BALTinnoSEC

Blueprint for a full-size Baltic Sea Region civil security solution-oriented forum











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Partners:

- Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat (lead partner)
- The National Headquarters of The State Fire Service of Poland (KG PSP)
- Main School of Fire Service (SGSP), Poland
- The State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia (SFRS)
- The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)
- Fire and Rescue Department of Lithuania
- Hamburg Fire and Rescue Service, public authority, Germany
- Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland
- International Affairs Unit Department for Rescue Services, Finland



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Introduction

Pan-Baltic Cross-Sectoral Innovation in Societal Security (BALTinnoSEC) project, funded by the Swedish Institute, aimed to investigate the feasibility of an interface, connecting civil security actors in constellations, focused on tackling risks, specific to the Baltic Sea Region. The interface was envisioned as a problem-solving platform or a forum for regular off- & online meetings of practitioners, researchers and business, thus sharing access to the latest management solutions and technologies, cutting costs and time for all involved. Basic question that the project intended to answer was: does the Baltic Sea Region need its own cross-sectoral forum for civil security experts and if yes, what format should it be? Partners analysed existing forums & platforms (civil security events & projects) and the market of solution providers. Based on the analysis a concept of the platform was elaborated and tested in a Pilot Forum in Warsaw in January 2023. The present document summarises the lessons-learned and thus provides a blueprint for a full-size BSR civil security solution-oriented forum.

From the beginning of the project, considering limited resources, the partners decided to narrow the focus of the project and of the Pilot Forum to one theme. On 24 February 2022, the project partners held the project's kick-off meeting at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm. The main result of the discussions was the list of criteria for a successful pilot forum which, among others, included "the pilot forum should tackle one specific common issue – to make the task more practical, concrete and achievable". The partners agreed that the topic of *risk and crisis communication* was the most fitting to the needs of the region and the format of the pilot forum. Another decision that was made after a thorough discussion: the pilot forum will be concentrated mostly on **one country experience** (in this case - Poland) to cut the costs, simplify logistics, increase the number of relevant participants.

BALTinnoSEC Pilot Forum in Warsaw

During the next ten months the partners' efforts were aimed at creating the programme and the format for the Pilot Forum which would attract most relevant participants and cover topics most relevant for the entire Baltic Sea Region.

The pilot Forum was organised in Warsaw on 27 January 2023. The forum gathered 75 participants from all BSR countries with the majority of participants coming from Poland. Three panels were organised: on influx of migrants, CBRN and natural disasters with focus on crisis and risk communication. The delegation from State Emergency Service of Ukraine shared their experiences working in the context of war:

Panel 1: Panel 2: Panel 3: Risk and crisis communication Risk and crisis communication Risk and crisis communication in the context in the context in the context of war and migration influx of natural disasters of CBRN Based on 2022 migration Based on 2022 UCPM **CBRN** threats contingency influx case study **GFFFV Poland module** deployment to France How to communicate with What are information How to manage chaos? the citizens in the context of management and **CBRN** threats? How can government communication needs of stakeholders at different support development and How will people react when levels - from local implementation of new in danger? custom-made solutions? responders to international level managers? What scenarios are in place How to manage information to communicate with them? during mass influx of What solutions are in place refugees? to support them? What IT solutions can be used? How to improve communication between How to manage information stakeholders? flow in the context of spreading emergency? How to coordinate

Innovations in online tools for fact-checking

volunteers at

administrational level with IT

solutions?

The event gathered representatives from the national and local governments, civil protection agencies, academia, volunteer organisations, NGOs and private sector (most notably, Microsoft, ESRI were present, which is a rare occurrence in the civil security themed events in the Baltic Sea Region).

Media accountability and

transparency

Organisers from the National Headquarters of The State Fire Service of Poland created a promotional website with all the information about the eventhttps://sway.office.com/3bM7YRzMDdMXOwcm?ref=Link

The Forum caught attention of the Polish media: https://polanddaily24.com/baltinnosec-pilot-forum/tech/17390

Post-forum evaluation by partners

On the 3rd of April 2023 the partners in the project gathered for the post-Forum evaluation. The summary of the discussion is below.

