at forskelligheden stiger, og derfor tror jeg at det er en god idé, at man lægger et niveau ind. – Det kan man sige, at man har haft i mange år i EU’s regionaludvikling, men ikke på den samme måde. Det har været sådan noget med at udligne forskelle, men det har ikke haft et selvstændigt politisk niveau, som man lægger ind mellem nationalstaten og EU-systemet. Og jeg synes det er meget rigtigt, når EU bliver mere og

mere heterogent, at man siger, at der er regioner, der har særlige problemstillinger og særlige karaktertræk, som legitimerer, at man forsøger at uddybe samarbejdet inden for et geografisk område. Vel at mærke i fuld respekt for EU's *acquis* og EU's fælles regler. Og det er meget vigtigt for os. Det her er jo ikke et forsøg på at splitte EU op. Tværtimod mener jeg, at det kan være med til at sikre bedre sammenhængskraft i EU, hvis man anerkender, at man kan lave, designe politikker på et geografisk område, som passer bedre til de særlige forhold, der gør sig gældende. På denne måde kan mange af EU's politikker blive bedre og mere relevante. Innovationspolitik i Østersøen er anderledes end innovationspolitik i Bulgarien og Rumænien, sådan er det. Og hvis man skal lave noget, som passer for alle, kan det være meget vanskeligt. Derfor skal man designe noget. Og jeg synes, at hvis man endda kigger på det indre markeds review, der er blevet lavet.. det indre marked er jo noget af det mest hellige og præget af virkelig fælles regler, ikke? Selv i det review, er Kommissionen kommet frem til, at der er behov for yderligere udbygninger af det indre marked og at der kan være behov for, at der laves særlige programmer og politikker for visse geografiske områder, visse sektorer, visse problemstillinger. Og hvis det selv i sådant et review siges, at det kan give god mening at lave nogle del-programmer, som er mere relevante for visse af EU's geografiske områder end andre, så synes jeg nærmest, det er et argument i sig selv at det godt kan lade sig gøre, og at det er en god idé at lave sådan nogle strategier, der går ind mellem nationalstaten og EU, hvor man lovgiver fuldstændig ens for alle. Og det nye er så også, at det er en EU-strategi, der kombinerer regional og europæisk integration. Dvs. at man forsøger at få det bedste af begge verdener – det regionale samarbejde har været præget af meget svage institutioner: Østersørådet er en meget svag organisation med et lille sekretariat. Uffe Ellemann vil argumentere for, at det aldrig har været meningen, at det skulle være en stærk organisation, men skabe netværk og politisk dialog. Ved at tage alle de positive tegn, der er, og karaktertræk, der er i Østersøregionen med et stort ønske om samarbejde over grænser og et hav af netværk og organisationer. Ved at kombinere det – på mange måder bottom-up inspireret – med EU's stærke institutioner og stærk styring, det synes jeg er rigtig godt og relevant. Så jeg tror det kan hjælpe EU med at gøre EU mere relevant for borgere, virksomheder og organisationer, og det kan være godt for regionen, at den får øget styrke. Så derfor synes jeg, at man skal have sådan en strategi.

Men den er jo lige blevet vedtaget i sidste uge, så vi får stadig at se, om det kan lade sig gøre og leve op til de høje forventninger, der er. Der er virkelig høje forventninger, hvilket også er godt – det lægger et vist pres. Og det er også afgørende, om der er den

fornødne politiske vilje til at leve op til det. Vi er spændte på at se situationen efter det svenske EU-formandskab, om der er en ligeså drivende kraft.

Q: Vi har læst jeres position paper, og selv om I har et lille opt-out i forhold til det beslutningsmæssige, men hvad betyder det, at der ikke bliver oprettet en ny institution, som skal varetage og implementere strategien? Er det et problem?

A3: Det er noget af det, der bliver spændende at se: Om man er i stand til at kombinere et multi-level governance-system, hvor man bygger på EU's institutioner, men samtidig åbner op for at regionale institutioner kan gå ind og spille en rolle. Det er den helt store test-case. På det område er jeg en lille smule nervøs fordi jeg lige er blevet gjort opmærksom på, at vi nok ikke bliver afholder af stakeholder-forum til næste år, hvilket vi jo selv synes, ville være fuldstændig oplagt.

Q: At I ikke skal være med til det?

A4: Nej, hvem der skal have ansvaret for at arrangere stakeholder-forum. Det er ikke defineret i beslutningen (strategien, red.). Der skal bare være årlige stakeholder-fora, og man skal ikke bygge på nye institutioner, men benytte de eksisterende. Og hvem skal det være? Vi mener, at BDF er ret oplagt til det, fordi vi i dag eksisterer som en platform for, hvor forskellige aktører mødes cross-border, siger vi normalt.. cross-level, altså vi har fra de øverste politiske niveauer til græsrodsorganisationerne. Og vi har også det her cross-sektor, som vi synes er vigtigt; altså vi har erhvervslivet, vi har det centrale beslutningsniveau, vi har det lokale, vi har byerne, parlamentarikerne. Og vi er en neutral platform, frem for alt. Det, det nok tegner til er, at DG REGIO vil samarbejde med BSSSC, en regional organisation, og sammen med Committee of the Regions (CoR). CoR ser jo nu en chance for at få et nyt drive og en ny rolle, efter jo i mange år at have været et støvet politisk foretagende, hvilket jeg mener – det er nu 'off the record'..

Det jeg frygter, er at det bliver en DG REGIO-logik, der kommer til at præge for meget. Strategien er jo lavet af DG REGIO i den forstand at de kan koordinere, men det er jo med et bidrag fra alle andre DG'er. Også fra DG ENTERPRISE og DG MARE og DG ENVIRONMENT, og hvad de alle sammen hedder. Jeg er lidt bange for, at det bliver den der lidt bistands-agtige logik, der kommer til at præge det.

Q: Du mener, at der skal være en politisk overbygning på det, for at det får et drive?

A5: Ikke en politisk overbygning. Man skal bare passe på, at man nu ikke går ind i den sektor, der hedder DG REGIO, som taler med CoR, som taler med regionerne. For det er jo ikke den samme logik, der er i DG ENTERPRISE. Det er det jo meget det private erhvervsliv.. Det er jo den del, der skal.. Men vi får se, om det bliver sådan. Kommissionen siger, at de vil samarbejde med os i 2011, hvor vi planlægger, at vores topmøde skal være i Warszawa, nu hvor polakkerne vil prioritere et første review af strategien højt i 2011.

Q: Må vi spørge ind til det, der foregår nu? Vi kan jo læse os til nogle ting, men vi har måske også en idé om, at der skal besluttes nogle af de her flagship-projekter. Det er svært at gennemskue hvilke, og hvor osv.?

A6: Det er jo også det, der er spændende at se. Det er jo en meget ambitiøs strategi i den forstand, at der er mange projekter. Om alle lande tager lige stort ansvar, og især om Tyskland løfter sit. Og også om Balterne, som i øjeblikket ingen penge har, om de har administrativ kapacitet og overskud til at stå i spidsen for det. Det skulle jo nødvendig være sådan, at det kun er de nordiske lande, som løfter. Alle skal ligesom vise, at de er committede til det. Og det er den proces, der er i gang nu. Siden foråret har den været meget regeringsstyret. Det har simpelthen været de her koordinatore, der har mødtes med Kommissionen, som har siddet og budt ind og besluttet. Og nu er man igen begyndt at åbne op for, at der er andre politiske niveauer, organisationer osv., der kan gå ind og tage ansvar.

