EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: Policy Area Safe – Implementing the New Action Plan

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Background of the research

- The goal: establish the views of stakeholders and Steering Committee members on the new PA Safe Action Plan
- Other themes: Flagship projects, Steering Committee work, communications…
- Methodology:
  - Questionnaire
    - Sent to 53 recipients from all Member countries surrounding the Baltic Sea and EU representatives related to PA Safe
    - Response rate 40% (21)
    - Biggest answer groups: authorities (62%) and/or Flagship leaders/partners (29%)
  - Interviews
    - 8 participants / 7 interviews
    - Voluntary and invited participants
    - Semi-structured / thematic interviews

Key concerns and strengths in the Baltic Sea

- The key concerns:
  - Can vary from one country to another, which makes it difficult to define a strategy that takes into consideration all the different interests and needs
  - Cooperation in search and rescue operations
  - The general conditions within the Baltic Sea region, including the density of traffic, archipelago and shallow waters
  - Education of crews
  - Coexistence of autonomous vessels and traditional vessels especially in the future
- The biggest strength of the Baltic Sea region, when it comes to maritime safety, was seen to be the long history of cooperation between the countries
- Digitalization and automation are topical and important in practically all Baltic Sea countries

Action 1: Providing reliable navigational conditions to the Baltic Sea

- The most important Action to maritime safety in the Baltic Sea
- Has been somewhat covered by previous Flagship projects (score 3.6/5)
- Is in need of new Flagship projects (score 4.1/5)
- Sub-action 1 (Developing new innovations based on more accurate bathymetry data) was considered the most important sub-action both for maritime safety and for EUSBSR/PA Safe
  - Was also considered to have a poor current state by one respondent
- Was criticized in the interviews for being too close to current activities

Action 2: Developing winter navigation to meet future challenges

- The least important Action to maritime safety in the Baltic Sea (with clear difference)
- Has been somewhat covered by previous Flagship projects (score 3.4/5)
- Is in need of new Flagship projects, but not as much as the others (score 3.8/5)
- Sub-action 2 (Further development of training both for merchant vessels and icebreaker operators) was the most important for maritime safety and security
- Sub-action 1 (Developing intelligent transport systems (ITS) solutions for winter navigation) was the most important to EUSBSR and PA Safe
  - The current state of sub-action 1 was also considered slightly below average
- Was criticized for not being relevant to the whole Baltic Sea region

Action 3: To be a forerunner in digitalisation and automation

- Was the third most important Action to maritime safety in the Baltic Sea (with a small difference)
- Has been only partly covered by previous Flagship projects (score 3.2/5)
- Is in need of new Flagship projects the most (score 4.5/5)
- Sub-action 1 (Reinforcement of fundamental functions of vessels) was considered to be the least important sub-action both for maritime safety and EUSBSR with a clear difference. Otherwise, the differences were not that significant
- Several sub-actions received below average scores, when assessing their current state
- Was considered really important, since digitalization and automation are cross-cutting issues and no project can omit them
- Has the potential to have the greatest impact of all four Actions, because it affects everything

Action 4: Ensure accurate preparedness and response for maritime accidents and security issues

- Was the second most important Action to maritime safety in the Baltic Sea
- Has been covered by previous Flagship projects the least (score 3.1/5)
- Is in need of new Flagship projects (score 4.3/5)
- Sub-action 1 (improve coordination of crisis management capacities and resources) was the most important to EUSBSR/PA Safe
- Also in the interviews, cooperation in search and rescue operations was considered a key concern in the Baltic Sea region

The new PA Safe Action Plan

- Gained mostly positive reviews
- Comprehensive
- Very well focused
- More concrete and more relevant than the earlier ones

- Actions 1 and 2 could be combined
- Action 3 is actually integrated to other actions

Flagship projects

- Quite successful
- Excellent way to implement PA Safe actions
- Good way to cooperate and develop and to address specific issues
- Problems exist with implementation and dissemination of results
- Suggestions to improve and promote implementation:
  - Better communication with decision makers
  - Better communication with other stakeholders and organisations
  - Improving the project planning and preparation, and including stakeholders in project planning
  - Creating new kinds of implementation projects/funding

Steering Committee composition and meetings

- Steering Committee operations received above average scores (3.6/5)
  - current composition of the Steering Committee received the poorest scores
- Suggestions for additions to the Steering Committee composition:
  - stakeholders
  - professionals or experts
  - national representatives of Baltic Sea states
- Meetings were criticized as it can be challenging to find the time and funding for (international) travel
- Suggested changes to the Steering Committee's meetings:
  - The amount of meetings should be reduced to one
  - The length of the meetings should be reduced
  - Virtual meetings should replace face-to-face meetings

Steering Committee and PA Safe communcations and visibility

- Overall, the communication within PA Safe and the Steering Committee works well
- The Steering Committee newsletter was read quite regularly
- Especially communications with industry and stakeholders should be focused on
- Steering Committee meeting should be done side-by-side to conferences, exhibitions or other meetings to improve the visibility of PA Safe and the Flagship projects
- Promotional material (video, flyers) for PA Safe were also suggested

Tunne huominen - All for the future.