What worked (to keep for the next BALTinnoSEC event)

Points on which all partners agreed

- Closed (limited participation, not streamed) event allowed for more open and honest conversation
- The Forum provided good networking opportunities

Individual comments

- Keep face-to-face format (regular and long enough breaks reduce barriers for newcomers)
- cross-disciplinary composition worked well (experts, solution providers mingled freely, created new contacts)
- Needs/gaps were voiced and could be heard by solution providers.
- Online participation of a few panelists worked well
- Good variety and relevant topics, good mixture of participants
- Sincere interest from startups
- Tangible results (new contacts, decision by the CBSS CPN/PA Secure network to organize meetings on IT solutions mentioned in the event)
- Ukrainian participation was very interesting and inspiring

Improvements needed

Points on which all partners agreed

- Q&A is important for the audience time needs to be reserved for it, even if panels exceed the planned time.
- Include hackathons/co-creating sessions
- 2 days preferable duration for the Forum, one day was too short
- Set concrete targets/goals for event to work towards them, finding solutions/developing solutions

Individual comments

- Keep 1-2 subjects per event /go broader (opinions equally represented)
- Add more formats for variety
- More small group-discussions
- Fewer participants in panels (panels had too many speakers)
- Good to meet yearly in different countries (make the Forum regular)
- More promotion to targeted groups is needed (especially to business)
- The event was organized on Friday which was limiting in many ways
- Use Baltic Leadership Programme (BLP) blueprint/TREFF project concept for organization of later events
- More BSR focused perspective
- Simultaneous interpretation is preferred (does not take as much time)
- Promote results of the event to wider audience

External evaluation report

To have an outside expert perspective on the Forum, the partners invited two students from the University of Munster, who are studying crisis communication, and who volunteered to observe the Forum, interview the participants and write an evaluation report. Below are their observations and the report based on data collected through interviews.

Part 1: Authors' observations

Our observations regarding the forum are collected and visualized in the following table.

Aspects that worked well	Aspects that require improvement		
 Despite the tight time frame of the conference, three different topics could be discussed in the panels. There were long coffee breaks that could be used for networking. 	Due to the extensive panels the rest of the schedule was delayed. Therefore, there was not enough time for Questions & Answers from the audience and the BALTinnoSEC Café at the end.		
 The panel formats were diverse and interesting to listen to. For detailed information see notes to the panels below. 	 Panels with fewer participants might have offered more time for interaction and discussion among the panelists and questions from the audience. Various formats could have been implemented as an addition to the panel formats: Specific solution approaches to certain issues or stakeholder demands could have been a keynote or presentation format with slides and pictures for an easier understanding. Formats with higher involvement of the audience could have been useful to hear personal experiences from the participants. 		
Structured variety in panel-portion of the forum was enabled by discussing the same topic (i.e., risk and crises communication) in three interesting and relevant contexts (war and migration	There was a lack of interaction and discussion in the panels, except for the last panel on CBRN threats. In the future increased interaction between panelists would make it easier for the		

- influx, natural disasters and CBRN threats).
- Composition of speakers was nicely done, as experts from many different fields were involved in the panels. Additionally, in the second panel on natural disasters, having official organizations explain what issues they are facing, and the business representatives elaborate what kinds of technical solutions they can offer for those issues was very interesting and very well done.
- Including both experts who spoke English as well as experts not speaking English (by working with a translator) was valuable and inclusive.
- The translator was extremely competent, and it was very pleasant to listen to his interpretation.
- Interaction and dynamic in the last panel (on CBRN threats) was very good. The discussion was a lot easier to follow and refences to other panelists' input was very beneficial and insightful.

- audience to process information and stay mentally invested in the conversation.
- We would recommend decreasing the number of speakers participating in one panel. Moreover, panelists should only be allowed a few sentences for opening statements.
- Additionally, when compiling the panels, one should pay attention to the ratio between English and non-English speaking panelists. Almost half of the panelists from the first panel (on war and migration influx) needed interpretation which created two problems:
 - 1) The time scheduled for the first panel was overdrawn.
 - 2) The flow of discussion and interaction was aggravated, and attention span of the audience was strained because of the long time it took to wait for the interpretation. This was done a lot better in the second and third panel.
- Gender representation should be improved in future panels.

