



## **Monday 7 November 2016, 16.00-18.30, BSSSC Board Meeting**

*Meeting venue: Platon Cabinet, Hilton Stockholm Slussen, Guldgränd 8, Stockholm 10465*

*Present:* Chair Mr. Ossi Savolainen (Board member, Helsinki-Uusimaa), Ms. Marlene Rothe (Board civil, Schleswig-Holstein), Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp (Brandenburg, Board member), Mr. Wieslaw Byczowski (Pomerania, Board member), Ms. Krystyna Wroblewska (Pomerania, Board civil), Mr. Roger Ryberg (Board member/Incoming chair, Eastern Norway County Network), Ms. Ann Irene Saeternes (Board civil/incoming general-secretary, Eastern Norway County Network), Mr. Jon Halvard Eide (Board Civil, Vest-Agder), Mr. Iisakki Kiemunki (Board member, Häme), Mr. Matti Lipsanen (Board civil, Häme), Ms. Marili Niits (Board member, Association of Municipalities in Estonia), Mr. Arne Tilk (Board member, Association of Estonian Cities), Ms. Kari Lie (Board member, BSSSC Youth), Mr. Trond Myrland (Board civil, Eastern Norway County Network), Mr. Lars Fredrik Godbolt (Board civil, Eastern Norway County Network), Mr. Sebastian Magier (Board member, Euroregion Baltic)

*Observers:* Mr. Lars Salvesen (Board member from 1/2017, Eastern Norway County Network), Mr. Rune Bakkevoll (Board civil from 1/2017, Akershus), Mr. Krzysztof Zarna (Westpomeranian Region)

*Secretariat:* Secretary-General Mr. Janne Tamminen (Helsinki-Uusimaa), Mr. Jaakko Ranta (Helsinki-Uusimaa)

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Opening of the Board Meeting (16.00)**

1.1. Opening of the meeting - **Mr. Ossi Savolainen**, BSSSC Chair

**Mr. Savolainen** started the meeting by presenting the busy and challenging situation of the Finnish Regional Government Reform and that it takes most of his time.

1.2. Adoption of the agenda – Agenda was adopted

1.3. Adoption of Board meeting minutes, Hämeenlinna 14 September 2016 – Minutes were adopted.

### **2. BSSSC member regions and Board members**

- Country specific reports from Board members – tour de table



**Finland:** **Mr. Lipsanen** and **Mr. Kiemunki** reported on the ongoing Finnish regional government reform. Greatest concern for them is, that if current plans go ahead, much of the decision-making will be centralized and taken from the regions to Helsinki. Nothing is certain, because governing parties in Finland are divided on the matter. **Mr. Lipsanen** has a new position where he is working full-time on the reform. It was agreed that the Secretariat sends a link to the information in English after the meeting.

**Norway:** **Mr. Ryberg** reported that greening of the economy and implementation of the Paris Climate agreement complicate budget negotiations in Norway. Parliamentary elections will be held next autumn and political crisis is not wanted now. There are ongoing negotiations on reforms on merging counties into larger regions. Counties of Akershus (**Mr. Salvesen**) and Buskerud (**Mr. Ryberg**) have made a preliminary agreement on going together in one region. This new region would be the largest region in Norway with 1.8 million inhabitants. Not all parties are for this, so it remains to be seen if this becomes a reality. **Mr. Eide** added that Norwegian government has proposed cuts to the INTERREG budget.

**Poland:** **Ms. Wroblewska** reported that Poland is living through many changes and the governing party is collecting power to its hands. Polish government is close in finalizing an educational reform, which will be a total change to the previous educational system. There are many project movements against the policies (rights of women, civil rights, democratic movements) of the government. Largest of these is the so-called Umbrella protest movement.

**Germany:** **Ms. Rothe** sent best regards from **Mr. Musiolik** who was unable to attend, because of delayed flights. Schleswig-Holstein will hold parliamentary elections next May.

