



Annual Report

2023

*Internationalisation in
practice for a sustainable
Baltic Sea Region*



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET



**One of the world's largest
university cooperations
for over 30 years**



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The photo on the front page is
taken in Klaipeda, Lithuania.
Photo by Pontus Ambros.

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The BUP heading for new heights

As the Baltic University Programme (BUP) continues to grow like never before, more colleagues and students are getting involved in the Programme. This year we have reached over 100 participating universities, with Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, the largest national higher education institution in Ukraine, taking us over the hundred mark.

During the last three years, the BUP Coordinating Secretariat has stressed the importance of reaching out and communicating with the participating universities, which in my opinion is the most challenging task in a regional Programme with more than a hundred participating universities from ten countries. This work combined with the past year's effort to launch an initiative to also reach out with information about the BUP to potential future participating universities, has led to many new contacts and universities showing an interest in joining the Programme. One thing is clear, more colleagues than ever are involved in, contributing to, and following our development.

In 2023 alone, we have been joined by 14 new participating universities and many of these have already made their mark on the BUP. This is particularly evident when it comes to the record number of applications we have had to our events this year compared to 2022. Our most popular events, in terms of applications, were the BUP Science and Sail and the BUP student conference: Environment and Well-being. For these two events combined, we received over 700 applications. Noteworthy is also that we reached a record number of applications to the BUP Student Conference with nearly 300 applications, as well as close to 230 applicants to the RESCUU teachers' course and about 220 registrations for the supervisor training programme. This success is thanks to a common effort in the Programme.

I will take the opportunity to extend a thank you to all our contact persons at BUP participating universities. With your help, we have been able to reach out to more colleagues in research and teaching as well as to students, than before. The most common ways for information to reach out within the universities are via a university mailing list, from a university teacher/supervisor or via the university webpage. In the coming year, we will continue our work by collecting best practices for reaching out with information within a BUP participating university and we welcome all thoughts or suggestions on the subject.

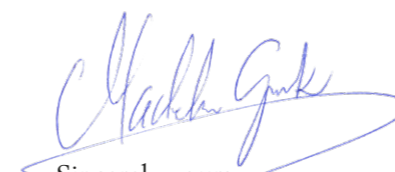
As the BUP continues to grow more colleagues are getting practically involved in the Programme. One example of this is that in the autumn we launched the BUP Course Platform which at the end of the year had nine free massive open online courses (MOOCs) available. In 2024 we will also launch a BUP material bank which will make the course material available for download to teachers at BUP participating universities. This will open for the use of individual lectures, tasks, readings and other course material in local courses.

For example, colleagues will be able to develop more advanced courses and give the student credits by adding material, assignments, seminars etc. In this case, we will also be able to promote virtual exchange cooperation between BUP participating universities when running credit-bearing courses.

This successful development that we now see within The Baltic University Programme is a testimony of the Programme's relevance and a result of hard work and committed colleagues. The last three years have been extremely productive with many new academic activities and cooperations, some you can read about in this annual report. One example is, at the Rector's conference in Uppsala fall 2022 we presented the idea of developing a BUP Course Platform. One year later, in 2023 we proudly presented nine courses unique for the Baltic Sea Region with different themes in a context of sustainability. The courses aim to be a contribution to both teachers and students at the participating universities, in supporting internationalisation and knowledge within sustainability science in English. All nine courses are created based on the BUP working model, in an inter/multidisciplinary and intercultural setting, by in total 87 colleagues from 26 different participating universities.

The year 2024 will be the 33rd year of the BUP. We are grateful for each of our participating universities and look forward to continuing fruitful cooperation in the coming years! It is an honour in my role as Director to manage and develop such a well-established and relevant Programme together with colleagues and students in the region. We learn from each other by Communicating, Cooperating and Contributing to our Common Regional Programme. Together we are heading towards BUP 3.0!

The mission of the BUP, to promote and support academic cooperation for sustainable development can hardly be more topical, in the current Baltic Sea Region. We need to remember that the BUP grew to become one of the largest and most successful university cooperations in the world, because of our common endeavours. Let us continue with that for at least 33 more years to come!



Sincerely yours,
Madeleine Granvik,
Director, Associate Professor



This is The Baltic University Programme (BUP)

The Baltic University Programme (BUP) is one of the largest university cooperations in the world, with more than 100 participating universities in ten countries of the drainage area of the Baltic Sea.

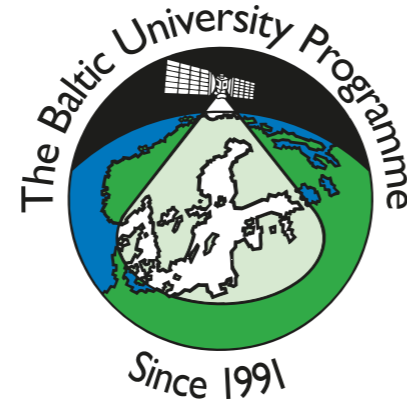
The Programme strives to find novel ways of interaction among universities and between universities and society. The main aim is to enhance strong regional educational and research communities but also to foster a greater awareness of sustainable development, environmental protection, and democracy in the Baltic Sea Region. The BUP supports the key role that universities play in democratic, peaceful and sustainable development.

Our aim is achieved by being an open and inclusive organisation, developing and offering university courses, trainings, conferences, symposiums and projects supporting multi and interdisciplinary academic cooperations, and by participating in transdisciplinary cooperations with other stakeholders in society. We focus on our 10 BUP research themes, which relate to several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, intended as a source of information where BUP colleagues can network and exchange knowledge as well as collect and submit material.

Due to the situation in the region and the world with rising inflation, we have had an increase in event costs that threatens our ability to continue to develop the Programme and offer the wide range of events that we have today. With this in mind, the BUP International Board has decided to increase the annual contribution fee from 1000 to 1250 Euros. The annual fee entitles the participating university to send its researchers, teachers, and students to all BUP activities, courses, and conferences. Our participating universities are located in Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and Ukraine.

The Programme is coordinated by a Coordinating Secretariat at Uppsala University, Sweden. Moreover, three BUP Associated Secretariats have their specialised tasks. An integral part of our organisation is the BUP National Centres which deal with the network coordination in each country. The long term development and the strategy of the BUP is attended to by the BUP International Board.

The Programme has been around since 1991, throughout the years, thousands of students, teachers, researchers and others have taken part in courses, conferences, projects, exchanges, excursions, sails, seminars, workshops and much more. During 2023 the BUP hosted a range of academic activities and educational opportunities. Some of the main focuses during the past year have been the launch of the BUP Course Platform, hosting the BUP Science and Sail and the RESCUU-project as well as concluding the Digital at Home project with a new book.



The Baltic University Programme's logotype. The logotype shows the earth and a satellite focusing on the Baltic Sea Region. This is our history, reflecting on how the BUP set up satellite TV arrangements in the early 1990's. An innovative approach to teaching and networking is as much part of our legacy as it is how we wish to continue working with our aims in the future.

BUP Presidency

The presidency was introduced in 2016 in order to decentralise and share responsibilities with the BUP National Centres and by this establish a formal platform for them to influence the organisation in practice. Each BUP National Centre holds the BUP Presidency for six months according to a rotating schedule.

The holder of the BUP Presidency is responsible for the content and arrangement of some of the BUP's annual events, as well as the promotion of the BUP in their own country, along with additional events and activities aimed at strengthening the programme in the country and the region as a whole.

The National Centre in Lithuania, which is located at Kaunas University of Technology, held the BUP Presidency in the spring of 2023.

Throughout the BUP Lithuanian presidency, the primary focus was dedicated to orchestrating three BUP events, which were successfully executed through collaborative efforts with the three BUP participating universities Klaipeda University, Vilnius University, and Kaunas University of Technology. In spring the following events were organised by or in collaboration with the Lithuanian National Centre: BUP Teachers Course 2022-2023, BUP Student Conference 2023, and BUP Science and Sail 2023. The key contributors to this success were the seamless cooperation among representatives from all three BUP participating universities in Lithuania, the equitable distribution of responsibilities in event organisation, and a steadfast commitment to ensuring the highest quality of each event.

On the BUP website, you can read the full presidency report written by the BUP Lithuanian National Centre.

The National Centre in Latvia, which is located at Riga Technical University (RTU), held the BUP Presidency in the autumn of 2023.

During the presidency, a BUP Centre Directors meeting was held on 10-11 October 2023. During two days, Riga welcomed BUP representatives from Tallinn University, Södertörn University, Lodz University of Technology, Kaunas University of Technologies, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Åbo Akademi University, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, National University of Lviv, and Zittau/Görlitz University.

During the meeting, the sessions aimed to conduct a comprehensive review of past achievements, identify areas for improvement, and outline a strategic roadmap for future cooperation. The initial segment of the meeting was dedicated to a thorough review of accomplishments and milestones achieved since the last gathering. On the BUP website, you can read the full presidency report written by the BUP Latvia National Centre.



The Student Conference took place at Kaunas University of Technology. The conference centered around the theme 'Sustainable Production and Consumption: A Circular Economy Perspective' and included a collaboration with the International Young Researchers Conference. An impressive total of 70 students, representing 31 participating universities across all 10 countries in the BUP network, participated in the event.

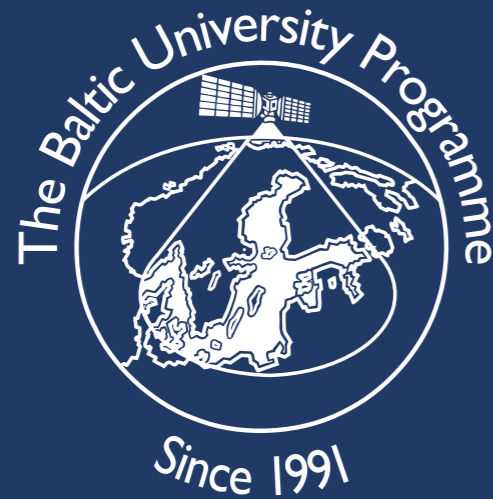
Photo: Pontus Ambros



The BUP Centre Directors met at Riga Technical University for the National Centre Directors' meeting in October.

Photo:Arta Pipcane

Projects



The Baltic University Programme initiates, coordinates, and participates in inter and transdisciplinary projects as a way of supporting the creation of strong educational and research communities in the Baltic Sea Region. During 2023, a couple of projects were led by the BUP Coordinating Secretariat at Uppsala University and each project had multiple BUP participating universities as project partners.