Der er lige en tanke, som kommer til mig.. Nordisk Ministerråd indkalder til konference, som jeg synes, I skulle deltage i. Og jeg tror netop også, at Nordisk Ministerråd vil gå ind at tage nogle politiske ansvarsområder. I strategiens tilblivelse var de skubbet lidt ud til siden, fordi man fra svensk side var meget fokuseret på, at det skulle være en EU-strategi, og det skulle være Kommissionen.. Så holdt man i høj grad CBSS helt ude, de måtte slet ikke komme ind.. Men Nordisk Ministerråd kom langsomt mere og mere ind i processen, og nu er man så tryk, så nu kan de godt komme ind og spille en rolle. Men de burde jo helt naturligt løfte, da en masse af deres aktiviteter falder fuldstændig i tråd med strategien. Så der sker egentlig ikke så meget behind the scenes andet end at de forskellige melder sig ind på forskellige projekter. Og det andet,

der vel sker, er, at man begynder at søge om de her strukturfondsmidler, med Østersøprogrammet som selvfølgelig det mest oplagte. Og så begynder de forskellige projektholdere at mødes og ser om de kan løfte det. Så jeg tror sådan set ikke der lige nu sker så meget endda. Det, der bliver spændende at se, er om Parlamentet bliver i stand til at få sat nogle penge ind på den budgetlinje, som er oprettet.. Der er en budgetlinje for samarbejde i Østersøregionen, der står bare ikke nogen penge på den! At få linjen oprettet er det første skridt at tage. Det kan måske været et mindre skridt at tage, at der kommer lidt penge ind på. Vi har forsøgt – i det gamle Parlament – at sige, at vi synes, der skal nogle penge ind på den budgetlinje, bl.a. fordi man skal sikre, at man får en ordentlig governance-struktur. Det koster jo nogle penge, at holde møder og indkalde.. og som Kommissionen fungerer i dag.. det har vi prøvet, fordi BDF var et af de rundbords-fora, som var med til at identificere områder og prioritere strategien i tilblivelsesprocessen, der havde man et samarbejde med forskellige organisationer. Og vores topmøde i Øresundsregionen sidste år holdt vi sammen med Kommissionen. Og det er næsten fuldstændig umuligt, fordi de har sådan nogle bureaukratiske regler for støtte. Så vi har ikke nogen frie midler til at arrangere møder og sørge for at de her stakeholders er involveret. Det første er, at der er politiske vilje, som jeg nævnte tidligere. Det andet succeskriterium er, at alle de her organisationer og NGO'er bliver holdt til ilden og opmuntret og føler, at de bliver hørt og inddraget. Og at denne her lidt mere regeringsstyrede proces, som vi har været igennem nu, bliver åbnet op, sådan så de kan komme ind og byde på de her forskellige opgaver.

Q: Føler I, at I har haft det indtil nu?

A7: Vi føler, at vi har været ret privilegerede. Vi har en løbende dialog med DG REGIO og jeg ringer og taler med dem, når jeg vil, nærmest. Jeg kender ham, der er koordinator osv. osv. Nu har Udenrigsministeriet også lige sendt en dansk national ekspert derved: Catharina Sørensen – hun er lige kommet derved og havde første arbejdsdag i mandags og er til introduktionskurser nu. Jeg fik lige en mail fra hende.

Q: Vil det sige, at der sidder nationale eksperter fra hvert land?

A8: Der er nogle lande, der sender nationale eksperter til Bruxelles for at hjælpe Kommissionen med den her governance-struktur. For der skal jo gerne være nye ressourcer til at løfte den her opgave, som Kommissionen nu har fået, til løbende at

administrere.. Jeg synes det er godt, at nogle lande har sendt nogle derned. Sverige har gjort det..

Q: Er det frivilligt?

A9: Ja, nationalstaterne finansierer hovedparten af deres løn og Kommissionen topper op: Det er sådan en 'national ekspert-ordning'. Så der er tre eksperter udsendt af lande i regionen.

Q: Som skal være der de næste 2 år?

A10: Ja, i en periode. Jeg tror nok, hun skal være der i et par år. Det bliver spændende, om de (Kommissionen, red.) sætter dem til at lave Danube-strategien eller om de nu virkelig får mulighed for at arbejde med Østersøstrategien. Det bliver lidt spændende!

Q: Når de nu endelig får flere ressourcer..

A11: Ja, netop!

Q: Hvilke projekter planlægger BDF at være med i?

A12: Vi har Vinnova som strategisk partner. Vinnova er det svenske innovationsagentur med masser af penge til innovation. Og der er et flagskibsprojekt i strategien, som har med innovation at gøre. Det håber og regner vi med, at vi skal være involveret i. Det andet store projekt, som vi er spurgt, om vi vil deltage i, er om det indre marked, hvor Polen har ansvaret. Vi har sagt 'hvor er I og kommer I ikke snart i gang?', men vi har ikke hørt noget fra polakkerne endnu. Men man kan sige, at vi har sådan set ikke ressourcer til at være storleverandør i nogle af de har projekter. Vi laver den her rapport (State of the Region, red.), som sætter nogle af rammebetingelserne. Vi synes faktisk, at den er et flagskibsprojekt i sig selv – det er bare ikke blevet defineret! Vi har haft meget stor indflydelse på indholdet af strategien, og vi har sagt, at vi gerne vil have den rolle som stakeholder-forum, som desværre ikke får til næste år. Så det er det, vi kan. Uden yderligere ressourcer kan vi ikke.. Men vores rolle er normalt, at vi sætter fokus på forskellige emner. Det, som vi også synes er meget interessant er, at vi håber EU-strategien også kan udvikle sig til en regional Lissabon-strategi. For Lissabon-

dagsordenen skal jo reformeres i 2010 og logikken i regionaludvikling er jo altså, at der er visse lande, der er knyttet økonomisk tættere sammen, og hvor vækststrategier påvirker hinanden mere end andre, så hvorfor skulle vi ikke lave en regional vækststrategi? Det er meget svært at lave en regionalstrategi, der dækker alle lande lige meget. I denne rapport (State of the Region, red.), der benchmarker vi landenes opfølgelse af Lissabon-dagsordenen og vi kan se, at vi næsten allerede nu opfølger hovedparten af de målsætninger, der er sat. Så derfor kan man sige at Lissabonstrategien begynder at være irrelevant. Så derfor skal der sættes en ny – og hvorfor kan vi ikke betragte det der (State of the Region, red.) som en regional strategy for jobs and growth – det foreslår vi i den rapport. Og jeg tror faktisk, at næste års topmøde i Vilnius kom til at hedde noget med ”Regional Strategy for Jobs and Growth”.

Q: Hvordan vurderer du tankegangen om makro-regioner?

A13: Det, jeg tror Antola har skrevet bedst – han taler om Olympic Circles og det synes jeg er en meget god måde at se det på. Nu går vi jo hen til næste cirkel, og det er Danube. Balkan – jeg ved ikke om det er helt modent endnu. Men det, der hele tiden har været en udfordring er, at det skal være en EU-strategi. Og det vil sige, at det skal være EU-lande. Med Balkan er der jo stadig mange lande, der ikke er medlem, men det kunne de jo nok blive ad åre. Så det er en intern strategi. Eksterne strategier på Balkan har man jo, med alle de forskellige instrumenter, man har der. Men i høj grad vil det være relevant. Jeg var i Groningen, Holland, i sidste uge. Der sidder man og tænker på ”skal vi have sådan en?” (strategi, red.) og de leder meget efter partnere. Den konference hed ”Hansa Reinvented”, fordi Groningen var faktisk en gang en Hanse-by, og de ser lidt den der historiske mulighed for at koble sig op på Østersøregionen. De vil både være en Østersøregion, men er også en Nordsøregion, og de bliver så glade, når jeg siger, at Danmark er jo i virkeligheden også splittet imellem Østersøregionen og en Nordsøorientering, ikke? Men de havde lidt svært ved at finde partnere og er i en lidt identitetssøgende proces, fordi det oplagte ville være Benelux, men de har problemer nok, må man sige. Og Tyskland er simpelthen bare for stor. Men det er i høj grad også en Hansetradition, dvs. Hamborg, Kiel, Lübeck og Rostock. Men Meckelenburg-Vorpommern er stadig meget tilbagestående og ikke udadvendt i sådan noget regionalt.. de er nok kommet op i omdrejninger, men de er ikke kommet dertil endnu. Så indflydelse til Berlin går i høj grad via Hansestæderne, og noget af det, der er

udfordringen er netop at holde de store landes opmærksomhed fanget.. Polens og Tysklands strategi.. det er meget vigtigt.

Altså det Nordisk-Baltiske er drivkraften, men uden de store (lande, red.), så taber man det, der er hele idéen med den her region. Men man skal bare heller ikke altid blive og vente på de store, så må de små lande gå i forvejen, og det synes jeg, de har vist sig dygtige til.

Q: Har det vist sig svært indtil nu?