**Estonia:** **Ms. Niits** and **Mr. Tilk** reported that Estonia has a new president Ms. Kersti Kaljulaid. The elections showed the weaknesses of the Estonian electoral system. Estonia is also planning a local governmental reform. **Mr. Tilk** continued that Estonia seems to have similar problems as the other countries around the Baltic Sea. Political field undergoing a huge turnaround at the moments since the largest political party got a new leader and political alliances are changing.



### 3. Policy Sectors and Working Groups

#### 3.1. Maritime Issues

**Mr. Tamminen** reminded that European Commission is publishing a program on Maritime Governance in the near future. This report should be read and taken into account. Also VASAB is organising a meeting Riga in two weeks. **Mr. Tamminen** also reminded that BSSSC should decide if it wants to organise a workshop in European Maritime Days in Poole next May. The deadline for applications is 19<sup>th</sup> December. It was agreed that timetable for organising a workshop is tight, but perhaps it is possible that BSSSC could co-organise a workshop with some other organisations.

#### 3.2. Youth Policy

BSSSC's youth workshop 'Nothing about Us without Us' in EUSBSR forum 2016 has been under work and **Ms. Lie** shortly went through the topics of the workshop. Youth Network was not able to nominate a new member to the BSSSC Board in Hämeenlinna. The problem was not the willingness of the youth members to participate, but the fact that the regions are not ready to fund the participation of youth members. **Ms. Lie** urged the regions to take more responsibility in youth affairs.

**Mr Tamminen** reported on panel debate in Round Table of Youth Affairs in Berlin. **Mr. Martins** complemented that participants of the Round Table stressed that it is hard to manage cooperation of different youth initiatives around the Baltic Sea Region, and reached a conclusion that some sort of common organisation or structure is needed for youth cooperation. **Mr. Martins** continued that some Baltic Sea countries did not participate to the Round Table and to ensure this not happening again BSSSC should distribute information on Round Table of Youth Affairs around its networks. **Mr. Magier** added that his message from Berlin was that there is a need for more dialogue and cooperation in youth affairs. BSSSC should send a letter to CBSS on the willingness to continue cooperation in youth affairs. **Ms. Rothe** expressed her support to the sending of the letter. **Mr. Tamminen** answered that the letter on willingness to continue youth cooperation has already been sent to CBSS Secretariat and it has been expressed on general level that BSSSC wants to continue youth cooperation. **Mr. Martins** added that CBSS wants to continue cooperation, but the official decision has not yet been made.



### 3.3. Energy and Climate Issues

**Mr. Tamminen** reported on an earlier meeting and recommended that co-operation with CBSS on this policy sector should continue. **Mr. Tamminen** recommended also the naming of a new reporter. It was decided that reporter on this policy sector will be named after the adoption of the new work plan.

### 3.4. Northern and Arctic Dimension

**Mr. Tamminen** informed that Northern Dimension was having a meeting at the same time as the BSSSC Board. BSSSC was invited but it was impossible to attend.

### 3.5. Transport and Infrastructure

**Mr. Eide** reported that European Commission has published a transport scoreboard and the board should look into that. **Mr. Eide** recommended that in the future Akershus could report on transport together with Agder, since the region has many transport projects and already is following this policy area closely.

### 3.6. Culture

**Ms. Rothe** said that there will be Culture workshop in the EUSBSR forum, but unfortunately it is organised at the same time with the BSSSC workshop.

### 3.7. Cohesion Policy

**Mr. Kneifel-Haverkamp** highlighted the difficult situation of cohesion policy at the moment in the EU institutions. In the mid-term review of the cohesion policy, European Commission states that programs run from Brussels are working fine but other programs are not working properly. **Mr. Kneifel-Haverkamp** recommends that BSSSC prepare a paper that among others states that cohesion policy is not working because of the administrative requirements.

**Mr. Kneifel-Haverkamp** recommended that the new Cohesion Policy Working Group should try to get CPMR on board, because of the experience this organisation has in cohesion policy. The cohesion policy working group will mostly work via e-mail. It was agreed that all BSSSC countries will nominate a member in the working group.