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RESCUU

Digital at home

This project, financed by the Swedish Institute, was launched in February 2021. Due to the war in Ukraine, the project was extended to June 2023. The final parts of the project included a virtual exchange between students and the finalisation of a MOOC course as well as the publication of an educational book.

The year began with a project meeting in Uppsala. During the meeting, the participants finalised work with the educational material which was being developed within the project, mainly the book about the transition that the Baltic Sea Region has undergone over the last decades. Another part of the meeting was devoted to planning the Virtual Exchange between some of the partner universities.

During the virtual exchange, international students at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland, and students at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (IFNUL), Ukraine, had a short course together that was devoted to Regional Interaction and Cooperation. Students had common lectures and seminars, and the most important aspect was that they were given a shared task which was to be fulfilled in mixed international groups.

“It was a really important and valuable experience both for the students and for the lecturers, especially in terms of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The students were able to present their opinions and views on how the war influences the security of Europe, particularly the Baltic Sea region, how effective the institutions functioning in the BSR are, how the cooperation in the BSR will develop, etc. These exchange classes also gave a great experience of interdisciplinary and intercultural communication though it was not very easy for the students, they successfully managed to overcome this difficulty. For Ukrainian students, this exchange was an experience they had not had before and judging from this it was a success. They expressed their wish to have such exchange in the future and participate in the whole course in virtual exchange mode.”, says Marianna Gladys, one of the lecturers at IFNUL

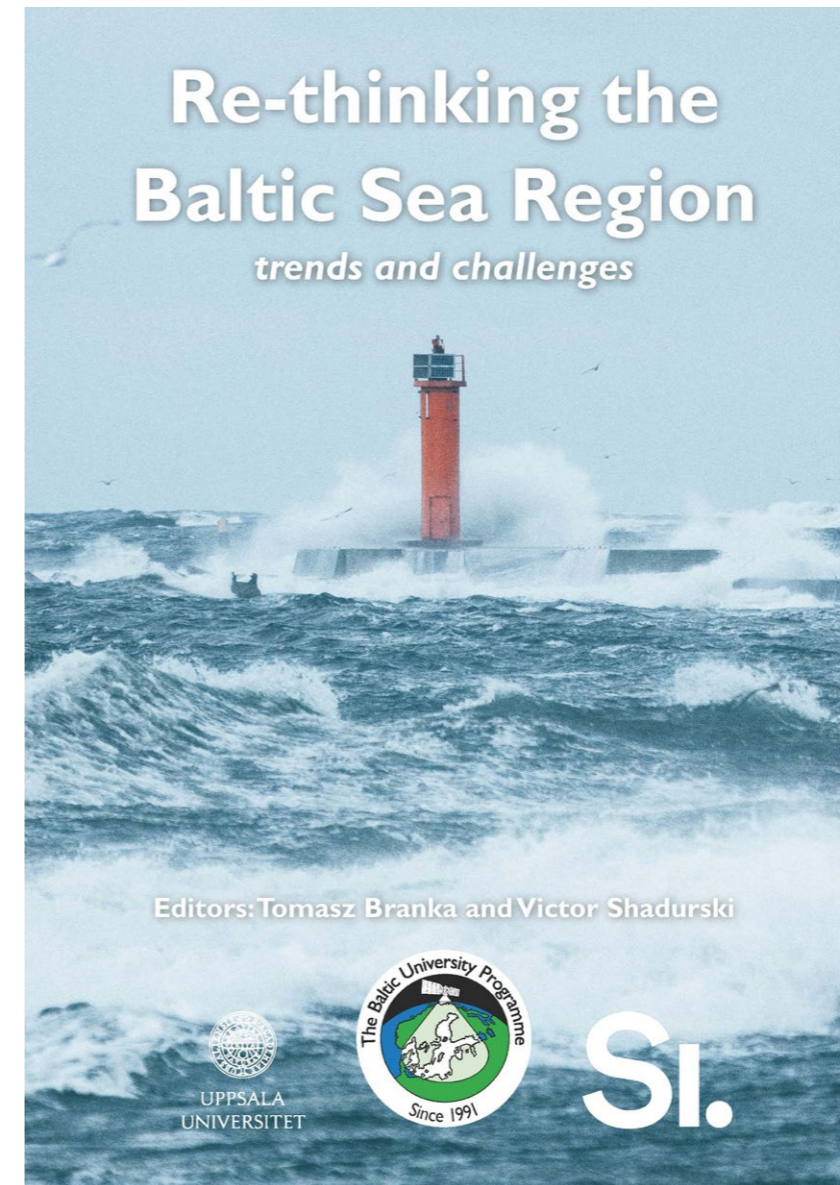


Ukrainian colleagues and the Project Coordinator at the meeting in Uppsala. During the meeting, the participants finalised work with the educational material that was developed within the project.

Photo: Lyudmyla Babak

At the project meeting in the spring there were discussions about the upcoming book. Pictured are, from the left, Lyudmyla Babak, Project Coordinator, Damian Szacawa and Anna Moraczewska from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, chapter authors.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



In the autumn the BUP published the book *Re-thinking the Baltic Sea Region: trends and challenges*, created within this project.

“This publication is the result of months of work by an international team of researchers whose research and teaching interests are related to the Baltic Sea Region. One of the distinguishing features of this book is the interdisciplinary and intercultural nature of the authorship team.”, writes Viktor Shadurski, Editor.

“The authors hope that this publication will contribute to a better understanding of the complex processes that have been taking place in the region in recent years, while encouraging students to make an intellectual effort and take a fresh look at this fascinating part of Europe.”, writes Tomasz Branka, Editor.

The book is written as a textbook mainly for undergraduate students but also has a wider applicability for all those interested in regional studies of the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe. The book is available to download via the BUP website.

This publication aims to critically (re) approach the classical understanding of region and region-building processes in difficult times of war in the region itself. The publication also aims to freshly chronicle the processes that have taken place in the region over the past two decades.

The published material has been accompanied by digitalised sources such as video lectures and quizzes and been made available as a MOOC course through the BUP Course Platform.

RESCUU

The project Resilience of Education: Sustainability and Cooperation for Ukrainian Universities (RESCUU) is aimed at contributing to the resilience of wartime Ukraine's educational institutions and supporting Ukrainian teachers, students, and researchers who remain in Ukraine and work or study at Ukrainian universities.

This project is financed by the Swedish Institute, and is led by the Coordinating Secretariat at Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden, and the project period is January 2023-June 2024. This project has provided several events, both online and physical, aimed at the target groups mentioned above. The content of the events focused on knowledge and experiences needed to overcome the consequences of the war, as well as problems of sustainability in connection to the war. The project began with a kick-off meeting that took place online via Zoom in January. During the meeting, many of the colleagues who are a part of the project participated.

The project is very much devoted to the new generation; the students. Two boot camps were organised by the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute". In April, student teams from BUP participating universities in Ukraine took part in the first 'Boot Camp for International Cooperation in Research and Innovation'. During the event, the participating students prepared project applications from their higher education institutions for the international competition, assisted by experienced mentors. The purpose of the event was to prepare students to participate in research and innovation projects aimed at the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine. Six of nine teams were on site in Kyiv. Luckily, no missile attacks happened during the Bootcamp so the students had the possibility not only to gain knowledge and present their projects but also had a chance to see Kyiv and have fun with other participants.

At the second 'Boot Camp for International Cooperation in Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development' student teams from five BUP participating universities were immersed in the realm of startups and entrepreneurship thanks to the experts from project partner universities, who delivered a set of practical workshops to help students on the way to create their own startup. This, the second, Boot Camp was a part of one of the biggest events in Ukraine dedicated to innovations and start-ups – the Sikorsky Challenge Festival, thus, student teams got the chance to present their startup ideas to a large audience. Students' projects have been evaluated by an international jury. What's more, students received expert comments concerning the further improvement of their projects to make those projects appealing to potential investors. Throughout October, participants had consultations with Sikorsky Challenge experts to gain better preparation to participate in the competition and present their projects to an international jury. During the boot camp, project partners carried out short workshops to aid boot campers in improving their startup ideas.



The project includes three work packages; Training for university teachers, International cooperation boot camps for university students, and Strengthening research cooperation.

Photo: Vectonauta via Freepik



Some of the students that took part in the Boot Camp for International Cooperation in Research and Innovation on site in Kyiv

Photo: Larysa Fedonyuk



Each student team consisted of five people. The presentations were given on site but colleagues within the project could take part and view the presentations online.

Photo: Larysa Fedonyuk

In particular, such workshops were delivered by: Uppsala University, Poznan University of Technology, Åbo Akademi University, Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Riga Technical University, and Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

The last event for students will be a student conference organised by Poznan University of Technology in Spring 2024, where the group of Ukrainian students will be able to meet with students from the BUP countries, discuss the problems of the region and look for possible solutions together.

Ukrainian university teachers are also engaged in the project. During March – June they met every week for twelve formal two-hour scheduled sessions, arranged online via Zoom. The session content was a mixture of presentations and collegial exchanges in a workshop or seminar format. The course was named 'Designing and Delivering Distance and Blended Teaching and Learning for teaching staff in Ukraine' and it was organised by The Baltic University Programme and the Unit for Academic Teaching and Learning, Uppsala University. The course facilitators were Geir Gunnlaugsson, Suzanne Pathkiller, and Mats Cullhed. The main task of participants was to compile a workbook and a course logbook during the duration of the course. Those participants who completed the task and handed in a workbook received a certificate. Around 70 participants successfully finished the course and received their certificates.

As a part of the RESCUU project, Åbo Akademi University offered Ukrainian teachers to participate free of charge in the courses 'Introduction to Education for Sustainable Development' (online) and 'Education for Sustainable Development'. The RESCUU project covered the travel costs to participate in the workshops. Together with a group of international university teachers from BUP member countries, Ukrainian colleagues deepened their knowledge and skills and gained the opportunity to develop their international contacts.

Networking workshops were organised for Ukrainian researchers to present the current problems and look for possible partnerships. As the next step, several colleagues will be able to visit Swedish universities for short internships/study visits to ensure future collaboration.



The first workshop within the course 'Education for Sustainable Development' was organised in Riga, Latvia, with the support of Riga Technical University.

Photo: Cecilia Lundberg



Teachers and organisers during the workshop at Riga Technical University.