A14: Ja, det har det. Ikke med Polen, overraskende nok. De har lavet en stor bog – den skal I nok også lige se. Vi har haft et fantastisk godt samarbejde med polakkerne. Men det har også noget at gøre med, at den nuværende polske regering er fra Gdansk. Tusk er fra Gdansk, og i det hele taget er Gdansk, som kraftcenter i Polen, meget dominerende. Og lige nu har Tusk via hele det her Solidarnoct – det var jo Gdansk. Så mange har den der Østersø.. men du skal ikke langt ned i Polen før de ikke har den mere. Men i øjeblikket er der en positiv orientering. Vi ser det også som meget positivt, at polakkerne har sagt, at de vil tage Strategien op i deres formandskab i 2011. Men det er langt fra en given sag, og de starter faktisk meget fra scratch. Og jeg tror der er ligeså mange andre dimensioner ind over deres engagement. Det har noget at gøre med, at de ser de nordiske lande som ufarlige og som god inspiration til polsk udvikling, hvor vi jo ved, at de til tider har haft problematiske relationer til deres tyske naboer. Så jeg tror det er en orientering om, hvor skal Polen være i fremtiden. Netop det her med innovation, viden, forskning og udvikling – det tror jeg er noget, man synes er rigtigt at stile efter, men som jo langt fra er så udviklet og orienteret, som de nordiske lande er.

Q: Hvad med de baltiske lande, som ikke er udset til at være koordinører på mange af Østersøstrategiens projekter?

A15: P.t. er situationen, at der sker politisk set utrolig meget positivt, men økonomisk er det meget grælt, og der er nogle, der siger, at det var godt strategien kom på nuværende tidspunkt, hvor den kan være med til at sætte lidt gang i kludene igen. Men det kan også være en barriere for balternes evne til at tage ansvar, fordi de i øjeblikket simpelthen ikke har penge til at deltage i noget internationalt m.v. Så det er meget vanskeligt. Men balterne har ikke noget andet valg. De er jo ikke på de globale markeder endnu. Deres handel går til de umiddelbare naboer. Balterne er også interesserede i at man ikke helt

udelukker Rusland: På den ene side vil de gerne bruge det til et instrument til at lukke endnu mere af. På den anden side er deres handel jo også med Rusland og Kaliningrad, deres umiddelbare nabo. Så det er vigtigt for balterne, at den der eksterne dimension også udvikler sig parallelt. Den der Northern Dimension, som har ligget lidt stille igennem nogle år. Men det interne og det eksterne spor skulle gerne udvikle sig parallelt. Det har vi her i BDF gjort vores beskedne bidrag til, bl.a. ved, at der nu oprettes et Northern Dimension Business Council. Det håber vi kan blive et udtryk for, at der sker noget på den eksterne dimension, samtidig med at der er så meget gang i den interne strategi. Og i denne måned vil der være et embedsmandsmøde, hvor man vil notere sig, at det her business council udvikler sig. Vores perspektiver med det er, at det skal være vores evne til at udvikle den helt unikke adgang vi har til Rusland, som jo ingen andre EU-lande har. Den privilegerede adgang skal vi jo netop udvikle, ikke? Den kan godt udnyttes bedre. Og perspektivet kunne være, at man udvikler et regionalt EU-Rusland roundtable. I EU i dag er der et EU-Russia Industrialist Roundtable, hvor erhvervslivets top i EU mødes med det russiske erhvervslivs top. Hvis vi kunne lave en regional aflægger af det, så ville det være fantastisk godt. Dermed jo ikke sagt, at man kan få løst nogle af de grundlæggende problemer, det kan man jo ikke gøre regionalt. Men man kan få skabt en masse business kontakter og personlige kontakter, som bare er dødvigtige for at få løst praktiske ting med erhvervslivet i Rusland, så det kunne være til god nytte.

Q: Vi har bemærket at Østersøstrategien ikke omhandler meget om, hvad der kendetegner en evt. identitet i Østersøregionen. Er det bevidst, at man fokuserer meget på det funktionelle i samarbejdet?

A16: Jeg har det også lidt vanskeligt med identitet. Man skal bare heller ikke være overfølsom overfor det. Jeg tror i virkeligheden der er en femte kategori i EU-strategien. Der er de fire søjler, men der er også et horisontalt niveau, som handler om, at man skal lave nogle projekter, som understøtter alle de funktionelle og praktiske ting. Man vil lave awards osv. Vi forsøger at lave en Baltic Sea think-tank, som vil kunne være med til at få debatteret emnerne mere livligt. Alle de her forskere, som vi har talt om, har vi faktisk inviteret til at være med til at lave en tænketank. Sådant en public debat om regionen. Det er sådan noget, som langsomt kan udvikle sig til en identitet eller en orientering. Men identitet er jo et vanskeligt begreb – vi føler jo ikke engang, at vi rigtigt har en nordisk identitet, og en østersø-identitet ligger endnu længere væk. Men

jeg tror, at hvis du spørger balterne, så vil de sige, at de har en baltisk identitet, og så har de vel en østersø-identitet. Også fordi det er noget, de ønsker. De ønsker jo ligesom at tilpasse sig mere. Jeg tror også, at i Sverige og Finland fylder østersøen bare så meget mere, end den gør i Danmark.

Så vi er faktisk med i et branding-projekt, som lige er blevet vedtaget. Og vi har igennem mange år haft med branding at gøre. I kan se (peger på billede på væggen) det er Simon Anholt. Han er nation branding ekspert. Og ham med brillerne her (?) er også nation branding ekspert. Det er ligesom for at italesætte, at der er nogle fælles værdier. Men regionen er så heterogen, og det er et faktum. Og hvis man virkelig skal have effektiv branding, så skal man jo dele mange værdier. Men bare det, at man taler om det og har en offentlig debat med både hvad man kan kalde sikkerhedspolitik, og funktionelle emner. Det gør, at så begynder man at have en fælles orientering. Jeg tror, vi skal holde det på det niveau. Men Kommissionen har sagt, at vi skal have den der 'femte søjle', der måske er. Så det synes jeg er fint.

Q: Så Kommissionen er med inde over branding-projektet?

A17: Ja branding eller det identitetsmæssige, i sådan et mere løst begreb, hvor man måske skal have en award. Der er også nogle, der taler om "hvorfor laver vi ikke en fælles historiebog". Der er mange måder at præsentere historiens udvikling i regionen på. Kunne man lave en fælles om Østersøregionens historie, som alle kunne være enige i – det kunne godt blive et kæmpearbejde! Men sådan nogle idéer synes jeg er glimrende.

Q: Hvordan ser I strategien om 5 år?

A18: Lige nu ser man frem til det polske formandskab, det første review der. Og så er spørgsmålet om man kan gøre strategien endnu mere skarp der. For lige nu er det jo ikke rigtig en strategi, for der er alle mulige bits and pjece. Kommissionen skriver alt det rigtige; det er en integreret strategi og alle de der ting. Det er lidt ligesom Lissabonstrategien, der er jo også sådan et juletræ med alle mulige ting. Og måske kunne man måske skærpe det lidt til. Og jeg synes idéen med at gøre det til et 'jobs and growth'.. er en rigtig god idé. Samtidig er der nogle konkrete problemstillinger, man skal have løst: Det at Østersøen er et af verdens mest forurenede have, det er jo ikke jobs and growth. Men det er et problem, man også skal have løst.

Så mit perspektiv er det polske formandskab og et review af strategien der, og ligesom få spidset (strategien, red.) lidt mere til. Og så kan sådan noget fungere, så længe der er politisk vilje til det, vil jeg mene.

Så skal man så se efter 2013, når de nye strukturfondsmidler skal vedtages, og hvor mange penge er der, og sådan noget. Det kan jo også have stor indflydelse på, hvad man prioriterer.

Q: Er der fejl og mangler ved EU's 'traditionelle' regionalpolitik?

A19: Alt dette med, at Østersøen har så mange institutioner, det er både en fordel og en ulempe. Det er en fordel hvis man har netværk og en masse mennesker organiseret. Ulempen er, at det er meget svært at styre og der er meget overlap – der har der været mange ulemper. Nu har vi ligesom defineret en fælles ramme. Så gælder det om, at vi alle sammen bliver overbeviste om, at nu skal I altså i arbejde inden for den. Så har man jo sonderet, og det hjælper jo meget med koordination. Så tidligere har der været større forvirring, kan man sige. Og i og med, at vi er sådan en platform, har vi forsøgt at koordinere det, men det er bare dødsvært.

Hvad siger I selv til det hele?

Q: Det har været svært at vide hvem af de involverede, der har indflydelse. Teoretisk set kører vi på to ben – vi har regionalisme og den makro-regionale tankegang, og på den anden side governance-aspektet i det. For netop at finde frem til hvad det nye i strategien er. For der er ikke nogen ny finansiering, og der er potentielt set heller ikke nogen nye institutioner, og på den anden side er der en form for ramme stadigvæk. Så hvad er det her for en strategi?