Networking opportunities

- The conference was very useful to meet new people and to deepen the contact with known people.
- The schedule of the conference has allowed many opportunities for networking.

BALTinnoSEC Café

 The concept of the BALTinnoSEC Café was very smart and enabled networking opportunities as well as connection between experts in a less formal environment.

Networking opportunities

- There were mainly people at the conference who already knew each other beforehand.
- Overall, only a few new and external people were present.

BALTinnoSEC Café

- The BALTinnoSEC Café somewhat perished and blended with lunch/coffee time.
- Perhaps for the BALTinnoSEC Café to work in the way it is intended to work, more structure (e.g., by having a moderator for this part or having a separate designated room for the BALTinnoSEC Café) is needed.

Part 2: Interviews with participants

In the interviews conducted all participants were asked the same six questions. Thus, this part of the report will be sub-sectioned into six parts with each part focusing on participants' synthesized answers to the questions asked. We have aspired to obtain a sample as diverse as possible in terms of the origin and gender of the participants. In total we conducted twelve interviews with participants from seven different countries. The composition of the sample regarding sociodemographic aspects can be seen in the table below.

Interview number	Gender	Country	Field of profession	Panelist
1	Male	Germany	Fire Service	Yes
2	Male	Poland	ESRI	Yes
3	Female	Estonia	Rescue Department	No
4	Male	Sweden	MSB	No
5	Male	Latvia	State Fire and Rescue Service	No
6	Male	Poland	Ambulance and Medicare Service	Yes
7	Male	Lithuania	Firefighter training school	No
8	Female	Lithuania	Fire and rescue department	No
9	Female	Poland	National headquarters of the State Fire Service	No
10	Female and male*	Ukraine	State Emergency Service	Yes
11	Female	Poland	Academic teacher	No
12	Female	Latvia	Communicator at the state fire and rescue service	No

^{*} The entire group of Ukrainian participants was interviewed together, as a translator was necessary for conducting the interview

In the following part we compile the aggregated feedback of the respondents regarding the six individual questions and conclude on the extent to which the BALTinnoSEC pilot forum has achieved its objectives.

WHY DID YOU COME TO THIS EVENT?

Analyzing the first question that was posed to the participants, we found three common categories. The first category as to why participants came to the event is coined by a vast amount of rationalism. Participants explained that they came to the event, because they were project partners of the Baltic Sea cooperation or simply because they were invited to attend the BALTinnoSEC pilot forum. The second broad category identified in participants' responses can be summarized as topics, experiences shared and information. Participants elaborated that

especially in these "very crazy times" it is important to share experiences and thoughts on how other countries have dealt with crises and risk situations: "I came here because I'm interested in the questions regarding the Ukrainian assistance, interested in the way how the Polish people has identified the gaps and how they approached those problems which they faced in the beginning of this war situation in the Ukraine". Additionally, participants highlighted the urgency and importance of the topic of crises and risk communication which was chosen for the pilot forum. They expressed that "the topic is very very high on every service's agenda in these times". Information shared at the event were perceived as crucial for participants work and they explained how they plan on involving "what was mentioned here" to their everyday work. The last category we found in participants' responses concerns networking with the goal of connecting with people at the BALTinnoSEC forum who can assist them with issues and supply information in the future. The goal here is to "be part of the group really" and meet different people from a variety of international organizations, who have experience and knowledge about communicating in times of risk and crises. Additionally, the forum was perceived as a way of coordinating needs: "Scandinavian countries, Nordic countries are helping us a lot with humanitarian aid. And as we have been partially talking about here as well, it was important for us to be here and speak about what we actually need and what we actually use".

WILL YOU RECOMMEND THIS EVENT TO YOUR COLLEAGUES?

