

Civil Protection Network and Steering Group for PA Secure

The two cooperation arenas in the Baltic Sea Region – Civil Protection Network and the Steering Group for PA Secure – are often mixed up by outside observers. It seems to be difficult to understand their respective functions and the added values for cooperation of each entity. Also, the possibilities for enhancements in this work area that they open for all the countries in the BSR need to be clarified.

Civil Protection Network (CPN) was established in 2002 by the civil protection authorities in the BSR within the framework of the Eurobaltic Civil Protection Programme. Poland led the Programme with support from Russia and Sweden. The countries agreed to rotate the responsibility for annual Senior experts and Director Generals meetings. During the Swedish Presidency in CBSS 2007 the countries decided to connect the Eurobaltic Civil Protection Programme to the rotating Presidency of the CBSS. In practice from 2007 the country holding the presidency is responsible for the organising of activities, such as the Senior Experts meeting, Directors General (DG) meeting and some other activities. Later on the Programme moved under the CBSS umbrella and changed its name to the Civil Protection Network. Countries implemented two Interreg projects: Eurobaltic I (2003-2005) and Eurobaltic II (2006-2007).

CPN activities open the possibilities to exchange views on ongoing developments in the field of civil protection between the experts and DGs. CPN includes all countries in the BSR: both EU Member States (MS) and non-EU countries such as Iceland, Norway and Russia which actively participate in annual meetings. The performed activities are of networking character; no formal decisions are made by the DGs which is very important and creates an open atmosphere in these high-level discussions.

Steering Group of the PA Secure (PA Secure SG) is an important decision making body for the implementation of the EU:s Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). PA Secure SG:s work is based on the Terms of References adopted by the MS. EU MS are the members of the PA Secure SG, non-EU countries are invited to participate in the work but can't block decisions by the PA Secure SG. The level of engagement from non-EU countries is varied. PA Secure SG covers both civil protection and law enforcement issues. The implementation of EUSBSR is based on flagship projects, mostly EU-funded. There is an ongoing process to align different funding sources in order to facilitate the implementation of the EUSBSR.

As distinct from the CPN, PA Secure SG is a formally designated decision-making body which follows the agreed rules of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy. This decision-making forum is coordinated by Sweden through MSB and by the CBSS Secretariat.