A20: Jeg synes også det her med governance er meget interessant. Og det er unikt, hvis man kan få det til at fungere. For mig at se kunne det helt sjove perspektiv være, at man overhalede Frankrig og alle de andre, der er tale om. Et samarbejde, hvor der er nogle pionerer, og hvor Frankrig ligesom ikke skulle være pionerer og gå forrest og være kernen. Man taler om *groupe pionée* eller et 'core Europe'. Det kan være, at man i Nordeuropa ligesom overhaler dem totalt indenom, ved at sige, at nu laver vi bare et regionalt samarbejde, og det fantastiske ved det her er netop, at det er inden for traktatens rammer, hvor Frankrig ellers havde forestillet sig, at de skulle gå forrest.

Fordi uden for traktatens rammer.. at stå i spidsen. Hvis vi nu siger, at vi kan få endnu mere ud af samarbejdet i den her region, få sat vores målsætninger for 'jobs and growth', som jo ikke skal gå ud over nogen andre, tværtimod. Men som bare er bedre defineret. Det kunne da være lidt sjovt. Så kan man presse samarbejdet videre på den måde, ved at gøre det på sådan en lødig måde, hvor man får det regionale til at fungere rigtig godt. Det synes jeg er et sjovt perspektiv.

Med hensyn til det sikkerhedspolitiske, så er der mange forskere, der lægger meget vægt på det. Det ved jeg ikke rigtig, om man skal lægge så meget vægt på. Den er der jo helt oplagt, og den kom sådan set også frem, da jeg var i Holland, for de har sådan en meget pragmatisk tilgang om, at vi skal jo bare samarbejde om nogle projekter, er det ikke det, det hele går ud på? Nej, det er det jo ikke. Så har I jo misforstået noget. Det hele kom jo sig af den sikkerhedspolitiske dimension, som hele tiden er der. Og alt det her med Nordstream-diskussionerne, og når vi kommer ind på emner som forsyningssikkerhed og energi, som jo også er et vigtigt element i strategien, og det her med 'Energy Islands' og sådan noget. Så kommer man jo lynhurtigt ind i alle sådan nogle sikkerhedspolitiske aspekter. Det ligger bare lidt latent og er ikke det primære. Men nogle gange kommer man ind på nogle af emner, hvor de ting popper op igen.

Q: Men i mange af de emner er Rusland jo en vigtig spiller. Hvorfor er de så ikke mere involveret i strategien?

A21: Jeg synes også, at man skal gøre alt hvad man kan for at Rusland bliver involveret, men de er jo bare ikke involveret i beslutningsprocessen – det er jo bare en EU.. Men når det så er vedtaget, så skal man jo gøre alt for.. (at involvere Rusland, red.). Og vores næste topmøde bliver i Vilnius. Og der bliver Kaliningrad selvfølgelig en del af det, der kommer til at bliver drøftet. Og der skal man gøre alt hvad man kan for at få dem med ind over.

Q: Men der har været noget kritik af, at selv om der blev sat en ny strategi for Northern Dimension i 2008, så er det en meget lille del at Northern Dimension kan optage af Østersøstrategiens elementer, ikke? Kan man komme til at skyde sig selv i foden?

A22: ..Og hvad skal CBSS-sekretariatets rolle være? For jeg vil jo sige, at det er et Northern Dimension-sekretariat. For der er Rusland jo med som lige partner. Så det er svært for det sekretariat at have noget med EU at gøre. Der er stadig en masse organisationer, som ikke helt har tilpasset sig den nye virkelighed, hvor der er en intern og en ekstern dimension. Men det er heller ikke sådan, at når man kommer ned på et lavt niveau med projekter, så skal man jo stadig, hvis der kommer en masse spildevand fra Rusland, så skal man jo selvfølgelig involvere dem. Det er logisk. Så det har også lidt at gøre med hvilket niveau, man taler om. Når man kommer ned på det praktisk niveau, så er det helt oplagt, at man bare skal lave projekter med russiske virksomheder, ligegyldigt hvad det er.

Q: Der er blevet fremlagt 109 høringssvar op til strategien. Hvor meget har I sat jer ind i andre positioner?

A23: Ikke så meget. Vi synes, vi kender meget af det. Mange af dem har lobbyorganisationer, som siger ”husk nu byerne”, ”husk nu regionerne”. Sådan en rolle har vi jo egentlig ikke rigtig. På mange måder kan man sige, at vores orientering er den samme som Kommissionens – ”the greater is good”. Og så har vi selvfølgelig vores egen eksisterende placering at passe på. Men mange af de bidrag er jo forsøg på at gøre opmærksomme på forskellige interesser, og det er jo fint. Men jeg har ikke læst dem alle sammen.

Q: Vi skal også tale med WWF, som jo er meget målrettet direkte på Østersøen og rensningen af den, og hvorvidt de har oplevet hele situationen på en anden måde. Og hvordan NGO’ernes forbindelse er til strategien.

A24: På hele det maritime og vandområdet er det jo et helt særligt kapitel. HELCOM er jo som international organisation, som har gjort en masse godt arbejde; de har identificeret det hele og alle planer er der, men de har bare ingen penge. Og de har ingen instrumenter til at slå landene i hovedet med. Der er det, at Kommissionen byder ind. Og Kommissionen har taget hele HELCOM’s strategi og puttet den udover EU-strategien, og det synes jeg kun er godt, hvis man så kan begynde at bruge nogle af EU’s instrumenter. Det var det jeg sagde, at hvis man kan få bedste ud af EU’s stærke institutioner, det vil jo være fint. Men WWF vil jo nok også.. jeg mener, det kapitel er lidt særligt, fordi der er virkelig nogle interesser på spil. Og der er en kamp om at få løst

et konkret problem. Andre kapitler er måske lidt mere med at udnytte muligheder, og sådan noget.

Annex 2: Interview with Åsa Andersson, Head of the Swedish Nature and Baltic Sea Programme, WWF (16 November 2009)

Q: Why is there a need for the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region?

A1: I know why we think there is a need for it (strategy red.). In the Baltic Sea Region there are many different conventions and agreements like the HELCOM Baltic Sea action plan, and we have a very long list of conventions and agreements, but if you look at them most of those agreements are made for one (picture) or for one specific issue. Again if you look at the Baltic Sea action plan from HELCOM it is only dealing with environmental problems, but not with the entire region. And I think that from our perspective we can see that the implementation of many of the agreements and conventions we have so far, have been very weak, and I think one reason for that is, that you try to deal with it sector by sector. And the environmental ministers are the ones that find the Baltic Sea Action Plan, for example, and then they go home and meet their ministers from agriculture or from fisheries or so and then they probably don't, or maybe they don't agree. So they have problems implementing things they have agreed on in the conventions. So I think there is a need for a more comprehensive strategy for the entire region looking at both the environmental perspective, but also the sustainable development and the development of the region, and I think that is what we need for the Baltic Sea. I guess from the EU perspective it is also that there are issues that are specific for this region and development of the region safe and security, the environmental problems in the Baltic Sea region, issues that are very specific for this region, but maybe not for the best of Europe. So there was a need to have just one integrated strategy for this region to deal with issues relevance for the Baltic.

Q: How happy are WWF with the Strategy? What are your concerns?

A2: I mean for a start there are the good things. We think it is good to have one integrated Strategy, we think it is one step forward, but I think the main problem or challenge if we look at the Baltic Sea is the fishery industry and the agricultural industry, which are the ones that have the major impact on the Baltic Sea. So the big problem comes from the fishery sector and then we have the eutrophication problem that comes from agriculture. I don't think that the common agricultural policy produces

an EU policy and the common fishery policy, which is also an EU policy, is very well integrated in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea. I think one of the reasons is, is that the two main problems and the two main.., the sectors that should be integrated in the Strategy is not very well integrated.

Q: How would you have liked these (fishery and agricultural) policies integrated specifically?

A3: First of all we would like to see much stronger or many more activities dealing with fishery and agricultural within the Strategy, so they have clear activities they have to have to deal with and have to implement and also what we would like to see is an activity that the Baltic Sea region is aiming for a very strong common agricultural policy. I don't know if you know that, but there will be a review, a reform of the agricultural policy and the fishery policy in 2013, so what we would like to see is that the Baltic Sea region as such is aiming for a very strong common agricultural policy and a strong common fishery policy and that they do actions together to have such a strong policy. And that is not included (in the Strategy red.) and I think that the reason for that is, that the fishery sector and agricultural sector didn't want to have stronger agreements in the EU strategy and that is a problem of course, if you try to take the Baltic Sea without including the fishery and agricultural sector in a very good way than I don't think that you will succeed.

