

PORTFOLIO OF BALTIC SEA REGION IMAGES AND IDENTITIES



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Portfolio of Baltic Sea Region Images and Identities is to explore, make sense of and present the identity and image¹ elements of the Baltic Sea Region. These elements take the form of assets and values as well as narratives associated with these values. The assets and values are described through short textual narratives and exemplified by geographical hotspots. The Portfolio can be used as a framework for investigating and creating an identity and branding profile of the Baltic Sea Region comprising key elements of the identity and image of the Region. The Portfolio consists of three main parts; 1) Narratives of the Baltic Sea Region, 2) a Cultural Map of the Baltic Sea Region, and 3) an Inventory of Elements of Baltic Sea Region Identity. The Narratives and the Map are built from the elements found in the Inventory.

The Portfolio can be explored in different ways:

1. **Thematically** – from the point of view investment or tourism promotion, or talent retention – in which case reading of the Narratives and the Elements of identity associated to the Narrative is one possible path.

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Region,
the sea and
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Sea have
e of this sea,
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m. Despite
ed the Sea.
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of the Baltic Sea, but green and 'blue' industries can develop in support of saving the Sea, giving the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region further prosperity. Fortunately there already is a spirit of entrepreneurship that cares about the environment in the Region.

Elements: Environmental Awareness, Accessible Maritime Heritage, Fish from the Baltic Sea, The Baltic Sea, Accessible Green spaces, Better growth than the Rest of Europe, Creativity in Attractive Locations

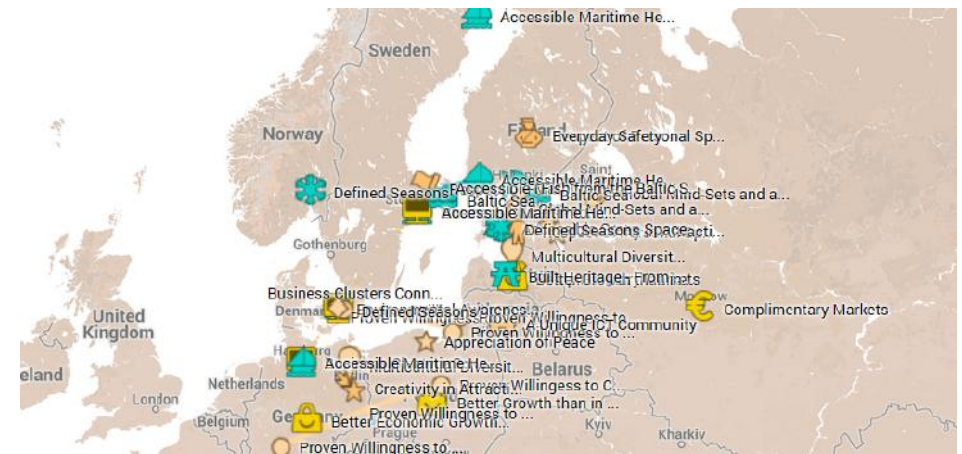
Comments by author: This narrative tells a story of a common destiny and hope of a better

"We all have to take care of the same sea."

There are clickable links at the end of each Narrative in Part I of the Portfolio linking to the Elements of identity associated to the Narrative.

You will also find "Comments by the Author" at the end of each Narrative, explaining succinctly how it has been constructed and providing suggestions as to the relevant areas of application: identity building, investment promotion, tourism promotion or talent retention.²

2. **As a local** asking yourself if you identify with the Narratives and by exploring the Cultural Map online. Feel free to discuss on social media with eg. ONE BSR³ project partners or give feedback to the author.



1. Identity in this case signifies how the people of the Baltic Sea Region view their own region, while image is how people from outside the Region view it.
2. These are the focal areas of the ONE BSR project.
3. www.onebsr.eu

The Cultural Map of the Baltic Sea Region provides clickable hotspots⁴ that give a short explanation of how the place contributes to a certain element of Baltic Sea Region identity. It also provides links to further reading of news pieces and blogs at the www.newswave.eu site⁵.

In the Narratives there are also quotes from interviews with locals and visitors of the Baltic Sea Region. You may click on the quotes to watch videos produced by the ONE BSR project and see where the quotes come from:

ATES DIFFERENT CULTURES (II)

itic Sea Region there are people that e gap between Eastern and Western cul-
ause of their unique understanding of their
r's national culture, but that are distinctly
from each other because of the differ-
those same cultures.

burg's cultural uniqueness as Russia's win-
he West, facing the Baltic Sea, is recog-
und the world. But Russian culture in all its
d ways of thinking displays many funda-
ifferences compared to the other cultures
he Baltic Sea. Yet people of those same
s Region cultures have sometimes taken
s from Russian culture. Those influences,
resulting knowledge of the Russians, took
mension during the Cold War, teaching
ies of the Baltic Sea Region how to bal-
ween East and West. This knowledge is of



"You can get a feeling of what the Baltic Sea Region is, but not put it into words."

Pernille from Denmark

great use in trade relations and meetings between
Russians and other peoples of the Baltic Sea Regi
today. Yet those same people may still feel mistr
towards the Russians because of past war experi-
ences; memories that now can become evoked b
recent developments in the relationship between
Ukraine and Russia.

Elements: *The Baltic Sea, Global Mind-Set; and
Understanding of Russia, Respect of Personal Space
Appreciation of Peace*

Comments by author: Like the previous one,
also this narrative is an ambiguous story about th
Region's cultural geography. To some extent it c
already be seen in use in investment promotion
orts. It can perhaps also be used in the context
intercultural dialogue.

3. **As a place promotion resource** for adding both content and context to specific place promotion efforts: Take a look at the Cultural Map – which identity elements have been connected to your country, region or city and how about your neighbours? Browse through the glossary to see where in the Inventory your place is mentioned. From the Inventory, you can then proceed to the Nar-

ratives by clicking the “Used in” links:

4. **For local and national leaders in different fields** to better recognize how local and national assets and values are appropriate for supporting a Baltic Sea Region identity and vice versa. Key words from different fields can easily be found in the glossary at the end of the Portfolio.

5. **For overall identity and branding building efforts of the Baltic Sea Region.**

Try perhaps by reading the Inventory as a whole, and then finish with the Narratives of the Baltic Sea Region. The Inventory of Elements constitutes a main narrative that is often rather fragmental, supplemented by an exemplifying hotspot, and finally and importantly an anti-story that nuances the main narrative.

Finally, please note that whenever used or applied, these Elements and Narratives of the Baltic Sea Region as well as the Cultural Map need to be re-evaluated in their new context. This is important notably in a branding context, because speaking truthfully and authentically is the basis for any successful brand. If you want to know more about the foundations of the Portfolio, please read the Methodology and Limitations.

4. Sometimes in cultural mapping these are referred to as points of interest (POI)

5. Newswave.eu is a Copenhagen based news website publishing a daily selection of articles chosen from monitoring regional and EU news titles. They also have several bloggers writing about their life, experiences and various compelling topics in and about the Baltic Sea Region

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The Portfolio's contents are to a large extent developed with the help of the method of Cultural Mapping. Cultural Mapping is the process of collecting, analysing and synthesising information in order to describe the cultural resources, networks, links and patterns of usage of a given community. For the purposes of this Portfolio we refer to these resources as the Elements of Baltic Sea Region identity, divided into values and assets, as described in Part 3. The "community" in this case has been interpreted as being the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region – as individuals or as collectives, notably nations. Consequently there is an inherent territorial limitation – the Baltic Sea Region – but what exactly this constitutes in terms of territory is left open to interpretation in the narratives. Culture is used here in its widest sense: It is about what matters to people and communities and about shared memories and experiences, relationships, sense of place and identity – which all are important ele-

ments of how places' images and brand identities are conceived and articulated. In practice, these are the Narratives of the Baltic Sea Region, described in Part I.

The Portfolio needs to be read with care. Much of the information is based on imagined stories, often on individual accounts, and as such reflect individual perceptions, not necessarily objective facts. All

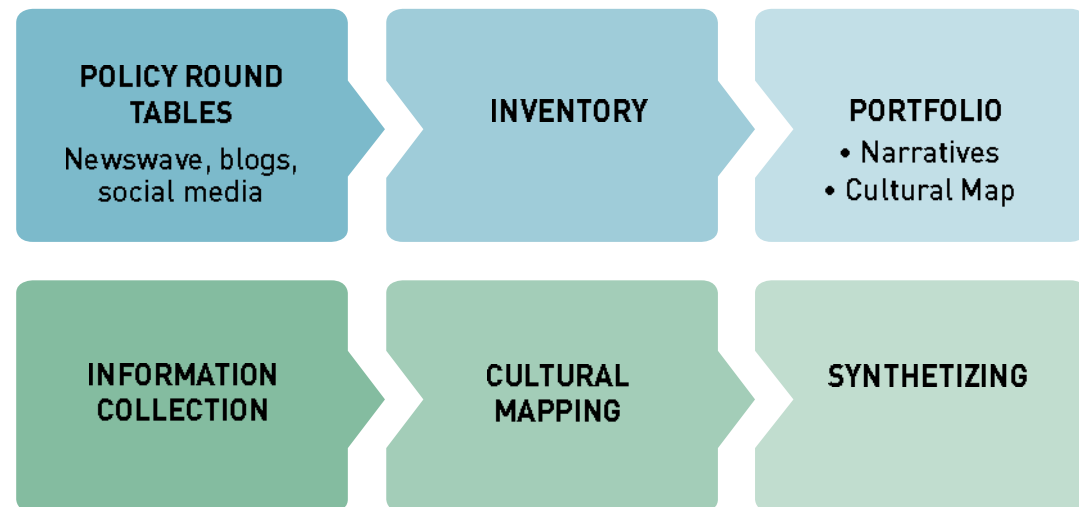


Figure 1:
Process of developing the Portfolio of Baltic Sea Region Images and Identities.

individual accounts have been collected at three Policy Round Tables (PRTs) arranged by the ONE BSR project during 2013 and 2014. Observations from these Policy Round Tables can be found in the Annexes. These observations form the primary source for the Cultural Mapping and Inventory. The Elements of Baltic Sea Region identity have been completed through information collection from blogs and news pieces on the www.newswave.eu website that is affiliated with ONE BSR project, as well as other written and spoken outputs from the ONE BSR project. These have also served as a guide for geographically pinpointing the hotspots in the Cultural Map of the Baltic Sea Region, exemplifying the Elements of Baltic Sea Region identity.

The Narratives of the Baltic Sea Region are constructed from synthesizing different values and assets from the Elements of Baltic Sea Region identity into new stories. These stories reflect some of the academically identified dimensions of national iden-



Photo: Helene Grynfarb / imagebankswedense



Photo: Mariusz Cieszewski

tities in Europe and European identity⁶, namely:

- Shared memories or shared continuity among populations
- Ethno-histories
- Belief in a common destiny
- Gendered or religious perceptions
- Division of labour, mobility and ownership of economic resources
- Cultural geography and territorial symbolism
- Relation to cosmopolitanism (globalisation of the identity)
- The other, the alter ego

The Narratives of the Baltic Sea Region are rhetorically constructed by applying different types of story arcs⁷. The used story arcs are referred to in the “Comments by author” at the end of each narrative.

6. Smith 1992

7. Ephorn; Gonzalez



PART 1:

NARRATIVES OF THE BALTIC SEA REGION

SAVING THE BALTIC SEA

All peoples around the Baltic Sea experience the abundance and importance of the Baltic Sea in their everyday life: There is the herring that is enjoyed in similar yet different ways around the Region, there are the good times spent next to the sea and on the sea, there are the beautiful landscapes and beaches. The peoples around the Baltic Sea have also gathered an exceptional knowledge of this sea, how to use it, enjoy it and take care of it. Environmental awareness is strong in the Region. Despite this knowledge, the people have polluted the Sea so that it is very sick. If the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region agree that all the qualities of the Sea that they enjoy are under threat then they should use the knowledge of the Sea that they possess to save it, otherwise the Sea and all that it offers may be doomed for generations. If the people do use their knowledge to save the Sea, the road back to a healthy Baltic will be long. But the rewards will be



*“We all have to take care
of the same sea.”*

Timo from Finland

big - not only will the peoples and visitors of the Region be able to continue enjoying the abundance of the Baltic Sea, but green and 'blue' industries can develop in support of saving the Sea, giving the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region further prosperity. Fortunately there already is a spirit of entrepreneurship that cares about the environment in the Region.

Elements: *Environmental Awareness, Accessible Maritime Heritage, Fish from the Baltic Sea, The Baltic Sea, Accessible Green Spaces, Better Growth than the Rest of Europe, Creativity in Attractive Locations*

Comments by author: This narrative tells a story of a common destiny and hope of a better future. It could be interesting for identity building and investment promotion in green, cleantech and/or blue industries.

