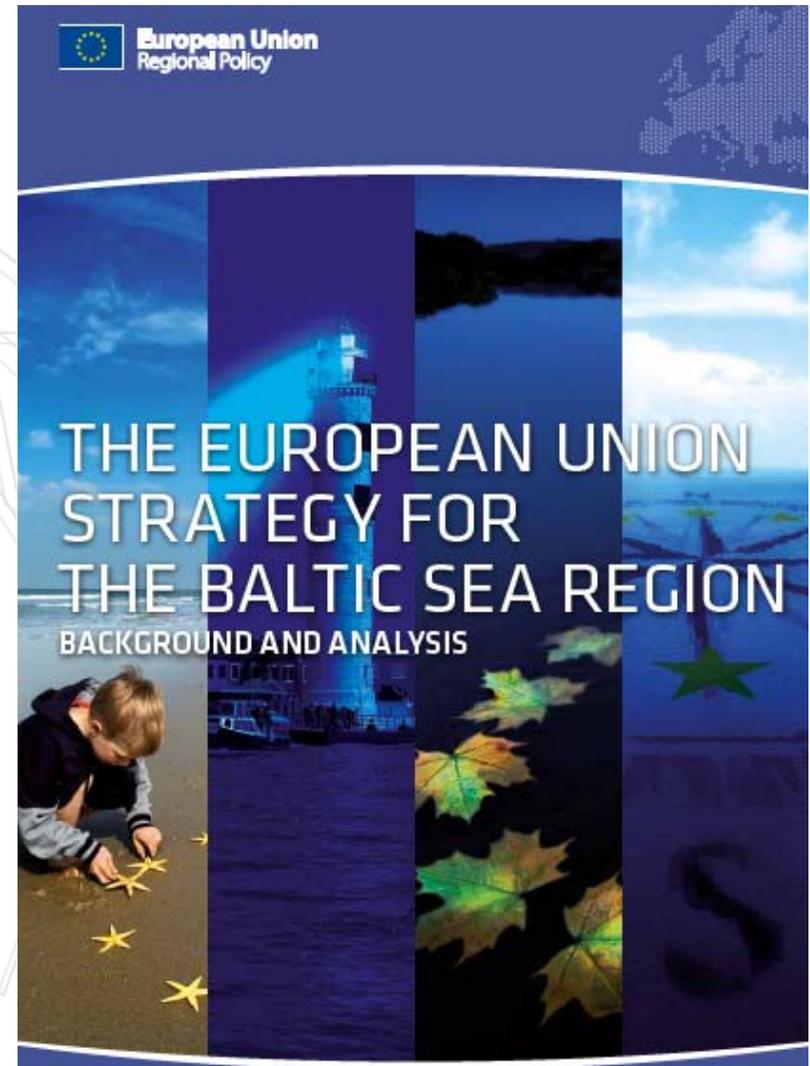


'Reframing' of transnational spaces through 'macro-regional strategies' -

the case of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

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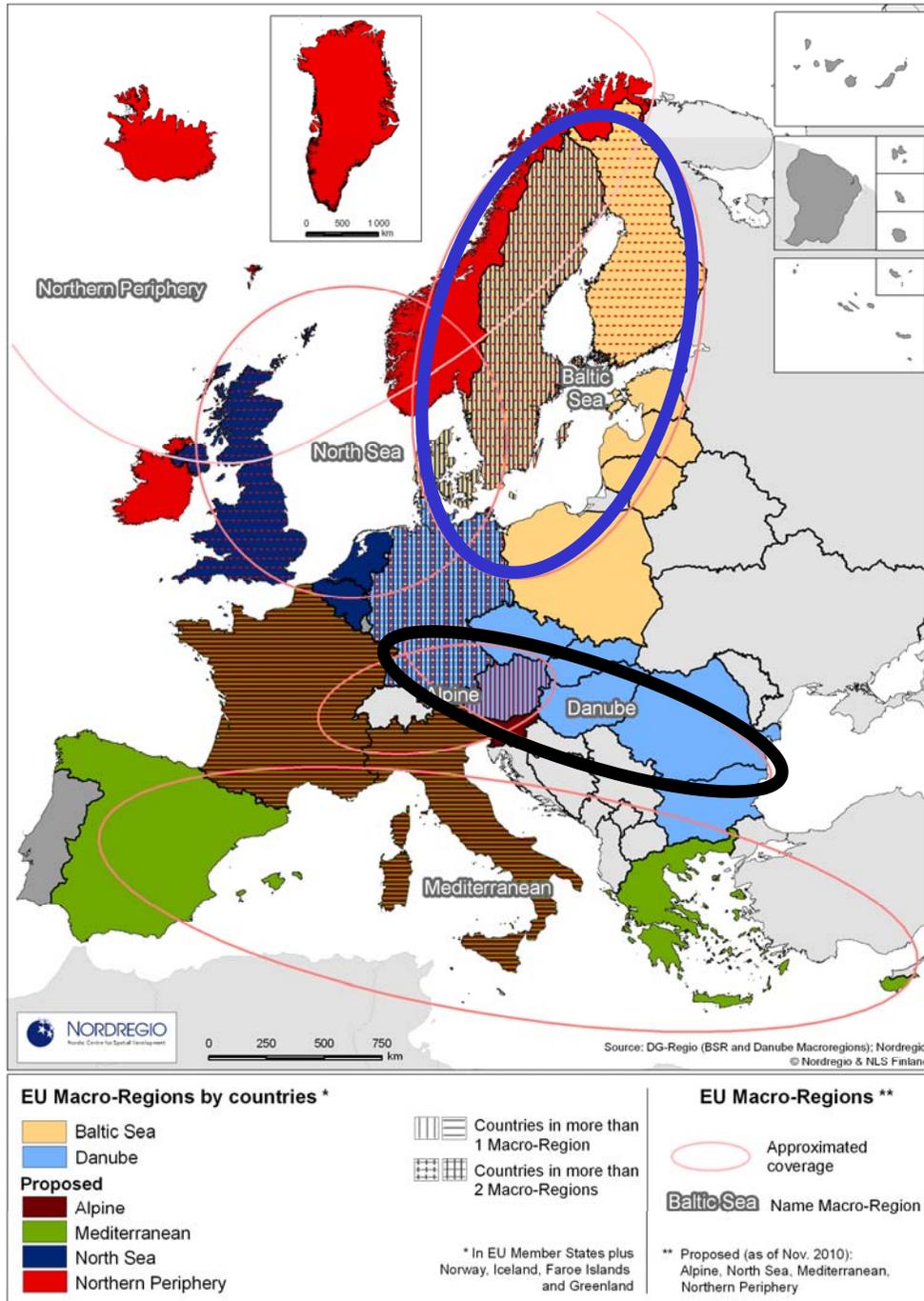
ARL Congress,
16th & 17th of June 2011
Bremen



NORDREGIO
Nordic Centre for Spatial Development

The Context:

**'Macro-regional strategies':
a turning-point in EU
territorial policy-making ?**



- **EUSBSR**: adopted in Sept. 2009
- **EUSDR**: adopted in Dec. 2010
- many others proposed, but not adopted yet

The EUSBSR: A historically well-embedded transnational strategy

- in the early 1990s: Hype of new 'discursive configurations'
- 40 pan-Baltic organisations – 'A Sea of Acronyms',
e.g. VASAB and CBSS (both from 1992!)
- further accession to EU – in 2004: the Baltic Sea almost a "EU lake",
- INTERREG IIC/IIIB/TCP BSR – a main driver for transnational cooperation/projects



Substance and scope of the EUSBSR

- a 'Commission document' setting out perspective on strategy
- a Working Document on the background, approach and content
- an **Action Plan**: list of actions and projects that can be implemented in the context of the strategy
 - 4 thematic Pillars (*Environment, Economy, Energy/Transport, Safety/Security*)
 - 15 Priority Areas with 80 projects – out of 500 proposals (!)
 - 10 horizontal Actions – Territorial Cohesion in focus, but no 'territorial sensitivity'

→ Implementation and visibility – not application and symbolism

→ flexible geographic scope - 'form follows function'

