



News room

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The first policy day convened during the Baltic Sea Science Congress in Riga on 17 June 2015

The joint Baltic Sea Science Congress and BONUS Forum policy day, convened for the first time ever on 17 June in Riga. It set out to define a common understanding of the links between research and innovation, regional prosperity and sustainability in the long term, all under one of the Congress's seven themes, the 'Viable ecosystem for a sustainable society'. The broad objective of the policy day was to discuss the research needs and bottlenecks of the academy-policy-industry interface processes to ensure most desirable development of sustainable blue economy in the Baltic Sea and wider context of the European regional seas.

The result of having this first ever policy day was most encouraging. In particular a significant achievement was made by starting openly discussing the role of science and the attitude of the research community towards the blue growth initiative at this congress. The level of activity of this discussion indicated not only high relevance and interest and diversity of opinions, but witnessed that such discussion is timely, worth effort, and deserves continuation at the future forums of the Baltic Sea scientists. In particular the policy day as well as the technology transfer workshop introduced two novelties of this Congress that could well become a tradition at the future ones.

The policy day was attended by some 150 Baltic Sea Science Congress participants, and moderated by Ms **Pauli Merriman**, Director of WWF Baltic Sea Ecoregion Programme and Professor **Markku Ollikainen**, Environmental and Resource Economics, University of Helsinki, Finland.



Policy day moderators Markku Ollikainen (l) and Pauli Merriman.

The session was kicked off with a compelling presentation by a world-renowned scholar **Dr. (Ru)Dolf de Groot**, Wageningen University, The Netherlands. He discussed the topic of how to embed marine goods and services to societal action in support of region's prosperity. Particularly considered was the question of how we can evaluate and embed marine ecosystem services to the practices and management action of society so that it truly supports blue growth and region's prosperity? **Maïke Piepho's**, of University of Rostock, Germany short presentation provided an overview of the project BACOSA, the Baltic Coastal System Analysis and Status Evaluation project and was followed by **Holger Jansson's**, of Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research Warnemuende, Germany short presentation on integration challenges in maritime spatial planning and the concept of an ecosystem approach. The presenters were joined in a panel discussion by **Evija Smiete** from the State Environmental Service, Latvia and **Peter Crawley**, DG Research, European Commission.



The panelists of the discussion on ecosystem goods and services session from left to right: Evija Smiete, Holger Jansson, Peter Crawley, Dolf de Groot.

The second part of the policy day was built around the theme of searching for the best cross-border and -sector governance model: What would the best model look like that emerges from the Baltic Sea experience and that

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ensures the best possible cross-border and cross-sector governance and ecosystem based management practices, not only to be used in the Baltic Sea region, but to act also as a model in other European regional seas? The keynote by Professor **Mike Elliott**, University of Hull, UK, set the scene for the discussions to follow. The first short presentation by Professor **Kari Hyttiäinen**, University of Helsinki, Finland outlined results of a comparative project titled "Water Protection in the Baltic Sea and the Chesapeake Bay: Institutions, Policies and Efficiency". The second presentation by Dr. **Zrinka Mendas**, Anglia Ruskin University, UK, was titled "Toward a sustainable spatial island ecosystem of island archipelago in Zadar, Croatia". The presenters were joined in a panel discussion by Dr. **Eeva-Liisa Poutanen**, Environment Counsellor, Environment Ministry of Finland, Dr. **Gerald Schernewski**, Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research Warnemünde, Germany and Dr. **Kaisa Kononen**, Executive Director, BONUS as well as the Commission representative from the first panel session, Mr. Crawley.



Panelists of the discussion on best governance model from left to right: Eeva-Liisa Poutanen, Kaisa Kononen, Kari Hyttiäinen, Zrinka Mendas, Peter Crawley, Mike Elliot, Gerhard Schernewski

Keynote by Dolf de Groot, [download here](#)
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