



Summary of Joint Action Plan Release Event and Afternoon Workshop

Venue: Stockholm Region EU Office, Avenue Marnix 28, Brussels, April 21, 2015

Video broadcast from the morning session available at <http://bsr-jointactionplan.eu>.

As part of the BalticFlows project, funded by the 7th Framework Programme Regions of Knowledge theme, the *Joint Action Plan for citizen engagement, liveable safe cities and competitive, inclusive regions in the Baltic Sea Region and throughout the European Union* was released in Brussels on April 21. After the morning session, there was also an afternoon workshop on the topic of stormwater management.

Morning session: Joint Action Plan Release Event

Speakers included Mr. Gustaf Lundgren, EU Policy Officer, Stockholm Region EU Office; Mrs. Henna Virkkunen, Member of the European Parliament; Mrs. Heidi Hautala, Member of the European Parliament; Mrs. Pauliina Haijanen, The Committee of the Regions; Mr. Tuomas Valtonen, Coordinator of the BalticFlows Project, University of Turku, Finland; Mr. Peter Crawley, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission; Mr. Pieter de Jong, European Regions Research and Innovation Network; Mrs. Violeta Kuzmickaite, European Technology Platform for Water; and Mrs. Pia Laurila Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission.

Brief summary of comments by MEP Virkkunen.

Member of the European Parliament, Henna Virkkunen was delighted to deliver the opening words for the event, stressing the northern European viewpoint of the Baltic Sea as a gateway to Europe, and the importance of commitment to protect the Baltic Sea. Urbanisation, climate change, increasing traffic and maritime traffic (incl. oil and chemical spills) were mentioned in her speech as important aspects of the sensitive ecosystem. Use, maintenance and protection of the Baltic Sea and the surrounding catchment areas were mentioned to protect the sea. MEP Virkkunen welcomes and supports multilevel cooperation, citizen involvement and the idea of the Citizen Union and citizens in the core of protection and monitoring actions. Environmental sector and the blue and green growth can be seen as a job creator. Virkkunen mentions cost calculations



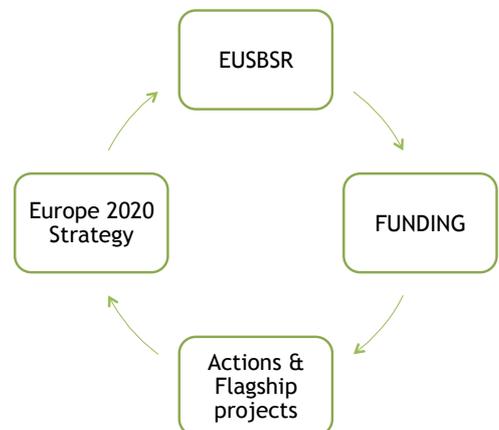


and losses as high as 50 million euros per year due to poor environmental condition of the Finnish gulf. Virkkunen expresses special thanks to the BalticFlows consortium for the Joint Action Plan for including the urbanized and urban areas into the plan. The themes of flooding and urban planning are seen as important also in the policy level dialogue. Ecological and economic win-win could be achieved and Virkkunen welcomes the politicians to cooperate with these topics at the Baltic Sea Region and European level.

Brief summary of comments by MEP Hautala.

MEP Hautala thanks the Joint Action Plan for the innovative engaging approach to environmental monitoring. It is mentioned that all efforts are needed, monitoring, measuring and tracking the pollution and the sources. The impact of cities, climate change and impact of rainwater to the shallow Baltic Sea as well as the damaging impact to the infrastructure are mentioned as aspects deserving special attention. MEP Hautala recommends and warmly welcomes addressing the Russian and eastern researchers and areas and European cooperation including Russia in the environmental sector. Hautala mentions the fruitful cooperation and results of the St. Petersburg efforts in water purification to the water quality of the Baltic Sea.

Brief summary of presentation by the Mrs. Haijanen. In her presentation, Mrs. Haijanen described the role of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), which explicitly calls for cooperation and coordination amongst states in the Baltic Sea Region, both Member States and non-EU nations. She described the intervention logic of the Strategy (see figure) based upon directing funding to Actions and Flagship Projects that would eventually have an impact on the Europe 2020 Strategy. Mrs. Haijanen also outlined the role of citizens and regions, emphasising that macro-regional strategies such as the EUSBSR increase, and improve coordination of and cooperation between the Member States, regions and various organisations, including NGO's. Further, the role of local and regional levels is of utmost importance in fostering the competitiveness of Europe and creating new jobs, and close links to the activities of civic society are critical for the Strategy's success. Haijanen continued that as next steps in the year 2015, the European Commission has undergone discussions concerning the revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan to-