**Mr. Tamminen** added that Helsinki-Uusimaa wants to add a sentence on smart specialisation into the cohesion policy papers. Helsinki-Uusimaa also wanted the same addition to the CPMR papers. There



*should be something of interest in cohesion policy for more developed regions too, otherwise cohesion policy will lose its legitimacy.*

### 3.8. Baltic Sea Region Programme

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## 4. Current issues at other co-operation organizations

### 4.1. CBSS

*Mr. Martins* reported that on November 29<sup>th</sup> CBSS is holding its annual consultations that will make decisions on many future plans including continuation of Round Table for Youth Affairs. Icelandic Presidency is planning a high-level political event and Arctic co-operation is also strongly on the agenda.

### 4.2. UBC

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### 4.3. B7

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### 4.4. NSPA

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### 4.5. CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

*Mr. Tamminen* reported on the General Assembly of CPMR on Azores, which had 200 participants from all the member regions. Current president was re-elected and there were some changes in Political Bureau members. Estonia was accepted as a member (the whole country) and four new member regions (3 from Morocco and Niedersachsen from Germany) were taken into the organisation. There were interesting debates on the future of the EU and the European project. Baltic Sea Commission wanted to add a sentence on smart specialisation to the CPMR position on cohesion policy and managed to do so. Baltic Sea Commission also changed the wording in a position so that it is stated that 'CPMR notes' that CEF-T money does not only fund TEN-T-corridors (in an earlier version it was stated that 'CPMR regrets').

*Mr. Halvard* complemented the report from Azores by stating that the CPMR position paper on cohesion policy is very important for BSSSC. CPMR believes that financial instruments have a too



*dominant role in cohesion policy and auditing could be differentiated on how different regions perform. CPRM also calls for stronger involvement of the regions to solving the migration crisis.*

**Mr. Halvard** also pointed out that the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission regard themselves as the voice of the Baltic Sea Regions in their position paper. **Mr. Tamminen** answered that the document is just a working document not an official position. It was agreed that **Mr. Tamminen** will send the Baltic Sea Commission paper on the future of Baltic Sea region to the board.

*Next Baltic Commission Executive Committee will be held in January in Schwerin in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Next year General Assembly of the CPMR will be held in Helsinki and all are welcome to attend.*

#### 4.6. BSPC - Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

**Mr. Tamminen** informed that the next conference will be held in Hamburg 3-5 September, 2017. Organisation was active at the Round Table for Youth Affairs.

#### 4.7. AEBR

**Mr. Tamminen** participated in the General Assembly in Görlitz in September.

#### 4.8. Informal Baltic Sea Group

**Mr. Tamminen** noted that IBSC has its Annual Seminar 16<sup>th</sup> of November in Brussels. At the moment it seems that the activity of IBSC and its Annual Seminar is fading. It is shame since they organise the only annual event in Brussels on Baltic Sea affairs. **Mr. Tamminen** raised the question if BSSSC could cooperate a bit more to raise the profile of IBSC.

#### 4.9. Other organizations?

### 5. BSSSC Chairmanship 2017-2018 ENCN

The preparation for the incoming chairmanship 2017 – 2018 and input to the Work Plan for 2017-2018 – Work plan by **Mr. Roger Ryberg**, the Incoming BSSSC Chair, Eastern Norway County Network



*The board agreed that ENCN had already made great work with their draft working plan.*

***Mr Ryberg** started by telling that the ENCN have continued the preparations of their chairmanship since the Hämeenlinna meeting. A new coordinator **Mr Godbolt** presented himself. **Mr Ryberg** continued by telling that at the moment ENCN's chairmanship looks very promising. He also stated that British regions have shown interest in the overall participation of Norway and Norwegian regions to the European cooperation.*