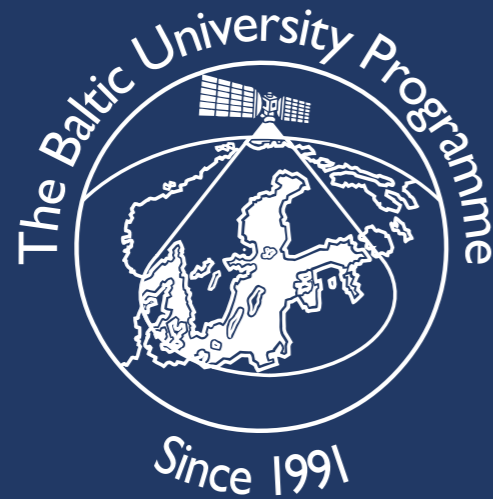
Photo: Cecilia Lundberg



Students and experts that took part in the 'Boot Camp for International Cooperation in Entrepreneurship for Sustainable development'.

Photo: KPI

Education



One of the key missions of The Baltic University Programme is the creation of educational courses from different academic disciplines with both theoretical and practical focuses. These courses are created by colleagues at BUP participating universities, some of which are available as massive open online courses (MOOCs) on the BUP Course Platform, some as courses where the participants achieve ECTS credits and some are created for BUP teachers.

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BUP Teachers Course 2022-2023

BUP Course Platform

One of the key missions of the BUP is to support teachers and students at participating universities in education for sustainable development. The BUP Course Platform is one example that presents nine interdisciplinary courses unique to the Baltic Sea Region with different themes related to sustainability.

Over the past number of years, online education has proliferated in nature and the BUP has been working actively within this field in creating a wide range of educational materials and courses from an intercultural, interdisciplinary, and regional perspective. This has resulted in the BUP Course Platform. All of our courses are linked to the 10 themes of the BUP, which have a base in sustainability science.

The courses are developed by a total of 87 colleagues from 26 BUP participating universities, a true regional teamwork. They are offered as massive open online courses (MOOCs). This means that they can be accessed by anyone independent of time and place, as self-paced distance courses, of course, free of charge.

After a relaunch at Uppsala University there was a kick-off meeting and at the end of the year the platform contained the following nine courses that all focus on aspects of sustainability in a Baltic Sea Region context:

- Conditions and Challenges of Sustainability
- Economic Sustainability- an introduction
- Sustainable Food Systems in the Baltic Sea Region
- Sustainable Tourism in the Baltic Sea Region
- The Baltic Sea Environment; Challenges and Solutions
- Rethinking the Baltic Sea Region
- Introduction to Virtual Exchange
- Climate Change in the Baltic Sea Region
- Energy Transition in the Baltic Sea Region

In developing courses, colleagues from BUP participating universities representing different disciplines and academic cultures, contribute with their knowledge and experiences. We strive to work out from the BUP working model, which means to work in interdisciplinary and intercultural teams of cooperation. This way of cooperation offers opportunities to learn from each other as well as enhance course material with different perspectives and academic cultures.

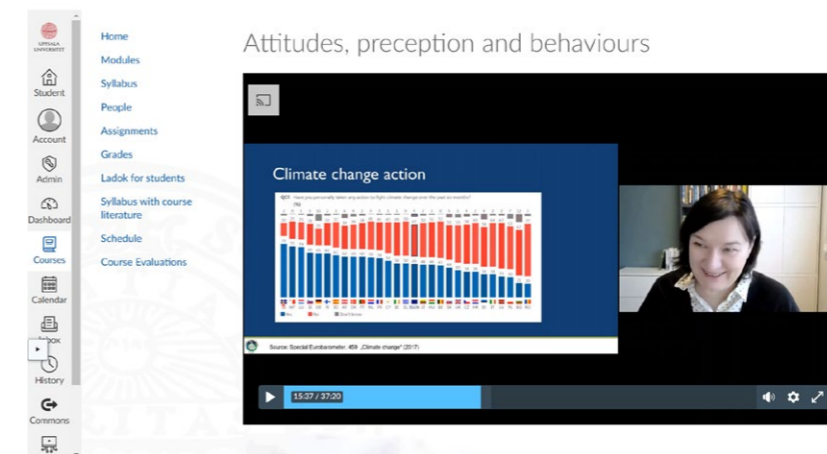
First and foremost, these courses are open to all who are interested in them. They are completely free to enroll with no previous knowledge or pre-requisites necessary. The BUP therefore welcomes all to take these courses; students, teachers, researchers, administrators, and all members of the public. Please note that the level of the courses on the BUP Course Platform are designed at the undergraduate level, however, with teaching from renowned experts across the Baltic Sea Region and vivid examples, the courses should be of interest to all.



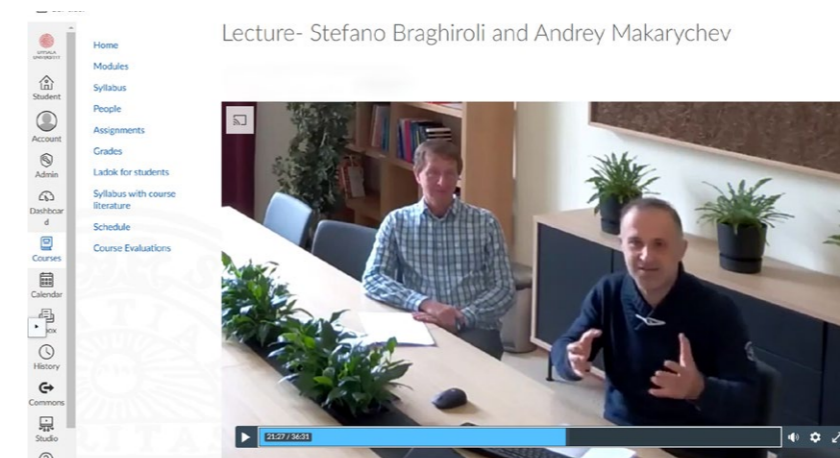
There is an additional opportunity too for those who are currently teaching courses at universities; the chance to integrate the lectures, literature, and quizzes from the courses into their teaching. The material can be used as a whole or as part of a course, for example, there are many example lectures that may prove useful. The BUP sees further opportunities with the material developed for each MOOC course. For example, users are able to develop more advanced courses and to give the student credits by adding material, assignments, seminars etc. These initiatives must then be taken from each BUP participating university. In this case, there could also be the possibility to promote virtual exchange cooperations between BUP participating universities when running credit bearing courses. In 2024, we will launch a material bank where teachers will be able to download course material for use in their own teaching.

Work has also begun with updating course material as a response to new research, relevance in examples, and increasing the video and audio quality. There is also a course focusing on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in development.

The BUP is happy to welcome new contributions to all of our current courses that are published on the Course Platform. There is great value in providing new material. This could be for example a lecture focused on a specific case in the Baltic Sea Region, an analysis lecture focusing on an issue not yet covered, or perhaps a new theoretical angle. If you would like to make a contribution, then please contact the Coordinating Secretariat.



Printscreen from the course 'Climate Change in the Baltic Sea Region' and the lecture 'Attitudes, perception and behaviours' by Prof. Aiste Balzekiene, Kaunas University of Technology.



Printscreen from the course 'Re-thinking the Baltic Sea Region: trends and challenges' and the lecture by and discussion with Stefano Braghiroli and Andrey Makarychev from the University of Tartu.

BUP Course Platform catalogue

The BUP courses are created as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that are unique in that they focus on sustainability in a Baltic Sea Region context. On the BUP Course Platform, we aim towards continuously updating available courses as well as publishing new courses that are created by colleagues at BUP participating universities.

Climate Change in the Baltic Sea Region

Are you interested in learning more about climate change in the Baltic Sea Region? Then this is the course for you. In this course, you will learn, discuss and gain new experiences about climate change on both a global and regional level. The course consists of a wide range of modules that aim to give you as a student a holistic understanding of climate change in the Baltic Sea Region.



Photo: Alex Gerst via NASA

Conditions and Challenges of Sustainability

If you are interested in learning more about the critical application of sustainability, then this course will be of definite interest. This course considers sustainability from a number of perspectives, particularly how it is approached, interpreted, worked alongside and implemented. The course will be of interest to all who are keen to learn more about sustainability, especially from a critical perspective.

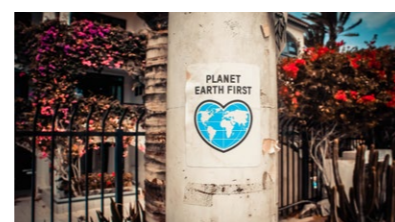


Photo: Photo Boards on Unsplash

The Baltic Sea Environment; Challenges and Solutions

The course introduces you to the basics of the Baltic Sea, with its fragile and unique environment. Taking the course will help to better understand how human impacts are changing its marine ecosystems, but also how one can best reverse the negative trends of its destruction.



Photo: Mats Westerbom/Metsähallitus

Sustainable Food Systems in the Baltic Sea Region

This is an introductory course on the history, social, economic, and ecological aspects of food production in the Baltic Sea Region. The course also focuses on future challenges, such as food security and climate change. The course consists of four parts: The history of agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region, Ecological, economic and social aspects of food systems, The challenges of sustainable food systems - now and tomorrow, and Examples from the region



Photo: Markus Spiske on Unsplash

Re-thinking the Baltic Sea Region: trends and challenges

Over the last 30 years, the Baltic Region has undergone a broad transition, resulting in many changes to the political, economic, social and environmental landscape. This course profiles a wide range of these issues with numerous examples. Due to the changes the Baltic Sea Region has undergone throughout the last twenty years, there is much value in highlighting its recent tendencies, developments and events. The aim of this course therefore, is to provide an overview of the issues that have been subject to change over the course of recent years.

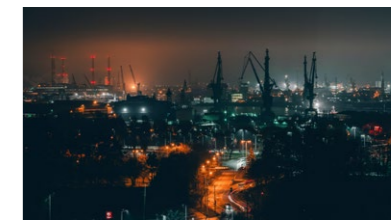


Photo: Andrzej Grzesiak on Unsplash

Introduction to Virtual Exchange

The course will guide you through the basic concepts of Virtual Exchange (VE), how universities and university teachers can improve digital mobility and improve the internationalisation of education. The course provides an introduction to the concept as well discussing some best practices and experiences from VE projects in the Baltic Sea Region and around the world.



Photo: Marvin Meyer on Unsplash

Sustainable Tourism in the Baltic Sea Region

This course aims to provide a basic but comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the origins, applications, analyses and examples of Sustainable Tourism with a specific regional focus on the Baltic Sea Region. The course has both an interdisciplinary and interregional focus and is designed to give the learner a broad but still focused introduction to the topic with socio-political, economic and environmental viewpoints.