Among all participants, consensus prevailed that they would recommend the BALTinnoSEC forum to their colleagues. Here participants stressed how the war against Ukraine marks an especially important reason why sharing ideas and including more colleagues in the forum is extremely crucial right now. Moreover, the value of the attending experts' expertise was praised: "I would recommend because the topics are interesting and the way how they expressed it during this conference is also like easy to get the idea about what's happening and the experts that are invited are [...] really knowledgeable about the background where they are working." Furthermore, participants mentioned the same or similar reasons as they did when responding to the first question (i.e., interesting topics, networking opportunities, good exchange of experience etc.)

DO YOU THINK THIS EVENT IS USEFULL FOR YOU PROFESSIONALLY AND HOW?

When asking participants whether they found the BALTinnoSEC forum useful, they generally replied that they felt the event was in fact very useful for them professionally. We identified two categories as to why participants felt the event benefitted them. The first category revolves around networking and connecting with other experts at the event. One participant elaborated: "I always find it extremely useful to expand your own network and deepen existing collaborations and contacts. And that's why it was very useful, very important for me.

And it is so that we apply again and again for new projects, [...] you always need project partners, and such events also serve to use that network, to build up, to find then maybe also

possible cooperation partners". Another participant expressed how he connected with a lot of people during the event and how he now knows "where I can make a phone and ask for help". The second category in participants' responses dealt with the value of different views and perspectives coming together at the event and sharing experiences and solutions concerning risk and crises communication issues. One participant elaborated that "the exchange of different views is the most important" and how "we have a lot of different experiences, and we think about crises management and crises communication in a different way" evaluating different approaches as very valuable. Getting in contact with the perspectives of different professions and countries was perceived as one of the key strengths of the BALTinnoSEC forum. Additionally, the benefits of hands-on-advice based on real stories and experiences was found to be a unique opportunity enabled by the forum: "Yes it was valuable, because in everyday life okay you know how things should be done and what is written in theories and so on. But here you can hear how these advices are working in practice. And in real situations, in real crises".

WHAT DID YOU LIKE THE MOST ABOUT THE CONFERENCE?



Many of the participants positively highlighted the content orientation of the three panels. In this regard, all three panels (war and migration influx, natural disasters and CBRN threats) were mentioned as highlights of the conference by different participants. Various reasons were given for this. On the one hand, several participants were particularly interested in the current situation in Ukraine. For example, one participant said: "I have to say that the

Ukrainian experiences are the most interesting because it's a terrible war and I'm quite interested about that". Another presented the following as a highlight: "The true stories. What it's actually like and how people find solutions in these difficult times. And of course, Ukraine's experience". On the other hand, participants appreciated the fact that they learned more about certain topics and issues that they don't deal with on a daily basis and were thus able to broaden their horizons. To this, one participant said: "But I think it's good to hear about areas that you're not confronted with in your day-to-day business. Simply to see what moves others, what topics are still important in the area of crisis communication, but which I personally don't focus on". It was also emphasized that the selected topics were good for getting a wide overview of the whole process of emergency management and to get new ideas for your own work: "I liked the first panel. [...] It gave me new ideas on what to do". Besides the panels, several participants mentioned the networking opportunities and the open exchange between the attendees as their favourite parts of the conference. For example, the possibility of asking colleagues with hands- on-experience for more detailed information, the connection

with the solution providers (e.g., ESRI or Microsoft) and the open space to share your opinion and ask questions were mentioned here. One participant highlighted: "But also, free discussion within the forum itself. We could speak out our mind and ask questions and receive answers".

WHAT DO YOU THINK CAN BE IMPROVED ABOUT THE CONFERENCE?

