

***Baltic Development Forum**  
The leading high-level network  
for decision-makers from business,  
politics, academia and media  
in the Baltic Sea region*

# REPORT

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## THE BALTIC SEA REGION AS AN ECONOMIC ENTITY? - THE MEDIA'S PERCEPTION OF THE REGION

*Baltic Development Forum  
is a non-profit organisation.  
Its mission is to  
advance the growth potential  
of the Baltic Sea region  
through the forging of new partnerships  
between leaders from business,  
national and local government,  
academia and media.*

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**THE BALTIC SEA REGION  
AS AN ECONOMIC ENTITY?  
THE MEDIA'S PERCEPTION OF THE REGION**

THE BALTIC SEA REGION IN THE FIVE MAIN DAILIES  
OF DENMARK, ESTONIA, FINLAND, GERMANY,  
LATVIA, LITHUANIA, NORWAY, POLAND, RUSSIA  
AND SWEDEN

26<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST – 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2003

“Each year, Baltic Development Forum gathers leaders from business, politics, academia and the media from the Baltic Sea region.

The media is an important part of our summits.

It is important because the media has a crucial role to play in drawing the attention of the public, the business community - and the world - to the Baltic Sea region.

I urge the media within and outside the Baltic Sea region to participate and to help position the Baltic Sea region as a global frontrunner.”

**Uffe Ellemann-Jensen**  
**Chairman of Baltic Development Forum, September 2003**

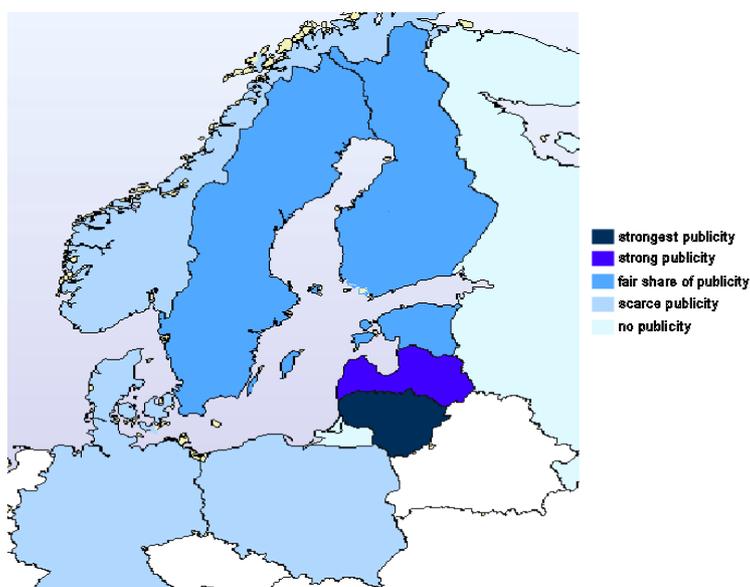
## Key Findings of Total Publicity

### *Baltic Sea Region as Entity*

- The media showed minor interest towards the Baltic Sea Region as an entity; the amount of publicity was small. Particularly compared to the amount of publicity for the EU relations of each country of the area, for the Baltic countries as a whole and for bilateral relations between the states in the same period, the Baltic Sea Region was overshadowed.
- The Baltic Sea Region hardly appeared in the media as an economic entity. The Baltic Sea Region was mainly taken into account in the political context. However, when the economy of the area was evaluated, its growth potential was found good.

### *Share of Publicity per Country*

- Lithuania produced the biggest share of the publicity for the Baltic Sea Region, followed closely by Latvia. Together, the two countries generated half of the total publicity.
- Finland, Sweden and Estonia had equal amounts of publicity. Each country had fair share of the publicity.
- In Denmark, Germany, Poland and Norway the topic of the Baltic Sea Region generated publicity scarcely.
- In Russia, the Baltic Sea Region as an entity received no publicity in the monitored media in the period.



### *Term Baltic Sea Region*

- The term Baltic Sea Region or Baltic Sea countries was used in less than half of the publicity, otherwise the media talked about the Baltic countries and the Nordic countries or just listed the individual countries in the area. The term Baltic Sea Region was used mainly when referring to particular regional projects. Sometimes the use of the terms was obscure, it was even difficult to know if the media was talking about the Baltic countries alone or the Baltic Sea countries.

### **Main Topics**

- The cooperation between the Baltic Sea countries was portrayed mostly in the political context, in connection with reports of various meetings.
- Coordinated traffic system, international investments and environmental issues were the biggest topics concerning the Baltic Sea Region in the monitored media in the period.