Q: But what about the more institutional aspects of the Strategy, which you have also criticised in your consultation paper and your press release? Where exactly is there a problem? Do you see that the institutions are not present enough?

A4: Do you mean when we talk about the governance? **Yes exactly.** First of all if you look at the Baltic Sea as such, there are so many different interests or sectors that influence or are influenced by the Baltic Sea or by the status of the Baltic Sea, and if you look at the governance of those different sectors it's always sector based sector. You have from the international level, we have for example for shipping; you have the IMO International Maritime Organization, that deals with shipping on a global level. Then if you look at fisheries and agricultural, like we talked about earlier, that the common agricultural and common fishery policy from the EU level and then if you look at the regional level for the Baltic Sea than you have for example HELCOM that is

dealing with environmental issues and than in all nine countries in the Baltic Sea region you have a number of different departments and agencies and authorities dealing with a number of different issues in all nine countries, so it is like a mix of so many different agencies, authorities, different frameworks and so on, so it is a bit of a chaos. I think that if we want to succeed in this region and to really take care of the Baltic Sea we need to simplify this system and we need to have a body, someone who can balance between different interests. We think that the EU Baltic Sea Strategy could be one way forward to deal with it in a more coordinated and integrated way. But that also means that you need to have a strong governance of the Strategy itself, so I think that is the long background. The shorter version is that if you have, if you want the Strategy to be more than just a paper strategy and if you want it to be implemented, I think you need to keep the high basis of the Strategy and I think that means that you need to have it (strategy red.) at a very high level, so that it has to be dealt with by the heads of states and you need to have a very good implementation strategy with all the different.. ..with the Commission, we think that the Commission needs to have a strong role, but also that you need to have small coordinated implementations and the way it is right now, we have split the implementation on all the different countries, so that each country or group who has responsibility for different projects, but who is really dealing with a big picture. That is a missing, I think.

Q: How do you then see the perspectives of the Strategy? How do you see the governance perspective in the future? How do you see the Strategy in the next five years?

A5: I think that it is very important that this will lead to real implementation of the activities can create and have influence, so what we would like to see is real implementation of it (Strategy red.) and also that they continue to have these stakeholders meetings like they have had now with the development of the Strategy, so every year or something like that they hold stakeholder meetings to discuss the Strategy and the development of the Strategy and new activities and so on, and then to regularly to measure the progress and to report back to their highest level of decision-makers, the heads of states in the European Council, so that it keeps the high profile and high status it has right now.

Q: How about the shifting of the presidencies, does WWF have any concerns about this?

A6: We know that Poland is planning to do a follow up of the Strategy, so I mean that is really good and important that they do that and I think that the Commission again needs to have a very strong role to make sure that they push the countries to do the implementation. It is very much up to the Commission also to push the countries and be the watchdog and check that what the countries have promised are really there.

Q: What is your perception, will this happen?

A7: I think this is the chance we will get and I think in the near future at least, I think this is a really good chance and I hope that the countries in the region and also in the rest of Europe will take this chance. I hope that the Baltic Sea countries and the EU will use this Strategy to create a good example for other regions to follow. This is its first regional strategy of its kind and if we do this in a good way in this region, than other regions can follow and be something good for the rest of Europe.

Q: How does WWF think of the aspect of macro-regions, which the EU has very much been pushing? Does WWF see this as been realistic or something the Commission and EU is pushing unnaturally?

A8: I think there are many questions that you have to deal with on a regional level, especially when the EU is so big with so many countries involved, but I think it has to be balanced between what you do on a regional level and what you do in the entire European Union. I think that the Strategy for the Baltic is very important and from WWF and our perspective, what we try to do in the future is to keep an eye on this Strategy and the implementation of the Strategy and we will make sure that countries are reminded of what they have agreed to do. So I think we see our own role as being the ones following the implementation to make sure that we don't forget about the Strategy and make sure that it wasn't just a thing they raised at the Swedish presidency.

Q: What has then been your role up to the Strategy being made? How has WWF been involved exactly?

A9: We have been involved in many different ways, both on a national level and also on an EU level, so we have been part of stakeholder consultations and stakeholders meetings and the Commission had plenty different meetings where we have been their speakers and to give our input and ideas and we have also sent our comments to the Commission in the different briefing procedures they have had. We have also had many meetings both with people at the Commission, but also with different countries in the region to present our ideas about what kind of projects and activities should be included and also the more horizontal actions we would like integrated, maritime spatial planning for an example. We have been part of the process, both in the meetings, workshops; we have had discussions with the Commission, with the different countries and also we have tried to push countries via the media and articles to raise the issue a bit.

Q: What are then the most pressing projects for WWF? Are you more involved in any specific projects of the action plan?

A10: I think what is really important for us, is first of all, what I said in the beginning, the integration with fisheries and agriculture and that is of course because we think the theme interest in the Baltic Sea is overfishing and the eutrophication problem, so activities related to that, to reduce the nutrients that leak into Baltic Sea and also to reduce fishing to a sustainable level. I think that is the two main things and it is not really included as specific activities in the Baltic Sea Strategy, but that is something we are pushing for, and then one of the main activities that is part of the Strategy, the horizontal actions, you have maritime spatial planning and that we are focusing very much on. Also a thing we worked very hard on to get included in the Strategy and that is one thing we will closely follow to make sure that there will be maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea, and that it will be done in a very integrated way between countries and between different sectors.

Q: How do you perceived the governance structure regarding “no new institutions”?

A11: I think that is a difficult question. I understand that that is the way it is, but sometimes I wonder if it is possible to.., if you want to have a system based management.., I don't know if it is possible with existing structures, so maybe in the future when you have a new structure, governance system for the Baltic Sea and

hopefully the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region can be sent in that direction. I don't know if that was a good answer, but this has been something that they have said already from the beginning, no new money, no new structures, no new laws. So that is pretty much where work is. I think that this is one step forward, but I don't think you will...??. What will be needed to really create an integrated sea use Strategy will be interesting in the future.

Q: Is the Strategy not just a new Northern Dimension framework?

A12: I mean that the Northern Dimension is.., I mean I don't know all the details on that, but it's not all the countries, it's not an EU regional Strategy like the Baltic Sea Strategy, and I think this is (the EUSBSR, red.) something more substantial in a way.

Q: Will it be a problem that the Baltic countries are underrepresented when it comes to responsibility?

A13: I don't know. I think that it is important that the ones that have the responsibility, who really take it seriously and push other countries and again that the Commission need to have a strong hold and also be there to push countries to do what they have promised to do.

Q: You don't see any significant problems in the fact, that the Baltic countries aren't primary responsible for different areas of the Strategy?

A14: What is really important, is that the incentives for the countries to implement, what they have agreed to do. Like we talked about before, there will be no new money. But I think it is important for the EU to make sure that the money that exists within the system, will be focused on those activities within the Strategy. That is maybe more important, to make sure that implementation will happen. To make sure that they (countries red.) can only get money for those projects that are priorities within the Strategy and not for other things. That is very important, to make it easy and best possible to implement the agreement.

Annex 3: Interview with Johan Friis, Head of Section, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (2 December 2009)

A1: Som I ved blev strategien vedtaget ved Det Europæiske Råd's møde den 29.-30. oktober og handlingsplanen blev bekræftet. Nu er vi i gang med planlægningen af implementeringen af strategien og handlingsplanen.

Q: Hvordan har Udenrigsministeriet været involveret?

A2: Vi har været involveret fra et tidligt tidspunkt. Det går helt tilbage fra 2007, hvor Det Europæiske Råd vedtog at anmode Kommissionen om at lave en Østersøstrategi. Og det er den første af sin karakter i EU-sammenhæng, og måske global sammenhæng. Og det er jo en såkaldt makro-regional strategi.

Det Europæiske Råd har anmodet om, at der skal laves noget tilsvarende for Donau-regionen. Så det skulle gerne være klar til næste år. Afhængigt af succesen og resultaterne af Østersøstrategien, og efterfølgende Donau-strategien, er der planer om at lave noget tilsvarende for Middelhavsregionen, Nordsø-regionen og Alpe-regionen. Disse tre regioner har man som egnede til makro-regionale strategier. Når man taler 'makro' er det ikke på det helt lave niveau, men på det mere generelle niveau. Man skal prøve at finde nogle regioner, som er velegnede til at lave noget styrket samarbejde og til at styrke integrationen inden for regionen, og dermed også inden for EU som helhed. Det er et projektbaseret samarbejde og når vi taler om Østersøstrategien er det koncentreret om fire områder: miljø, økonomi/vækst, sikkerhed, trivsel for borgerne og energi. Disse fem prioritetsområder har man opdelt, hvoraf Danmark er koordinator på 6 af dem (projekter, red.), heraf 3 hvor vi er medkoordinator sammen med Letland, Finland og nu også Tyskland på prioritetsområde nr. 8, som vedrører Små og Mellestore Virksomheder. Altså erhvervsfremme, bredt fortalt.

