



Present:

Mr Olgierd Geblewicz (PL), Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek (PL), Mr Stefan Herms (DE), Ms Birgit Küstner (DE), Ms Ann Irene Sæternes (N), Mr Ivar Haug (N), Tom E.B. Holthe (N), Mr Oddvar Skaiaa (N), Mr Stefan Musiolik (DE), Ms Marlene Rothe (DE), Mr Toivo Riimaa (EE), Mr Arne Tilk (EE), Ms Ulle Erman (EE), Mr Louis Hansen (DK), Ms Anne Mette Bæk Jespersen (DK), Mr Knud Andersen (DK), Mr Uno Aldegren (S), Mr Jan Prahm (DE), Mr Esko Lotvonen (FI), Mr Ossi Savolainen (FI), Ms Liana Maximova (RU), Mr Pawel Maciejewski (PL), Ms Magdalena Aniśko (PL), Mr Sebastian Gojdz (PL), Mr Krzysztof Barczyk (PL), Mr Paweł Grządko (PL), Ms Ingrid Klemp (N).

1. Opening of the Board Meeting

On behalf of the host region, Eastern Norway County Network, Mr Tom E. B. Holthe welcomed the BSSSC Board to Oslo and gave brief information about the cooperation and activities of the Eastern Norway County Network in the Baltic Sea Region.

Mr Olgierd Geblewicz, BSSSC Chairman, welcomed the BSSSC Board and opened the meeting.

Mr Stefan Musiolik noted in the agenda the lack of a point concerning the Baltic Sea Region Programme. Ms Ann Irene Sæternes, the BSSSC Rapporteur on the BSR Programme, explained that it was agreed with the BSSSC Secretariat not to place this point in the agenda, as since the last BSSSC Board meeting in Hamburg there has been nothing new to deliver to the Board..

The Board adopted the meeting agenda and the minutes of the BSSSC Board meeting in Hamburg on 27 January 2011.

2. Adoption of the Work Plan 2011-2012

Mr Esko Lotvonen pointed out that nowadays fishing principles are important issues for Northern Europe and remarked that the BSSSC Work Plan should include this issue in the field of sustainable development.

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek explained that the work plan contains only guidelines in this priority area because the Westpomeranian Region can not take full responsibility in this aspect. Ms Ludwiczek informed that the BSSSC Work Plan can be updated anytime and new projects and issues can be added.

Mr Stefan Herms informed the Board that Hamburg is willing to remain their Rapporteur on Baltex and Regional Representative in the Expert Group on Sustainable Development - Baltic 21.

Mr Oddvar Skaiaa marked some language mistakes in the document which should be corrected by the Secretariat.

The BSSSC Board adopted the Work Plan for 2011 and 2012.



3. Follow-up Work Plan 2011-2012

3.1 Cohesion policy

Mr Knud Andersen, BSSSC Rapporteur on Cohesion Policy, presented to the Board a brief outline of recent developments concerning the EU budget for the post-2013 cohesion policy. Mr Andersen stressed the importance of the 5th Cohesion Forum which took place in Brussels between January 31st and February 1st with more than 800 representatives from all EU member states. The BSSSC Rapporteur on Cohesion Policy informed the Board that it is now an important time to talk about and work on the future EU budget. Mr Andersen underlined that intensive lobbying concerning the future EU budget is currently taking place in Brussels especially involving the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Committee of Regions. In the beginning of April the Committee of Regions will adopt its position on the EU budget and on the 5th Cohesion Report. The European Parliament will adopt its position at the beginning of June. The EU budget and the regulations will be negotiated and agreed in parallel to 2011 and 2012.

Mr Stefan Herms informed that the joint representation of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein in Brussels in cooperation with DG Regio is preparing a round table on cohesion policy. The event will probably take place in May and will round up of all the bilateral discussions of Commissioner Hahn. Representatives of the regional offices of the BSSSC member regions should be invited to this working conference in Brussels.

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek proposed to continued working together via e-mail in the field of cohesion policy and to make an effort to update a common position paper of the BSSSC concerning the post 2013 cohesion policy.

Mr Knud Andersen admitted that there is a need to cooperate in the field of cohesion policy. However, in the previous ad hoc working group on cohesion policy only few regions participated actively. Mr Andersen stressed that such cooperation is worth considering only when all regions get involved in the work.

Ms Ann Irene Sæternes underlined that it is necessary to get in contact especially with Lithuania and Lotvia, which have not been present at the BSSSC Board meetings for very long time.

After discussion, the Board agreed that there is a need for updating the BSSSC position paper on cohesion policy on the basis of the existing position paper from October 2010, as it is a very useful tool of informing other networks and institutions about the BSSSC point of view. The updated version of the paper will be presented at the end of the 19th BSSSC Annual Conference as a reaction to the European Commission report in June 2011.