***Ms. Saeternes** continued by presenting the draft framework for the new work plan. ENCN wants to engage more actors and involve all Baltic Sea Region countries (especially Denmark and Sweden) in the BSSSC Board, also in the field of youth co-operation. New web page is under construction and there is a need to update information regarding every country. A contact will be taken via Board Civils where input from each country is demanded from ENCN. Discussions on youth co-operation with UBC and ERB have already started - and will be continued. Cooperation agreement with Committee of Regions is due at the end of the year and should be renewed.*

***Ms. Saeternes** expressed hope of comments and suggestions to the draft work plan, so a more concrete and final proposal could be prepared for the next meeting. Teamwork is needed and the board should express which areas each member wants to report on/take responsibility for.*

***Mr. Lipsanen** praised the work plan and said that it is well-balanced between ambition and realism and Häme Region will gladly support the ENCN chairmanship on the basis of this work plan. Häme region is ready to report on INTERREG programs.*

***Mr. Magier** added that Euroregion Baltic are willing to continue co-operation and youth affairs and environmental issues are important for them. Mr. Magier will ask the willingness of Swedish Presidency for a meeting between the boards of BSSSC and Euroregion Baltic.*

*Mr. Tilk and Ms. Niits will inform afterwards on what Estonia is prepared to report on.*

*Ms. Wroblewska informed that Pomerania can take responsibility on the communication project.*

***Ms. Wroblewska** also expressed that Pomerania was very pleased with ENCN draft work plan, especially on the idea of not competing but complementing other organisations, and were ready to give free hands for ENCN to continue working on with the draft work plan.*

***Mr. Tamminen** added that HELCOM should be added to co-operation organisations and Helsinki-*



Uusimaa can report on CPMR Baltic Sea Commission and HELCOM. Mr. Tamminen also asked more time for comments on the work plan since BSSSC Finnish Delegation will hold a meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was agreed that deadline for comments on the ENCN's draft work plan is December 6<sup>th</sup>. On the basis of comments ENCN will continue to work on with a more detailed work plan that will presented and hopefully adopted in the next board meeting. There can be minor changes at the next board meeting, but not a complete rewrite.

**6. Interreg BSR 2<sup>nd</sup> call - Possible projects to be supported, presentation by Ms. Saeternes.**

**Ms. Saeternes** presented proposals on concrete projects that BSSSC could support as an associated partner. **Mr. Musiolik** had suggested two cultural projects on Creative Ports and Maritime Cultural Heritage. It was agreed that Schleswig-Holstein drafts a support letter for these. Otherwise it was harder to find projects in the 2<sup>nd</sup> call in line with BSSSC's policy sectors and field of work. **Ms. Saeternes** came up with two projects to support in field of bio-economy and smart specialisation. Three ongoing projects on transport are already supported by the BSSSC.

**Mr. Lipsanen** said that he would be happy to see a handful of projects with BSSSC's support. Häme region did not have any new proposals, but were ready to support **Ms. Saeternes'** proposals as was Helsinki-Uusimaa. **Ms. Saeternes'** proposal for projects to be supported was accepted.

**7. Preparations for the EU Council presidencies of Estonia (Jul-Dec 2017) and Finland (Jul-Dec 2019) and to the Arctic Council Chairmanship of Finland (2017-2019)**

**Mr. Tilk** told that Estonia got the presidency so early unexpectedly, they are working hard on preparations but there is not much to tell at the moment. Estonia will report as soon as there is something to tell, at the next board meeting at latest.

**Mr. Tamminen** reported that Finnish government is also preparing for the EU presidency. Finnish Presidency will see through many important decisions, especially on the post 2020 –cohesion policy and the financial framework. **Mr. Tamminen** continued that Finnish Arctic Council Presidency starts in May 2017. Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has promised information at the start of next year.