CELEBRATING LIGHT AND NATURE

The solstice festival of Midsummer is celebrated in much of the Baltic Sea Region through the solar symbol of burning a bonfire. Today the burning of the fires really epitomize the short, crisp summers of the Region contrasting to the short days of winter. The light and associated blooming of nature is always doomed by the cycles of the seasons, yet always returning. The seasons also define a lifestyle cycle of the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region; from the winter's intimacy of the cosy home to summer's open air festivals. Making use of the abundant green spaces of the Baltic Sea Region is a constant in people's lives all year round. The city dwellers as well as inhabitants of the countryside can all easily observe the changing of the seasons in the surrounding natural beauty. One person may enjoy picking berries at the doorstep in late summer; another tending his sailing boat in the winter. It is all culture defined by



Photo: Latvian Institute

*"It's just you and the nature,
and that's very nice."*

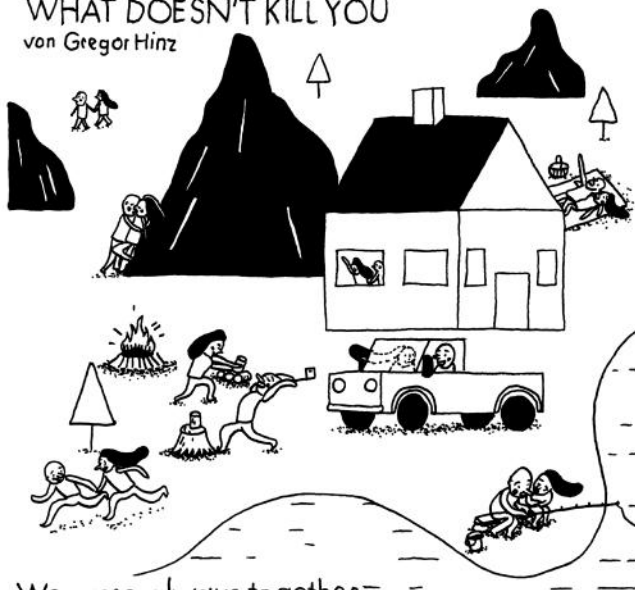
Linn from Finland

the cycles of light and nature. The Baltic Sea Region is unique in how cities, nature and culture come together.

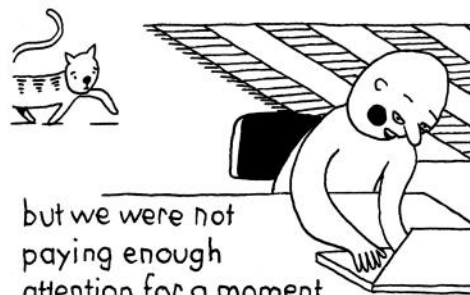
Elements: *Defined Seasons, Respect of Personal Space, Multicultural Diversity, Accessible Green Spaces, Everyday Safety*

Comments by author: This narrative tells a cyclical story of ethno-histories. It could be interesting for identity building as well as talent retention and tourism promotion.

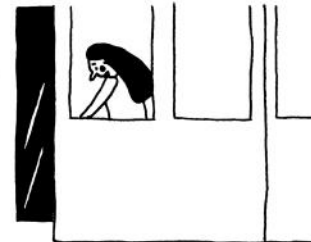
WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU von Gregor Hinz



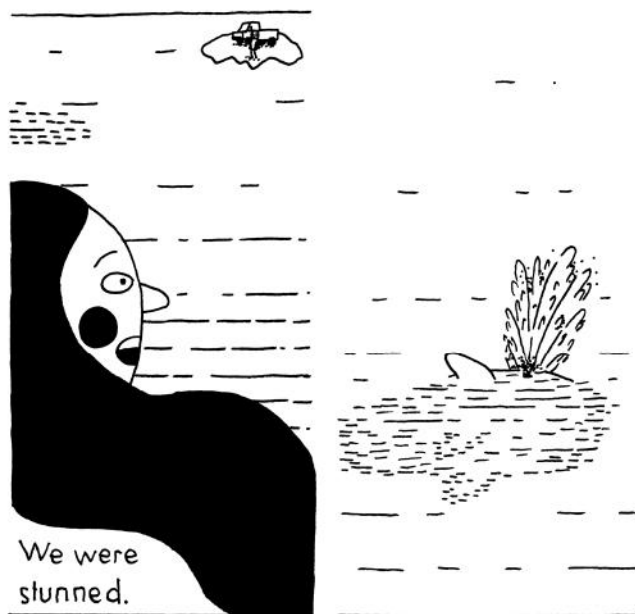
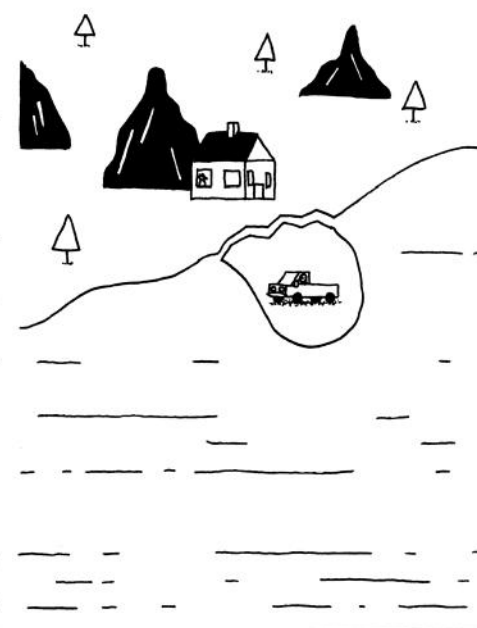
We were always together.



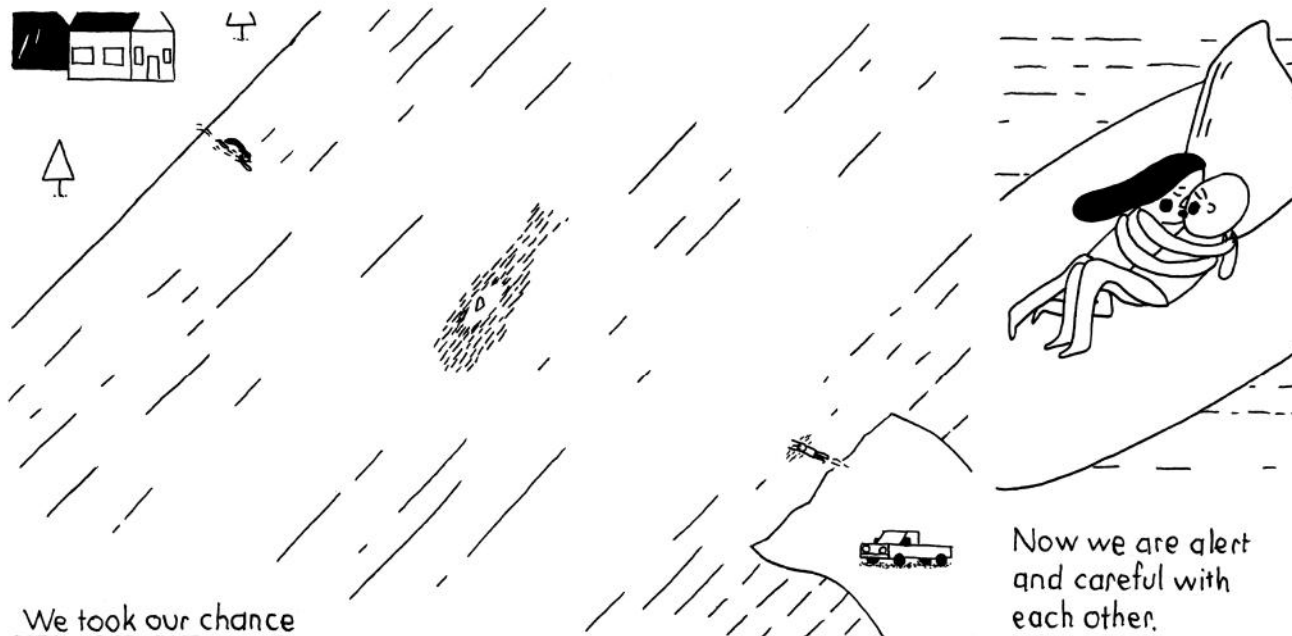
but we were not
paying enough
attention for a moment
and lost sight of each other.



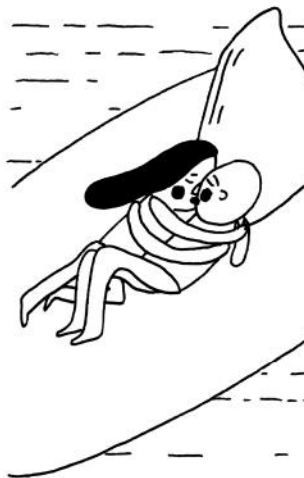
So it happened.



We were
stunned.



We took our chance



Now we are alert
and careful with
each other.

BEST AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-REALISATION

The post-Cold War generation of the Baltic Sea Region is rather well equipped for the era of globalisation. The talents of the Region enjoy fair labour markets and equal opportunities at universities. A hard-working protestant work-ethos characterizes the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region, with women equally hard-working as men and highly involved in working-life. The post-Cold War generation has grown up in a generally safe region. All this has given this generation an opportunity to self-realisation visible in the exceptional start-up activity and creativity of the Region's young talents. The USA has long been the land of opportunities. The Baltic Sea Region, embodying fairness and equality, is today the region of opportunities for all. Every young person in the Region, irrespective of socio-economic status, can access good education and enjoy safety. They grow up with a global mind

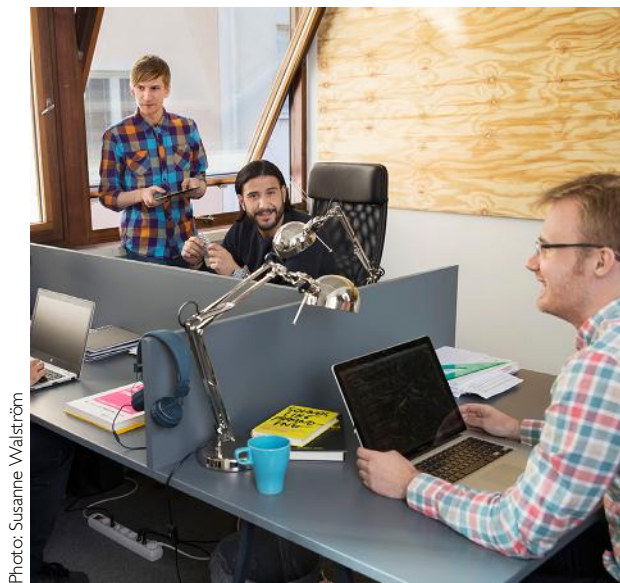


Photo: Susanne Walström

“We are innovative.”

Elisabeth from Sweden

set, surrounded by opportunities and a preparedness to meet people from other cultures. They are known to be early and eager technology adopters too. They do quality things in a quality environment!

Elements: *Creativity in Attractive Locations, Respect of Fairness, Everyday Safety, Global Mind-Sets, Unique ICT Community, Better Growth than the Rest of Europe*

Comments by author: This narrative tells a 'creation story' where the talents are given many positive conditions in the Baltic Sea Region. It could be interesting for identity building, talent retention and investment promotion.

Wind

Getting

Shells



Fresh air



Sunbath



Waves of excitement

Tickles



Castles of sand



J. Piekara 2014



Giving



Blue box



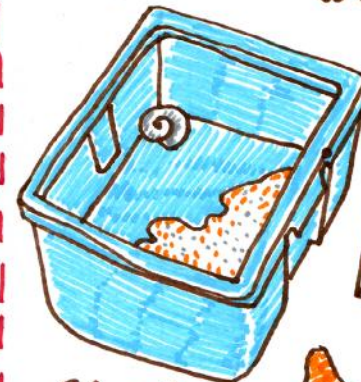
Wire



Pollution



Glass



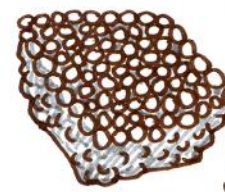
Straw



Plastic



Butts



Foam

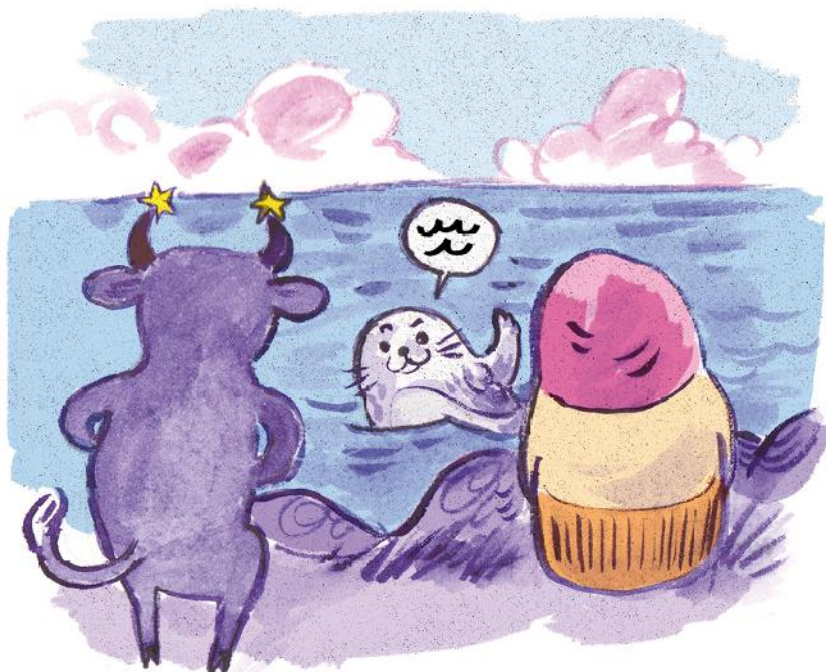


Balloon



Paper

- all this trash I found on Riga's beach on the 2nd of August, 2014.