Altogether, there were many different suggestions from the people we interviewed on how the conference could be improved. Some of these relate to specific aspects of the forum while others relate more generally to the forum as a whole. One point of criticism was that few external people attended the conference. Hence, several suggestions for improvement refer to making the conference more open and accessible to a greater number of people. One participant had detailed suggestions for improvement: "Maybe an event like this should be more openly. I think it maybe should not be inside this kind of institution academy. Because it is closed for people, and you have the name checks. So maybe some kind of public open place will be useful. And maybe we should have some journalists from this kind of initiatives". To improve the accessibility, it was also proposed to widen the invitation circle and give more people the opportunity to participate both in person and online. In this context the broadcast or streaming of the conference (e.g., via Zoom) was suggested so that it could be followed by a larger audience and by people who couldn't attend in person. Another aspect that received suggestions for improvement was the schedule of the event. Many participants perceived the conference as too tightened and short. As a result, some participants felt there was not enough time to reflect on the content, while others felt there was not enough audience involvement. One participant put it this way: "And as I said, Questions & Answers fell almost flat and that was a pity. Because there are also experts in the audience who could make their contribution, but they were not given the opportunity and that's a shame". To address this problem, for example, a speaking time limit was suggested to allow more attendees to have their chance to speak. In order to have more time at the forum for content slots but also for networking, it was proposed to extend the conference to two days. As one interviewee said: "Because there is a lot of information, a lot of people who would like to talk to shared experiences and so maybe it would be more useful divided into two days and have more speakers and to share more experience". Lastly, several smaller points were addressed. One suggestion was that when talking about different apps or software products the applications should be shared to a screen so that the audience can follow the explanations better. Another suggestion concerned the translation. Overall, this was perceived very positively, but a simultaneous interpretation, as opposed to consecutive interpretation, could have accelerated the discussions somewhat. A final idea was to make networking easier for introverts by, for example, assigning numbers to people and then having them gather at specific tables so that people could talk to each other in a more structured way.

WOULD YOU LIKE THIS FORUM TO BECOME REGULAR?

Overall, all respondents said that they would appreciate a regular forum of this kind. Two main reasons were given for this. Firstly, several participants mentioned that a forum like this is a good way to build and maintain international relations, which is generally very challenging. For this purpose, it would be useful to bring together many stakeholders from the Baltic Sea states. One participant summed it up like this: "So definitely to bring together, to bundle more actors that are active in this area, Council of the Baltic Sea States or Baltic Sea States". Secondly, the personal and thematic exchange at the conference was cited as a reason to hold the conference regularly. The conference would be a good occasion to exchange information in a wide range of topics around crisis/risk communication and emergency management. A regular conference would provide the opportunity to discuss more topics and track issues over a longer period of time to see changes and developments in the field. One participant described it as follows: "Yes. Because in one forum you [...] can cover only a few themes. Yeah, and having more of them, you could go with more different themes". Another said it this way: "Yes. It would be good because there are new crises, there are new experiences, it's very good that you have a format where you can exchange those experiences and get this information that can help you to avoid mistakes".

CONCLUSION OF THE REPORT

In conclusion we come to the assessment that the pilot forum achieved all its main goals. The forum was both cross-sectional and multi-disciplinary, which was perceived this way by both the authors of the report and by the participants interviewed. The BALTinnoSEC pilot forum successfully facilitated connections between the experts attending this event, as there were multiple opportunities for networking, which were extensively used by experts. The theme of the forum was perceived as crucially relevant by the interviewees, who accumulatively named the topic and themes of the forum as reasons why they attended the event, why they would recommend the forum to their colleagues and what they liked most about the event. Additionally, business participation was noticeable and useful, as the junction of hands-on demands and existing business solutions in the panel on natural disasters was extremely interesting and valuable. Thus, the overall main goals were certainly achieved by the BALTinnoSEC pilot forum. However, considering the efficiency of the forum's format, some deficits and potentials for improvement were identified. Generally, there was too much information and too little time scheduled for the entire program and the vast amount of information conveyed. As proposed by one participant, we would suggest spreading the event over a time span of two days, instead of one. The speakers and moderators were clearly experts in their field and shared valuable information; however, attention should be paid to the composition of English and non-English speakers as well as a better balance in gender representation (as there were very few women participating in the panels and no women moderating the panels at all). The panels are an interesting and good format; yet efficiency could be increased. Additionally, it should be considered whether different kinds of formats should be introduced to the

forum, such as keynote speakers who will have the opportunity to present implementations of specific solutions to concrete problems with visual aids such as slides with pictures. The BALTinnoSEC pilot forum enabled various networking and knowledge sharing opportunities, which were greatly appreciated and taken advantage of by the participants.