Ms Sæternes asked the Secretariat for information about the meetings concerning cohesion policy and the new EU budget. Mr Herms informed that the Hanse Office in Brussels is preparing such a list and promised to provide to the Secretariat a list with the relevant meetings, which shall be distributed later on among BSSSC Board members.

3.2 EU Baltic Sea Strategy

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek proposed to create a BSSSC position paper concerning EUSBSR, which will be based on the opinions and reflections of Board members, on the current status of the implementation of the EUSBSR. The aim of the paper is not only to present to the European Commission the position of the BSSSC towards the strategy, but it will be a good foundation for further discussion during the BSSSC Annual Conference in October 2011.



The Board agreed to create the position paper concerning EUSBSR which will present the common point of view of BSSSC member regions. The answers to the questionnaire should be submitted to the BSSSC Secretariat by 31st March 2011. The draft paper will be sent out to BSSSC members via e-mail and the final decision concerning the document will be made during next BSSSC Board meeting on 18th May 2011.

3.3 Maritime policy

Mr Stefan Musiolik informed the Board that cooperation between the BSSSC maritime working group and maritime working groups of CBSS and BSPC is doing well. Those three working groups will have a joint event during the European Maritime Day on 20th May, which will include the presentation of those three groups and a panel discussion on the topic: "The development of the Baltic Sea Region into Europe's best practice region". On May 20th there will be also a meeting of the BSSSC, CBSS and BSPC working groups on Maritime policy.

Ms Ann Irene Sæternes gave very positive feedback from a conference in the North Sea Region held in the Netherlands on 9 – 10 March. Here Mr. Haitze Siemers from DG Mare emphasized the cooperation between governments, parliamentarians and regional authorities in the Baltic Sea Region, and he especially mentioned the joint workshop planed by CBSS, BSPC and BSSSC for the European Maritime Day in Gdansk. This joint work was put forward as a best practice example of maritime governance.

3.4 Climate policies and energy security

Ms Birgit Küstner presented to the Board information about the cooperation with Baltex, which is currently concentrated on the joint BSSSC – Baltex Conference on Adapting to Climate Change, which will take place on 31st May 2011 in Hamburg. The aim of the conference is to give practitioners and decision makers from the regional and political level a platform to present and discuss concrete examples of the regional and local adaptation to climate change. Ms Küstner on behalf of the organizers kindly invited Mr Chairman O.Geblewicz to deliver a speech during the conference opening session. Ms Küstner discussed in detail the conference programme and informed that during the conference 8 case studies from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Germany will be presented. The conference will end up with the adoption of the conference declaration. BSSSC Board members are invited to participate in the conference.

3.5 Science and Education

Mr Stefan Herms gave a short report on the recent developments in the priority of education, especially in the area of science and schools. In reference to the area of science Mr Herms mentioned the Baltic Univeristy Programme (BUP), which is a network of 225 universities and other institutes of higher learning throughout the Baltic Sea Region. The BUP aims to foster cooperation between universities and regional and local governments The BUP concentrates on environmental protection and sustainable development. Mr Herms informed the Board that for the Baltic Science Link project an INTERREG application is being prepared and project partners will try to reach the last funding of the programming period.

In the field of schools, a network of 16 schools has been established. The partners come from the Baltic Sea area and the cooperation is based on the exchange of pupils, teachers, experiences and educational tools.. The last item Mr Herms presented was the idea of the conference which is being prepared by the Hamburg Ministry of Education and will mostly concentrate on the topic of vocational training. The conference is planned for the beginning of the next year and this is the prolongation of the planning process as a result of the political changes in the ministry.



3.6 Youth

Mr Pawel Grzadko: The youth group has been very active and highly motivated. He gave a short report about what has been done since XVIII BSSSC Annual Conference in Tallinn: youngsters from Germany, Poland, Estonia and Norway were invited by the Baltic Sea Conference group for Youth Affairs to a 2-day conference, which was organized on a ferry on the route from Kiel to Oslo. The discussion was mainly devoted to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The authorities of the Mecklenburg Vorpommern invited young people at the end of March to Greifswald, to debate the BSSSC Youth Work Plan for 2011 and also to the film competition which is planned to be launched in May. Another point of discussion was a new website for the youth group and future plans. The meeting was coordinated by Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek from the Youth Secretariat of the Westpomeranian Region. In closing, Mr Grzadko informed the Board about the upcoming youth event organized side-by-side with the XIX BSSSC Annual Conference and about the concept of the upcoming youth conference. It will start on 3rd October and will last until the end of the main conference in order to give the youngsters the possibility to participate in the entire event. As the previous conference was devoted to the labor market in the BSR, especially the unemployment rate among young people, this year's edition will cover the topic of voluntary service – 2011 is the European Year of Volunteering. On behalf of all the youth group he expressed his wish to invite professionals, NGOs' representatives and politicians. He also mentioned the request by the Assembly of the European Regions, regarding the participation of 2 representatives of the BSSSC youth group in the assembly. She asked the Board about permission to participate in the AER conference which will be held in France in April 2011. The BSSSC Board accepted the request.