BEING SPLIT, THEN EMERGING STRONGER THAN EVER

Centuries ago the Baltic Sea Region was economically united through Hanseatic trade, then in the 20th century economically split through opposing economic systems of communism and mixed Western economies. The peoples of the Region then managed together an economic transition of both systems towards fully globalised economies, and recently came out of the global economic crisis better than any other part of Europe. The development continues until this day: Even when the euro system recently was questioned, new countries from the Baltic Sea Region – namely Estonia and Latvia - joined the system, with Poland and Lithuania lined up to join in the future. This is a sign of the economies' strength fulfilling strict financial and monetary criteria. This is a powerful shared memory of the Region - economic fortunes and misfortunes that have had an impact on every inhabitant



“History was always connected by the people.”

Christian from Germany

of the Baltic Sea Region. The current day relative strength in the Region's economies compared to the rest of the EU also shows how by returning to the intensive trade relations across the Baltic Sea, the Region has emerged stronger than ever. Today it is a Region of good news!

Elements: *Appreciation of Peace, Proven Willingness to Cooperate, Better Growth than the Rest of Europe, Complimentary Markets, Global Mind-Sets and an Understanding of Russia*

Comments by author: This is a positive survival story that includes learning from the hardships of the past and confidently moving towards the future. It could be interesting for identity building and investment promotion.

THE SEA THAT CONNECTS AND SEPARATES DIFFERENT CULTURES (I)

In the Baltic Sea Region there are cultures that bear influences of each other because of their connection by the Baltic Sea, but that same Sea separates them and therefore also makes them distinctly different from each other.

By influence from each other many of the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region have adopted the same or similar architectural styles in their cities, in the past as well as today. Inhabitants of Hansa cities take pride in the Hanseatic built heritage. The Hanseatic style is intimately connected to the history of trade in the Region. But in some of the major trading cities of the Baltic Sea Region of today, the Hanseatic style is not present at all. Not least is this the case in the architectural pinnacle of the Baltic Sea Region - St Petersburg. Its Russian Empire style can be found in some other cities around the Region too, reflecting the Russian influence in these cultures.



“The cultural landscape is often rather similar.”

Christian from Germany

This style, however, has its own roots in French influences. More recently, a Nordic or Scandinavian design movement has emerged. This concept of design based on simplicity is now influential in much of the Baltic Sea Region. But in Russia the nouveau riche set the architectural standard today, and as big and brash as possible seems to be the guiding principle there.

Elements: *Multicultural Diversity, Built Heritage, Creativity in Attractive Locations, An Accessible Maritime Heritage*

Comments by author: This story contains a lot of ambiguity about the Region's territorial symbolism. Spontaneously ambiguity may not be a solid foundation for identity building, but this story should be fine, and is probably in fact already used, for tourism promotion.

HERRING FISHERY HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT TO THE BALTIC SEA REGION



SIMON VATH

THE SEA THAT CONNECTS AND SEPARATES DIFFERENT CULTURES (II)

In the Baltic Sea Region there are people that bridge the gap between Eastern and Western cultures because of their unique understanding of their neighbour's national culture, but that are distinctly different from each other because of the differences in those same cultures.

St Petersburg's cultural uniqueness as Russia's window to the West, facing the Baltic Sea, is recognized around the world. But Russian culture in all its habits and ways of thinking displays many fundamental differences compared to the other cultures around the Baltic Sea. Yet people of those same Baltic Sea Region cultures have sometimes taken influences from Russian culture. Those influences, and the resulting knowledge of the Russians, took a new dimension during the Cold War, teaching the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region how to balance between East and West. This knowledge is of



“You can get a feeling of what the Baltic Sea Region is, but not put it into words.”

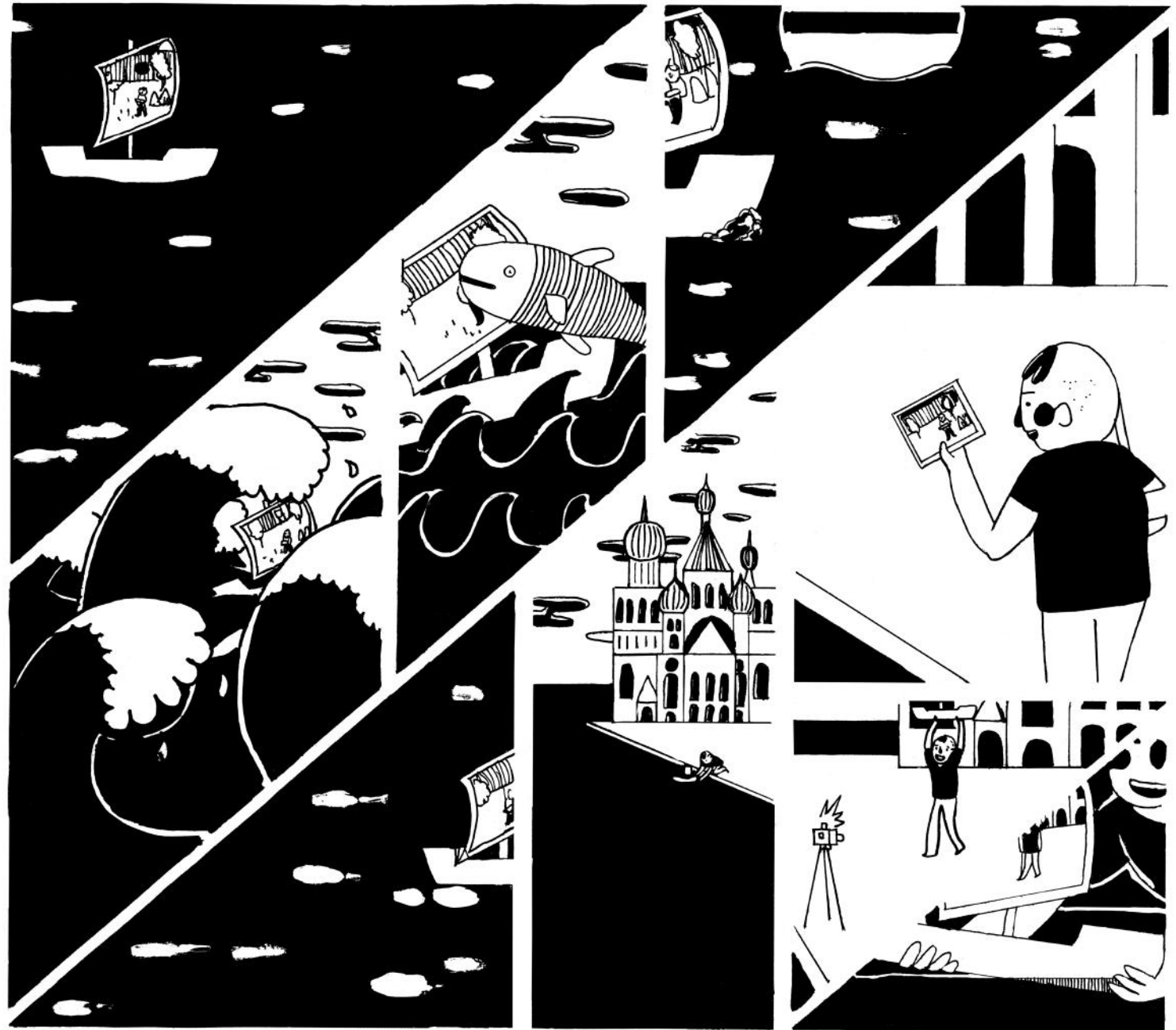
Pernille from Denmark

great use in trade relations and meetings between Russians and other peoples of the Baltic Sea Region today. Yet those same people may still feel mistrust towards the Russians because of past war experiences; memories that now can become evoked by recent developments in the relationship between Ukraine and Russia.

Elements: *The Baltic Sea, Global Mind-Sets and an Understanding of Russia, Respect of Personal Space, Appreciation of Peace*

Comments by author: Like the previous one, also this narrative is an ambiguous story about the Region's cultural geography. To some extent it can already be seen in use in investment promotion efforts. It can perhaps also be used in the context of intercultural dialogue.

DIFFERENT, BUT ONE
von Gregor Hinz



Sea is like a mother for me.
A mother who gives me space and
holds me when I want to swim. A mother
who calms me down with cool and silent
waves. A mother makes it possible for me to breathe.



EXPLORING A UNIQUE ICT COMMUNITY

The skills of the talents in the Baltic Sea Region and the markets of the Region's countries complement each other. The value chains between ICT⁸ clusters in the Region are important and call for further exploration. Some ICT companies in the Region have particularly clear roots in different countries of the Region – such as Berlin-based Soundcloud founded there by Swedish talent, and Skype created by Swedish, Danish and Estonian talent together. Most of Skype's development team is still based in Estonia although it is now American owned. It is most definitely worth for the Region's ICT talent to get to know each other even better and cooperate even more, as these highly successful examples show.

In addition to the complimentary skills that can be found across the Region's countries, the clear cost differences between the countries in the Region raise the opportunity of locating different company

functions in different countries. In the ICT sector this could involve, amongst other, research and development, contact centres, and sales functions. Distances are short and it easy to travel from one place to another within the Region. The Baltic Sea Region is recognized as having a truly unique ICT community by international investors. Today a regional strength is the pace of development towards solution convergence and connectivity. The Region's talents should seize these opportunities too! They should dare to believe they can

“Here you have a splendid mix.”

Cecilia from Sweden

be the world's best and ask people from around the world to support them. The Baltic Sea Region is undergoing a journey that can be compared to that of Silicon Valley in the '70s. Only in hindsight will the people of the Region understand what an important development is going on.

Elements: *Proven Willingness to Cooperate, Unique ICT Community, Creativity in Attractive Locations, Business Clusters, Complimentary Markets*

Comments by author: This is a story of exploring and discovering the labour markets and economic resources in the Region. Talent retention and investment promotion are clear areas of potential application, in addition to identity building.

8. ICT = Information and Communications Technology



PART 2:

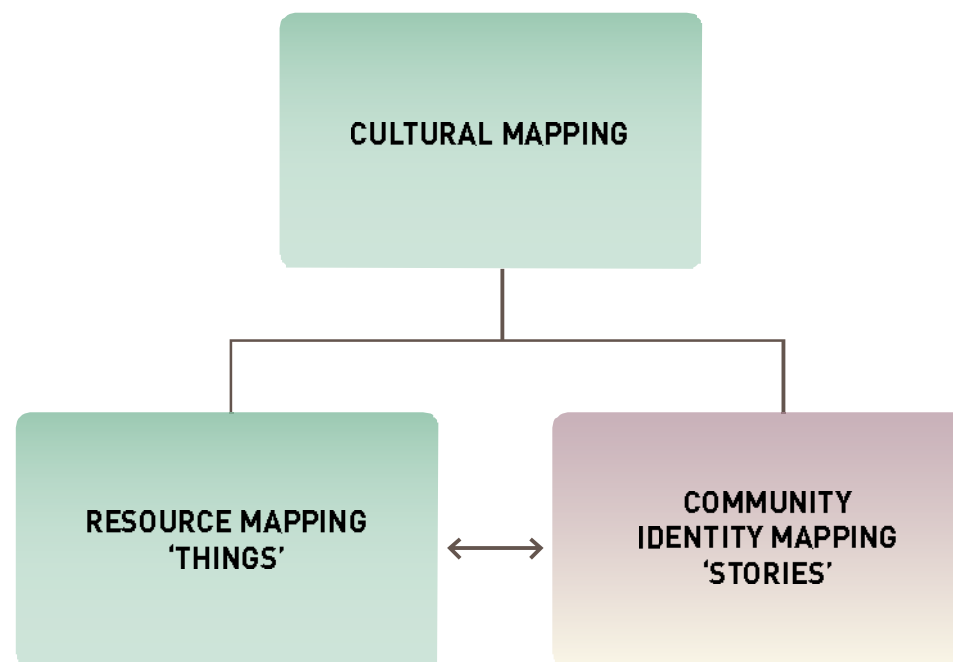
CULTURAL MAP
OF THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Figure 2:
Dimensions of cultural mapping, by
Baeker & Brown 2010

Recall from the methodology chapter that Cultural Mapping is a process of collecting, analysing and synthesising information that can be used to describe the cultural resources, networks, links and patterns of usage of a given community. Concretely, there are two dimensions to cultural mapping⁹:

1. **Resource mapping** – identifying and recording tangible cultural resources; and
2. **Community identity mapping** – exploring “intangible cultural resources” – the unique values, stories, narratives and traditions that define a community’s identity and sense of place.

