



Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2006/2171(INI)	Procedure completed
Baltic Sea strategy for the northern dimension		
Subject 6.40.02.02 Relations with northern Europe and the Baltic States		
Geographical area Baltic Sea area		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs		03/05/2006
		PPE-DE STUBB Alexander	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	REGI Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		13/07/2006
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	External Relations	FERRERO-WALDNER Benita	

Key events			
06/07/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
10/10/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
18/10/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0367/2006	
15/11/2006	Debate in Parliament		
16/11/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
16/11/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0494/2006	Summary
16/11/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2171(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54

Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/6/38395

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE376.577	07/08/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE378.640	26/09/2006	EP	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE378.716	10/10/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0367/2006	18/10/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0494/2006	16/11/2006	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2007)0054	11/01/2007	EC	

Baltic Sea strategy for the northern dimension

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Alexander STUBB (EPP-ED, FI) on a Baltic Sea Region Strategy for the Northern Dimension. The report pointed out that "the Baltic Sea has almost become an internal sea, a mare nostrum, of the European Union following the 2004 enlargement". The committee wanted to define the Baltic Sea Region as the priority area for the Northern Dimension, although it also underlined its ongoing support for the Arctic Policy, including cooperation with Norway and Iceland. It wanted to "systematically create a brand" for the Baltic Sea region "as one of the most attractive and competitive areas in the world". And it wanted to help improve the ecological status of the Baltic Sea (currently one of the most polluted sea areas in the world), reduce pollution and eutrophication and prevent further releases of oil and other toxic and harmful substances.

Against this background, the report called on the Commission to come up with a proposal for an EU Baltic Sea Strategy in order to reinforce the internal pillar of the Northern Dimension, cover horizontally different aspects of regional cooperation, promote synergies and avoid overlapping between different regional bodies and organisations. The Strategy should include both measures to be implemented by the EU and its Member States alone and measures to be implemented in cooperation with Russia.

Among its recommendations, the committee stressed the need to reduce the Baltic Sea region's dependency on Russian energy and encouraged the Member States in the region to examine the possibility of a common energy market. The Commission, the Member States and the partners were urged to promote joint projects on energy efficiency and renewable energy resources, in the light of the region's potential as a source of bio-energy, and to encourage the usage of biomass, solar, wind and hydro energy. The report also suggested that the Trans-European Network Nordic Triangle be enlarged to cover the whole region and that the road and railway routes of the Barents Corridor and the Bothnian Corridor be included within the TEN system. Other recommendations included the realisation of the Rail Baltica project, with a high-speed train connection linking up the whole region, and the realisation of the Via Baltica highway by 2013 as a priority project, with European funding, linking the Baltic Sea region with Member States in central and western Europe.

The committee noted that the status of the Kaliningrad Oblast enclave surrounded by the European Union "calls for genuine cooperation between the regional authorities, the Russian Federation and the European Union" and wanted it to be developed into a more open and less militarised pilot region with improved access to the internal market. It stressed that the enclave was plagued with many social, economic and ecological problems, such as the significant ecological risk posed by the presence of the military bases and weapons in the region, the substantial health risk and the high levels of organised crime and drug addiction.

Lastly, the report expressed concern that the Baltic Sea region's Eastern border is serving as "a conduit for a significant level of organised crime", such as trafficking in humans and drugs. It called for greater Europol involvement, reinforced cooperation at both EU and intergovernmental levels on these issues, and greater efforts to improve the efficiency of border controls on the Eastern border.

Baltic Sea strategy for the northern dimension

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on a Baltic Sea Region Strategy for the Northern Dimension, based on the own-initiative report drafted by Alexander STUBB (EPP-ED, FI). The resolution was adopted by 519 votes in favour to 9 against with 14 abstentions. (Please see the summary dated 10/10/2006.) On the matter of funding, Parliament called for an own EU budget line for the Baltic Sea Strategy, possibly under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, supplementing the current funding of the Northern Dimension by the EU, Member States, third countries, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Nordic Investment Bank and others. Parliament stressed that the Strategy must receive adequate funding from all relevant budget lines in order to be able to fulfil its objectives.

Parliament also recalled the role of the Baltic Sea as a uniting factor in the region. It suggested a new programme, to be entitled "Borderless Baltic Sea", designed to facilitate smooth border crossing in the region, including between the Member States and the Russian Federation. It supported the establishment of a "Baltic Sea motorway" linking the Baltic Sea region with Member States in central and western Europe by