Photo: Sanna-Mari Renfors

Economic Sustainability- an introduction

If you are looking for an introduction to this important topic, then this course is for you! The course begins with an introduction to the Anthropocene, before diving into the subject of economic sustainability. This is explored by a number of angles with supporting literature and quizzes.



Photo: Marcin Jozwiak on Unsplash

Energy Transition in the Baltic Sea Region

This course has been created in recognition of the imperative for all to explore more about energy, energy policy and the energy system during a time of changing and evolving dynamics in the world, but particularly in the Baltic Sea Region. The course provides a short introduction to this topic, focusing on certain aspects relating to energy. The course will begin by providing a context of energy in the Baltic Sea Region, before profiling some effects of energy as well as individual examples of energies and energy sources.



Photo: Andreas Gücklhorn on Unsplash

The Baltic Sea Environment – Challenges and Solutions

Continuing their work with education, the BUP National Centre and BUP's Associated Secretariat at Åbo Akademi University have created a course focusing on the Baltic Sea Environment. In addition to being available on the BUP Course Platform, the course has also been given as a 5 ECTS online course.

The course has been coordinated by MSc Karin Madsén, in cooperation with the Open University at Åbo Akademi University, and it took place between 8 October and 8 December 2023. This is one example of how the courses and course material on the BUP Course Platform can be used when creating credit-bearing courses locally at a BUP participating university.

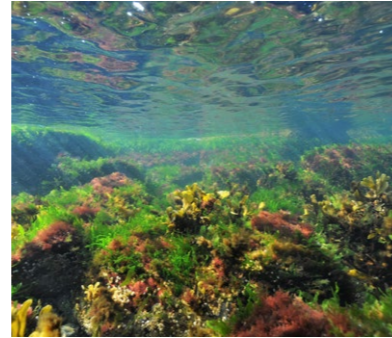
During the course, the participants learned more about the typical characteristics of the Baltic Sea, what kind of life thrives there, and how low salinity affects the environment. The focus of the course was different pressures that are prominent in the Baltic Sea, and what can be done to mitigate these challenges.

After having completed the course, the students should:

- know what physiological factors shape the Baltic Sea
- know what kind of climate is prevalent in the Baltic Sea
- know more about the biodiversity in the Baltic Sea, and how the ecosystems are shaped
- be able to give examples of key species and their function in the Baltic Sea
- be aware of the pressures and challenges present in the Baltic Sea and how they can be dealt with
- be able to give examples of regional cooperation between countries in the Baltic Sea

During the course, students watched lectures at their own pace, completed individual quizzes after each chapter, and participated in group discussions. In total 31 participants from eight countries, including seven participants through cooperation within BUP, took part. The overall feedback was positive, and the students appreciated the mix between the self-paced study elements and the more interactive group discussions.

In total 31 participants from eight countries, including seven participants through cooperation within the BUP, took part.



The course was given as a credit course and is also available as a MOOC course on the BUP Course Platform.

Photo: Mats Westerbom/Metsähallitus

BUP Teachers' Day

The BUP Teachers' Day 2023 was an online workshop which was led by EdD Ann-Christin Furu, from Åbo Akademi University. The title of the workshop was 'Inner Sustainability – the Core for Education for Sustainability'.

Inner sustainability is a vital part of sustainability education in contemporary higher education. Both on the local and the global scale. When you support your own wellbeing and work to develop abilities, skills, and qualities for inner growth, you are better prepared to act for the transformation needed to create a better world.

The BUP Teachers' Day was an online workshop discussing and experiencing the following questions:

- What is inner sustainability?
- Why is it important?
- How can it be strengthened among students and teachers?

The workshop was led by EdD Ann-Christin Furu, Åbo Akademi University. Her research interest lies within sustainability education, and she is an associate professor in early childhood education.

The workshop had 38 participants from six different countries. A total of 15 participants answered the evaluation. The participants gave the event a 4,5/5 overall rating.

The feedback was positive, even if many felt that the time was too short. The presentation was in focus, and very little time was left for small group discussions and exercises.

The participants would have appreciated more practical exercises during the meeting and that the methods were more comprehensive and oriented towards university teaching. On the BUP website, you can read the full event report from the BUP Teachers' Day 2023.



Printscreen from the online workshop led by EdD Ann-Christin Furu.

BUP Teachers Course 2022-2023

After a break, we were once again able to arrange the BUP Teachers Course for the study year 2022–2023. This course is organised by the BUP Associated Secretariat and the National Centre in Finland, located at the Centre for Lifelong Learning, Åbo Akademi University.

The aim of the course, and its study process, is to support university teachers to integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their teaching and courses/programmes, to strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The course teachers were PhD Cecilia Lundberg and MSc Sinikka Suomalainen from Åbo Akademi University, and PhD Shepherd Urenje from Uppsala University.

During the course, different learning methods were introduced with a focus on e-learning, peer learning, and workshops. As a learning outcome, each participant planned and developed a Change project to improve the integration of ESD in their current or future work. The Change projects were supported by peer reviews via the e-platform and during the workshops. During the workshops, keynotes with a focus on learning in Higher Education at the hosting university were also part of the program. As in previous years, this was the fourth time the course was given, the program is built on the following parts:

- E-learning: Introduction of Sustainability and Climate change (Moodle). Planning of the individual project, the so-called Change project.
- Workshop (1): Sustainable development with emphasis on learning environments and ESD methodology. Tallinn University, Estonia.
- Work with the change project in special interest groups. Documentation and communication via Moodle. Assignments and tasks on Moodle.
- Workshop (2): Critical reflection – taking the Change Project forward. The latest phase of the Change projects was presented and discussed. Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania.

The course was an international learning environment with 21 participants from six countries representing different disciplines and subjects. The course corresponds to 5 ECTS credit points (133 hours) at the Centre for Lifelong Learning, Åbo Akademi University. All participants who had all assignments, including the Change project, approved, and participated in at least one of the workshops (compensatory task if you were not able to attend more than one workshop), received a course certificate.

The feedback after both workshops generated an average mark of 4,5/5. There was a 91 percent reply rate in the evaluation. Most of the participants, giving a mark of 4,25/5, gained new insights about ESD which they will bring with them in their own teaching. On the BUP website, you can read the full event report from the BUP Teachers Course.



Participants during workshop 2 in Kaunas. Pictured from the left are Farid Karimi, University of Jyväskylä, Andzelika Kuznar, SGH Warsaw School of Economics and Zivile Stankeviciute, Kaunas University of Technology,

Photo: Cecilia Lundberg

”I have been planning to develop an English course that can help MSc students implement some sustainability ideas into their projects. I thought this was a great opportunity to receive the packet of tools, knowledge and skills on the subject.”

Quote from Lesia Myklash, one of the participants in the BUP Teachers Course.



Participants during workshop 1 in Tallinn. Pictured from the left are Julia Kulkova, University of Turku, and Maria Ivanova-Gongne, Åbo Akademi University.

Photo: Cecilia Lundberg



Participants during workshop 1 in Tallinn. Pictured from the left are Andzelika Kuznar, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Zivile Stankeviciute, Kaunas University of Technology, and Aleksandra Kekkonen, Estonian Business School.

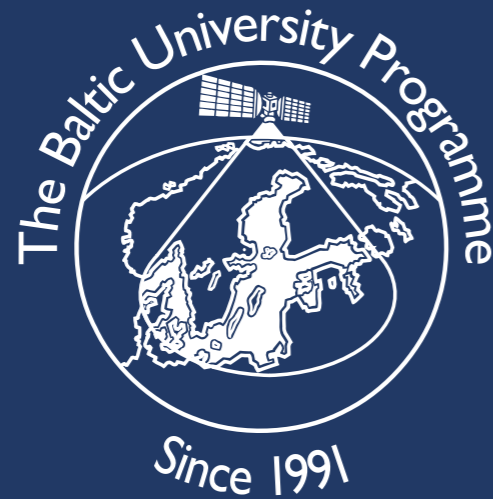
Photo: Cecilia Lundberg



Participants at the second workshop held in Kaunas.

Photo: Cecilia Lundberg

Researchers



One of the main aims of The Baltic University Programme is to promote a strong regional research community in the field of sustainability. This is done by building research networks according to the 10 BUP themes, coordinating publications and grant calls through the BUP Research and Publication Office (BUPRaP), publishing the Research Notes Letter and on an annual basis arranging the BUP Symposium related to the 10 BUP themes.

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BUP PhD Award

This distinction is given to young researchers who have written a high-quality thesis that promotes sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. The winners receive a prize in the form of a diploma and support of up to a maximum of 1000 Euro for either attending a scientific conference or publishing in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

Winner in the category of Natural Sciences and Engineering

Motivation

The thesis addresses the long-term safety and efficiency of CO₂ storage by investigating the processes and mechanisms that could potentially lead to trapped CO₂ remobilisation. The thesis focuses on the difficult and controversial technique of residual trapping of CO₂ in different scales. The author analyzed conditions in which trapped CO₂ could be remobilised. The thesis identifies the critical gas saturation in field-scale, to determine the long-term security of residual storage. The work required a multidisciplinary approach, e.g. hydrogeology, reservoir engineering as well as advanced mathematical modelling. The thesis presents the first in the literature field-scale observation and determination of the role of critical gas saturation in geological CO₂ storage. The findings are crucial for effective, safe, and sustainable strategies for managing CO₂ emissions in the Baltic Sea Region. The thesis delivers a novel and innovative contribution to the field of CO₂ geological storage. The topic is of great interest for sustainable development, results can be used for the promotion of sustainable development in the region.



PhD Ramin Moghadasi
Uppsala University

Title: Residual and critical saturation in geological storage of CO₂: results from field studies, pore-network modelling and laboratory experiments

Winner in the category of Social Sciences and Humanities

Motivation

The role of leadership in promoting sustainability is relatively recent. The aim of the thesis was to explore the theoretical foundations of the concept of leadership for sustainable development and its implications in the context of higher education institutions.

The author undertakes his study with the help of a range of well-elaborated theories and methods and an impressively large number of sources. The theories, concepts, and hypotheses are clearly stated, and the study was skilfully carried out with the help of quantitative, as well as qualitative, methods transparently presented to the reader. The author has used methods and theories from various disciplinary fields demonstrating this thesis to be multidisciplinary. With reference to what has been stated above about the results of the study, the committee finds this thesis contributing important insights to the issue of sustainability leadership in the context of higher education.