The focus of the Cultural Map of the Baltic Sea Region is on the latter, as the source material for the Map are stories – discussions, debates, videos and articles – that with more or less express intent look for elements of Baltic Sea Region identity. In



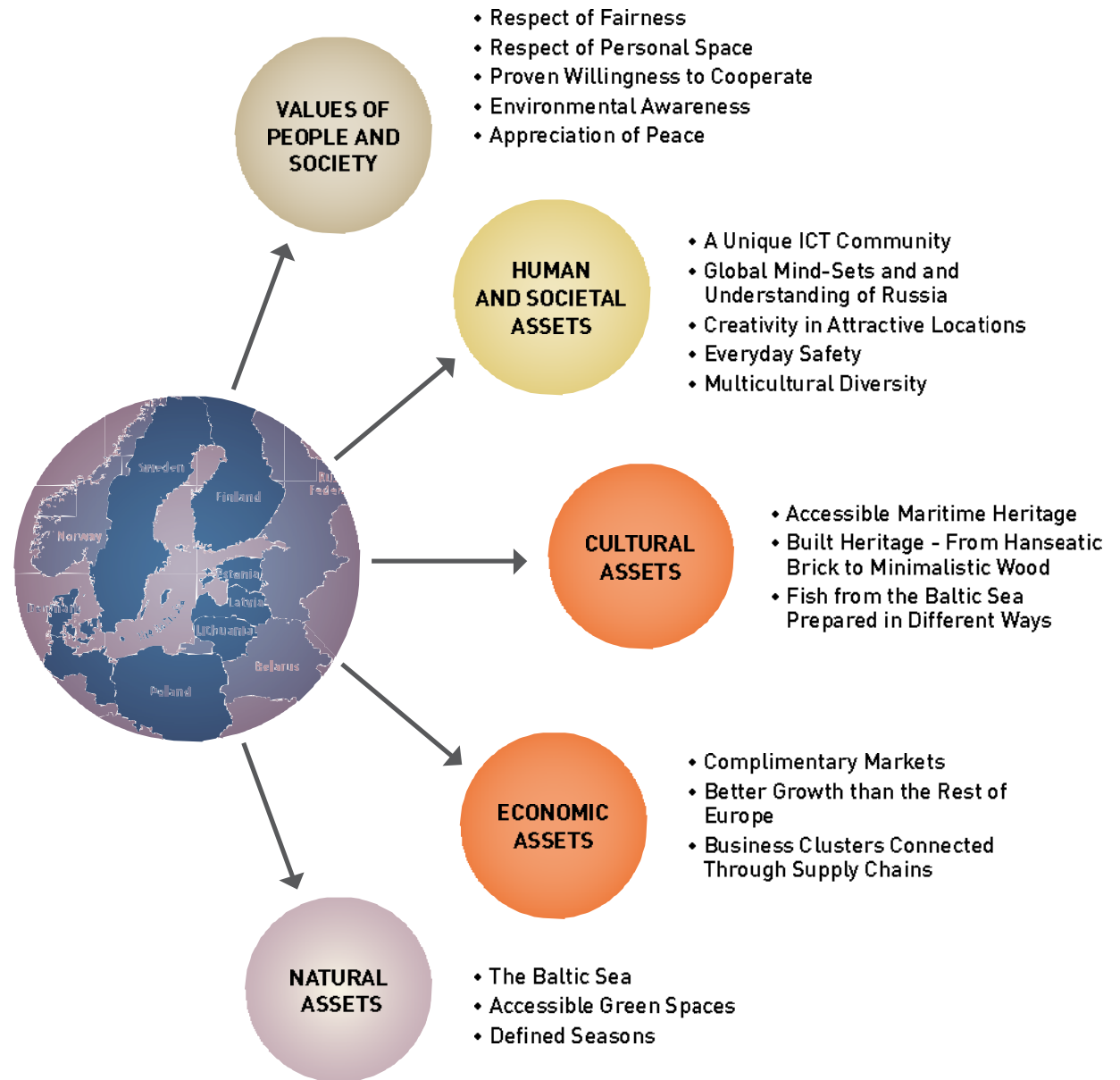
⁹. Baeker & Brown 2010

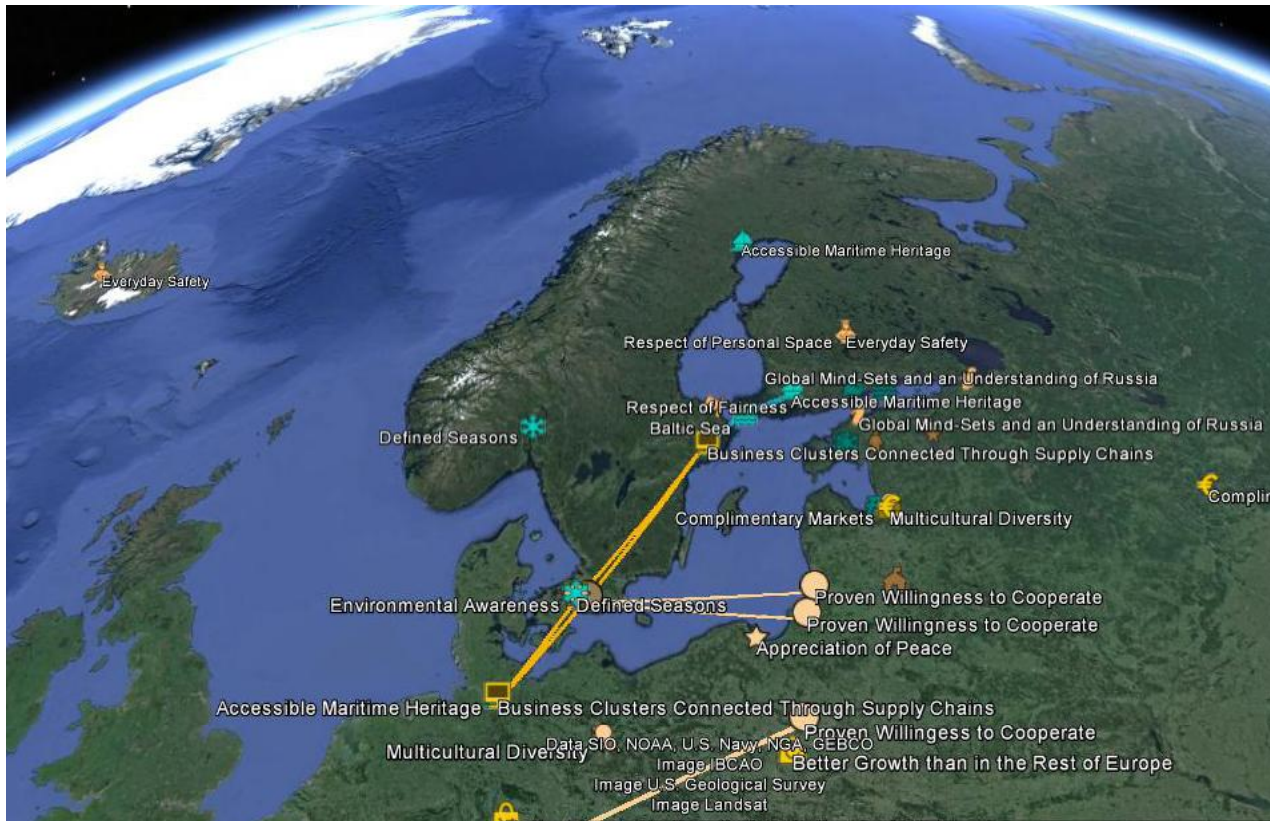
Figure 3:
Categorization of assets and values
of the Baltic Sea Region

many cases these intangible values and assets are exemplified in specific locations in the Baltic Sea Region. This raises the opportunity of creating an actual spatially based Cultural Map of the Baltic Sea Region.

Baltic Sea Region identity is at best scattered amongst locals. Providing a framework for soliciting and collecting their stories is a valuable way of mapping community identity and engaging the community. A cultural mapping process helps reveal these stories and narratives and makes it possible to promote and raise awareness both among locals as well as talents, tourists and investors in the Baltic Sea Region.

The first step has been the consolidation of the source material based on a consistent set of categories of assets and values as illustrated below:





Cultural Map of the Baltic Sea Region
in Google Earth



Photo: Lauri Rotko / City of Helsinki

The Map is built on an open platform, and potentially anyone can contribute to completing the map with more stories about values and assets of the Baltic Sea Region identity:
The Cultural Map of the Baltic Sea Region is avail-

able at <http://goo.gl/NdAkkk> in Google Map Engine. A file compatible for Google Earth can be obtained by clicking the file icon in Google Map Engine and then selecting "Export to KML".



PART 3:

INVENTORY OF ELEMENTS OF BALTIC SEA REGION IDENTITY

Each element is narrated in three ways:

1) **A main narrative**, which is a short summary or observation of how the element emphasizes commonality between people in the Baltic Sea Region, or contributes to something constructive, unifying, cross-border, transnational or distinctly macro-regional.

2) **An anti-story** in order to bring in a somewhat or entirely opposing narrative to the main narrative. This story will often look towards a national perspective only, or emphasize differences between people in the Baltic Sea Region, or somehow take a negative view on the possibilities of crossing borders or nationalities, or overcoming national identities, in the Baltic Sea Region.

3) Finally there are examples of **geographical hotspots** in the Baltic Sea Region where the main narrative is represented in the form of a news story or blog entry www.newswave.eu. The selection is entirely subjective by the author as well as confined to the source material, thus the author would encourage residents of locations and places within the Baltic Sea Region to evaluate their own affinity to the main narratives.

VALUES OF PEOPLE AND SOCIETY

RESPECT OF FAIRNESS

Main narrative: The peoples of the Baltic Sea Region display a high level of respect for fairness in their everyday lives. This is reflected in strong women in society, but also in fair labour markets and universities offering equal opportunities. Honesty is



a defining trait for people in the Region. People are what they say they are, and therefore what you see is what you get.

Narrative hotspot(s): Sweden has been identified as the most gender equal country in the EU by the European Institute for Gender Equality. In Sweden, more women are employed than men.¹⁰

Used in: *Best available opportunities for self-realisation*

Anti-story: However, there also exists a patriarchal tradition in the Baltic Sea Region. Plus, even in the most gender equal country, Sweden, a woman's salary is only 80% of a man's salary and very few CEOs are women. Furthermore, reproductive rights, highlighted by regulation of abortion, is in constant movement in some of the Region's countries. Corruption, a major problem in some parts of the Region, can also be considered the main human rights problem in the Region.

¹⁰. <http://newswave.eu/sweden-most-gender-equal-country-in-the-eu/>; <http://newswave.eu/more-employed-swedish-women-than-employed-men/>

RESPECT OF PERSONAL SPACE

Main narrative: One trait that seems to unite the countries from an international talent point of view is that it is hard to get to know new local people and get in to social networks beyond the expat bubble. Opportunities do exist, and many initiatives showing a willingness to address the issue are around. But it all comes down to that people are comparatively reserved, even initially sceptical of new people. However, when you get to know someone properly, you will usually find a very good friend. As a result of them being reserved, people in the Baltic Sea Region tend to be quite tolerant too. And there are plenty of exceptions to the rule; Midsummer is a very traditional day in large parts of the Region and the celebrations include gathering in big groups for games, dancing and drinking.

Narrative hotspot(s): Estonian people can endure a lot until “water finally boils”. They are quite tolerant towards others even if the truth is not on the side of those others. The Estonians take personal space seriously on the Internet too, being a champions of Internet freedom¹¹. At concerts no one treats the artist quite as respectfully and with such attention like Finnish crowds¹².



Photo: City of Helsinki

Used in: *Celebrating Light, The Sea that Connects and Separates Different Cultures (I)*

Anti-story: Being reserved is not necessarily part

of the Russian culture though. What more, some peoples of the Baltic Sea Region have a strong tradition of spending different holidays within family, but for others family is not such an important value.

11. <http://newswave.eu/estonian-calmness/> ; <http://newswave.eu/estonia-falls-second-place-internet-freedom-study-2013/>

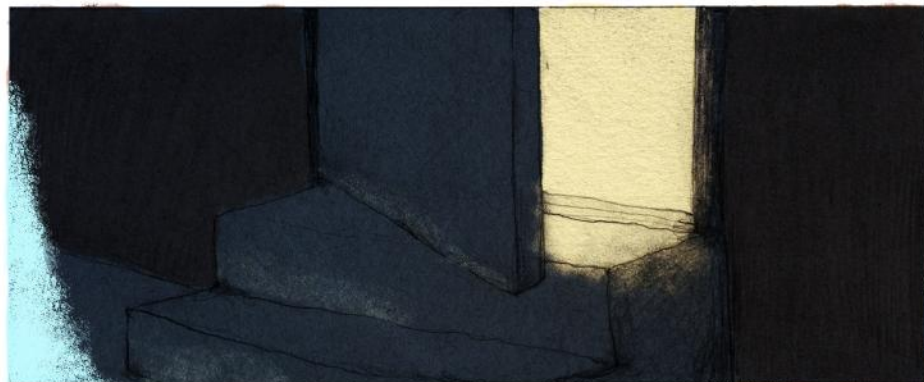
12. <http://newswave.eu/finnish-crowds/>;



THEY CHANGED THE WORLD THEN AND NOW.