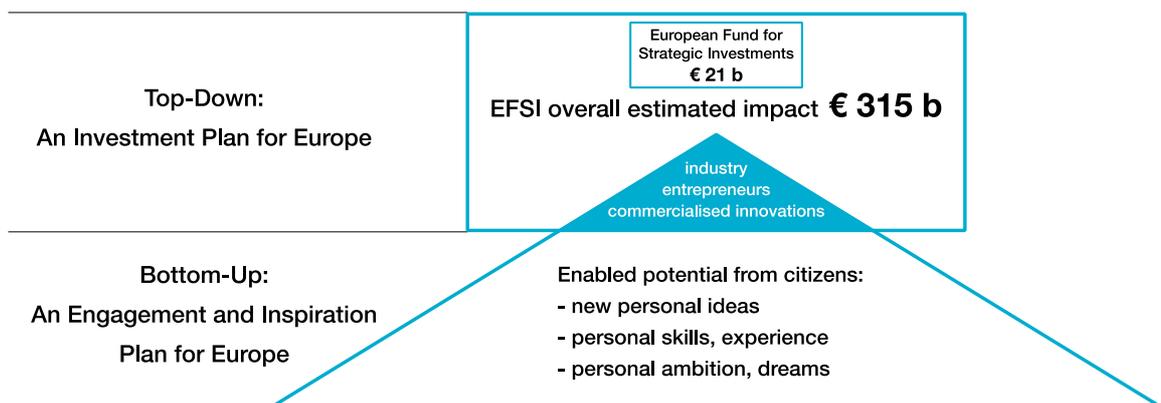




gether with National Contact Points, and has this spring, together with BSR States, formulated a new proposal concerning administrative structure and priority areas. The revised Action Plan will be formally approved during the 6th Annual Forum in Latvia, on June 15.

Brief summary of the High-Level Goals of the Joint Action Plan, presented by Mr. Valtonen. New ideas and innovation are crucial to the future of Europe. We believe that every citizen has an idea that could benefit Europe, and a dream of turning that idea into reality. We need to build a *Citizen Union*. To achieve this, we need an *Engagement and Inspiration Plan for Europe* to engage citizens, develop their ideas, bringing upon ownership towards their region, their nation and the European society. The Plan will construct the Citizen Union by 2020 based upon three cornerstones:

- 1. Innovation Pillar.** Gathering, organising and processing the global pool of citizens’ ideas, and finding the means to turn these to reality, thus contributing to European competitiveness;
- 2. Sustainability Pillar.** Advancing sustainability by bringing life cycle thinking and assessment into everyday decisions of citizens, empowering citizens in monitoring and preserving our environment, and promoting safe urban living via smart rainwater management and harvesting;
- 3. Engagement Pillar.** Learning the driving motivation for each contributing citizen and creating matching reward schemes, leading to ownership and commitment towards joint actions.



The Engagement and Inspiration Plan for Europe aims at complementing the European Commission's 315 billion euro Investment Plan for Europe; where the Investment Plan provides strong support for industry, entrepreneurship and business, we aim at broadly involving citizens in the future development of Europe, who could otherwise be difficult to engage and motivate. To bring the Citizen Union to reality by 2020, support from all European regions is essential. In the Baltic





Sea Region, the regions of Hamburg, Riga, Tallinn, Turku and Uppsala shall serve as pilot areas for implementation of the Engagement and Inspiration Plan, empowering their citizens in the fields of rainwater monitoring and management.

Afternoon workshop: Towards Stormwater Management in Baltic cities

Speakers at the workshop included Prof. Dr. Dr. Walter Leal, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany; Mr. Tuomas Valtonen, Coordinator of the BalticFlows Project, University of Turku, Finland; Dr. Enrica Uggetti, EU-EIP Water NatureWat Action Group; Mr. Christian Ebel, Hamburg Ministry for Urban Development and Environment, Germany; several representatives of the Uppsala County Administrative Board, Sweden; Dr. Gunta Šlihta, Institute of Physical Energetics, Latvia; and Dr. Piia Leskinen, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland.

The workshop took a focus on the methods, challenges, and constraints surrounding the planning, management, and implementation of urban stormwater in various Baltic cities. Four different municipalities from the cities of Riga, Hamburg, Tallinn, and Turku, presented an overview of their current state of affairs. In the case of *Riga*, the demands and needs in stormwater planning were based on the need for more regulatory framework and standards. A proposal to deal with these challenges was formulated based on a triple helix model: public, private, and research and academia. In *Hamburg*, the Rainwater Infrastructure Adaptation project, RISA, emphasized the need for organization in water management, and cooperation among stakeholders as essential due to the high cost for implementation and the different priorities, tasks, and budgets. The land use planning for the city of *Tallinn* presented deficiencies in the proper allocation of space for parking areas and landscape areas. It highlighted the deficiencies in the protection of green areas as essential tools for stormwater control. Recommendations included the need for a stronger system of land use regulation, better allocation of space for transport-related areas, and building codes as well as the need for alternative sustainable material that can be used on urban surfaces for the protection of the soil. In *Turku*, soil properties and specific climatic conditions require the need for testing sites to determine the performance, cost and capacities of the urban stormwater strategies. It is necessary to further the cooperation between municipal authorities, research, regional, local authorities and to motivate the public to be actively involved water reuse methods and strategies.