PhD Joao Paulino Pires Eustachio
Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

Title: Leadership for sustainable development in the context of higher education institutions

BUP Mobility Grant

The grant is intended to support young scholars from BUP participating universities by offering the possibility to be a guest researcher for a time period at another university in the Baltic Sea Region. The grant supports young scholars to conduct research and create intra-network cooperations within sustainability, being a valuable asset in their academic careers.

Tamari Mumladze from Kaunas University of Technology and the project 'Sustainable Technical Solutions for Plastic Waste Management during Activities Controlled by Municipalities (TechPlastControll)' has won the BUP Mobility Grant 2023. The project aims to address the challenges of plastic waste management and pollution reduction in the municipalities of the Baltic States' big cities. On the BUP website, you can read more about the Mobility Grant as well as Tamari's Mobility Grant report.



PhD Tamari Mumladze
Kaunas University of Technology

Research Notes Letter

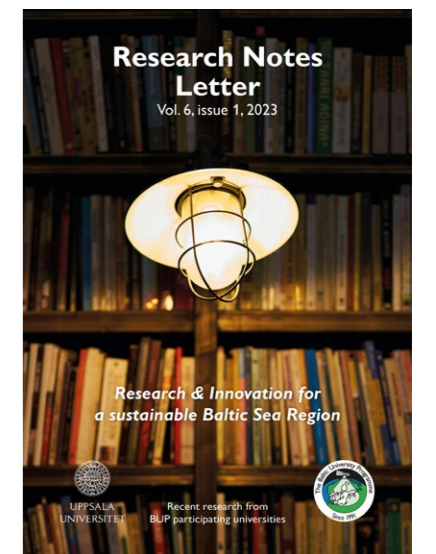
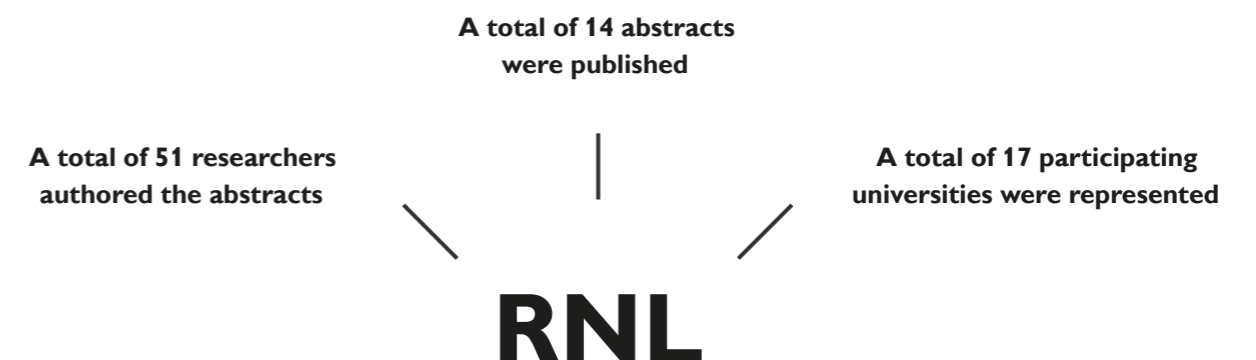
The Research Notes Letter (RNL) highlights abstracts on recent publications related to the Baltic Sea Region and our ten BUP themes. The abstracts presented in the Research Notes Letter are accompanied by information on authors, information on their affiliation, abstracts, keywords, citations, and links to the full paper.

We publish the Research Notes Letter up to three times per year and disseminate it in the network. Most contributions are from researchers at BUP participating universities since we strive towards promoting the research of these colleagues.

The common denominator among the research is an interest in and focus on sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region. The aim is for the Research Notes Letter to reflect the multi- and interdisciplinary science that is central to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals indicated by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2023 there was only one issue of the Research Notes Letter published, mostly due to the fact that there were very few submissions of abstracts and partly since the BUP Coordinating Secretariat has had a high workload. If you wish to read all of the published Research Notes Letters you can find them on the BUP website:

Below are some numbers connected to the Research Notes Letter in 2023.



The cover of Volume 6, Issue 1, of the Research Notes Letter.

BUP Symposium

The Symposium is a platform where regional educational and research communities are given the possibility to come together and get to know colleagues at BUP participating universities.

The BUP Symposium was held for the fourth time on 7-8 November 2023. The Symposium is an arena for disseminating recent research and where new discussions and collaborations can begin. The Symposium featured oral presentations on different themes from researchers as well as sessions that focused on future research collaboration and projects. Those who attended had the opportunity to share new research and project ideas as well as search for new project partners.

During the two days that the Symposium took place, there were more than 70 presentations from colleagues representing around 30 participating universities. The sessions that had the most presenters on day one were:

- 'Closing the loop - Circular Economy in the Baltic Sea Region'
- 'Sustainability literacy - Education for a Sustainable Baltic Sea Region'
- 'Cities, towns and rural lands - changing urban and rural landscapes in the Baltic Sea Region'

Day two featured the following three sessions; 'Future Circular Economy', 'Future Climate Change and Renewable Energy', and 'A collaborative research region, ideas and discussions about future science'.

The opening presentation on day one by Victor Shadurski, focusing on the book *Re-thinking the Baltic Sea Region: trends and challenges*, was appreciated by those attending. Victor discussed the changes in the region that the book strives toward presenting. In the chapter that Victor has written, he states that in Ukraine, compared to Russia and Belarus, a strong national-democratic elite and a more developed civil society have been evident. This, with the active support of democratic countries, contributed to the gradual evolution of democratic processes in Ukraine.

The much appreciated opening presentation and discussion on day two with Carsten Hille and Markus Vossel focused on research collaboration. The participants were given an insight into how the Technical University of Applied Sciences Wildau works with knowledge and technology transfer at their university and how others can do the same.

The participants gave day one an 8.6 rating and day two an 8.8 rating. The moderators gave the Symposium a 7.6 overall rating. Those who participated in the Symposium said that they will take with them new acquaintances, knowledge, and ideas for the future. They also thought that the event was helpful in terms of furthering their research. The majority of the participants and moderators would like the Symposium to be either a hybrid or in-person event in the future. On the BUP website, you can read the full event report from the BUP Symposium 2023.



The Book of Abstracts contains 45 abstracts from oral presentations held at the BUP Symposium 2023. The Book of Abstracts is available on the BUP website.

”For me the best parts of the Symposium were both the talks and Q & A. Meeting researchers from diverse disciplines and realising that we are addressing similar challenges regarding issues like sustainability and climate change, but from completely different perspectives.”

Quote from Keith Larson, one of the moderators during the BUP Symposium.

Research within the BUP

One of the main aims of The Baltic University Programme is to build a strong regional research community by promoting inter, multi, and transdisciplinary research for a sustainable Baltic Sea Region.

The research being conducted at BUP participating universities is an important source of knowledge being used to increase the quality of all our events. We strive towards creating opportunities for researchers at BUP participating universities to meet and cooperate with each other. One way of promoting research collaboration is by creating research networks within the ten BUP themes that we present on the BUP website.

Each BUP theme gives researchers the possibility to learn more about fellow colleagues and the focus of their research. The researchers also get the chance to take part in and contribute to the BUP Symposium, Research Notes Letter, Supervisor Collegium, and the BUP Course Platform.

Baltic Research and Publications Office (BUPRaP)

BUPRaP gathers and makes available information on open calls for funding programmes, and coordinates publications on matters related to the environment, sustainable development, and climate change in scientific journals. Furthermore, BUPRaP aims to support research and development (R&D) at BUP participating universities by catalysing their participation in externally funded research initiatives and projects.

The BUPRaP is currently running the Horizon-funded project BALTIPLAST which focuses on Baltic approaches to handling plastic pollution under a circular economy context. In addition, it is running a 'roadshow', consisting of presentations on how to pursue scientific cooperation and publications on sustainability issues across the region. Furthermore, the Office offers fellowships as well as hosts seminars.

Supervisor Collegium

The Supervisor Collegium is an initiative where scholars contribute with their skills and knowledge to supervise master- and PhD students from participating universities all over the region with their thesis. This is a win-win situation. Both for students who can get a second set of support, but also for supervisors who get to add this experience to their skillset. The BUP is currently working on creating educational opportunities and opportunities for exchange that colleagues within the Supervisor Collegium and those with an interest in supervision can benefit from. For instance, we have started a supervisor training series which began in December 2023, and is set to continue throughout 2024. This is in addition to offering a greater number of supervision opportunities to colleagues to participate in BUP events including thesis trainings.



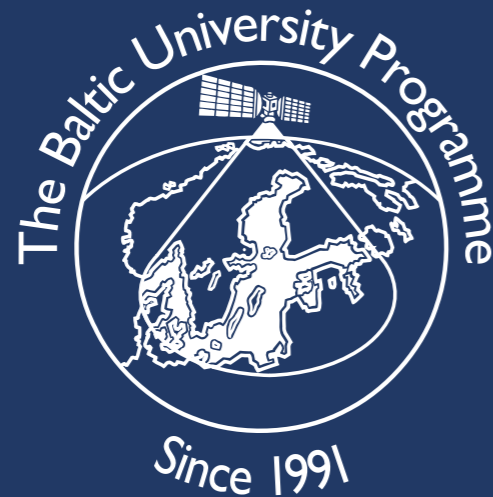
BUP Research and Publication Office

BUPRaP is hosted by the Sustainability and Climate Change Management Research and Transfer Centre at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences in Germany and it is led by Professor Walter Leal.



The first lecture was entitled 'Supervision across borders - The role of supervisor collegia in interdisciplinary and intercultural collaborations' held by Helena Lundqvist and Cesar Pay Gomez from Uppsala University

Students



The Baltic University Programme organises several events and conferences each year intended for students studying at Bachelor-, Master- and PhD level. Organising is often a joint project between two or several BUP participating universities. All our activities are focusing on one or several of our 10 BUP themes. Events are open for students from BUP participating universities.

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BUP Student Conference

The 2023 BUP Student Conference was held in May 2023 at Kaunas University of Technology in Kaunas, Lithuania, which is also the host of the BUP's National Centre in Lithuania. The conference was called 'Sustainable production and consumption: A circular economy perspective' and featured a collaboration with the International Young Researchers Conference.

The 2023 BUP Student Conference was open for students studying at BUP participating universities and focused on the development of young researchers' competences in connection to sustainable development, sustainable production and sustainable consumption. A total of 70 students, from 31 participating universities and all 10 network countries joined the event.