### *Coordinated Traffic System*

- The most popular topic was coordinated traffic system, which generated publicity particularly in Lithuania, but also in Latvia, Poland and Finland.
- Publicity had almost exclusively to do with Via Baltica and Rail Baltica projects for which EU financing was wanted.
- All the publicity for the coordinated traffic system came in connection with the Baltic minister meeting in Vilnius, where also the prime ministers of Finland and Poland were reported to be present.
- Publicity was neutral.
- Rolandas Paksas, President of Lithuania, was quoted saying that implementing infrastructure in the Baltic Sea Region is important for the entire Europe (Sep 6, *Respublika*, Lithuania).
- Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen paid attention to maritime lanes (Sep 6, *Lietuvos Zinios*, Lithuania, *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*, Finland).
- The coordinated traffic system was the only topic receiving publicity in the Polish media.

### *International Investments*

- The second most popular topic was international investments, which received publicity in every country except in Estonia and Poland.
- The international investments received one-fourth of the total publicity.
- In this context various companies expanding in other countries in the Baltic Sea area were handled, and influence of EMU and the EU memberships.
- One-third of the publicity was positive: Sweden's decision not to accede to EMU and Estonia's accession to the EU were seen to expand the Baltic Sea cooperation, the situation of the Baltic Sea Region was found promising and it was estimated that growth could double in the Baltic Sea Region.
- However, Hubert Fromlet, the chief economist of Swedish Förenings Sparbanken, was quoted saying that EU candidates of the Baltic Sea Region will not be ready for EMU for many years.
- It was also said that it might be difficult for Sweden to continue as one of the Baltic Sea Region leaders after deciding not to move to euro.

### *Environmental Issues*

- The third biggest topic was environmental issues.
- The topic generated publicity in connection with various meetings, mainly the meeting of the Baltic and the Nordic countries' Chairmen of Parliaments in Lithuania and CBSS Ministers' Environment Conference in Sweden.
- The main issue in Finnish, Swedish, Estonian and Latvian media was the plan to have the status of a particularly sensitive sea area for the Baltic Sea, which Russia was reported to oppose, and to ban single hull vessels in the Baltic Sea.
- The Lithuanian media focused on the wishes of cooperation of the Nordic countries and the Baltic countries in encouraging Russia to prevent the damages of oil extractions near the Curonian Spit National Park.

### *Other Issues*

- Especially to the Lithuanian media, energy was an interesting topic: EU financing was hoped for the Baltic energy ring.

## News Players

- Most of the publicity came from news of political meetings, therefore most of the quoted people were ministers or presidents of various countries.
- Frequently, the quotes were used in the connection of environmental issues and international investments, and the Lithuanian politicians commented most often the Baltic Sea Region issues.
- Most often quoted individual person was Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen, who in the Finnish and Lithuanian media pointed out the importance of maritime lanes, and was quoted in the Estonian *Eesti Päevaleht* (Sep 16) saying, that the Estonian yes to the EU is good for the entire Baltic Sea Region. Also Lithuanian Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas was quoted often.
- In the monitored media, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, Chairman of Baltic Development Forum, Former Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, was quoted about EU and business e.g. in the Danish *Børsen* (Aug 26) saying that the support for the Danish investments in the Baltic countries has been divided between too many ministries, and thus the Danish exports in the area are not as successful as they could be.

# Appendices

## *Appendix 1:*

### *Media List*

DENMARK  
Berlingske Tidende  
Børsen  
JP Köpenhavnr  
Jyllands Posten  
Politiken

ESTONIA  
Eesti Päevaleht  
Postimees  
Äripäev  
SLÕhtuleht  
Eesti Ekspress

FINLAND  
Helsingin Sanomat  
Kauppalehti  
Aamulehti  
Turun Sanomat  
Etelä-Suomen Sanomat

GERMANY  
Die Welt  
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung  
Süddeutsche Zeitung  
Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung  
Financial Times Germany

LATVIA  
Diena  
Dienas Bizness  
Bizness & Baltija  
Neatkarīga Rita Avīze  
Telegraf

LITHUANIA  
Lietuvos Rytas  
Respublika  
Verslo žinios  
Lietuvos žinios  
Kauno diena

NORWAY

Aftenposten  
Dagens Næringsliv  
Finansavisen  
VG

Dagbladet

POLAND

Rzeczpospolita  
Gazeta Wyborcza  
Parkiet  
Super Express  
Puls Biznesu

RUSSIA

Vedomosti  
Kommersant  
Izvestija  
Trud  
Pravda

SWEDEN

Dagens Nyheter  
Svenska Dagbladet  
Dagens Industri  
Sydsvenska Dagbladet  
Göteborgs Posten