THE GREATEST RISK OF HAVING YOUR HOME UNLOCKED -



SIMON VATH

- IS UNANNOUNCED VISITS FROM YOUR DEAD ANCESTORS

PROVEN WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE

Main narrative: There is a sense of shared responsibility in the Baltic Sea Region. For example when the Iron Curtain fell the Nordic countries assisted the Baltic states in many different ways. Today different organisations in the Region have identified a whole host of common good towards which to work through cooperation. At the level of individuals and the social sphere exchange programmes are key. The EU gives the possibility to integrate people in the region, but it will take another one to two generations to reach a rooted integration of the Baltic Sea Region's peoples.

Narrative hotspot(s): For example a ONE BSR blogger did a Polish-German student exchange, gaining knowledge about the neighbouring country and finding differences. Going further, Balticlab is a new concept created by the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Swedish Institute to fill what was recognised as a relative lack of networks bringing young talented entrepreneurs and creative industries from the Region together; but also to provide them with a platform for working together more concretely on a regional level.¹³

Used in: *Being Split, then Emerging Stronger than Ever, Exploring a Unique ICT Community*

Anti-story: The brain circulation in the Region is tilted - reflecting the fairly big socio-economic differences between the countries. West-East movement in the region is relatively rare, all the flows seem to go westwards in Europe, to the Nordic countries and Germany but to an even higher extent to countries outside the region such as the UK and Ireland. Everyone in the Baltic Sea Region can feel the impact of the East-West movement, both in countries where people are leaving, and those receiving.

Despite all the cooperation and region building that is going on, the Baltic Sea Region is not recognized as having one brand or constituting one offer for talents or investors, at least not to those from outside the Region. Each country is so different, there are more differences than similarities.

13. <http://newswave.eu/international-friendship/> ; <http://newswave.eu/balticlab-beyond-men-suits/>

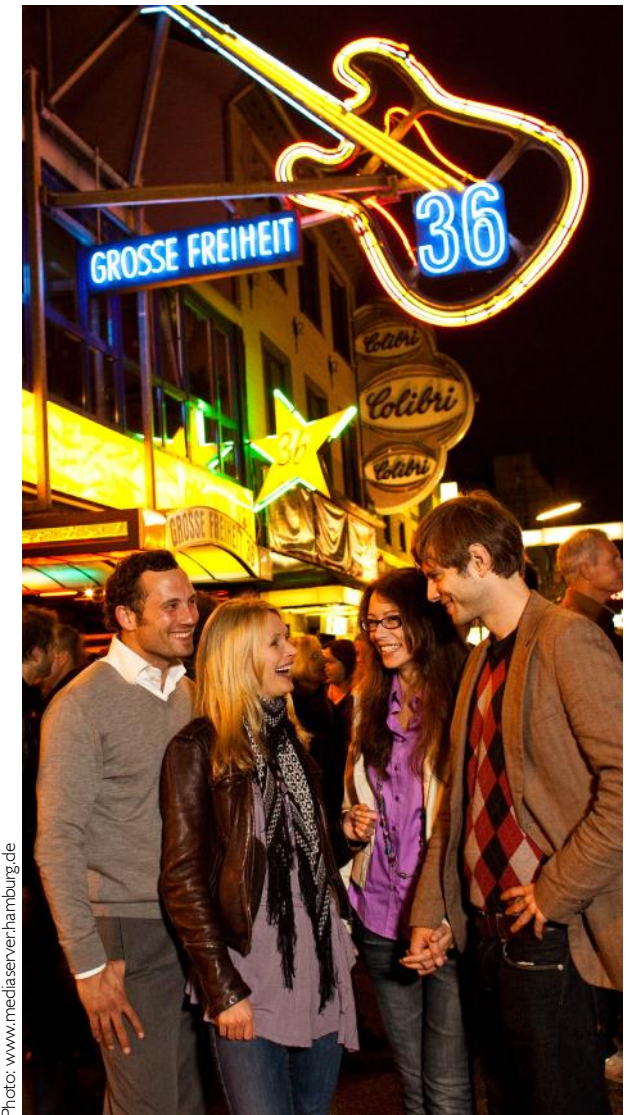


Photo: www.mediaserverhamburg.de

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Main narrative: Reflecting a close relationship to nature, the natural landscapes are an important part of the life of the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region. People live in cities and work in offices, but they are still very close to nature and enjoy and try to preserve nature. You don't see this in US, and it is very attractive lifestyle. Not least is it supported by the concept of eco-cities, of which there are many in the Region.

Narrative hotspot(s): Copenhagen is European Green Capital 2014. There are 36 % of Copenhageners who commute and 55 % who cycle to work or school/college.¹⁴

Used in: *Saving the Baltic Sea*

Anti-story: Politicians are not making the necessary efforts to protect the environment, in particular the Baltic Sea. This indicates that they believe that environmental issues are not the top priority of their respective electorates in the Region.

¹⁴ <http://newswave.eu/copenhagen-european-green-capital-2014/>



Photo: www.mediaserver.hamburg.de

APPRECIATION OF PEACE

Main narrative: In the past each and every people of the Baltic Sea Region suffered in wars, conflicts and poverty. The countries of the Region occupied each other throughout history, and the enemy was to be found within the Region. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the peoples of the Baltic Sea Region finally can interact, move and get to know each other without violent oppression lingering.

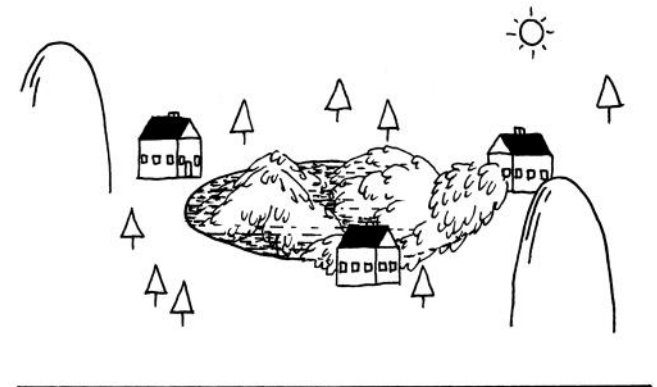
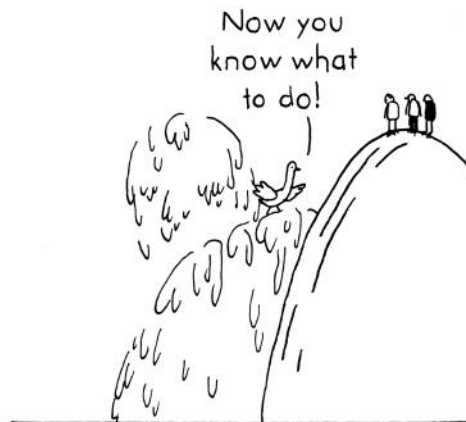
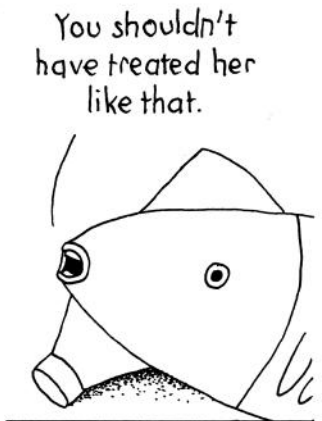
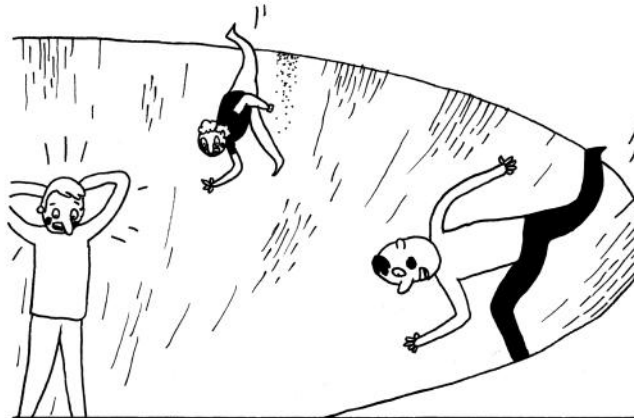
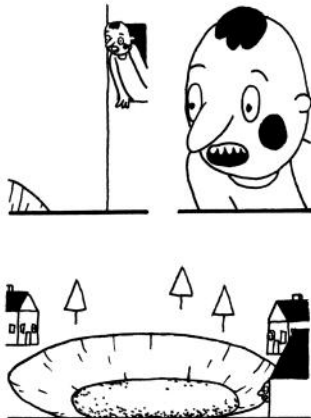
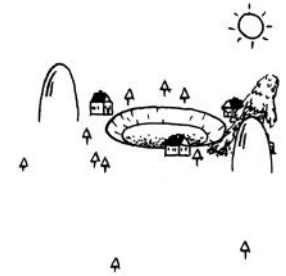
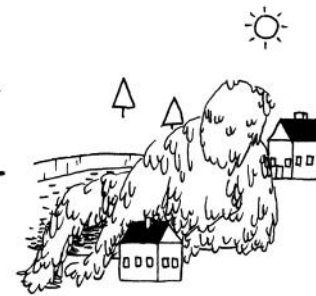
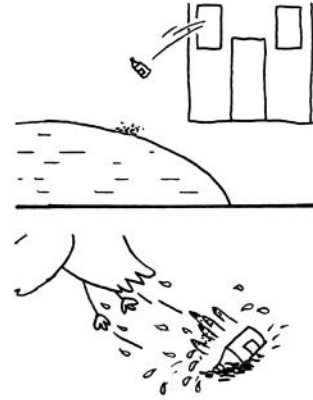
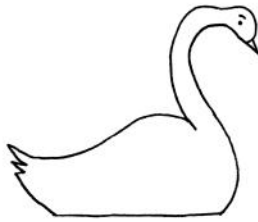
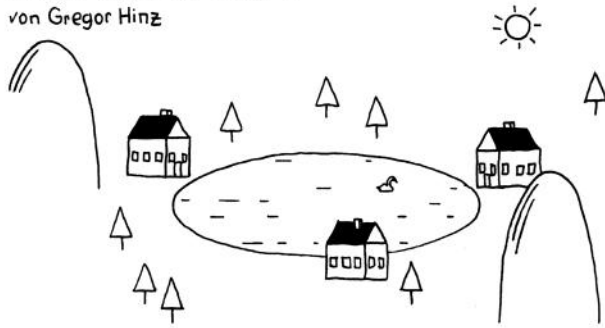
Narrative hotspot(s): Polish descriptions in literature of post-war Gdansk after the Germans had left. Literature always, probably even because of experiences of war and conflicts, has the task of identifying, processing and eventually overcoming loss.¹⁵

Used in: *Being Split, then Emerging Stronger than Ever*

Anti-story: In addition to food wars between EU member states of the Baltic Sea Region and Russia and an energy stranglehold between Baltic states and Russia, affecting people's jobs and the economy, there are growing military concerns. Soldiers from other Baltic Sea Region countries have been moved closer to the Russian border, there is a fear of Russia interfering with minority affairs in the Baltic states, signs of increases in military spending, suspension of defence projects with Russia from EU companies, and so on.

¹⁵ <http://newswave.eu/putting-focus-baltic-sea-literature/>

TREAT A LADY RIGHT
von Gregor Hinz



- Amber
- Wax
- Furs
- Rye
- Timber
- Resins

Hamburg
Lübeck

Visby

Danzig

Riga

Tallinn

Tartu

Novgorod

Hansa

The Hansaetic League
(13th - 17th century)

The Baltic sea is like a country, that connects independent cities. It's a country with it's own rules, people, army and even language.



HUMAN AND SOCIETAL ASSETS

A UNIQUE ICT COMMUNITY

Main narrative: Skills are one of the key strengths of the Baltic Sea Region. In particular the ICT¹⁶ community in the Region is truly unique! The strengths of the individual countries in terms of ICT skills are indeed recognized by foreign investors. The skills are different in different locations, but they complement each other. These skills together form a critical mass for the Region in the ICT sector, supplemented by an attractive education structure.

Narrative hotspot(s): Lithuania's students are among leaders for using technologies in EU. The confidence in using the Internet of Lithuania's students exceeds the EU average. Lithuanian students feel more confident in using ICT than the rest of Europe's students do.¹⁷

Used in: *Best Available Opportunities for Self-Realisation, Exploring a Unique ICT Community*

Anti-story: However, a negative voice could say that there is a lack of talent in the Baltic Sea Region, threatening the future development of the ICT industry. In Lithuania for example, future demand for

ICT specialists will be five times higher than supply, a study shows.¹⁸ And even so, people are not bold enough and do not think big enough.