The Student Conference took place over three days with activities based at Kaunas University of Technology and in the city of Kaunas too. The conference began with an introduction from key staff before two keynote speeches:

- Kerli Kant Hvass, Estonian Business School focusing on circularity in the fashion industry.
- Jurgis Kazimieras Staniškis, Kaunas University of Technology and UN SDG expert group member, focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change action.

One of the main objectives of the conference was to offer an opportunity to learn about issues related to circular economy from both a practical and theoretical perspective as well as to offer students the chance to present their own work and results and spearhead discussions related to the topic. The second day began with four speeches and discussions with representatives from Lithuanian industry and society before student presentations in the afternoon. All students were offered the chance to present their own work either in poster or oral form.

An important part of the conference is the Students' Parliament. The aim is to increase the participation of students within the decision making of the BUP. The parliamentary session is the chance for the students to both elect a new Student Representative to the BUP International Board, as well as submitting motions (proposals), that if approved will be forwarded to the BUP International Board. After an active discussion, the students elected their new Student Representative, Niumi Dissanayake from Riga Technical University.

All participating students were asked to complete an evaluation on the final day of the conference. The survey was completed by 67 students. Prior to the event, students held an expectation of 7.89/10, therefore it was pleasing that the students ranked the event overall at 8.7/10. Students particularly highlighted the selected speeches and presentations as interesting and thought provoking. Meeting new people as well as social



During the Students' Parliament the participants elected Niumi Dissanayake from Riga Technical University as a new Student Representative, for a two-year term to the BUP International Board

Photo: Pontus Ambros

"The best part of the student conference were the presentations by Mr. Jurgis Staniskis and Ms. Lina from Aurika Packaging. I also enjoyed the opportunity to give my presentation during the conference."

Quote from Mufaddal Jafferjee, one of the students that took part in the conference.

activities including the cultural party were also identified as appreciated. The accommodation was also well-rated. On the BUP website, you can read the full event report from the BUP Student Conference 2023.



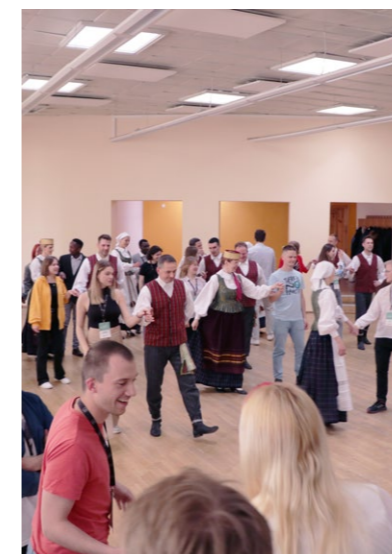
The conference offered the students many opportunities to voice their thoughts and ask questions to presenters and each other. Visvaldas Varzinskas, BUP Centre Director in Lithuania, moderated some of the discussions.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



The conference gave the participants the opportunity to meet students from other countries in the Baltic Sea Region. Here during an excursion in Kaunas.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



An integral part of the conference is the cultural party during which participants had the opportunity to learn more about and take part in traditional Lithuanian dances.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



A vital part of the BUP Student Conference is the Students' Parliament where the participants choose a new BUP Student Representative.

Photo: Brian Kipruto

BUP Science and Sail

The BUP summer school was held in Klaipeda, Lithuania, hosted by Klaipeda University in July 2023. This year's iteration was called Science and Sail and focused on the Baltic Sea Environment with students studying on both sea and land with leading experts from across the region.

The BUP summer schools offer students the chance to conduct hands-on fieldwork related to issues of sustainability and the ability to take part in a diverse program, all whilst discovering a new location in the Baltic Sea Region and meeting a new group of peers. A total of 35 students from 26 participating universities and all 10 countries within the BUP network joined the event.

The summer school program was anchored by four days of fieldwork based in and around Klaipeda. The students rotated around these days in smaller groups. Activities included;

- Baltic Sea coastal hydrology- based on Klaipeda University's tall ship *s/v Brabander*, with a focus on water sampling, sailing practice, depth profiles, and salinity investigations.
- Baltic Sea sand beaches- located in Karkle, with a focus on shoreline mapping, beach profiles and GIS.
- Baltic Sea coastal sand dunes- a full day excursion on the Curonian Spit with a focus on biodiversity.
- Baltic Sea coastal birds- ecology and counting of a coastal cormorant colony in the Placis lagoon.

In addition, students also attended lectures, went on specialised site visits to Klaipeda University's Marine Research Institute and Botanical Garden, took part in a guided tour, gave presentations and worked throughout on various pedagogical tasks within the program.

Science and Sail aimed at giving students from BUP member countries and participating universities the chance to meet, discuss, network, sample and research scientific issues with a focus on sustainability in an international and interdisciplinary manner. This summer school helps to enrich the students' perspectives about sustainability and the Baltic Sea Region with new experiences and viewpoints. The summer school thus serves as a realisation of regional issues- both challenges and solutions.

All participating students were asked to complete an evaluation on the final day of the summer school. This was completed by 31 of the students. Prior to the event, students held an average expectation of 7.61/10. Particularly praised was the communication with both the BUP staff and Lithuanian colleagues, a unique range of activities, the accommodation and the storytelling based group project. The students gave the event a 9.35/10 overall rating. This is the BUP's highest rating for a summer school. On the BUP website, you can read the full event report from the BUP Science and Sail 2023.



All of the participating students had the opportunity to learn more about the life and work on a tall ship.

Photo: Pontus Ambros

"I will especially remember the amazing opportunity of being onboard the tall ship *Brabander*. I have dreamed of going on a sail like this for a long time and this was an incredible possibility to sail and help the crew onboard."

Quote from Ada Kaminska, one of the students that took part in the summer school.



The students represented 26 different BUP participating universities from all 10 member countries.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



Much of the event was spent outdoors, here the participants visited Klaipeda University's Botanical Garden.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



The participants worked in teams and collected GPS coordinates to measure beach erosion on the dunes of the Curonian Spit.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



Toward the end of the event the students gave group presentations focusing on what they had seen and learned.

Photo: Pontus Ambros

BUP Master Thesis Training

The Master Thesis Training (MTT) is an opportunity for master students to gain supervision from an expert at a BUP participating university. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to get feedback from other students in the region, build connections, and become better acquainted with other academic perspectives in an interdisciplinary and intercultural environment.

The Master Thesis Training (MTT) took place at Uppsala University between 27-30 March 2023. The event aims to give master students from the BUP participating universities the possibility to meet and discuss scientific problems with a focus on sustainability in an interdisciplinary, international, multicultural, and regional context. In this way, students will also have the opportunity to become acquainted with other universities and their scientific traditions. The training offers an interdisciplinary learning experience, with sustainability as a shared concept.

The training serves as a platform for a common understanding of regional challenges and possibilities and opens avenues for future cooperation on these issues. Students from twelve different BUP participating universities in seven different countries took part in the event. Due to the war in Ukraine, students from our participating universities in Ukraine had the opportunity to take part in the Master Thesis Training online. Three Ukrainian students participated online where they presented their thesis as well as received feedback on their thesis from a supervisor.

The students enjoyed the presentations and getting to know students from different countries and academic backgrounds. The individual supervision with an expert was the part of the program that the majority of the students appreciated the most, along with from the other students. A majority of the students thought that the event was helpful in terms of improving their thesis. The participants thought that next time there could be some changes in how the presentations are given, one suggestion is to have more groups for the presentations which would also lead to more time for feedback and discussions. The students gave the event a 9,2/10 overall rating.

There supervisors felt that the students were receptive to their and input and that they were able to make a positive contribution to the students work. The most appreciated parts of the MTT for the supervisors was the time they got to spend and work with the students and to see the amount of work the students put into their theses. The experts enjoyed working in an international team and they were impressed by the students' achievements and work ethics. The supervisors gave the event a 9,6/10 overall rating. On the BUP website, you can read the full event report from the BUP Master Thesis Training 2023.



One of the participating students, Minerva Serrano Martinez, documented the event from a student perspective. Her photos and videos can be viewed on the BUP Student Instagram.

”The Master Thesis Training offered a unique opportunity for knowledge acquisition, sparking inspiration, and promoting engaging discussions. It was great to be surrounded by a diverse group of like-minded people with different perspectives on sustainability.”

Quote from Wojciech Malolepszy, one of the students that took part in the Master Thesis Training.



Students and supervisors that took part in the Master Thesis Training. The picture is taken at Geocentrum at Uppsala University.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



There was time for the students to revise and add information to their thesis during the event, for instance when another student was getting their supervision.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



During the MTT each student had one on one time with their supervisors and received on their thesis.

Photo: Minerva Serrano Martinez



The students all gave a presentation of their thesis. Pictured is Jakub Baloga from Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra.

Photo: Minerva Serrano Martinez

Student conference: Environment and Well-being

This student conference began as a student initiative and it was organised by The Baltic University Programme (BUP) and the University of Ostrava. The student conference took place between 6-9 December in Ostrava, Czechia.

The participating students were immersed in a range of activities including workshops, study visits, and lectures focused on various topics including well-being, sustainability, the environment, and post-industrial urbanism.

The program for this conference was put together by the BUP Czech National Centre based at the University of Ostrava and it was specifically developed with the Czech Technical University in Prague and VSB Technical University in Ostrava to provide a strong Czech impetus and context. The goals of the event were to:

- Improve the knowledge of students around the key topics of this conference: Environment and Well-Being: a joint venture of technology, sciences, and humanities.
- Promote and encourage stimulating discussions between students and staff members especially around the relevance of the topic for the everyday.
- Discover and learn more about the city of Ostrava, its historical context and current situation, as well as a Czech context on the highlighted topics.
- Build skills in intercultural and interdisciplinary cooperation.

Prior to the event, students held an average expectation of 7.4/10, a number that was exceeded in the overall score of the conference which was 8.96/10. The most appreciated parts of the conference were the lecture Biodiversity and citizen science project presentation by Aleš Dolný and Stanislav Ozana, the lecture Introduction to Augmented and Virtual reality activity by Filip Beneš, the program at the Planetarium as well as the program at Dolní Vítkovice. The participating students thought that the student conference was worthwhile in attending, in terms of their studies, future aspirations, and careers. The students said that they will bring home new knowledge, experiences, memories, and new friends.

The students thought that the program on the first day of the conference was slightly too packed and there could have been a bit more focus on interactivity with, for instance, discussions and networking between the students. Furthermore, some of the lectures were not as connected to the conference themes and they could have been either removed or replaced with another lecture. On the BUP website, you can read the full event report from the student conference: Environment and Well-being.