Ms Ingrid Klemp from Norway gave a brief overview on the co-operation between the youth expert group of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBBS) and the BSSSC working group on youth policy, indicating the need of strengthening relations. She informed that before this meeting she had spoken with the CBBS CSO about the potential of co-operation, wishing to organize the joint event of young representatives from other Baltic organisations which are still under the Norwegian presidency in the CBBS.

Mr Oddvar Skaiaa said that he is impressed by the activities taken by the youth group, indicating that the activity is even higher than in other groups. He also confirmed approval of the request concerning the participation in the AER. At the end Mr Grzadko invited all the Board members to the youth event and added that after the planned meeting in Greifswald he will distribute pictures showing the recent youth group's work.

3.7 Co-operation with Russia

Mr Stefan Herms presented three main topics of development in this area: the active participation of the Kaliningrad region in the TransBaltic project (namely: Baltic Fleet State Fishing Academy as a partner of this project). Then he pointed out some difficulties in co-operation, namely financial.

He underlined the good example of the active participation of the Kaliningrad Region in the Cool Brick project co-ordinated by the Ministry of Heritage and Environment in Hamburg. He also informed about the very recent developments in the area of potential co-operation within EU structures - DG Regio approached Hamburg recently to consider the possible triple-side agreement between Hamburg, St. Petersburg and Turku. This



model of co-operation gives an opportunity to cover areas directly related to the EU Strategy for BSR. The European Commission will promote examples of good co-operation with Russia in this particular matter creating a so called two-track strategy where the first channel is Moscow and second one the Baltic regions. On this occasion he also mentioned the conference which is planned to take place in April in St. Petersburg. He also informed that a day before, during the meeting with the CBSS CSO he spoke with the Russian representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about developing the co-operation during the upcoming Russian presidency in the Council. He proposed a back-to-back conference in this period.

Ms Liana Maximova from the Kaliningrad Region commented on this saying that, however optimistic this may sound for St. Petersburg, it does not have to be the same for Kaliningrad. She underlined the great role of the BSR Programme in last 2 years, where in some of its projects Kaliningrad is an associated partner. She is looking forward to the new programming period. She also pointed out some difficulties in co-operation with local authorities and companies and institutions in Russia, while the regional co-operation is on a much higher level. She recalled active relations with Lithuania.

Mr Herms was grateful for this contribution, mentioning that the cohesion policy funds should cover the Baltic Sea region in terms of the entire area, to include Russia financially in projects. He suggested that this could be a political issue for the BSSSC.

Esko Lotvonen recalled the discussion with Commissioner Johannes Hahn and Mr Dirk Ahner from DG Regio pointing out the existing difficulties in implementing the available programmes.

Ms Ann Irene Saeternes mentioned the role of the BSR Programme especially in terms of co-operation with Russian partners. She underlined the issue of transferring the money to the Russian side within the project. She proposed that Russia should be hosting the BSSSC Annual Conference in 2013.

3.8 Northern Dimension

Ms Ann Irene Saeternes declared that she will continue to cover the topic within the organization. She asked for any proposals for the upcoming meeting of Senior Officials which will take place probably in 2011. Mr Lotvonen recalled the ND Ministerial Meeting which was held in November last year. He mentioned the development in areas of culture, public health, environment and transportation. Concerning the last one, he underlined the fact of signing an agreement with Russia. He mentioned that Norway took over the presidency of the ND Transport Partnership recently.

Chairman Geblewicz gave thanks for the contribution and the declaration.

3.9 Transport and infrastructure

Uno Aldegren: there are no new developments in this area. He mentioned the TransBaltic conference which will be held in Sweden in May. Ms Ludwiczek said that the Secretariat received an invitation for this event. Mr Andegren was asked to participate, unfortunately he will be not able to participate this time.



4. Annual Conferences

4.1 BSSSC Annual Conference in 2012 in Norway

Mr Tom Holthe informed that since the last meeting in Hamburg there have been no larger developments in this matter. There is an internal meeting scheduled for April, so at the next Board meeting in May he will give feedback.