GLOBAL MIND-SETS AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF RUSSIA

Main narrative: The younger generation(s) in the Baltic Sea Region has a global mind-set and has few problems meeting peers from around the region and around the world. People tend to know English because their own languages are small.



16. ICT = Information and Communication Technology

17. <http://newswave.eu/lithuanias-students-among-leaders-using-technologies-eu/>

18. <http://newswave.eu/demand-ict-specialists-lithuania-will-5-times-higher-supply/>

19. <http://newswave.eu/globalization-st-petersburg/> ; <http://newswave.eu/estonians-exceedingly-eager-study-russian/>

Small languages and learning foreign languages also means there is an open mindedness. Furthermore, there is an inherent understanding of Russia in this Region, not available in other established European markets.

Narrative hotspot(s): St Petersburg is more globally exposed than you might think, while Estonians are exceedingly eager to study Russian.¹⁹

Used in: *Best Available Opportunities for Self-Realisation, Being Split, then Emerging Stronger than Ever, The Sea that Connects and Separates Different Cultures (II)*

Anti-story: The older generation does perhaps not to the same extent have this global mind-set. And in a cultural sense sometimes there is less open mindedness than in a business sense. Besides, even for the young generation globalisation leads to looking for something local. Languages of the Baltic Sea Region are small, and finding friends is usually difficult for talent arriving in the Region. Integration in the local labour market of the Baltic Sea Region usually requires knowing these small languages to some extent.

CREATIVITY IN ATTRACTIVE LOCATIONS

Main narrative: There is an undeniable dynamism and creativity in some places of the Baltic Sea Region. Creativity pulls people to these places. People in the Baltic Sea Region are generally more innovative and creative than elsewhere in Europe, proof being e.g. that Soundcloud and Spotify were invented in the Region. Entrepreneurs want to make a difference and think about more than money, they also care about the environment and about humanity. The possibility to self-realisation is perhaps a strength of the Region.

Narrative hotspot(s): Berlin - a city that attracts thousands of Europeans and non-Europeans every year, mainly young people in search of spaces for creativity in an affordable city.²⁰ But forms of creativity can be found in more surprising locations too – such as the Old Believers settlements on the Peipus Lake shore that can seemingly reuse or recycle everything!²¹

Used in: *Saving the Baltic Sea, Best Available Op-*

²⁰. <http://newswave.eu/ich-bin-ein-berliner/>
²¹. <http://newswave.eu/creativity-of-estonian-old-believers/>

portunities for Self-Realisation, The Sea that Connects and Separates Different Cultures (I), Exploring a Unique ICT Community

Anti-story: From 2008 to 2013 the divide between the western and the eastern part of the Baltic Sea Region has widened in terms of brain drain. Are some parts of the Region unattractive for the “creative class”?

EVERYDAY SAFETY

Main narrative: The Baltic Sea Region is a safe place to live. Societies are politically stable and have well-established legal systems. There is a high level of respect for law, justice, democracy and human rights throughout the area. Locals have always valued wellbeing highly so you can be sure that they are taking good care of you. With investors and companies perhaps wary of establishing themselves on Russian territory, yet wanting to access Russian market potential, the neighbouring countries with a more stable image come into play. These locations can be safe places to access Russia, without actually being in Russia.

Narrative hotspot(s): Unlocked bikes on the

streets, no-curtains covering windows, open houses and cars on Iceland. Another example of personal safety are the superfoods at your doorstep in the Finnish forests.²²

Used in: *Celebrating Light and Nature, Best Available Opportunities for Self-Realisation*

Anti-story: There is the constant threat of maritime safety in the Baltic Sea failing and creating an environmental disaster. Some diseases still affect even the most affluent countries of the Region, such as swine flu. Some of the Region's states fail to tackle corruption efficiently: anti-gay propaganda laws in Russia, first passed in St Petersburg, give an entirely different picture of the safety of the Region. Furthermore, the health care systems have an urgent need to be innovative in order to strengthen cost efficiency as costs of health care are rising due to e.g. the aging populations. On a more basic note: Almost 12% of Estonian homes still lack toilets that flush properly.

²². <http://newswave.eu/niceland-unique-impressions/> ; <http://newswave.eu/superfood-and-finlands-nature/>



ON ONE DAY OF THE YEAR



THE NIGHT IS FULL OF MAGIC



AND LOVE.



THE NIGHT SKY IS BRIGHT
LIKE THE DAY



THERE ARE LIGHTS
MADE BY MEN



AND OTHERS THAT
ARE NOT.

OUT WITH THE OLD HABITS



MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY

Main narrative: The Baltic Sea Region is multicultural, and much diversity is concentrated in one area: one sea – many different nations and cultures. Such multiculturalism cannot be experienced in, for example, a vast country such as Australia, or even in other macroregions. The diversity of the Baltic Sea Region is best in the countryside and in smaller towns. Actually cities too are very different from each other – Lübeck in Germany is nothing like St Petersburg in Russia! The Region is a cultural crossing point where East and West meet each other. Furthermore, there are many ethnic minorities in the Baltic Sea Region. The sounds of different languages of the Region are really interesting!

Narrative hotspot(s): Berlin, with its long history of multiculturalism, is not just another colourful carnival.²³ Besides the UK the most tolerant countries in Europe are the Baltic Sea Region countries of Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Latvia where the unwillingness to live nearby people of another race was expressed by less than 5% of respondents of a study.²⁴

Used in: *Celebrating Light and Nature, The Sea that Connects and Separates Different Cultures (I)*



Photo: Latvian Institute

Anti-story: Cities all look and feel more or less the same in the Baltic Sea Region. Furthermore, how much tolerance is there for multicultural diversity actually? Structural racism is still a problem even in Sweden – a country that at the same time rates as one of the most tolerant in Europe.

23. <http://newswave.eu/not-just-another-colourful-carnival/>

24. <http://newswave.eu/latvians-prove-to-be-among-the-most-tolerant-people-in-the-world/>



They said not to let go of each other's hands while jumping

DON'T LET GO!
von Gregor Hinz

... then you will have a happy life.

So we did.

CULTURAL ASSETS

Photo: www.mediaserver.hamburg.de



AN ACCESSIBLE MARITIME HERITAGE

Main narrative: There is a knowledge of the sea in the Baltic Sea Region. There are several maritime heritages in the Region, some of them overlapping each other. This age-old heritage can be symbolized by the German kogge vessel and similar cultures among e.g. fishermen. Sailing events symbolize this heritage in a modern time. Passenger ferries cross the Baltic Sea from one country to another with impressive frequency and great accessibility. It gives the opportunity for everyone to live the Region's maritime heritage and make use of it in work and pleasure.

Narrative hotspot(s): Hamburg: Modern and sophisticated, Germany's second largest city boasts maritime flair and a long sea-faring history.²⁵ Fin-

land's Viking Line cruise line now offers passenger ferry route across the Baltic Sea with a state of the art LNG ship. Meanwhile, in the winter ice-breakers keep the routes open even in the most difficult of conditions.²⁶

Used in: *Saving the Baltic Sea, The Sea that Connects and Separates Different Cultures (I)*

Anti-story: Rising sea levels as a result of climate change threatens Hanseatic UNESCO sites around the Baltic Sea Region.²⁷

BUILT HERITAGE – FROM HANSEATIC BRICK TO MINIMALISTIC WOOD

Main narrative: There are visible Germanic and European influences throughout the Baltic Sea Region's built landscape. In particular this concerns those cities in the Region with Hanseatic style buildings. The Gothic influence can be seen all the way to Belgium. Many cities and towns in the Region have a particular cobble stone, and it is particularly common to use brick as a building

25. <http://onebsr.eu/2014/03/13/one-bsr-roadshow-us/>

26. <http://newswave.eu/cruise-line-offers-green-holiday-getaways/> ; <http://newswave.eu/late-season-freeze-sets-baltic-ice-record/>

27. <http://newswave.eu/hanseatic-unesco-sites-threatened-sea-levels/>

material. In general, many features of more recent architecture and design are similar – minimalistic, modern and simple. Using wood in building houses is another common trait of the built heritage of the Baltic Sea Region.

Narrative hotspot(s): Along the streets of Riga, the architecture chronicles the city's complicated history, from ornate merchant guild buildings dating to Riga's days as a key port of the Hanseatic League, to a brick tower built by the 17th-century ruling Swedes, to glorious art nouveau facades and wretchedly drab iterations of Soviet ideology. Through centuries of foreign rule, Riga's undeniably Latvian spirit never waned²⁸.

Used in: *The Sea that Connects and Separates Different Cultures (I)*

Anti-story: Many cities suffered during wars and much architectural heritage has been destroyed and often replaced by concrete structures. American visitors find some of the Baltic Sea Region's cities grey and cold.

28. <http://newswave.eu/riga-national-geographic-list-recommended-travel-destinations-2014/>



Photo: City of Helsinki

FISH FROM THE BALTIC SEA PREPARED IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Main narrative: One can experience the Region through the kitchen – fish is a traditional source of food in every country, and all countries fish from the same sea, but prepare and eat it in different ways. Every nation has herring, but in different forms. Be noted that the countries surrounded by Baltic Sea are not so vegetarian friendly. Fair enough, winters are cold and it's better to eat well to keep your body heated.

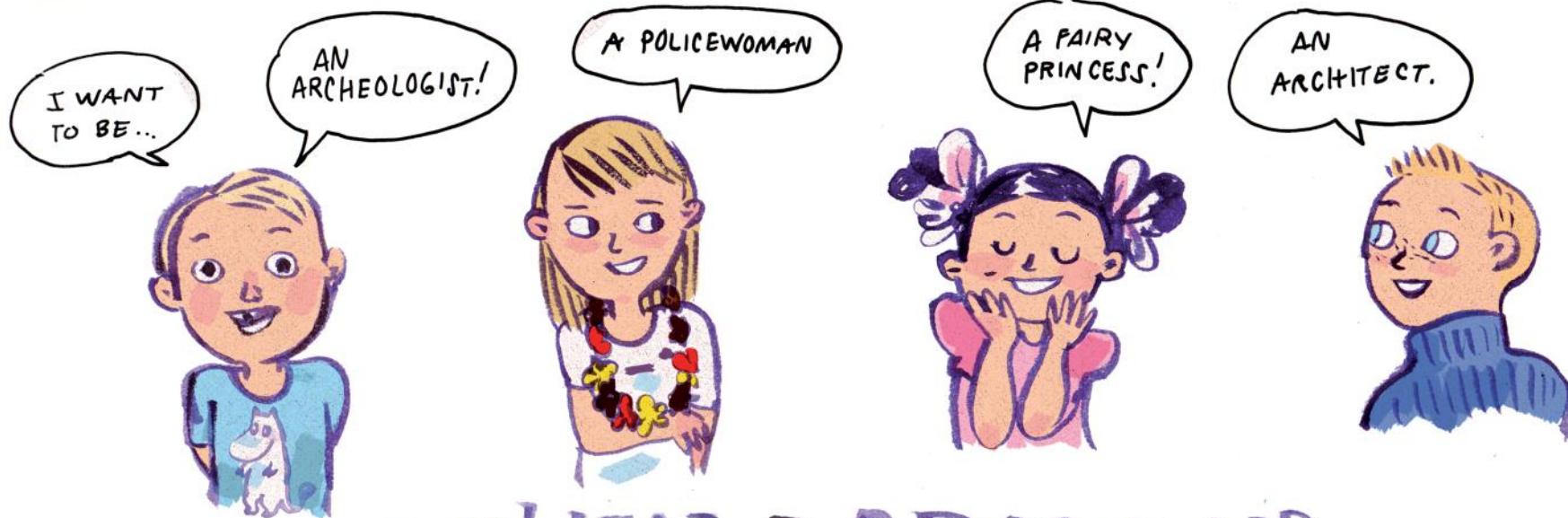
Narrative hotspot(s): The Baltic Herring Market is Helsinki's oldest traditional event.²⁹

Used in: *Saving the Baltic Sea*

Anti-story: From award-winning haute cuisine to traditional cooking, the gastronomy of the Baltic Sea Region has something to offer for every appetite!

²⁹. <http://www.onebsr.eu/onebsr/One-BSR.pdf>





WHEN I GROW UP...



NATURAL ASSETS

THE BALTIC SEA

Main narrative: People in the Baltic Sea Region have an emotional commitment to the Baltic Sea itself. Baltic Sea Region assets such as fish based cuisine, maritime heritage and defined seasons also relate to notions of a shared natural heritage in the Baltic Sea. The Sea defines the way people around the Baltic Sea Region spend their summer breaks. It also allows people to travel by boat or ferry to explore the different countries around the Baltic Sea. There is a strong link between many of the assets of the Baltic Sea Region and the future of the Baltic Sea itself. Herring, for example, can be seen as a cultural asset. But if we are to continue eating it, it is necessary for the peoples of to join forces to improve the environmental status of the Baltic Sea. Already, for example the Baltic salmon is too toxic to pass some food safety rules in the EU. The story of the most polluted sea in the world could be turned into a positive opportunity a “Blue Ocean Campaign” – showing that it is possible to clean up the sea with the newest technology. It has a challenge value for investors and could appeal to investors who care. “Blue is the New Green!”