Den proces er så skudt i gang nu. Jeg tror, at det er lidt forskelligt hvor langt fremme de prioritetskoordinatorer er med hensyn til at få sat gang i processen. Jeg ved i hvert fald at nogle af de danske er kommet godt i gang med et såkaldt opstartsmøde; snakke med dem man samarbejder med. Det er fx Finland på prioritetsområde 14 om maritim sikkerhed.

Q: Foregår det mest på ministerielt niveau?

A3: Det må man sige ja til. Hvis man ser på alle 15 prioritetsområder så er det langt overvejende ministerier, der er ansvarlige. Såkalte ressort-ministerier, som har indsigten, den faglige kunnen og viden på det pågældende område, der er hovedkoordinator. Det kan også være en styrelse under et ministerium. På prioritetsområdet omkring turisme er det dog en region i Tyskland, Nordrhein-Westfalen, der er koordinator. Hamborg er vist også koordinator på et enkelt område. Men typisk er det et ministerium/styrelse.

Under disse prioritetsområder er der 78 flagskibsprojekter. Nogle af flagskibsprojekterne er allerede i gang, og nogle skal igangsættes. Det største arbejde er med dem, der skal igangsættes, for der skal man finde ud af hvor pengene skal komme fra. Du skal søge om pengene og komme igennem hele EU-maskineriet.

Q: Er der kommet nye penge?

A4: Nej, det er inden for de eksisterende midler, det ligger klart nu. Så det gælder om at bruge de midler, der er og 'få sugerøret ned i kassen', kan man godt sige. De projekter, der allerede er igangsat, dem er der midler til. Om der så kan blive behov for yderligere midler, det må man så se hen ad vejen.

Hovedformålet med alt det her, er, forhåbentlig at få bedre sammenhæng i alle de her projekter, der er i gang og skal i gang. Og få de forskellige aktører til at arbejde bedre sammen. Der er nogle, der har ment at de projekter, der tidligere har kørt har været noget spredt fægtning. Fordi der ikke var nok styr på hvem der lavede hvad, og der var overlap og duplikeringer osv. Så strategien skal være et redskab til at få bedre sammenhæng i de projekter, der er i gang og de projekter, der skal igangsættes. Kommissionen, medlemslandene og Det Europæiske Råd har med det forsøgt at få højnet effektiviteten i projektimplementeringen og udnyttelsen af midlerne og styrke integrationen i regionen og dermed udviklingen i EU som sådan.

Q: Vi har hørt, at nogle lande har sendt nationale eksperter til EU, bl.a. har Danmark. Er det et forsøg på at gøre noget ekstra og noget nyt ud af strategien og promovere processen?

A5: Det er for at have en person dernede, som har fingeren på pulsen i Kommissionen, som vi kan trække på. Men andre medlemslande er også velkomne til at trække på hende (den nationale ekspert, red.). Men jeg synes det giver meget god mening at sende en ekspert derned, fordi Danmark har påtaget sig den største del af koordinationsansvaret, koordinationsbyrde, kan man sige, med 6 prioritetsområder ud af 15. Det er der ingen andre, der har. Sverige har to eller tre, og kommer på andenpladsen. Så vi er helt i front med hensyn til at påtage os ansvaret for implementeringen. Det tror jeg er en god ting (at sende national ekspert til EU, red.)

Q: Hvad er baggrunden for at Danmark har valgt at blive ansvarlig for, og fået, så mange prioritetsområder?

A6: Da der var 15 handlede det om hvem, der byder ind. Det handler noget om profilering i EU: Vil Danmark tage teten og vil Danmark promovere sig. Det er vel primært det, der ligger i det. Men det giver også nogle fordele at være koordinator. Det giver selvfølgelig arbejdsmæssigt nogle ulemper, men samtidig giver det nogle muligheder for at sætte fingeraftryk og, for at sige det meget firkantet, få et større sugerør ned i kassen til gavn for Danmark. Men selvfølgelig i samarbejde med de andre lande og projektdeltagere.

Hvis Danmark har nogle målsætninger, vi gerne vil have fremhævet, vil vi selvfølgelig prøve at arbejde for dem. Det kan man bedre som koordinator, end hvis du bare sidder på bagsædet. Det synes jeg giver god mening. Men det skal jo heller ikke blive sådan, at vi tager for meget på skuldrene, så det bliver for stor en byrde. Fordi så er der nogle, der bagefter vil sige ”hvorfors tog I så meget på jer? I magter jo ikke at gennemføre det. Men vi har jo fået ministerier og styrelser med på det, og det er blandt andet Udenrigsministeriets opgave at følge det og overvåge dem nu. Farvandsvæsenet, Søfartsvæsenet, Undervisningsministeriet, Økonomi- og Erhvervsministeriet osv., (følger red.) fremskridt i processen, og følger dem tæt. Holde møder i vores kontaktudvalg. Det er Udenrigsministeriets opgave at overvåge, følge, få afrapportering fra vores prioritetskoordinatorer, at de har gang i processen. Det gør vi dels ved at holde møder i kontaktudvalget, og dels ved at få status med deres arbejde med

implementeringen. Dels holder vi løbende kontakt til dem - jeg sender mails til dem og skriver ud til dem.

Q: Skal udenrigsministeriet så igen rapportere til Kommissionen?

A7: Prioritetskoordinatorerne skal afrapportere til Kommissionen. Formentlig bliver første gang her i foråret 2010. Og da Udenrigsministeren er dansk national koordinator, vil vi gerne sikre, at vi er fremme i skoene, og at vi har gjort vores arbejde. Det prøver vi at sikre gennem møder i kontaktudvalget, hvor der sidder repræsentanter ikke kun fra prioritetskoordinatorerne, men også fra andre, der har med de såkaldte flagskibsprojekter at gøre. Det er både statslige og ikke-statslige aktører, der er med der. Det kan være fra Danske Regioner, det kan være fra Baltic Development Forum.

Q: Det lyder som om det er et meget teknisk samarbejde. Ser du et større billede i det, ifht. fx at skabe en fælles Østersø-identitet eller identifikation? Eller er det meget de her enkelte projekter?

A8: Teknikken findes jo på mange planer: Der er noget finansieringsteknik i at have kendskab til, hvordan får du skaffet midlerne. Hvis det er nye projekter, vi taler om. Jeg var til møde i Farvandsvæsenet for et par uger siden til sådan et opstartsmøde. Og der var det, at vicedirektøren derovre sagde, at de har en rigtig god mand, der kender EU-systemet indefra, ved hvordan man skriver projektansøgninger, ved hvor man skal trykke på de rigtige knapper. Og ham vil vi virkelig bruge til at trække på og sætte ekstra midler til de projekter, vi vil prioritere. Nu var det prioritetsområde nr. 14 (Maritim sikkerhed), vi taler om. Efter at have talt med finnerne, som man samarbejder med på det område. Så der er noget teknik i hvordan man søger om midler, hvordan man laver projektansøgninger osv.

Så er der noget teknik i at drive en proces i sig selv og nå nogle mål. For de her flagskibsprojekter, der sætter man nogle tidsfrister på et år, hvor de skal være gennemført. Og det kræver noget fodarbejde og koordination, nogle samtaler og møder osv.

Så teknik er på mange forskellige niveauer: det er noget med viden, det er noget med at du kan dine værktøjer, at du har nogle folk, der kan operere på den rigtige måde. Og det er nok meget forskelligt, tror jeg. Nogle famler, fordi der ikke rigtigt er nogen, der kender til processen og procedurerne i EU og hvordan man arbejder med projekter i det

hele taget. Projektarbejde – for dem, der ikke har prøvet det før, så er det svært. Jeres, det er jo også et projekt – det er bare en anden type projekt, kan man sige.

Q: Der er jo ikke blevet oprettet nogen nye institutioner, der skal varetage strategien..?

A9: Det er ikke meningen, som udgangspunkt. Man skal trække på de eksisterende. Det er jo først og fremmest Kommissionen. Så er det Østersørådet og så på Udenrigsministeriet. Ja, man laver ikke nogen større institution med henblik på den her strategi. Man bruger de eksisterende institutioner.

Q: Er det fint, som det er?

