

Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Copenhagen 1st December 2014

We are writing to you as chair and vice-chair of the Executive Committee of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council.

We want to take this opportunity to wish you every success with your five year appointment as Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. It is a very broad portfolio, but you have already made clear that you see this fusion of portfolios as a natural development and that they actually complement each other.

The principle of environmental conservation as the overriding principle at the expense of jobs and livelihoods has been brokered for five years. We take note of your emphasis on protecting the environment, whilst at the same time maintaining competitiveness. A healthy maritime environment will create the right conditions for a sustainable fishery and aquaculture and thereby maintain and generate jobs for those in the maritime sector. Your words: Good for the environment means good for business, imply that these two objectives can work together.

We consider the Baltic to be a well-functioning sea basin. It has the institutions in place as well as an established framework for stakeholder cooperation on a regular basis. All those involved are working together to make appropriate and responsible use of the natural resources, whilst at the same time taking care of the marine environment.

Of course, there are challenges and legacies from the past in the form of heavy industries and burdensome farming practices. Moreover, the use of the Baltic Sea space is becoming ever intensive and this poses challenges. So the focus needs to be on blue and green growth and this is reflected in the EU's Baltic Sea Strategy.

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We want to keep up our collective efforts and our tradition of dialogue and mutual understanding. We also note that you are of the opinion that consultation with stakeholders and Member States is essential.

The Baltic Sea Advisory Council is going to hold its next General Assembly on Thursday 7th May 2015. It will take place somewhere around the Baltic. We extend a warm invitation to you to take part. The first multi-annual multi-species management plan under the new Basic Regulation concerns the Baltic. We would like it to be a first for us that you as Commissioner responsible for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries plus Environment will accept our invitation to take part at our General Assembly and make an intervention on issues relevant for us. We hope that you will accept our invitation.

We look forward so much to hearing from you.

Kind regards,



Reine J. Johansson
Chairman of the BSAC



Ewa Milewska
Vice-chair of the BSAC