Hotspot(s): The algal blooms of the Baltic Sea are

a visible testimony to a Sea that needs to be protected.³⁰ Studies have found that the Finnish shores are the most littered in the region. Now urban innovators could make a difference in protecting the Baltic Sea.³¹

Used in: *Saving the Baltic Sea*

Anti-story: There is plenty of frustration in the efforts to save the Baltic Sea, with different countries' politicians blaming each other for not taking enough responsibility. There is some risk that the Baltic Sea would be totally and utterly polluted. The most polluted sea in the world would then become the “Dead Sea”. It is a negative brand that would dominate should the Baltic Sea Region be mentioned.

ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACES

Main narrative: A main element of the high quality of life in the Region is the natural beauty, and in particular the closeness and accessibility of it. Nowhere in Europe is such vast greenery to be found,

30. <http://newswave.eu/experts-hope-algal-blooms-will-be-minimal-this-year/>

31. <http://newswave.eu/better-urban-planning-help-keep-baltic-sea-clean/>

and there is just so much space in the Baltic Sea Region compared to for example the Netherlands. Even the biggest cities of the region have forests right at their doorsteps, and often also the sea, lakes and rivers. The populations have a tendency to enjoy the nature spontaneously in their everyday lives. In the Nordic countries the *allmansrätt* is a unique concept allowing free access even to all privately owned natural areas. People also consume products from these forests, not least berries and mushrooms. The Baltic Sea Region is unique in how cities, nature and culture come together.

Narrative hotspot(s): Living near Matsalu National Park in Estonia, with all that it involves in terms of roots, community, climate, environment, family and work.³²

Used in: *Saving the Baltic Sea, Celebrating Light and Nature*

Anti-story: Natural resources are heavily exploited in the region, eg. forestry and mining, and oil drillings in the North have received much attention.

32. <http://newswave.eu/live-near-matsalu-national-park/>

DEFINED SEASONS

Main narrative: The four seasons of the Baltic Sea Region are particularly defined. The seasons have an impact on how people live their lives; with great exuberance in the short but bright summers, and in cosy family settings in the winter. The seasons can be heard in much of the classical musical heritage of the Region too – often dramatically!

Narrative hotspot(s): Places where the seasons are the most dramatic and have high impact on people's lives. There are testimonials eg. from Oslo, Norway in the winter, Estonia in spring or Copenhagen in the summer³³.

Used in: *Celebrating Light and Nature*

Anti-story: The seasons of the south of the Baltic Sea Region are less defined, and have more in common with neighbouring regions of Central Europe. Climate change is perhaps erasing the most defined aspects of the seasons. In the far north of the Region the different varieties of winter are the most unique feature that impact the way people lead their lives.

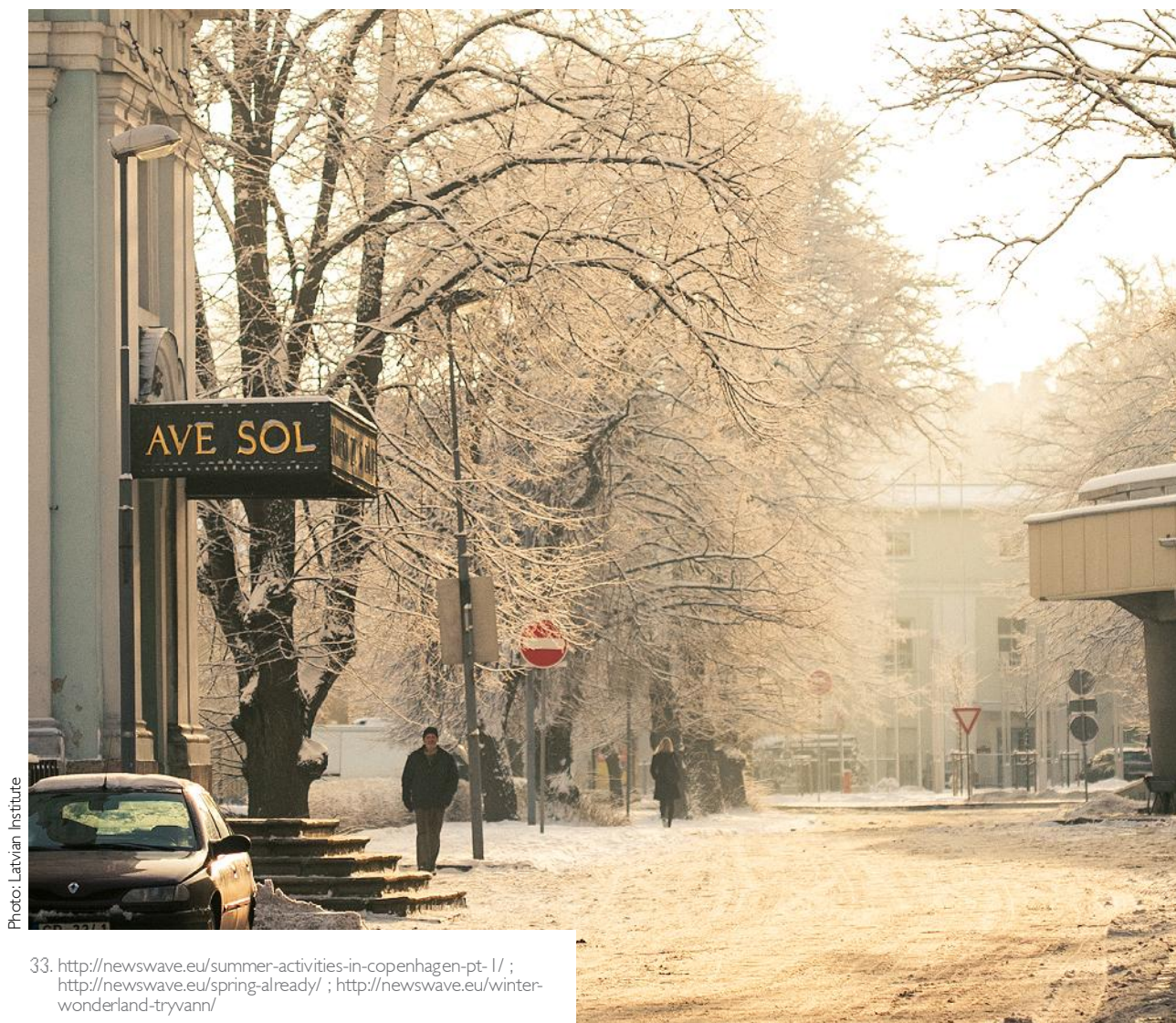


Photo: Latvian Institute

33. <http://newswave.eu/summer-activities-in-copenhagen-pt-1/> ;
<http://newswave.eu/spring-already/> ; <http://newswave.eu/winter-wonderland-tryvann/>

ECONOMIC ASSETS

COMPLIMENTARY MARKETS

Main narrative: Companies investing in the Baltic Sea Region can sometimes find complementarities between the different markets in the Region. Don't forget everything is so close in this Region: A company headquarters can be located in a more mature market and production in a less mature market – all within the Baltic Sea Region. This could be particularly interesting in the case of services industries with a focus on mature markets. The clear cost differences between the countries in the Region raise the opportunity of locating different company functions in different countries. In the ICT sector this could involve research and development, shared service centres, contact centres, and sales functions.

Narrative hotspot(s): As far as the image of the Baltic Sea Region is concerned, the vicinity and inclusion of Russia is a double-edged sword. On the one hand recent developments in Ukraine and Russia result in an image of instability that is also reflected on neighbouring countries. Yet it also creates the opportunity to make further use of the gateway to Russia function that many cities and

34. <http://bit.ly/1tSFYYL>

countries in the Baltic Sea Region have put a lot of effort into developing since the end of the Cold War. A Russian CEO has even been quoted saying that Latvia could even become Russia's Switzerland³⁴.

Used in: *Being Split, then Emerging Stronger than Ever, Exploring a Unique ICT Community*

Anti-story: Investors simply do not see the Baltic Sea Region as constituting one offer and it is therefore futile to look to attract investments to the Region through joint marketing.

BETTER GROWTH THAN THE REST OF EUROPE

Main narrative: Successful open national economies providing a stable backbone for Europe's growth. In a global perspective the Baltic Sea Region is doing quite well. Some Region's countries are among the wealthiest in the world, while the Baltic states and Russia are in a transitory phase towards becoming welfare states. A regional strength is the pace of development towards solution convergence and connectivity.

Narrative hotspot(s): The EU forecasts the

highest economic growth in the EU in Latvia in 2014 and German economic growth recently doubled³⁵. Bloomberg has ranked Poland as the best place to do business in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, not least due to its expanding consumer market.³⁶

Used in: *Saving the Baltic Sea, Best Available Opportunities for Self-Realisation, Being Split, then Emerging Stronger than Ever*

Anti-story: There is a permanent lower growth path than before in the Baltic Sea Region just as elsewhere in Europe. Foreign Direct Investment in Europe in 2013 was down 12 %, in comparison with 0.77 % decline in North America, and 50 % growth in Latin America.³⁷ Surely this reflects on the Baltic Sea Region too. Nobody is interested in Europe, the bad economy image is sticking...The West was less impacted by the economic crisis, but also will profit less for the upswing. The East on the other hand more vulnerable and already at the saturation level.

35. <http://bit.ly/1v72iQ0> ; <http://bit.ly/1srwPEo>

36. <http://bit.ly/1kkSCgl>

37. Numbers mentioned by Courtney Fingar at Policy Round Table, ONE BSR project, Helsinki, Finland, June 2014.

HOW THE BALTIC SEA REGION BECAME A STRONG ICT COMMUNITY



BUSINESS CLUSTERS CONNECTED THROUGH SUPPLY CHAINS

Main narrative: Being connected matters, particularly in the ICT sector. Skills and clusters of companies already present in the Region are very important for Baltic Sea Region level investment promotion activities. There is a need to understand the assets and skills of the Region, to map the capabilities and supply chains, as well as agreeing on what the Baltic Sea Region is good at and what not. Crosscutting promotion between ICT sectors to create new ICT strengths could be an option.

Narrative hotspot(s): More than 100 cities in the Baltic Sea Region are promoting the smart city concept under the device “Smart is the new green”. Stockholm, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Helsinki, and Berlin listed as some of the world’s top smart cities.³⁸ All these large cities have strong ICT clusters with different strengths. Typical for the success of these clusters is that they are networked and internationalized.

Used in: *Exploring a Unique ICT Community*

Anti-story: There is no proper proof of the Baltic Sea Region clusters being connected through sup-



Photo: Mariusz Cieszewski

ply chains. While Estonia embraced global context immediately after the end of the Cold War, Finland is still much more modest. Poland is waiting to go global, because it’s a big country in itself. Different countries of the Region see their position in the

global market differently. In addition, a lingering lack of ICT talent may threaten to hamper new developments of ICT skills and capabilities in the Region.

38. <http://onebsr.eu/2014/01/14/baltic-urban-forum/>



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Onebsr.eu Vimeo channel – multiple videos retrieved during June 2013 to June 2014. Specific links that have been checked 26 June 2014 are embedded in text.

Seminars

Policy Round Table, ONE BSR project, Berlin, Germany, April 2013 (Annex I)

Policy Round Table, ONE BSR project, Gdansk, Poland, October 2013 (Annex II)

Policy Round Table, ONE BSR project, Helsinki, Finland, June 2014 (Annex III)

ANNEX I: THE JOURNEY OF THE HYPOTHETICAL AUSTRALIAN VISITOR IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

3 May 2013

Here are some observations, snippets or beginnings of stories, of the BSR, as told by participants in the World Café in Berlin in April 2013. They are classified into stories of diversity, similarity, change and cooperation in the region. The observations are often contradicting themselves, as there are sometimes several voices in the stories, sometimes the same voice raises contradictions as part of their story.

Observations by Marcus Andersson and Adrian Solitander, Tendensor AB

Diversity

The Baltic Sea Region is multicultural, there is diversity in the BSR and much diversity concentrated in one area: one sea – many different nations and cultures. Such multiculturalism cannot be experienced in Australia, or in other regions (e.g. Caucasus and the Balkan). The diversity of the BSR is best in the country side and in smaller towns. Cities all look and feel more or less the same in the BSR. But Lubeck is not like St Petersburg! Actually cities are very different from each other. *[Comment by observers: The BSR territory itself is described as an asset for diversity, be it country-side or cities. But is this territory arbitrary? Here there is an indication that the sea is what binds these diverse territories together. If the BSR is accepted as displaying a meaningful cultural diversity the question arises: For whom and in what way is the diversity meaningful? And is the diversity meaningful, significant in comparison to other macroregions?]*

One way of experiencing the diversity is by travelling the region by only boat and ferry. It is the traditional way of approaching cities, countries, and harbours. Gives more unique experience than coming through airports, which are more generic and exchangeable.