A10: Umiddelbart ser jeg ikke behov for nyt. Som jeg ser det, handler det langt overvejende om at få bedre sammenhæng i projektgennemførselen. Og det er projekter på alle mulige forskellige områder; miljø, klima, energi, veje, transport, maritim sikkerhed og ikke mindst forurening i Østersøen. Så det kan vi håbe på, at her om et par år, hvor der skal være en gennemgang af resultaterne, under Polsk formandskab i 2011, at det bliver meldt ud, at der faktisk er kommet rigtig godt fremskridt i det her. Gode resultater, positive resultater. At man samlet set har opnået noget – for at bruge et rigtig godt ord – merværdi ud af det. Det koster trods alt noget: Det koster noget at holde møder, rejse, hoteludgifter. Så de udgifter, der er til det, de skal jo mere end hentes hjem ved at du får noget bedre samarbejde, noget bedre synergi, noget hurtigere udførelse af projekterne, men samtidig af en høj kvalitet. Men det må tiden vise. Vi er først lige ved at starte op på det. Tidligere var det i langt større omfang Kommissionen, der var inde over processen her. Og nu har vi altså fået et instrument her, hvor medlemslandene i regionen skal arbejde tættere sammen.

Q: Du tænker på ifht. den 'traditionelle' EU regionalpolitik, hvor Erhvervs- og Byggestyrelsen fordeler regionalfondsmidler?

A11: Ja, så satte de noget i gang i Jylland. Så satte man noget i gang i Estland måske, om noget. Og det vil også køre videre stadigvæk, men det her (strategien/det makro-regionale samarbejde, red.) er jo grænseoverskridende projekter, hvor man kan arbejde sammen om nogle ting. Det gælder fx forurening i Østersøen – det dækker jo en masse

lande. Maritim sikkerhed i Østersøregionen dækker også mange lande. Transport via veje går også igennem mange af regionens lande. Energi kan vi også samarbejde om. Der kan være noget på uddannelsesområdet, som vi alle sammen kan have gavn af, og som ikke bare vedrører Estland alene, men som alle andre lande i regionen kan have gavn af. På den måde kan der skabes noget synergi.

Q: Hvordan ser du fremtidsperspektiverne for strategien, inden for en 5-årig periode?

A12: Der er ingen tvivl om, at mange af de projekter, når vi ser på formålene, og områderne, så er det nogle vigtige ting. For det gælder vores dagligdag, det gælder vores fremtid, det gælder. Det handler om at have strøm på pæren, have nogle gode veje, gode skoler, sikkerhed af den ene og den anden karakter. Så der er ingen tvivl om, at alle de mål er gode nok og også fornuftige ting at bruge penge på. Men spørgsmålet er altid, om man kunne bruge pengene på en lidt anden måde og er det den rigtige måde at skrue maskinen sammen på for at få de projekter sat i gang, implementeret og færdiggjort. Når vi taler om såkaldt grænseoverskridende samarbejde, som det her jo er, så kan man godt stille sig selv det spørgsmål, at hvis nu vi slet ikke havde noget af den her karakter, så er der måske større risiko for, at der bliver duplikering. Det kan være, at de i Estland laver noget af det samme, som vi laver i Danmark osv. Så der skulle være større chance og mulighed for at vi undgår dobbeltarbejde og duplikering. Det er sådan en fornuftig betragtning. Man skal være klar over at sådan er internationalt samarbejde med forskellige sprog, kulturer og uddannelsessystemer – selv i lande inden for EU. Forskellige tidspunkter man er kommet i gang med udviklingen af sit land. Tag Østereuropa og de Baltiske lande – de er først startet op med en ny samfundsmodel for få år siden, mens eksempelvis Danmark har haft vores samfundsmodel i mange år. Der kan skabes noget træghed og nogle misforståelser, og der kan være kapacitetsproblemer og ressourceproblemer osv., der gør at processen ikke glider hurtigt og nemt. Danskeren har en måde at arbejde på, mens tyskeren har en anden, svenskeren en tredje. Eksempelvis går danskerne måske hurtigt til den, ”bare komme i gang og hurtigt færdig, ikke for mange møder”, mens svenskerne måske er mere tilbøjelige til at holde 20 møder, hvor vi ville holde 5 møder. Det godt være, at når svenskerne først har holdt de 20 møder, så ligger linjen fuldstændig klar og så kører man derudad. Mens vi holder 5 møder, og der ligger linjen sådan $\frac{3}{4}$ klar og må justere hen ad vejen.

Q: Man kalder Østersøstrategien for en 'model' og Kommissionen har fremlagt et position paper (Macro-regional strategies in the EU, red.), som favner det hele uden at sige noget helt konkret, og hvor man skriver lidt om Østersøstrategien, som blev lavet lidt specifikt på den og den måde. Mener du, at man kan lave en sådan 'model'?

A13: Nogle vil kalde Østersøstrategien for et pilotprojekt. Det er en illustration, et eksempel på en måde at gøre det på. Som en test-case.

Q: Man kunne fx også have taget Rusland med.

A14: Det er vigtigt, du lige kommer ind på det. Det er helt klart, at Rusland er en meget vigtig spiller i alt det her, fordi Rusland er en vigtig spiller i regionen. Og Rusland skal – og det er også helt klart og det ligger i kortene – at Rusland skal involveres mest muligt. Jeg har fx været til møde i Farvandsvæsenet for to uger siden, hvor vi talte meget Rusland. På hvilke områder kan vi identificere, hvor Rusland skal være med. Så Rusland var helt klart på dagsordenen.

Q: Kommer der ikke en begrænsning i og med at en del af strategien også er, at man vil facilitere implementeringen af EU-lovgivning? Så på hvilken måde kan russerne være med? Man kan jo ikke tvinge dem til at implementere EU-lovgivning.

A15: Nå nej, men der må man tale med russerne om, vi har et projekt, der vedrører et eller andet med Østersøen, fx forurening i Østersøen eller maritim sikkerhed. Vi har så et projekt her, som vi mener, ville kunne gavne den maritime sikkerhed. Vi mener helt klart I vil kunne bidrage. Der må man tale med russerne om det og arbejde på, at de er med på tanken og idéen og projektimplementeringen, ikke mindst. Så alle trækker ligesom samme vej til gavn for eksempelvis den maritime sikkerhed i Østersøen.

Q: Hvad med finansieringen?

A16: Det er helt klart, at russerne jo vil undgå at betale mest muligt, det er klart. Men der må vi finde en modus vivendi – en måde at leve sammen på. Men jeg vil da mene, at

hvis det er projekter, som Russerne har gavn af, så må man finde en eller anden nøgle, som forhåbentlig kan tilfredsstille alle parter.

Q: Har der været dialog med Rusland?

A17: Der har været noget i forskellige sammenhænge, altså omkring Østersøstrategien og vedrørende deres involvering og engagement i strategien. Men konkret har jeg ikke set eksempler på noget endnu. Men det ligger helt klart i kortene, at de skal være med på relevante udvalgte områder. Og de skal informeres via Østersørådet, eksempelvis. Det vil være et naturligt forum at informere Russerne om hvor vi er henne, og hvor langt vi er kommet omkring Østersøstrategien. Så jeg tror nok, de skal være med. Det er også vores indtryk, at de gerne vil være med. Det er jo en vigtig ting.

Q: Er der forskel på de 8 EU-landes engagement i arbejdet med Østersøstrategien?

A18: Nej, men jeg tror det er lidt præget af kapacitet, ressourcer, vilje, erfaring og.. Jeg kan godt forstå at de Baltiske lande ikke lige kaster sig over en masse prioritetsområder. De har vel 2-3 stykker i alt, de lande. For dem har det været vigtigt at markere, at de godt kan tage sig af et land for hvert område, der har betydning for dem. Men jeg har ikke fået indtryk af, at der er nogen lande, der kører i meget lavt gear. Det er klart, der er nogle, der kører i højere gear end andre, sådan er det. Sådan er internationalt samarbejde.