4.2 BSSSC Annual Conference in Szczecin in 2011

At the beginning of this point Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek mentioned the additional, working meeting of the BSSSC board, organized a day before the Board meeting, it was fully devoted to the conference's agenda. She presented the draft programme indicating the blanks and question marks upon particular parts. She added that the programme in this shape is a proposal and that it is open for discussion. She asked the Board for proposals and concrete contributions: recommendations for speakers and coordinators of the particular sessions.

She presented some practical information: registration will be open from 16th May (as an online form) until mid-September. She proposed the fee: 100 Euros for so called "early birds" and 150 Euros in the later stages. The Board accepted this proposition.

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek gave a presentation in order to go over the conference's programme. She proposed the Danish representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for session no. 2 – the debate on cohesion policy.

Ms Birgit Kuestner: informed that at this time the CBSS will be chaired by Germany, so in advance we can make a correction in the programme.

The idea of inviting the Russian representative situated in Brussels to the debate appeared also at the working meeting. Mr Herms said that he spoke to the Russian CSO, who seems to be a good contact in this matter.

Ms Ludwiczek at this point asked the Board members to take over this session. As there was no response, it was decided that the eventual propositions will be sent by e-mail.

On the working meeting Mr Herms proposed that the 2nd workshop should be concentrated more on the issue of co-operation between cities and rural areas. Regarding to the 3rd workshop, Ms Ludwiczek addressed the Board with a request of appointing a good coordinator. The propositions will be sent by e-mail later on.

Ms Ludwiczek presented the idea for a session which should sum up the workshops. Its form should give the chance for an open discussion (also with the audience), instead of giving just dry reports. The 5th session (on financing) should be a panel discussion of the heads of all programmes which will give a general summary and recommendations for the new programming period. Schleswig-Holstein declared to co-ordinate this session.

Session 6 should also have the form of an active, seated debate. Ms Ludwiczek presenting the proposal of the speakers and underlined the need of the participation of the representatives of the regions. This session should also include a debate on the questionnaire which was elaborated by regions.



Ms Ludwiczek informed also about the contest for the best movie organized by the youth group from all over the Baltic regions. The results will be announced at the end of the conference and the winners will be awarded.

At the end Ms Ludwiczek gave some practical hints: we will arrange a bus to pick up the Board members from Berlin's airports on 5th October and there will be shuttle buses for the participants after the conference on 7th October.

Mr Knud Andersen asked what does it mean to be a coordinator of a session. Ms Ludwiczek answered that like in Zealand, it is a matter of finding the way to reach a speakers and arrange them. She ensured about the support of the secretariat. If a Chairman's signature is needed, the secretariat will provide it.

Mr Andersen gave an overall comment on the program. He said that he will inform the secretariat if the Danish regions will take over session 6. At this time he said, he can't promise it. Mr Herms recommended that the Finish regions should coordinate the 3rd workshop, as an upcoming chairing region. Mr Ossi Savolainen from the Uusimaa region promised to consider this option and to inform the secretariat.

5. Brussels Antenna

Mr Gojdz presented the first issue of the BSSSC Brussels Antenna newsletter and distributed it among the members. He informed about the conference organized by the polish regions devoted to the EU Strategy For The Baltic Sea Region which is planned to take place in Brussels, in November within the Polish Presidency of Council of the European Union. He asked the Board for contribution to the event's programme. After talking to Knud Andersen, they agreed that Mr Andersen will represent the BSSSC in panel discussion.

Later on Mr Gojdz recalled recent events held in Brussels strictly related to Baltic issues: the 5th Cohesion Forum, the TEN-T conference and informed about the upcoming: Informal Baltic Sea Group's Summer Reception on 15th June, between 11th and 15th of April there will be Sustainable Energy Week in Brussels.

6. Reports form meeting and events

None

7. Coming events

Ms Ludwiczek presented some of the events which will take place in the nearest future: TransBaltic conference on 11th May, the BALTEX / BSSSC conference in Hamburg on 31st May. She encouraged everyone once again to follow the calendar on the website.



8. BSSSC Board meetings in 2011

Ms Ludwiczek on behalf of the BSSSC Secretariat informed that registration for the meeting in Gdańsk is already available on the website. The date of the meeting is 18 May, as it was agreed before.

Traditionally, the autumn's meeting will be organized together with the Annual Conference (5th October in Szczecin). The last Board meeting in 2011 will be held in Brussels. Mr Gojdz informed about the conference on 30th November and suggested to organize the BSSSC Board meeting right after it, so on 1st December.

Esko Lotvonen informed that the Lapland region is open for discussion about the organization of the first meeting in 2012 in Rovaniemi.

9. Any other business

None