There are many ethnic minorities in the BSR. The cultural diversity of the BSR cannot be a story of nine nation states, but should include minorities and languages of ethnic minorities, not least those under threat of extinction. The sounds of different languages are interesting!

Each nation has its own ethnological, historical, cultural background. Russians are

Slavic and are certainly not like Scandinavians, culturally. Finns are a mix!
[These are challenges for any BSR identity building: The backgrounds are complex, and sometimes not well understood among the nations. Stereotypes and simplifications are a result. Identity is always constructed in relation to the other, and in terms of national identity, the neighbouring nations are often the closest other.]

If we are to find common ground in the BSR, we should not look to history. There has been rivalry and a quest for hegemony from different powers in the BSR. Currently there is 50 years of history that we are trying to repair. However, Hanseatic League is part of our common history, say others. There is a local dimension of this history in many places in the region.

We could invite guests to our homes, to show how we live.
[Is this a real asset? Is there a culture of inviting visitors to homes in the BSR?]

Similarity

Visible Germanic and European influences throughout the BSR. The Hanseatic style. A particular cobble stone, as well as using brick in architecture. This Gothic influence can be seen all the way to Belgium. In general, many features of architecture and design are similar – minimalistic, modern and simple. Using wood in building houses is another commonality.

[The Hanseatic legacy, the Nordic design legacy are assets that are visible in architecture in parts of the BSR spanning several nations. The social realist is not mentioned, possibly because of negative connotations. Are these BSR assets truly, or do architec-

tural styles find their roots in Europe in general?]

BSR countries have occupied each other throughout history. There has thus been a cultural spill over. Visiting the big cities teach a lot about the history of the BSR.

[Exploring the cultural spill overs would probably unveil some more assets and resources]

The beaches are similar. Winters have an eerie magic. Summers have a crisp light. The landscapes share common features such as lakes, the common sea, lots of space and light and reflections from the sea that give a certain feeling. Not basis for one identity but a diverse one.

[What cultural significance do these natural assets have? A particular way of enjoying nature? A way of spending different seasons? And can they be translated into a resource for cooperation to improve the environment, for example a willingness to save the Baltic Sea through joint efforts?]

There are similar mid-summers celebrations all over the BSR.

Every nation has herring, but in different forms. One can experience the region through the kitchen – fish is a traditional source of food in every country, and all countries fish from the same sea, but prepare and eat it in different ways. There are similar values, there is a similar mentality; even a common feeling in the souls of people. What could this be in more concrete terms:

- A common way of living of some kind?

- Justice, human rights, politics, democracy
- Design of the society and quality of public spaces
- Concern for the conservation of monuments
- Creative thinking
- Solidarity
- Education
- Position of children in society
- Equality and strong women

Some of these values and features are unique, even in a global perspective. We need to show and build on what we have in common but also talk about 20th century differences stemming from the two main societal systems (Nordic welfare and socialism). There is also a sense of shared responsibility in the region – e.g. when the iron curtain fell, the Nordic countries assisted the Baltic in many ways.

But how does Russia fit into this? And how does it define the BSR in relation to Europe as a whole?

[Some would argue that there is an East-West cultural divide that is symbolized by the Russian border that is as deep as the North-South / Germanic – Romanic cultural divide in Europe. Can that divide be turned into a strength, or will it remain a challenge?]

There is a knowledge of the sea. There are several maritime heritages in the BSR with some overlap. Symbolized by the German 'kogge' vessel and similar cultures

among e.g. fishermen. Sailing events symbolize this heritage in a modern time. There is a tradition of vocal music in many of the countries, but not in Germany in the same way.

Change

The BSR has moved from Europe's periphery to Europe's heart.

The Baltic states and Russia are in a transitory phase towards becoming welfare states.

[Is Russia really on the path to becoming a welfare state in a foreseeable future? If not talking about a BSR of welfare states may be tricky.]

Cooperation

Many links of cooperation between cultural institutions in the region. The EU gives the possibility to integrate people in the region, but it will take another 1-2 generations.

There is a strong link between commonalities and cooperation: herring, for example, can be seen as a basic commonality, but if we all agree that in order to continue eating it we need to join forces to improve the environment of the Baltic Sea. These "simple things" can be used as a symbol and anchor for cooperation. Such symbols also relate to notions of a shared natural heritage.

[Again, to what extent and how can this notion form a resources for cooperation and concrete actions?]

ANNEX II: ONE BSR GDANSK, SUMMARY OF OBSERVED ELEMENTS FOR BSR IDENTITY MAPPING

By Adrian Solitander, Tendensor AB
20 November 2013

Are there needs of talents that the BSR countries can answer in a particular way that unites them?

Perhaps the most promising need of expats that would remain on a constantly high level are the safety needs. The region is considered stable, and scores high on such measurements. But again, there is a big difference between Russia and the rest. Social needs are usually considered a big challenge in the region; languages are small and finding local friends is usually not easy for foreign talent arriving. Is possibility to self realisation a strength of the region? (Observer's note =>) *Start up activity* in parts of the region indicates that perhaps it is. All these elements are elaborated below.

When an international talent arrives in the BSR, what kind of environment does he/she arrive in?

► Labour market and residence formalities

International talents arrive in labour markets of which many aspects look very different in different countries of the BSR. Labour markets needs in the BSR countries perhaps have something in common as many countries identify that there is a need for highly qualified skills in the future. Some of this is *driven by ageing populations* in all BSR countries. Ageing populations reflect decreased nativity (numbers vary) and people living longer, in turn reflecting healthier lives. (Observer's note =>) But here again things look different in Russia. Most BSR economies are *growing better* than most of the EU right now, but salaries vary greatly between BSR countries.

At the moment international graduate students are not particularly employable

in the region. (Observer's note =>) Are foreign companies in the region even interested in foreign workforce? With foreign graduate students the answer seems to be very hesitant at the current moment. But there must be some good examples? These are probably mostly the big business names?

International talents face residence formalities that vary and probably reflect *differences in openness* towards non-nationals settling in the country. Policies are not synchronized, not even between countries with similar socio-economic structure in the BSR.

EU membership creates a fairly level playing field in terms of formalities concerning intra-EU-mobility. Consequently there are formal possibilities for mobility between the BSR, excluding Russia. The mobility within the BSR, how does it compare to mobility between other EU countries and the BSR countries?

In all the brain circulation in the region is skewed reflecting the fairly big socio-economic differences between the countries. West-East movement in the region is relatively rare, all the flows seem to go westwards in Europe. This is not to downplay the importance of the East-West movement in the region that everyone can feel, both in countries where people are leaving, and those receiving. In any case, there is a perceived lack of information about opportunities to mobility between the countries. (Observer's note =>) This would probably hold true to the entire EU.

The workplaces offered are of good quality and universities are highly developed,

as suggested by a PhD. (Observer's note =>) The testimony came from a Russian national, suggesting perhaps that this situation is in contrast to Russia.

► Mindsets and quality of place

But the numbers of the labour market and the legislation of the states are not the whole story. Are the mindsets of the people in the BSR more open? Real life testimonies seem to suggest that at least the younger generation in the BSR has a global mindset and has few problems meeting peers from around the region and around the world. This is less the case for older generations, it has been suggested. (Observer's note =>) Why exactly is this so? Perhaps history explains some things, but perhaps globalisation explains the experiences of the younger generation. Are their experiences in the BSR somehow different from those of young people elsewhere in the world? Perhaps, perhaps not.

One trait that seems to unite the countries from an international talent's point of view is that it is hard to get to know new local people and get in to social networks beyond the expat bubble. Opportunities do exist, and many initiatives showing a willingness to address the issue are around. But it all comes down to that people are comparatively reserved, even initially sceptical of new people. (Observer's note =>) This trait is not necessarily part of the Russian culture though. Can this perceived weakness be turned into a strength?

Some places in the BSR have undeniable dynamism and creativity that pulls people – one talent testimony speaks warmly of Berlin: *Everybody wants to go to Berlin. It is very creative and people find new ways of doing things.* (Observer's note =>) How far does this apply to the whole BSR – even though probably Berlin

is a unique hot spot? How does this nuance the picture of those reserved peoples around the BSR? Does it all tie up with the start up activity mentioned in the beginning of the observations?

Finally, most locations in the BSR seem to use elements of nature, landscape, and natural beauty when describing the *quality of life*. Is access to green areas perhaps a superior value of the BSR in comparison to other places?

ANNEX III: OBSERVATIONS ON ELEMENTS OF IDENTITY IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION MADE AT IPA FORUM 2014

Helsinki, Finland; 9 – 10 June 2014
By Adrian Solitander, Tendensor AB

Unity

In a global perspective the Baltic Sea Region is doing quite well. But there is a permanent lower growth path than before, and the Region should not settle for that. “The new normal” should not be accepted. Attracting FDI is one way of changing the slower growth path. A good example that should be learned from is Microsoft’s recent investments in the Region that amount to USD 20 billion. What the BSR had for Microsoft was above all talents and an [attractive] education structure. Skills and clusters are key strengths of the Region. Together the Region has a bigger critical mass also in the ICT sector. The ICT community in the BSR is truly unique! A negative voice though could say that there is a lack of talent in the BSR...

A regional strength is the pace of development towards solution convergence and connectivity. “Smart is the new green”. Stockholm, Oslo, Helsinki, Berlin listed as smart cities. More than 100 cities in the BSR are promoting the smart city concept. A lot of innovation takes place in smaller cities. Plus there are lots of eco-cities.

On a different note, there is some risk that the Baltic Sea would be totally and utterly polluted, then the “Dead Sea” brand is what would dominate should the Baltic Sea Region be mentioned. The “Dead Sea” story could be turned into a positive opportunity a “Blue Ocean Campaign” – showing that it is possible to clean up the sea with the newest technology. It has a challenge value for investors and could appeal to investors who care. “Blue is the New Green!”

Diversity

Worse news is that FDI in Europe in 2013 was down 12%, in comparison with 0,77% decline in North America, and 50% growth in Latin America. Surely this reflects on the BSR too. Nobody is interested in Europe, the bad economy image is sticking...

In absolute numbers of FDI Russia, Germany and Poland are among the top ten European countries for FDI, whereas the other BSR countries are comparatively small in this respect. ICT is the top FDI sector in Europe.

In terms of market the Nordic market is recognized by investors as having common traits across national borders, as are the three Baltic states. Poland is sometimes to be found in the beyond BRICs markets. The Scandinavia brand is particularly strong by itself and has a clear character to it. Can this character in any way be supplemented by a Baltic Sea Region brand? There is fierce competition between different places in the BSR that are a centrifugal force.

Natural resources are present in the Region, but not throughout the Region. As far as workforce is concerned the skills available in the BSR are different across countries. But perhaps within ICT there is a bit of homogeneity to be observed and the strengths of the individual countries in ICT are indeed recognized by investors.

The BSR is a vast region with many differences – how could it be marketed? In

terms of efficiency the BSR countries display a strong variation of operational costs between them. The Sea itself is a barrier from a market perspective. For investors there is not even one Europe – at a very minimum there is a clear East-West divide, and this divide goes straight through the Baltic Sea. The West was less impacted by the economic crisis, but also will profit less for the upswing. The East on the other hand more vulnerable and already at saturation level. There is no one proposition to be found in the BSR quite simply. Individual cities above all can have their own proposition to investors.

Complementarity

However, there are perhaps some complementarities to be found, where a company headquarters can be located in a more mature market and production in a less mature market – all within the BSR. This could be particularly interesting in the case of services industries with a focus on mature markets. The clear cost differences between the countries in the Region raise the opportunity of locating different company functions in different countries. In the ICT sector this could involve R&D, SSC, contact centres, and sales functions.

Also the target group is important to keep in mind. New investors will not look at the BSR, but rather at individual countries or Europe as a whole. Old and existing investors in the Region may have a different outlook. There may be global HQs out there that can and will see the complementarities of the Region. This means that the skills and clusters of companies already present in the Region are very important for BSR level IPA activities. There is a need to understand the

assets and skills of the Region, to map the capabilities and supply chains, as well as agreeing on what the Baltic Sea Region is good at and what not. Crosscutting promotion between ICT sectors to create new ICT strengths could be an option.

As far as the image of the BSR is concerned, the vicinity and inclusion of Russia is a double edged sword. On the one hand recent developments in Ukraine and Russia result in an image of instability that is also reflected on neighbouring countries. Yet it also creates the opportunity to make further use of the gateway to Russia function that many cities and countries in the Baltic Sea Region have put a lot of effort into developing since the end of the Cold War. There is an inherent understanding of Russia in this Region, not available in other established European markets. With investors and companies perhaps wary of establishing themselves on Russian territory, yet wanting to access Russian market potential, the neighbouring countries with a more stable image come into play. These locations can be safe places to access Russia, without actually being in Russia.

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