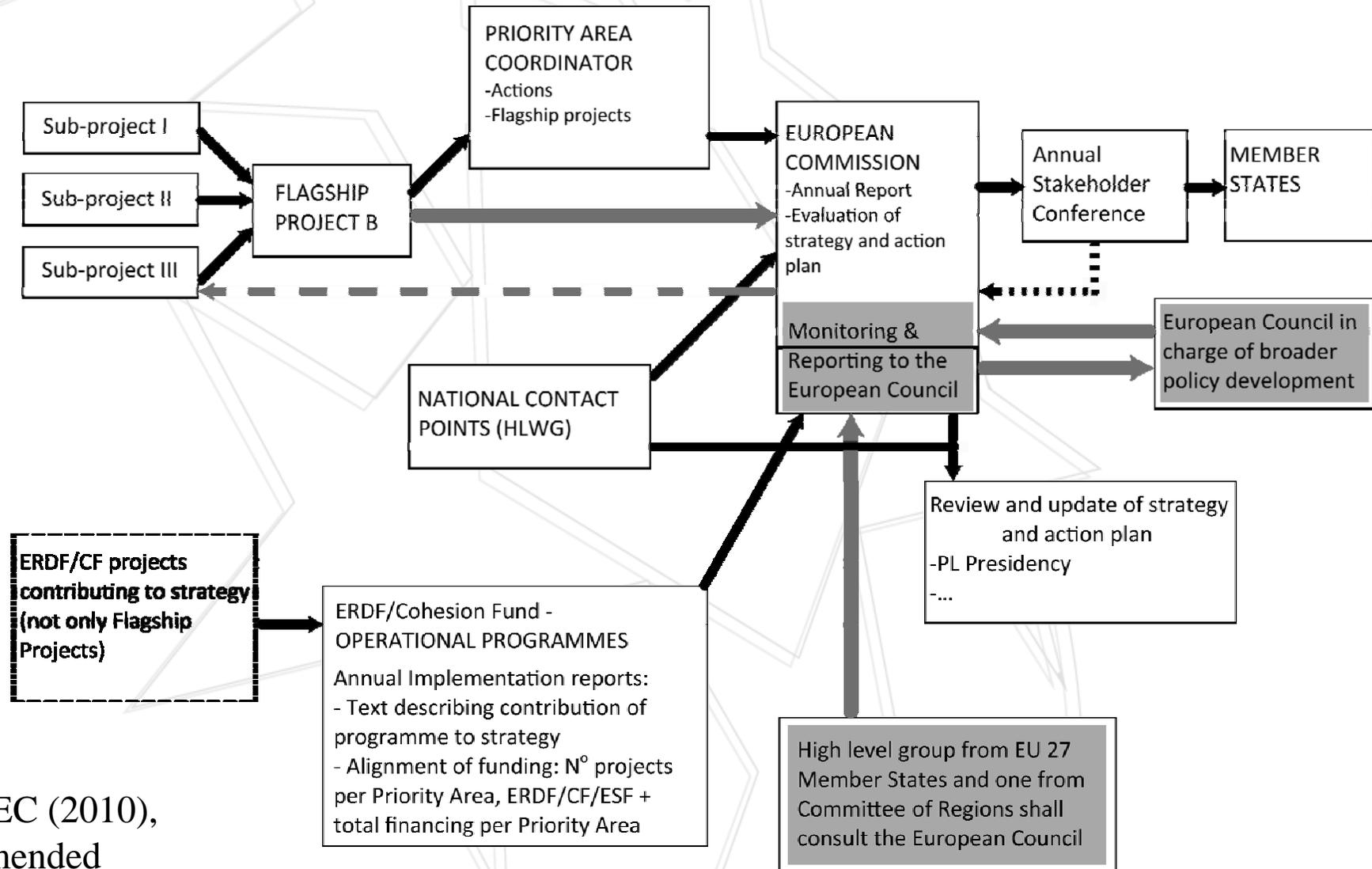


The vague governance and implementation model of the EUSBSR

- “3 NOs” – no new legislation, instruments or institutions
- trust on targeted joint initiatives – hope for ‘shared concern’
- focus on coordinating existing programmes/agendas/instruments
- National States as ‘Lead Partners’ - A place-based approach?



EU Commission ... and National States – as controlling and coordinating momentums



CEC (2010),
amended

Conclusion and Outlook 1 (2)

- 'no' new category of space – rather 'reframed' or 're-loaded' the Baltic Sea Region in a normative sense
- Macro-regional strategies: top-down regional engineering without territorial sensitivity, but 'soft spaces' with fuzzy boundaries – more room for institutional flexibility/innovative capacity?
- DG Regio central player regarding further institutionalisation of the BSR – certainly dependent on other BSR stakeholder → 'to get things done' !



Conclusion and Outlook

2 (2)

- Can the EUSBSR keep its promises? – what projects get the ‘Macro-regional stamp’? – framework flexible? – three No’s also after 2013?
- Geographic + thematic overlap with INTERREG TCP – a convergence/fusion in 2014-2020?
- Macro-regional approach: slicing up the European cake in new ways?
- And: Is this the future of ‘strategic’ spatial planning in a transnational context?