BALTinnoSEC future and institutialisation plan

During the partner's post-Forum meeting, the following points were raised:

- Partners agreed that the evaluation (both internal and external) will be used in the preparation for the next BALTinnoSEC Forum.
- Finland (Finnish Ministry of Interior) already planned a BALTinnoSEC event as a part of the Finnish Presidency in CBSS and PA Secure Steering Group (July 2023 June 2024)
- Since this is a costly activity, partners will look for sources of extra funding: possible sources include HORIZON Europe and UCPM (DG Echo), no immediate suitable calls to fund such an event were identified at the moment.
- It could be useful to use the Exchange of Experts by DG Echo for the next BALTinnoSEC fora
- If successful the next BALTinnOSEC Forum should be presented to CBSS Civil Protection Network (CPN) DGs for endorsement (and possible inclusion as a regular point into CBSS presidency calendar)
- CBSS CPN might consider running a BALTinnoSEC event instead of/or parallel to Baltic Excellence Programme in societal security
- Including UA partners into BALTinnOSEC will assist countries in the BSR in helping Ukraine both during and post-war.

BALTinnoSEC Pilot Forum

9:00 - 9:10 Opening statements

9:00 - 9:05 - BG Adam KONIECZNY, PhD, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the State Fire Service of Poland 9:05 - 9:10 - BG Mariusz FELTYNOWSKI, PhD, Rector-Commandant of the Main School of Fire Service

9:10 - 9:35 Setting the stage

9:10 – 9:15 – Andriy MARTYNENKO, Adviser, Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat
9:15 – 9:25 – Adrian BUCAŁOWSKI, Deputy Director, Civil Protection Department, National Headquarters of the
State Fire Service
9:25 – 9:35 – GOVTECH Polska

9:35 - 10:50 Panel 1: Risk and crisis communication in the context of war and migration influx

9:35 – 10:35 Panel discussion moderated by Adrian BUCAŁOWSKI, National Headquarters of the State Fire Service

Questions:

- How to manage chaos?
- How can authorities support development and implementation of new custom made solutions?
- How to manage information during mass influx of refugees?
- How to improve communication between stakeholders?
- How to coordinate volunteers at administrational level with IT solutions?

Invited experts from: State Emergency Service of Ukraine, Ministry of Interior and Administration of Poland, Podkarpackie Governor's Office in Rzeszów), Provincial Headquarters of the State Fire Service in Rzeszów, City Hall of Warsaw, Humanash, Enviar.

10:35 - 10:50 Q&A

10:50 - 11:05 Coffee break

11:05 — 12:20 Panel 2: Risk and crisis communication in the context of natural disasters

11:05 - 12:05 Panel discussion moderated by Adrian BUCAŁOWSKI, National Headquarters of the State Fire Service

Questions:

- What are information management and communication needs of stakeholders at different levels from local responders to international level managers?
- What solutions are in place to support them?

Invited experts from: State Fire Service of Poland, State Emergency Service of Ukraine, Emergency Response Coordination Centre, Space Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Science, MICROSOFT, ESRI Polska, Mindmade

12:05 - 12:20 Q&A

12:20 - 13:00 Lunch break



BALTinnoSEC Pilot Forum

13:00 - 14:15 Panel 3: Risk and crisis communication in the context of CBRN threats

13:00 – 14:00 Panel discussion moderated by PhD Michał GŁOWACKI, University of Warsaw Questions:

- How to communicate with citizens in the context of CBRN threats?
- How will people react when in danger?
- What scenarios are in place to communicate with them?
- How to manage information flow in the context of spreading emergency?
- Media accountability and transparency
- Innovations in online tools for fact-checking

Invited experts from Main School of Fire Service (Warsaw), Hamburg Fire and Rescue Service (Germany), State Emergency Service of Ukraine, Psychologists and Sociologists

14:00 - 14:15 Q&A

14:15 - 14:30 Summary and closing statements

14:30 - 16:00 BALTinnoSEC Cafe

Structured 15 min face-to-face talks among Pilot Forum participants at three tables, corresponding to panel themes.