Mrs. Pavla Cvachovcová from the Czech Ministry of the Environment, presented their work on the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Photo: Pontus Ambros

”At the conference I met new people from all around the world and gained knowledge from different areas of expertise.”

Quote from Klaudia Jasiewicz one of the students that took part in the conference.



Students gathered for a group photo in-between lectures at the University of Ostrava.

Photo: Pontus Ambros



During the second day the students went on a tour to Dolní Vítkovice, a former blast furnace complex, where they learned about the history of Lower Vitkovice and pig iron production.

Photo: Oleksandra Petrova



At the end of day one the students got to visit the Planetarium Ostrava.

Photo: Niumi Dissanayake



PhD Aleš Dolný, University of Ostrava, gave a lecture about the use of dragonflies as a biodiversity indicator in post-industrial environments.

Photo: Pontus Ambros

BUP Student Representatives and Student Ambassadors

Within the BUP, there are many active students. Two important student roles are the Student Representatives and Student Ambassadors. The Student Representatives are elected by the BUP Students' Parliament and represent the students on the BUP International Board. The Student Ambassadors promote the BUP at their home universities and take part in planning and developing events, communication, and research visibility within the BUP.

Student Representatives

The Student Representatives are elected by democratic vote in the Student Parliament, which is held during the yearly Student Conference. Being a Student Representative is a two-year commitment, where one Student Representative is elected during each Student Conference. During their mandate, the representatives are to:

- Attend board meetings representing the BUP students (twice a year)
- Report on the student activities to the BUP International Board
- Attend and take part in the organisation of student activities (conferences, summer courses, etc.)
- Actively work to promote the BUP and BUP activities in the region
- Organise the Students' Parliament
- Be a contact person for BUP students
- Actively participate and support the BUP Student Ambassadors program (with the help of the BUP's coordinating secretariat)

Student Ambassadors

All students at BUP participating universities can apply to become a BUP Student Ambassador. The role of the Student Ambassadors is to cooperate with participating universities, to serve as a contact person between their home university and its students and the BUP Coordinating Secretariat in Uppsala as well as the National Centre. The Ambassadors also work together with the Coordinating Secretariat to develop and evaluate the organisation and its work.

The Baltic University Programme aims to develop its communication and cooperation with each of its participating universities all over the Baltic Sea Region. One important communication path besides the BUP contact persons or coordinating staff at each participating university is the BUP Student Ambassadors.



At the Student Conference 2023, there were four students that applied to become the new BUP Student Representative. Niumi Dissanayake, second from the left, from Riga Technical University was elected to be the new Student Representative.

Photo: Pontus Ambros

There are three different profiles that the students can choose to focus on; communication, research, and events. Based on what the students choose they will be able to work closely with students that share their interests and work together in an international context to promote and develop the BUP.

During 2023 the Student Ambassadors have contributed to our work with our student events, event reports, material for social media as well as ideas and suggestions for improvements of our organisation in general.

The Student Ambassadors are an important asset when it comes to contributing before and during events. In 2023, there were Student Ambassadors who documented and reported from the BUP Master Thesis Training and the BUP Student Conference, mainly via the BUP Student Instagram but also by contributing to the event reports.



The resigning Student Representative Seymour Ingilabli from University of Lodz making sure that each vote was handled correctly during the Students' Parliament 2023.

Photo: Brian Kipruto



The Student Ambassador Trang Nguyen pictured here to the left, from the University of Turku shared updates from the Student Conference via the BUP Student Instagram.

Photo: Trang Nguyen

BUP PhD Students Training

This tenth installment of the training was arranged on 22-26 November 2023 by the BUP National Centre in Poland and BUP's Associated Secretariat at Lodz University of Technology. The PhD Students Training is an opportunity for PhD students to become better acquainted with other academic perspectives.

The objective of this training is to give PhD students from BUP participating universities the possibility to meet and discuss scientific problems in a multidisciplinary, international, multicultural, and regional context. In this way, students will also have the opportunity to become acquainted with other universities and their scientific traditions.

PhD students are offered training in research cooperation with the guidance of a group of multidisciplinary research experts, composed of senior scientists. The program of the training included: lectures, workshops, students' presentations of PhD work, and individual consultancies of PhD work with senior scientists.

The training admitted 23 PhD students from 20 BUP participating universities in Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and Ukraine. During the event 20 experts participated.

The participating students said that they gained new knowledge such as how to give a research presentation as well as new contacts and collaborations. They thought that it was worthwhile attending and would recommend the event to other students. The PhD students gave the event a 9.2 overall rating.

The most appreciated parts of the program for the students were the consultation with a senior scientist, the design thinking session, the first impressions matter session, and the thesis and poster workshop. They all thought that the discussions and supervision were helpful for improving their thesis.

The experts held the consultations with the students in high regard and they liked engaging with the students to improve their work. All the experts would like to be invited to take part in future BUP activities and they would recommend a colleague to attend this event if they wish to improve their knowledge of and experience with supervision. The experts gave the event a 9.6 overall rating.

On the BUP website, you can read the full event report from the BUP PhD Students Training 2023.



The participating PhD students were given on their PhD work from experts from BUP participating universities.

Photo: Krzysztof Ciesielski

”The best part of the training was meeting and talking to other PhD students. Another valuable point was getting the experts’ comments and suggestions on the research topic.”

Quote from Marina Troshkova, one of the students that took part in the PhD Students Training.



Participating PhD students and experts during the BUP PhD Students Training at Lodz University of Technology, Poland.

Photo: Krzysztof Ciesielski



The students worked together in teams during the Design Thinking lab session.

Photo: Krzysztof Ciesielski



Each student gave a presentation of their PhD work and their research.

Photo: Krzysztof Ciesielski



One of the students most appreciated parts of the event was the design thinking session.

Photo: Krzysztof Ciesielski

BUP organisation



The Baltic University Programme is coordinated by The BUP Coordinating Secretariat at Uppsala University, Sweden. Moreover, three BUP Associated Secretariats in Finland, Germany, and Poland have specialised tasks. The BUP National Centres deal with the network coordination and student interaction in each BUP country. The long term development and the strategy of the BUP is attended to by the BUP International Board.

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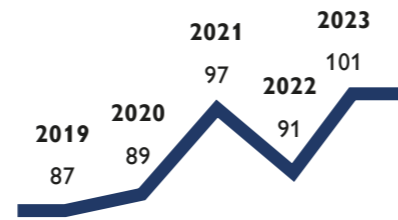
BUP communication

Participating universities

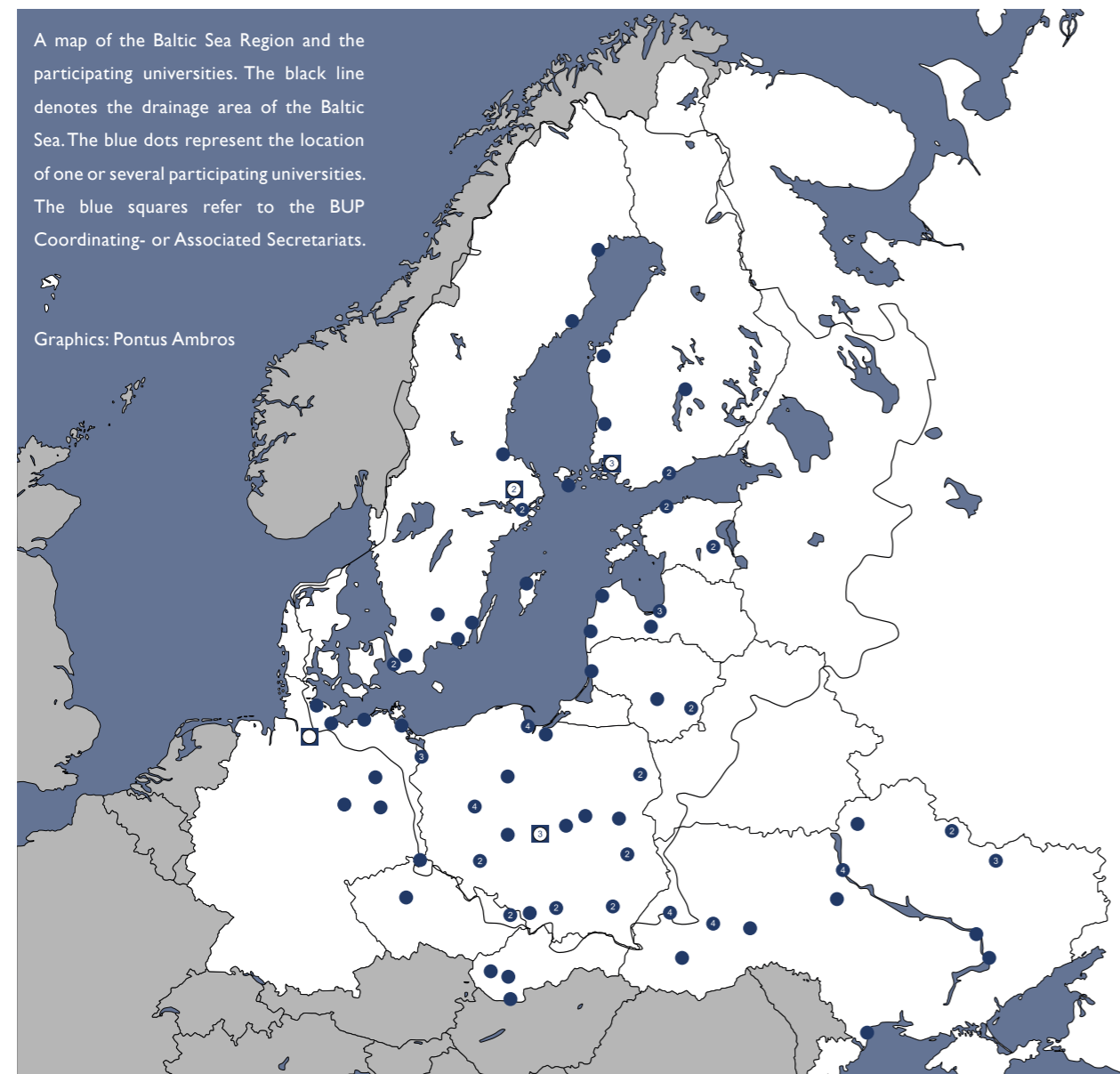
All participating universities have signed an inter-university agreement to be a part of the BUP. At the end of 2023, we had 101 participating universities within the BUP.

Participating universities are an active part of the BUP; together we shape the outline of the Programme as well as its activities and outcome. The participating universities come together as a part of the BUP to promote internationalisation with a focus on sustainability and democracy.