*Ms. Saeternes added that Norway will hold the chairmanship of Nordic Council of Ministers in 2017 and ENCN wants BSSSC to co-operate with the chairmanship.*

**8. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - EUSBSR Annual Forum 2016, 8-9 November - the preparation for the EUSBSR forum**

*Ms. Saeternes described the BSSSC workshop on youth affairs called 'Nothing about us without us' which was prepared in cooperation with UBC and Euroregion Baltic. Mr. Magier added that Euroregion Baltic hopes that a young person from the workshop to be present on the closing plenary session of EUSBSR and that the message of the workshop should be published after the EUSBSR forum.*

*Board agreed that ENCN can go forward with the workshop as planned.*

*Mr. Tamminen added that BSSSC is also represented by the Secretary-General on a different workshop on Wednesday, November 9th.*

**9. BSSSC Board meetings 2016 – 2017 and Annual Conference 2017**

February 7-9, Brussels (tbc) – *Mr. Ryberg declared that the key topic of the next meeting will be cohesion policy. The exact date for the meeting (either 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>) will be confirmed as soon as possible.*

May 11-12, 2017, Saaremaa, Estonia (tbc) – *Saaremaa will let the board know if they can organize a meeting in May.*

25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, September 2017, Brandenburg (tbc?) – *Mr. Kneifel-Haverkemp will look into the possibility of organising the AC in Brandenburg. There is no political decision on it yet. It needs to be further investigated if it is possible within the 2017 budget. Brandenburg can make the decision before February board meeting. Mr. Kneifel-Haverkemp also added that the proposed dates of 27-29 September were not possible and if the AC is held in Brandenburg it should be one week earlier (20 - 22 September).*

December 11-12, Copenhagen (tbc) - *Mr. Ryberg added that the ENCN Chairmanship wants to organize a meeting in Copenhagen, because they want to involve Danes into the BSSSC.*

March 2018, Sweden (tbc)

June 2018, Kaliningrad (tbc)



26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, September-October 2018, Lithuania (tbc)  
December 2018, Brussels (tbc)

## 10. Coming events

Informal Baltic Sea Group seminar, 16 November, Brussels, Belgium

VASAB MSP Seminar, 23-24 November, Riga, Latvia

XI Annual International Conference «Cross-border Cooperation: the Russian Federation, the European Union and Norway», 25 November 2016, Petrozavodsk, Russia

- **Mr Tamminen** added that it is difficult to travel to the location but conference otherwise would be interesting.

European Maritime Days, 18-19 May 2017, Poole, UK

- **Mr. Tamminen** stressed that Maritime Days are important for all who are interested in Maritime Affairs.

CPMR Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly, 12 June 2017, Berlin, Germany

EUSBSR 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum, 13-14 June 2017, Berlin

Ten-T –days, June 2017, Brussels

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, September 3-5 2017, Hamburg

European Week of Regions and Cities, 9-12 October 2017, Brussels

CPMR General Assembly, 18-20 October 2017, Helsinki, Finland

UBC General Conference 24-27 October 2017, Växjö, Sweden

EUSBSR 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum 6-8 June 2018, Tallinn, Estonia

## 11. Any other business

**Mr. Martins** invited BSSSC to attend meeting on youth events in Berlin on January 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Tamminen** reported that BSSSC Secretariat sent a congratulatory letter to the new governor of Kaliningrad oblast from the recommendation of **Ms. Wroblewska**. The Secretariat has not yet received an answer.

**Mr. Kiemunki** announced that he has received a civil servant position as a communications director of



the Hospital Region of Häme. **Mr. Kiemunki** will stay in the board until the municipality elections next April. **Mr. Lipsanen** added that Häme region is ready to have its board membership until the next AC and **Mr. Kiemunki** has the full support to stay in board until that. The successor of **Mr. Kiemunki** in regional board will be current MP and former minister **Ms. Tarja Filatov**. **Ms. Filatov** needs to be consulted if she wants to take **Mr. Kiemunki's** position in the board, but **Mr. Kiemunki** was doubtful about this.

**Mr. Savolainen** wished Merry Christmas and Happy New Year for everyone and closed the meeting.

**18.35 End of the Board meeting**