Man kan sige, at Danmark hidtil har kørt i et højt gear, i kraft af, at vi har sat os på så meget, kan man sige. Og trækker så meget i processen. Og svenskerne i kraft af formandskabet, kører i et højt gear. Polen måske ikke i så højt gear. Det samme med den nordlige del af Tyskland – ikke i højeste gear, vil jeg sige. Finland er helt klart meget engageret. Finnerne er dygtige og ofte langt fremme i skoene og meget engageret i mange sammenhænge – også i Østersøstrategien. De baltiske lande er måske lidt famlende, vil jeg sige, men forståeligt. Også fordi de hurtigt skifter mange folk ud på mange poster. Det gør vi jo også her i Danmark, men det er jo et handikap. For der skal være en vis kontinuitet for at få en momentum og fremdrift i processen. Det kræver, at folk ikke springer fra det ene til det andet. Det er klart noget, som er med til at sænke processen og trække den lidt i langdrag. Men det allervigtigste, som jeg ser det, er at få nogle strukturer på plads. For hvordan griber man det an – starter op. Og hvordan har

man en løbende dialog blandt prioritetskoordinatorerne og dem, der er ansvarlige for flagskibsprojekterne, og følge den der proces med meningsudveksling, dialog og mødeaktivitet. Enten med mail eller opsamlingsmøder, måske 1-2 årligt.

Næste år har vi det såkaldte stakeholder-forum, som tegner til at blive i Tallinn til efteråret. Og så skal vi snart have et møde i den såkaldte højniveau-gruppe. Det bliver nok ikke i år, som vi først havde forventet, men først i januar måned.

Q: Er det på Udenrigsministerie-niveau?

A19: Ja, eller de nationale koordinatore, og de fleste af dem kommer fra udenrigsministeriet. Der er et par enkelte lande, hvor det er lidt anderledes. Fra Sverige er det faktisk fra Statsministerens kontor, men ellers er det typisk Udenrigsministeriet. Og højniveau-gruppen – om den så kommer til at hedde højniveau-gruppen eller noget andet, det er ikke fastlagt endnu. Men det bliver den gruppe, der i den videre del af beslutningsprocessen er det højeste organ, højeste niveau – med Kommissionen for bordenden. Og så har man det her årlige stakeholder-forum, hvor alle aktører; statslige, NGO'er, alle projekthavere, er til stede og holder indlæg og snakker sammen.

Q: På hvilken måde spiller NGO'erne en rolle i processen?

A20: På stakeholder-forum vil de relevante NGO'er blive inviteret til at deltage. Og så vil de høre på indlæg, oplæg, præsentationer, og de vil selv kunne kommentere og være med i processen på det tidspunkt. Men ellers kører processen nu gennem alle de her 15 prioritetsområder med prioritetskoordinatorer og flagskibsprojekter. Og nogle af disse flagskibsprojekter vil hen ad vejen blive skrottet, fordi man finder ud at, at det ikke går. Så vil der komme nye til. Man kan sige, at handlingsplanen er levende og dynamisk. Det er ikke et statisk dokument, men et levende dokument, der skal tilpasses hen ad vejen til nye udviklinger.

Men det er klart, at NGO'erne får et 'say', kan man sige, på et tidspunkt. Men der er enkelte NGO'er der er med i projektimplementeringen. Jeg mener, at Baltic Development Forum er med i nogle projekter

Q: Vi vender lige tilbage til et spørgsmål, vi skulle have stillet i starten. Hvor tilfredse var Danmark med EU's Østersøstrategi, da den blev præsenteret i sommers. Var det hvad man havde forventet?

A21: Det er en lang proces, som startede op i slutningen af sidste år. Kommissionen fik opgaven af Det Europæiske Råd i juli 2007. Kommissionen går så i gang med at lave udkast til strategipapir og udkast til hvordan handlingsplanen skal skrives sammen. Handlingsplanen er baseret på inputs. Det er strategipapiret jo også, for det foregår i dialog med medlemslandene: Vi kommenterede på strategipapiret frem og tilbage. I forhold til handlingsplanen er de enkelte medlemsstater kommet med en masse oplæg til, hvad der skulle i den, og hvad vi kunne påtage os af opgaver. Og der har været nogle møder og konsultationsprocesser for at få den på plads. Så udkastet til handlingsplanen kom på plads i maj/juni måned i år.

Det er mit indtryk fra det, jeg har set og hørt, og forstået på kolleger, som har siddet med det, at processen alt i alt indtil nu er gået godt. Det har været en god proces. Og den er gået mere smertefrit, end man måske havde forventet. Så man har nået de ting, man havde sat sig for. I begyndelsen kørte man med ret lav profil fra dansk side. Men der var så nogle, der sagde, at ”det her er for lav profil. Det er trods alt Østersøen og vores nabolande. Så der var nogle, der tog fat og sagde, at nu højner vi ambitionsniveauet. Så der blev sat nogle kraftige fodaftryk fra dansk side.

Q: Det er ikke noget, man har hørt meget om i medierne.

A22: Nej, der har været et par artikler. Der var også i øvrigt en her for nylig. Det var noget med regionalt.. Det var i Viborg Folkeblad eller et eller andet. Jeg tror også, at Udenrigsministeren har skrevet en eller to artikler. Så der har været lidt rundt omkring. Men det er jo ikke det, som sælger. Men det vil være fint med nogle succeshistorier. Vi har været tilfredse med processen indtil videre (omkring Østersøstrategien, red.). Der har ikke været noget der. Men det, man kan frygte er, at en ting er at vedtage noget på et stykke papir – noget andet er at gennemføre det. Det hårde arbejde er jo nu.

Q: Vi har talt med NGO'er, som understreger, at man skal blive ved med at holde et højt pres fra politisk niveau.

A23: Det er vigtigt, at vi, som national koordinator, og Kommissionen, som jo har en stor rolle at spille i processen, at der bliver lagt et pres hele tiden fra de forskellige, der kan lægge presset. For ellers kan dampen godt gå af kedelen. Det er vigtigt for at

opretholde en fremdrift. For hvis ikke det bliver en succes.. nu bliver Donau-strategien nok sat i gang under alle omstændigheder. Men ellers kan det godt være, at man vil sige, at det her ikke er måden at gribe tingene an på. Men det er jo gode lærepenge.

En ting, jeg kommer til at tænke på: Jeg har været med til noget projektrelateret samarbejde omkring.. man taler altid om bottom-up og top-down. Det var også det, I var lidt inde på med, at man skal styre det lidt fra oven af. Der kan man så håbe på.. for det, der bottom-up, jeg har været med til, det kan være meget langhåret noget af det.

Q: Hvad er det for noget projektrelateret samarbejde?

A24: Det går nogle år tilbage i forbindelse med noget PHARE og TACIS-projekter, og noget af det, hvor BSSSC var med. Det blev noget småfnidder og nogle små-projekter og man drøftede og snakkede. Det blev noget underligt noget. Man sad 20-30 mennesker rundt om et bord og snakkede om 50.000 kr. Det skulle køres på en helt anden måde. Vi skal op i noget volumen, ikke? Der var noget, hvor man kan se et virkelig godt formål med det, så man får noget value for money. Selvfølgelig er det også vigtigt med civilsamfunds- og små-projekter, og der skal også være muligheder for det, og der skal også gives penge til små-projekter, men man kan altid diskutere hvordan det skal gribes an og styres. Og det er klart, at hvis muligheden er der, så griber mange den.

Q: Det er også noget af det, hvis der skal være en kritisk vinkel på det her, som har været diskuteret fra forskeres side: At strategien ikke umiddelbart foreskriver en struktur – det kan godt være, at den findes på en 'every day basis' – man i Kommissionens strategi står der ikke, at sådan og sådan skal strategien implementeres. Og det åbner netop op for, at mange aktører bliver interesseret i strategien.

A25: Ja, netop BSSSC – de er sikkert fine og gode, men erfaringerne taler for, at vi skal gribe det an på en lidt anden måde: måske lidt mere top-down end bottom-up. Det er de selvfølgelig ikke så glade for. For de lever jo af det omvendte. Men vi lever i en konkurrence-præget verden. Det er markedsandele og hvem kan lave de bedste ting. Der er jo forskellige organisationer og alle prøver at få en del af kagen. Men det er jo politikernes opgave at styre processen og sige, at nu er det på tide at lukke for pengekassen. Og så skriger organisationerne jo op: ”hvordan kan i lukke for

pengestrømmen. Det er jo så vigtigt, så vigtigt.” Så det er jo det spil, man også skal tænke på foregår.

Q: Vi talte med WWF, som ønskede en styrket rolle til Kommissionen.

A: 26: Ja, ok. Der skal være plads til alle og vi lever i en fri verden og alle skal kunne spille med og være med, og udtrykke sine meninger. Men hvordan man så griber tingene an, det er jo så lige det. Hvem der skal være hovedaktør, og hvem der skal sidde på bagsædet og spille statistrollen. Det er jo meget det, det handler om. Og hvor får vi mest ud af det, til gavn for os alle sammen. Så det er en meget god ting at køre det på denne måde. Men det er jo en test-case.

Annex 4: Chart