With many exciting events and the collected work of many colleagues within the Programme there has been an increase in interest for the BUP and this is reflected in the number of new participating universities which are 14 in total. The highest number of participating universities are from Poland, 29 universities. A plurality of new participating universities came from Ukraine, where 5 universities have joined the BUP.



The increase in the number of participating universities is a result of the Coordinating Secretariat, Centre Directors, and Associated Secretariats sharing information about the BUP with possible new universities. In total 14 new participating universities joined during 2023.



Organisational structure

The extensive network is supported, for administration, organisation, and strategic planning, by a Coordinating Secretariat at Uppsala University, Sweden, and three Associated Secretariats situated at Lodz University of Technology (Poland), Åbo Akademi University (Finland), and Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany).



The BUP organisational structure.

The BUP International Board 2023

Input regarding strategic decisions and ideas about the overall direction of the BUP comes mainly – but not exclusively – from the International Board and is implemented by the Secretariats and participating universities.

Chair of the board
Olle Jansson, Dr.
Uppsala University, Sweden

Eva Friman, Dr.
Director SWEDESD, Uppsala University

Vice Chair of the board
Ireneusz Zbicinski, Prof.
Łodz University of Technology, Łodz, Poland

Joakim Ekman, Prof.
Södertörn University, Sweden

Tapio Salmi, Prof.
Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Irina Kryba
Ivan Franko National University of L'viv, Ukraine

Walter Leal, Prof.
Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Student representatives
Tereza Homolova
University of Ostrava, Czechia

Hele Kiimann, Dr.
IRES, Uppsala University, Sweden

Niumi Dissanayake
Riga Technical University, Latvia

Magdalena Kuchler, Assoc. Prof.
Uppsala University, Sweden

The Secretariats

The BUP is an extensive organisation that needs a structure involving colleagues in many different countries. This is where the Coordinating and Associated Secretariats come in.

The Associated Secretariats

The scope of the BUP activities, projects, and events is wide and ranges from those targeted at students to those aimed at university teachers and researchers. Therefore, the BUP has three Associated Secretariats, each in charge of a specific BUP domain. Their budgets are independent of the Coordinating Secretariat and come from local funding.

Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

The German Associated Secretariat deals with research development in the network and they host the BUP Research and Publications Office (BUPRaP), which assists participating universities in fostering their research activities and enhancing their publications output and profile. Works with creating opportunities for young researchers as well as seasoned scholars.



Head of Secretariat
Walter Leal
Prof.

Lodz University of Technology

The Polish Associated Secretariat deals with the organisation of network wide courses and conferences. It is the main organiser of the BUP PhD Student Training. The training has been offered since 2012 and represents an opportunity for PhD students to meet and discuss sustainable development in an interdisciplinary, international, and regional context at once. The training includes lectures and workshops as well as a chance for students to present their PhD work and consult their PhD projects with international experts.



Head of Secretariat
Ireneusz Zbicinski
Prof.

Åbo Akademi University

The Finnish Associated Secretariat's core mission is the professional development of university teachers and it works mainly within the theme Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Equipped with this expertise, it provides the Programme with an efficient and innovative platform for the BUP teachers' professional growth.



Head of Secretariat
Cecilia Lundberg
Dr.

The Coordinating Secretariat

The BUP requires a central body for administrative and organisational support as well as for long term planning. This responsibility lies with the Coordinating Secretariat which is located at Uppsala University.

Head of the Coordinating Secretariat. The main responsibilities are the strategic aspects of the Programme; lead, plan and implement the strategy. The Director also supports the Programme at an academic and research level and seeks new ways of strengthening the scientific impact of Programme participants.



Director
Madeleine Granvik
Dr.

Responsible for individual projects, such as Digital at Home and RESCUU, and represents a key figure in the practical running of the organisation, which includes inviting and welcoming new universities, economic matters, and ensuring networking and strong levels of overall contact with the Programme's participating universities.



Project Coordinator
Lyudmyla Babak
MA

Focuses primarily on designing and executing projects and organising activities aimed at students from participating universities. Pontus is in charge of the BUP student conferences and also focuses on the BUP Course Platform.



Project Administrator
Pontus Ambros
MSc

Works with coordinating new courses for the BUP Course Platform and with the BUP Master Thesis Training. Responsible for the BUP Student Ambassadors, Supervisor Collegium as well as the projects Quality Assurance at participating universities and Sustainability at participating universities.



Project Administrator
Evan Goss
MSS

Maintains the presence of the BUP on social media and, among other things, edits the newsletter BUP Weekly, Research Notes Letter, and Annual Report. Takes care of the issue of informational and promotional material as well as the BUP website.



Communications Officer
Adam Söderberg
BA

Worked with the BUP Student Ambassadors, proofreading communications material and other published material. Brian took part in the planning and execution of the Master Thesis Training and the Student Conference.



Intern
Brian Kipruto
BA

The National Centres

National Centres have been a part of the organisational structure of the Programme since the mid 1990's. The Centres are led by Centre Directors who gather at least twice a year to discuss and coordinate their activities as well as offer their suggestions concerning the direction and future plans of the BUP.

The National Centres benefit the Programme in several ways; they make coordination of activities at a local level easier, work as communication hubs between the Secretariats and participating universities in the given country, and, at the same time, students, teachers, and researchers can easily, via National Centres, get in touch with the BUP. They are located at participating universities and always include at least one person with expertise and academic background in one or several of the BUP themes.

The BUP National Centre Directors 2023



Czech Republic
Ivana Adamiková
University of
Ostrava



Estonia
Tiina Elvisto
Tallinn University



Finland
Cecilia Lundberg
Åbo Akademi
University



Germany
Jakob Hildebrandt
Zittau/Görlitz
University of
Applied Sciences



Latvia
Juris Iljins
Riga Technical
University
Until November



Latvia
Laura Štāle
Riga Technical
University
From November



Lithuania
Visvaldas
Varzinskas
Kaunas University
of Technology



Poland
Ireneusz Zbicinski
Łódź University of
Technology



Slovakia
Barbora Čáková
Slovak University
of Agriculture in
Nitra



Sweden
Joakim Ekman
Södertörn
University



Ukraine
Iryna Kriba
Ivan Franko
National
University of Lviv

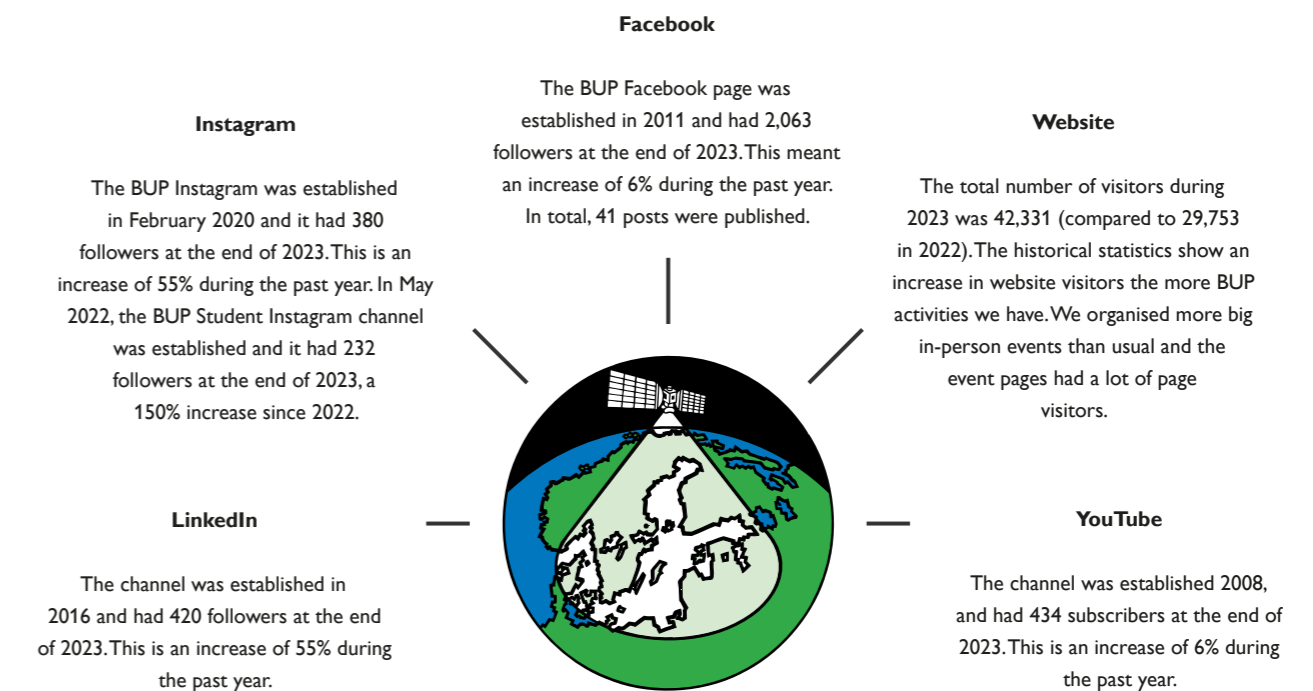
BUP communication

Being an organisation with more than 100 participating universities, the BUP has the possibility to reach and cooperate with a large number of people with diverse backgrounds and facilitate their networking and communication. The Programme's growing impact and reach affirm that we can accomplish great things in relation to the ten BUP themes and sustainable development in general.

In the past year, we have seen that the trend from 2022 continues, an increasing number of people follow us on our platforms as well as apply for and join our events and activities. Our reach and growth tell us something about how many colleagues are interested in the BUP and what we do. It also indicates that there is an even bigger audience for our news, calls, and material.

We distribute the BUP Newsletter, Research Notes Letter, BUP Weekly, our Annual Report, and event announcements via our mailing lists. We have different lists for contact persons at our participating universities and for a wider spectrum of subscribers – anyone who is interested in the BUP can subscribe and receive news. The contact persons e-mail list had 621 subscribers (an increase of about 3% during the past year), and the generic list had 3645 subscribers (an increase of about 40% during the past year) at the end of 2023. We always add e-mail addresses to our lists with the subscribers' consent. The increase in subscribers can be explained by the fact that we had many applicants to events that subscribed to our email lists.

Communication material that was published during 2023 comprised of 22 issues of the BUP Weekly, one issue of the Research Notes Letter, and the 2022 Annual Report.





The Baltic University Programme
Uppsala University
Villavägen 16
SE-752 36 Uppsala, Sweden
info@balticuniv.uu.se



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET