



BSSSC BOARD MEETING  
September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

MINUTES

**Date:** 29 September 2020

**Online meeting**

**10:00 – 14:00**

**Present:**

**Board Members:** Mr Ossi Savolainen (Regional Mayor of Uusimaa Regional Council, Finland), Ms Sari Rautio (Vice - Chairperson of the Managing Board Regional Council of Häme, Finland), Ms Venla Hatakka (BSSSC Youth Board Member, Häme Region, Finland), Mr Stefan Musiolik (Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection of Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), Mr Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp (Brandenburg Ministry of Finance and for European Affairs, Germany), Ms Agnes Lusti (BSSSC Youth Board Member, Østlandsamarbeidet, Norway), Mr Ričards Gailums (Vidzeme Planning Region Development Council, Latvia), Mr Mięczysław Struk (BSSSC Chairman - Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship, Poland), Ms Alla Ivanova (Agency for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation of the Kaliningrad Region, Russia), Mr Ilmar Reepalu (Region Skåne, Sweden), Ms Elin Malm (Region Skåne, Sweden).

**Board Civil:** Ms Krista Taipale (Head of International Affairs, Helsinki EU Office, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, Finland), Mr Matti Lipsanen (Director of Regional Development Regional Council of Häme, Finland), Mr Janne Tamminen (International Advisor Uusimaa Regional Council, Finland), Ms Marlene Rothe (Senior advisor Baltic Sea Affairs - Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), Mr Christopher Lucht (BSSSC Youth Coordinator - Brandenburg, Germany), Ms Ann Irene Sæternes (Head of European Affairs, Eastern Norway County Network), Mr Jon Halvard Eide (Vest - Agder County), Ms Klaudija Kionies (Managing Director of the Association *Klaipeda Region*, Lithuania)

**Special guests:** Mr Bernd Hemingway (the Council of the Baltic Sea States), Ms Aline Mayr, (Project Assistant for Regional Identity) Council of the Baltic Sea States, Ms Lucille Ehrhart (CPMR Baltic Sea Commission - Executive Secretary), Mr Marko Paunovic (Union of the Baltic Cities - UBC HA Capacity Coordinator), Mr Bodo Bahr (BSPC Conference).

**Others:** Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło (Head of the ERB International Permanent Secretariat), Ms Monika Pochroń-Frankowska (Head of the International Cooperation Bureau, Pomorskie Marshal's Office, Poland), Ms Julia Orluk (BSSSC Youth Board delegate from Pomorskie, Poland).

**Secretariat:** BSSSC Secretariat (Ms Krystyna Wróblewska - BSSSC Secretary General, Head of the Baltic Sea Cooperation Bureau - Pomorskie Region, Poland, Ms Małgorzata Maria Klawiter-Piwowska - BSSSC Executive Secretary, Ms Marta Czarnecka – Gallas - BSSSC Communication Officer, Ms Agata Birecka), Ms Anna Drażek (BSSSC Brussels Antenna, Director of the Pomorskie Regional EU Office in Brussels, Poland).





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## Digital BSSSC Board meeting Minutes

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### 1. Opening of the Board meeting

1.1. Opening of the meeting – Mr Mieczysław Struk, BSSSC Chairman

**Mr Struk** welcomed the BSSSC Board Members gathered online. He expressed his gratitude for the input received from the Board Members to the Board meeting. Mr Chairman welcomed special guests from the Baltic organisations.

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska** provided short technical instructions for the meeting.

1.2. Adoption of the agenda

**Mr Chairman** asked the Board Members to approve the online meeting agenda.

**The Agenda was adopted.**

1.3. Adoption of the minutes from the Board Meeting in Brussels, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The minutes of the BSSSC Board Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were presented. As there were no comments, BSSSC Chairman asked the Board Members to adopt the minutes.

**The Minutes were adopted.**

### 2. BSSSC Annual Conference

Referring to the Annual Conference, **Mr Chairman** underlined that it was a great pity that it was not possible to meet in person in Kaliningrad as planned. Mr Mieczysław Struk thanked everybody involved in the organisation of the Annual Conference, especially the Work Group responsible for preparations and the Secretariat. The floor was given to **Ms Wróblewska**.

2.1. Final information on the conference – Ms Krystyna Wróblewska

**Ms Wróblewska** provided information on the conference technicalities and the program and presented the main speakers. Ms Krystyna Wróblewska encouraged the Board Members to visit virtual booths imitating real exhibitions staged on the HOPIN.TO platform. Youth input to the Conference in the form of the three-day Autumn Youth Event was mentioned too. Ms Wróblewska thanked also Mr Lucht, for his involvement in the organisation of the event.





**Ms Secretary General** gave the floor to the Board Members responsible for break - out sessions during the Annual Conference.

#### 2.1.1. Culture and BSR Identity by Schleswig-Holstein

**Mr Stefan Musiolik** welcomed the Board participants. He said the program was high ranking and introduced the Board Members to the session on culture. The session will take place at 2.30 pm and it is called *Baltic Sea Culture Cities- connecting citizens and cities through culture*. It refers to a project developed under the leadership of the CBSS. Mr Stefan Musiolik expressed his gratitude to Ms K. Williams for agreeing to act as a speaker and a moderator. The aim of the project was presented as *possibilities for cities and regions and discussion for the development perspectives*. Mr Stefan Musiolik invited the Board meeting participants to join the session. He referred also to the session on the culture within the BSSC Autumn Youth Event. He said that he appreciated strong youth commitment, in particular to those coming from Schleswig - Holstein and Kaliningrad region.

#### 2.1.2. State of the Baltic Sea – Plastic Free Sea by Häme

**Ms Rautio** welcomed everybody and reported on the session on plastic free sea. She thanked the Kaliningrad youth for their video – message. She mentioned that the session would consist of presentations by two companies, involved in sustainable business without use of plastic. Another panelist would be Ms M. Drewnowska (*FanPLESSic – sea project*) as well as Mr Ali Harlin (*VTTresearch*). Ms Sari Rautio stated that the most appreciated part for her would be the involvement of the youth.

#### 2.1.3. Intelligent Transport and Mobility by ENCN & Agder

**Ms Ann Irene Sæternes** reported on the transport session on behalf of Mr Jon Halvard Eide. She said that the session had been supported by Eastern Norway County. The session will present the sharing of good practices of projects across the sea, perspectives for the future and finally possibilities within the new programming of Interreg 2021 – 2027.

#### 2.1.4. Circular Economy – Pomorskie & Vidzeme

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska** reported on the circular economy session. Ms Secretary General thanked Ms Santa Vitola and Ms Laila Gercane from Vidzeme Planning Region for their efforts and smooth cooperation. She expressed also her gratitude to Ms Ann Irene Sæternes for her suggestions given on the session. She added that the main focus would be on the fashion industry.

**Mr Chairman** thanked the Board Members and the Secretariat for putting up the programme together and choosing to be involved in the Conference. He said that he hoped it would be interesting for the participants and the outcome would be used in further discussions, e. g.





during the EUSBSR Forum on October 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr Mieczysław Struk encouraged the Board Members to visit digital exhibitions during the breaks. He suggested to proceed to the point on the Conference Resolution. The floor was given to Ms Secretary General.

## 2.2. Conference resolution 2020 – Ms Krystyna Wróblewska

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska** thanked the Board Members for their input to the Resolution. She informed on the drafting procedure of the Conference Resolution 2020. The drafting process had been conducted via on-line communication.

Discussion on the shape of the BSSC Resolution followed with several changes agreed on and introduced. As there were still some minor doubts and differences it was decided that work on the final shape would follow in an online mode and the final text would be adopted via email after the conference.

## 2.4. EUSBSR- the New Action Plan- what has changed? – Ms Marta Czarnecka - Gallas

**Mr Mieczysław Struk** asked Ms Marta Czarnecka – Gallas to report on recent developments of the revision process of the EUSBSR Action Plan. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

**Ms Czarnecka - Gallas** reminded that the EUSBSR Action Plan had been agreed preliminary by the NCG on July 6<sup>th</sup> and it should be adopted until October 2020. Ms Marta Czarnecka - Gallas presented the main principles of the new document as follows: 1) Streamlining the policy areas and play them in a strategic context, 2) Seeking to connect policy areas more with SDGs, 3) mainstreaming climate change aspects and cooperation with neighbours into all 14 PAs, 4) focusing on embedding EUSBSR with EU policies & funding programmes, 5) aiming at empowering the stakeholders and increasing ownership of the EUSBSR by setting clear rules and responsibilities, 6) establishing Baltic Strategic Point.

In the new document the three Strategy objectives were maintained: 1) Save the sea, 2) Connect the region and 3) Increase prosperity. Ms Czarnecka – Gallas informed that there were now 14 Policy Areas instead of former 13. The new one is PA Spatial Planning. There are no HAs any more. HA Neighbours and Climate shall be incorporated into the other PAs and HA Capacity falls into the Baltic Strategy Point to be established. The total number of Actions has been reduced from 73 to 44.

**Ms Czarnecka - Gallas** presented a quick review of the management structure of the revised Strategy. She underlined that the most important issue there was clear responsibilities set between the National Coordinators Group (NCG) - core decision-making body, the Steering Group (SG) - a cooperation body at PA level as well as Policy Area Coordinators (PAC) as a key operational stakeholder at PA level and High - level Group (HLG). The EU Commission was presented as a coordinating and advisory body. Ms Marta Czarnecka - Gallas informed that the Baltic Sea Strategy Point was going to be established in the form of an Interreg BSR project





as a supporting structure, guided by NCG. The process of establishing will be based on open competition. In the transition period, the project *Let's communicate* will serve as a secretariat for the Baltic Sea Strategy Point.

**Ms Marta Czarnecka - Gallas** stated that the New Action Plan was more compact because of the better division of labour, reduced overlaps and being build up on synergies. She added that it was more result-oriented and more embedded with European Union policies and funding programmes. She stated that establishment of the Baltic Sea Strategy Point aimed at introducing more coordination within the EUSBSR. Ms Czarnecka - Gallas expressed her hope that all the new developments included in the New Action Plan would move the BSR cooperation to the next level.

**Mr Stefan Musiolik** thanked for the presentation and drew the attention to the Baltic Sea Strategy Point as a better backup for the EUSBSR for the future.

**Mr Chairman** asked Mr Matti Lipsanen for update on Interreg programming. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

2.5. Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme - state of programming the next financial period – Mr Matti Lipsanen

**Mr Matti Lipsanen** thanked for the invitation and briefed on the Interreg next financial period. He informed that the Joint Programming Committee had met in June. Public consultations and survey among EUSBSR coordinators had been opened between July and September. A preliminary analysis of the results had been presented the previous week. Mr Matti Lipsanen said that the next JPC meeting was planned for December. A schedule for 2021 was presented as well. Programme approval and kickoff events would take place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2021. The first application round would be at the end of 2021. First financing decisions and first project activities could take place in early 2022. Mr Lipsanen informed that the agreement on CP content would be in two months.

**Mr Matti Lipsanen** presented four Programmes' Statements: 1) Supporting transition; 2) Customer orientation; 3) Flexible content; 4) Transfer of knowledge and capacity building. The Programme Objective was shaped as *transnational cooperation facilitates the transition of the Baltic Sea Region to cleaner, climate - neutral and a better place to live for all citizens.*

**Mr Lipsanen** presented also Programme topics 2021-2027 and preliminary results for open consultations. He said that feedback had been received not only from all BSR countries, but also from Italy and Romania. Most answers had come from Poland, Germany, Finland, Lithuania and Sweden. The highest number of feedback had come from higher education, research institution, regional, local and national public authority, interest groups including NGOs as well as a business support organisation. The topics relevant for the participants are more innovative and resilient economies and societies, green and intelligent transport





and mobility, circular economy. Five actions have particularly high relevance for the future programme: piloting actions strengthening societal resilience, supporting public authorities in developing, testing, and deploying multimodal transport, developing models reducing the dependency of the BSR on global security chains, exploring solutions enabling services and products in the BSR to scale and shrink.

Main conclusions of Task Force meeting from September 24<sup>th</sup> were presented as 1) support to the EUSBSR governance, 2) next steps on small projects, 3) simplified cost options, 4) future management, audit and control system.

**Mr Stefan Musiolik** thanked for the presentation and stated that there was support for small projects facilities. He underlined that PA culture had contributed to the consultations. The aim had been to pick up the topics relevant for culture. Culture is a cross - sectoral topic which is important for other fields e. g. innovation, public administration. Mr Stefan Musiolik expressed his hope that *culture and creative industries* would not be forgotten in the upcoming Interreg Programme.

**Mr Matti Lipsanen** said that the culture sector and creative businesses had suffered from the COVID-19 crisis. He underlined also that the Position paper of the BSSC on culture was very visible among the Programme preparation materials.

**Ms Musiolik** thanked for kind words and expressed his gratitude to Mr Struk for the letter to the JPC Chair supporting the line of Priority no. 1 to further cultural activities in the next Interreg funding period.

**Ms Krista Taipale** thanked Mr Matti Lipsanen for his presentation. She said she was looking forward to the Interreg Programme being launched. Ms Krista Taipale expressed her support for small project facilities. She asked Mr Matti Lipsanen what was the size of consortiums by small project facilities. She added that culture just like tourism was very hit by the COVID-19 crisis. She underlined that culture, creative industries and tourism could be funded by small project facilities.

Referring to the size of consortiums, **Mr Matti Lipsanen** said that partners of minimum three countries were welcomed.

### 3. Youth involvement and empowerment

**The Chairman** said that he appreciated the youth involvement and energy. He gave the floor to Ms Krystyna Wróblewska and Mr Christopher Lucht to share some more information on the so called local hubs that had been organised in Gdańsk, Brandenburg, and Kaliningrad as well as on the whole BSSC AYE.







3.1. Report from the local youth hubs and BSSSC AYE - Ms Krystyna Wróblewska, Mr Christopher Lucht

**Ms Wróblewska** thanked everybody for their contribution to the hubs and the BSSSC Autumn Youth Event. The floor was given to Mr Christopher Lucht the BSSSC Youth Coordinator.

**Mr Christopher Lucht** stated it had been a very intensive period. He thanked persons in Kiel involved in arranging the local hub. He said that the results of the events were satisfactory and there was a need to think about another form of more innovative ways of preparations. He mentioned that elections of the new Youth Board had been conducted. Mr Christopher Lucht thanked Ms Agnes Lusti for her commitment during the last two years.

**Ms Agnes Lusti** thanked for kind words and expressed her hope to be able to continue cooperation on the Baltic topics within the BSSSC.

3.2. CBSS Youth vision - status regarding the Baltic Sea Youth Platform & Baltic Sea Youth Camp - Ms Aline Mayr, Project Assistant for Regional Identity, Council of the Baltic Sea States

**Mr Mieczysław Struk** stated he was proud that the BSSSC is a partner of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform (BSYP). He asked Ms Aline Mayr from the CBSS to give a review on preparations for the Annual Forum of the EU Strategy the Baltic Sea Region.

The BSYP strives to empower young people to take part in the decision - making process on all levels in the Baltic Sea area. It was initiated by young visionaries in the BSR region. In this context, Ms Aline Mayr mentioned the name of Mr Martin Rümmelein, the BSSSC Youth Board Member.

**Ms Mayr** presented the history of the BSYP. The project idea appeared in 2018 as the result of Baltic Sea Youth Dialog. The BSYP partnership consisted of the CBSS, the BSSSC, the ERB, the UBC as well as ESN Finland, the Lithuanian Youth Council and other ca. 20 partners.

The aims of the BSYP are as follows: 1) systematic and overarching involvement of youth - youth shall be part of decision - making on all levels; 2) connect and boost youth organisations' activities-innovative projects and alliances will be supported by strong partners; 3) education of youth on various levels - youth will learn how to make political contributions.

The BSYP has launched a virtual platform called ACTER - a new digital collaboration platform for youth actors to organise, coordinate as well as collaborate to solve pressing environmental and societal challenges.

There are six Working Groups within BSYP : 1) advocacy; 2) power box; 3) research; 4) culture and cities; 5) communication and 6) IT.





**Ms Aline Mayr** shared information on forthcoming events: EUSBSR local youth events (05.10., 12.10.), EUSBSR common youth event (17.10.) and EUSBSR Annual Forum (20.10.).

**Mr Bodo Bahr** thanked for the presentation. He asked Ms Aline Mayr if she could inform how many people were permanently involved in the BSYP.

**Ms Aline Mayr** said that the BSYP gathered around 40 young people in six different Working Groups.

**Mr Ilmar Reepalu** shared the opinion that it was important to find young people who want to be involved in the Baltic topics. He said that Working Groups were a better way to engage the youth and spread their ideas or to cooperate with other young people.

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska** said that the youth issue, including BSYP would be discussed more in depth during the December BSSSC Board meeting. One of the topics would be how to encourage the youth from the member regions to get involved more effectively.

**Mr Musiolik** expressed his gratitude to Ms A. Mayr and Ms K. Williams for their excellent work for the sake of the Baltic Sea Region. He added that the BSYP was a very positive development and a consequence of the Baltic Sea Youth Camp (BSYC) organized in Gdańsk in 2019. In his opinion, cooperation between the CBSS and the BSSSC was very fruitful. He expressed however his doubts about sustainable funding of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform. He said it could be probably a topic for the BSPC.

**Mr Bodo Bahr** said it that what Mr Stefan Musiolik said was a crucial point . He informed that the BSPC had integrated young people in the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Forum. He said that the BSPC wanted to cooperate very closely with the BSSSC. He said that the BSPC had asked the governments to support the structure gathering young people. The main point was to get an agreement of all the governments to provide financial contributions. The situation must be stabilized. Mr Bodo Bahr noticed also that all the governments supported the initiative it in the BSPC Bornholm Declaration.

**Ms Czarnecka - Gallas** said that in the EUSBSR Action Plan and the new Baltic Sea Strategic Point was also an additional potential to lobby more for the youth involvement within the Strategy. There is an emphasis on the capacity building and the youth is mentioned there.

**Mr Lucht** thanked Ms Aline Mayr for her work within the CBSS. He said that the BSYP was a very efficient tool for youth cooperation and empowerment. He then t introduced Ms Julia Orluk as the newly elected Youth Member of the BSSSC Board. He welcomed Ms Julia Orluk to the BSSSC family.







### 3.3 Presentation of newly elected Youth Board Member – Ms Julia Orluk (Pomorskie Region)

**Ms Julia Orluk** introduced herself and shared the idea to create the Youth Dialogue Board consisting of the members of the BSSSC regions. Each region would have from 1 to 3 council members. Members of the council will be in contact with the youth representatives of the BSSSC Board (2 candidates elected for a two year term).

**Ms Orluk** said that members of the Youth Board would have priority to register for the BSSSC Youth Event and could apply to the BSSSC Board. She shared the motto of the BSSSC Youth - *Youth Action Now because tomorrow starts today*.

**Mr Christopher Lucht** thanked for the presentation.

**Ms Sari Rautio** thanked Mr Christopher Lucht and Ms Julia Orluk for the information shared. She expressed her gratitude to Ms Aline Mayr as well. Ms Sari Rautio said that she was happy to see young people involved. She said that she hoped to establish a youth network in Finland.

**Mr Christopher Lucht** said that he totally supported the idea of Ms Julia Orluk.

**Mr Chairman** congratulated Ms Julia Orluk her election to the BSSSC Board. He said also that he was glad to see the BSSSC Youth work and involvement. He stated that the BSSSC had to improve it. The Chairman suggested to devoting more time to this issue during the next Board meeting in December. He said that by time the BSSSC Secretariat, the Youth Coordinator, would prepare proposals for the youth to be more strongly represented in the European and Baltic structures and projects helping to implement their ideas. The BSSSC Chairman added that it was very important to be able to successfully have youth involved and empowered. Mr Struk gave the floor to the Secretary General to provide some more information on the Interact initiative.

### 3.4. Manifesto for Young People by Young People to Shape the European Territorial Policy

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska** said that the initiative by the European Commission and Interact had been launched in June. She added that on October 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> during the Interreg 30 year anniversary there would be a youth event during which a special document *Manifesto for young people by young people to shape the European territorial cooperation* will be presented to the Commissioner Elisa Ferreira. The text is not published yet. The idea behind the initiative was that young people throughout Europe would get more involvement, empowerment when it comes to territorial cooperation, Interreg projects and programming. Ms Wróblewska promised to send out some more information on the event and the document when available. Ms Secretary General expressed her hope that the BSSSC youth would be present at the event. She encouraged also the Board Members to follow the initiative.

### 3.5. Other EU youth-oriented initiatives





#### 4. Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions (CoR)

**The Chairman** welcomed Ms Sari Rautio, who had established the new Interregional Group within Committee of the Regions.

##### 4.1. Updates from CoR Interregional Group Baltic Sea Macroregion – Ms Sari Rautio

**Ms Sari Rautio** thanked for giving her the floor. She said that had invited Commissioner Elisa Ferreira to address the Baltic Sea International Group meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Ms Sari Rautio asked also the BSSSC Chair Mr Mieczysław Struk and Mr Ilmar Reepalu to accept the invitation as guest speakers. She commented that the main issue within the new group was to get people more involved in the Baltic Sea issues.

**The BSSSC Chairman** thanked Ms Sari Rautio and stressed that the BSSSC Board had promised to encourage new CoR members to join the Group and be active. Mr Mieczysław Struk asked if there were some questions.

The floor was given to **Mr Ilmar Reepalu** from the Skåne Region. He confirmed that he would participate in the work of the CoR Interregional Group Baltic Sea Macroregion.

**Mr Reiner Kneifel - Haverkamp** asked Ms Sari Rautio to send out the invitation to join the Baltic Sea international group meeting to Mr Jobst - Hinirich Ubellohde, who is the new CoR member from Brandenburg. Ms Sari Rautio agreed to do so.

#### 5. MFF 2021-2027 and Cohesion Policy

Before passing the floor to **Mr Reiner Kneifel - Haverkamp**, the BSSSC Chairman said that he had the privilege to be the rapporteur of the CoR opinion on the REACT- EU package, which would be presented at the CoR October session. Mr Struk said that during this session there would be political debates with Ursula von der Leyen, Angela Merkel on the German EU Presidency, and Paolo Gentiloni on the resilience and recovery.

**Mr Mieczysław Struk** asked Mr Reiner Kneifel – Haverkamp to report on the Cohesion Policy.

##### 5.1. Update from Rapporteur, Mr Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp, Brandenburg

The *Next Generation EU* under the agreement of the EU Commission will be able to lend up to €750 billion on the markets. In reference to the Cohesion Policy, there is a gap of about €40 billion (€330 billion in 2018 prices to €370 billion in current prices).

**Mr Reiner Kneifel – Haverkamp** mentioned that Recovery and Resilience Facility was €672.5 billion of which loans - €360 billion and grants €312.5 billion. It will be given to the Member





States for the investments and reforms in order to bring about ecological and digital change in the EU and improve the resilience of national economies. The details would be presented soon.

**Mr Reiner Kneifel – Haverkamp** also mentioned that the React-EU Facility provided money into the current Operational Programmes. He noticed as well that future - oriented programmes like Horizon Europe 2021 – 20227 had not been resourced in the way that proponents had wanted to.

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Resources for the *European territorial cooperation* goal (Interreg) will amount to a total of €7 950 million. The amount of € 970 million will be allocated by the EU Commission for *European Territorial Cooperation - component for interregional innovation investments*. Mr Reiner Kneifel - Haverkamp asked Ms Krista Taipale if these resources would be split into two parts.

**Ms Krista Taipale** thanked for the briefing and said that interregional innovation investments would be split in two parts.

**Mr Reiner Kneifel - Haverkamp** stated that negotiations between the Council and Parliament were crucial. He said it had been very difficult to come up with the compromise. He shared his personal opinion that it would be good if the EU Parliament would better concentrate on those aspects which were not related to ? the amount of available money, but to the ways how to spend it.

<Coffee break>

## 6. Reports from events

**The BSSSC Chairman** welcomed the representative of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), Mr Bodo Bahr. Mr Mieczysław Struk expressed his gratitude for the invitation to BSPC annual meeting, held in August. He stated also that it had been a real privilege to address the meeting as the BSSSC Chairman. He stressed that he was grateful for the participation of the new President of BSPC, Mr Piry Niemi at the 28<sup>th</sup> Digital BSSSC Annual Conference. Mr Chairman expressed his hope to further intensify the good cooperation.

### 6.1. BSPC Conference, August 24<sup>th</sup>, Mr Bodo Bahr

**Mr Bodo Bahr** thanked for the invitation and briefly reported on the 29<sup>th</sup> BSPC, held digitally due to the pandemic of COVID - 19. He reminded that the main headline of the conference had been *Vision 2030 - acting for the future of the Baltic Sea Region*. He said that the event had gathered more than 150 participants in different sessions. The delegates discussed topics such as the environmental state of the Baltic Sea, migration and integration, maritime policy and tourism, but the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on every aspect of cooperation in the BSR was a constant element of the discussion. The Conference had also unanimously adopted the Conference Resolution. It was chaired by Mr Valerijus Simulik, current President





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of the BSPC. Incoming BSPC President, Mr Pyy Niemi from the Swedish Parliament presented the priorities of the Swedish Presidency and invited all delegates to the 30<sup>th</sup> BSPC in Stockholm on August 29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> 2021.

The Conference approved the new BSPC Working Group on Climate Change and Biodiversity with Chairwomen Ms Tenfjord - Toftby from the Swedish Parliament for the next two years.

**Mr Bahr** encouraged the Board Members to download the *Report 2020 on Developments in the field of Integrated Maritime Policy* prepared by the BSPC's Rapporteurs, MP Jochen Schulte and MP Jörgen Pettersson in addition to the statements given during the 29<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. It summarizes the developments in the Integrated Maritime Policy since the 28<sup>th</sup> BSPC as well as informs about the activities of the Maritime Rapporteurs and important conferences which have taken place throughout the past year. The Report addresses the impact of the COVID pandemic on Maritime policy and the Maritime economy.

**Mr Bodo Bahr** thanked Mr Mieczysław Struk for his speech at the Conference. He stressed that both the BSPC and BSSSC shared similar priorities and it would be beneficial to continue working on the same challenges. He expressed his hope to continue efforts for the sake of the BSR and wished much success to the BSSSC Annual Conference.

**Mr Marshal** thanked for the presentation and confirmed that it was important for all the levels of governance to cooperate closely. The floor was given to the thematic reports on transport, culture and maritime affairs.

## 7. Reports from policy areas

### 7.1. Transport

**Mr Jon Halvard Eide** shared the information on the recent EU transport policy developments. Information from Rapporteur is attached in supporting materials.

The European Commission is in a process of preparing the Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility. The Commission has launched a public consultation which is closing on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr Jon Halvard Eide said that the European Coordinator had drafted an updated version of the Detailed Implementation Plan (DiP) for Motorways of the Sea (MoS), which focus especially on the decarbonisation of the maritime sector, further exploration of shore - side power supply. In Mr Eide opinion, it is a key to reduce emissions from transport.

*The FuelEu Maritime* has been announced as a legislative initiative in the context of the 2020 Commission Work Programme as part of the Green Deal. The initiative aims at ramping - up the production, deployment and uptake of sustainable alternative marine fuels, and regulate access of the most polluting ships to EU ports and obliging docked ships.





A revision of the TEN-T Regulation is expected by June 2021. MEP Jens Gieseke from the TRAN Committee has issued the Own Initiative Report on the TEN-T revision, which was published in the beginning of August.

**Mr Jon Halvard Eide** mentioned that the transport team within the CPMR Secretariat had met with the rapporteur for this report, and managed to integrate several key messages in line with adopted CPMR positions. Transport Rapporteur underlined that the CPMR Secretariat would try to set up a meeting between the rapporteur and representatives of the geographical commission – including Baltic Sea Commission (BSC).

**Mr Jon Halvard Eide** added that the CPMR North Sea Commission Transport group had sent a letter to selected MEPs with comments to the report. He announced that the BSC Transport Working Group would meet online on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr Jon Halvard Eide** said that green, intelligent transport and mobility were among the seven topics in the proposal for the next Baltic Sea Region programme which had been under public consultation. Topics mentioned could include actions in relation to: 1) renewable fuels and e- mobility, and 2) common standards for harmonisation of transport systems to ensure compatibility of green solutions along transport corridors and borders 3) multimodal transport as an integrated service using digital tools, 4) urban, regional transport and spatial planning adapting to vehicle and service innovation (e. g. autonomous and shared mobility solutions) and also 5) testing and applying.

**Mr Ilmar Reepalu** asked whether the phrase *outermost regions* included in an updated version of the DiP for MoS, could be changed to *rural areas and islands*.

**Mr Jon Halvard Eide** asked Ms Lucille Ehrhart to comment on that as this wording comes from the CPMR, which has a very broad membership.

**Ms Lucille Ehrhart** stated that through this wording CPMR had always tried to find the right balance between different interests and territories.

**Mr Jon Halvard Eide** added then that it was very important to emphasize the need to focus on territorial cohesion in the context of the MoS.

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska** took continued to chair the meeting as the Chairman had to leave. She thanked for the presentation, explanations and additional comments. She invited Mr Stefan Musiolik to report on culture.





## 7.2. Culture

**Mr Stefan Musiolik** gave an overview of recent developments in the culture sector since the BSSSC Board Meeting in June. Information from Rapporteur is attached in supporting materials.

**Mr Stefan Musiolik** informed on the PA Culture Workshop, to be held on October, 2<sup>nd</sup> within 11<sup>th</sup> EUSBSR Annual Online Forum. The key issues as well as experts of the workshop called *Umbrella funding for small - and micro - scale cultural initiatives in the BSR* were presented. The Board Members were invited to register for the event.

The key issues of the *BSSSC Annual Conference - Culture and Regional Identity Session* were shared. The session will focus on the project initiative Baltic Sea Cultural Cities and will inform about the current state of the project and possibilities for cities, regions, and citizens to get involved. There will be an open discussion on the further development of the project. It was underlined that this offered good opportunities for the Board members to get informed and to reflect upon the participation of their region in the Baltic Sea Cultural Cities project.

Information provided by the Rapporteur included also the BSSSC activities so far about to the programming of the future Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme as well as PA Culture.

## 7.3. Maritime affairs

**Mr Janne Tamminen** gave a quick overview of the *Our Baltic Conference* organized by DG ENV held online, September 28<sup>th</sup>. He reported that the Baltic Sea was warming. Eutrophication as well as phosphorus are also increasing problems. It was underlined that the Baltic Sea was not a lost case. It is still possible to heal many parts of it, in particular through small projects focusing on minimizing of discharges of greywater.

**Mr Janne Tamminen** reported also that the HELCOM had had a special meeting on the social-economic and financial issues of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. He mentioned that there would be new projects in HELCOM on clean shipping. Mr Janne Tamminen expressed also his hope that last week negotiations within European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) would be successful for the whole maritime sector.

**Mr Ilmar Reepalu** referred to Mr Tamminen's speech. He stated that due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the activities on transportation had been quite low. He suggested it would be easier to put some formal change and have discussions on what could be done to make the Baltic Sea a pilot sea.

**Mr Janne Tamminen** said that he completely agreed. He stated that it was a great opportunity to take new steps to have clean shipping in the future.







**Mr Ilmar Reepalu** suggested contacting the World Maritime University to start to cooperate and making the Baltic Sea a kind of showcase.

## 8. Reports from other BSR organizations

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska**, the BSSSC Secretary General asked Mr Bernd Hemingway to take the floor and report on behalf of Council of the Baltic Sea States.

### 8.1. CBSS – Deputy Director, Mr Bernd Hemingway

**Mr Bernd Hemingway** thanked for the invitation and expressed his gratitude for the BSSSC work on young people. He added that during the previous CBSS ministerial meeting the importance of youth cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region was highlighted.

**Mr Bernd Hemingway** shared the information on the new Polish Director General of the CBSS Secretariat. He said that he was happy having Mr Ambassador Grzegorz Marek Poznański on board. He mentioned also issues that would be presented during the 28<sup>th</sup> BSSSC Digital Annual Conference.

**Mr Bernd Hemingway** said that the CBSS would work closely with relevant actors in the Baltic Sea Region as one point of the reform of the CBSS. He stressed then the strong added value of the cooperation with the BSSSC, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, BSPC and the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Referring to the Lithuanian Presidency in the CBSS since July 1<sup>st</sup>, he said that the *Vilnius Declaration - Vision for the Baltic Sea Region for 2020* was available on the CBSS webpage and covered what had been achieved and which goals set in 2010 had not yet been met. Mr Bernd Hemingway said that the CBSS had had the first discussion on the *Vilnius 2 Declaration* on the CEO level.

The four priorities of the Lithuanian presidency were presented to the Board Members: 1) sustainable development, especially in the field of developing green industry; 2) green as well as maritime tourism as an important sector in reviving the regional economy, increasing region's visibility, giving employment opportunities to young people; 3) civil protection in the region, strengthening resilience in the region against major emergencies and disasters; 4) fight against human trafficking for labour exploitation in the region, and prevention of violence against children.

**Ms Wróblewska** thanked for the presentation and said that she was looking forward to the *Vilnius 2 Declaration*. She expressed her gratitude for being a partner organization of the CBSS.





## 8.2. CPMR Baltic Sea Commission - Executive Secretary, Ms Lucille Ehrhart

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska** welcomed Ms Lucille Ehrhart and invited her to report on the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) developments.

**Ms Wróblewska** welcomed Ms Lucille Ehrhart as the new CPMR BSC Executive Secretary and invited her to report on the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) developments.

**Ms Lucille Ehrhart**, took the floor and underlined similar priorities of the BSSSC and the CPMR. She informed that the BSC of the CPMR had 20 members - regional authorities from Sweden, Finland, Estonia, and Germany. She gave then a short update on the CPMR BSC recent activities and mentioned the following:

1. The CPMR met with the European Commissioner for Budget and Administration Johannes Hahn to discuss over the EU Recovery Instrument and the MFF 2021-2027. The meeting was intended to highlight a many of key issues from the perspective of the regions on the future of the EU budget ahead of a crucial EU summit scheduled for 17-18 July.
2. The CPMR's Baltic Sea Commission discussed the regional perspective of the revised Action Plan of EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

Referring to the presentation on EUSBSR, Ms Lucille Ehrhart thanked Ms Czarnecka for her informative input. She said also that the New Action Plan was welcomed by the BSC CPMR and the regional dimension was quite strongly mentioned.

**Ms Lucille Ehrhart** presented also the forthcoming CPMR events:

1. The CPMR's Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly - Online meeting, October 21<sup>st</sup>
2. The BSC Transport Working Group meeting, October 27<sup>th</sup>
3. 13<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Tourism Forum, November 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>

## 8.3. Euroregion Baltic - Head of ERB International Permanent Secretariat, Ms Magda Leszczyzna - Rzucidło

**Ms Leszczyzna - Rzucidło** presented the proposal for the *Umbrella 2.0 project* on capacity building and added that the ERB had turned to the Swedish Institute for financial support. She said that it would be not only the South Baltic initiative aimed for the countries in the South Baltic area, but covering the whole Baltic Sea Region. She added that the Euroregion Baltic had invited the Union of the Baltic Cities to cooperate and expressed her hope that the BSSSC would agree to be a project – partner, too.





*Umbrella 2.0.* will be a one year -long project raising awareness of transnational and cross-border cooperation among the smallest actors - newcomers (NGOs, civil society, local organisations) who had never been involved in the BSR cooperation yet. Other goals are: 1) to empower stakeholders to build the strategic and long term partnerships; 2) to improve the knowledge on the EU, and in particular, EUSBSR; 3) to create an understanding of the strategic importance of the EUSBSR, EU Green Deal and UN SDGs.

Target groups of the project are: 1) representatives of local authorities and civil societies organisation that is interested in transnational and cross-border cooperation and/or projects but have little or no experience; 2) newcomers from institutions that are not active in a transnational projects.

**Ms Leszczyna – Rzucidło** briefly reported on proposed ERB activities for the next year: 1) Awareness Raising event on EUSBSR, SDGs and EU GD (live/ hybrid/online); 2) communication campaign on social media, LMS platform (Moodle), newsletters; 3) List of EUSBSR Flagships and their *entry points* for the small and local actors; 4) 2- day *Meet your Flagship* event (live/ hybrid/online), 5) List of participants for the training and their letters of commitment and 6) thematic training sessions on EUSBSR, SDGs, EU Green Deal as well as 7) webinars on project management based on *Umbrella's* material.

**Ms Magda Leszczyna - Rzucidło** presented a promotion toolkit created for the *Umbrella 2.0.* project and once again expressed her hope for the BSSSC to join the project .

**The members of the BSSSC Board agreed to join *Umbrella 2.0.* project as an associate partner .**

8.4. Union of the Baltic Cities - UBC HA Capacity Coordinator, Mr Marko Paunovic

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska** gave the floor to Mr Marko Paunovic BC HA Capacity Coordinator, who shared information on the UBC Brussels antenna activities. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

Roles of the UBC bureau in Brussels were presented as 1) straighten the visibility of the UBC at the EU level; 2) facilitate institutional partnership with key EU stakeholders; 3) reinforce UBC role as a partner in European projects and 4) build synergies with member cities offices.

**Mr Marko Paunovic** presented key UBC activities for 2020. He said that the UBC had finished the Roadmap for Positioning. The UBC is also a part of the European Week of Regions of Cities. Mr Marko Paunovic informed that the UBC had started a task force for the policy and projects. He presented also some results to be achieved by the UBC by the end of 2021.

**Mr Marko Paunovic** said that the UBC had prepared national workshops in the Baltic countries (Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland), held online (from mid -





November till the first week of December) due to the pandemic situation. He presented also the main aims of the workshops and expected results.

**Mr Marko Paunovic** invited the Board Members to interest in the national workshops.

## 9. Report from Brussels antenna

9.1. Ms Anna Drążek, Director of the Pomorskie Regional EU Office

**The BSSSC Secretary General** asked Ms. Anna Drążek to give information on the most important developments within the EU since the June BSSSC Board meeting.

**Ms Drążek**, Director of the Pomorskie Regional Office, briefed the BSSSC Board on the recent European affairs. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

### 9.1.1. Highlights from State of the Union address by President von der Leyen

The President of the EU underlined the need for a very strong EU for the health programme, even taking into account the treaty change for a better common response to a crisis such as the COVID pandemic. Discussions on the treaty changes need to start as soon as possible. This is a noble and urgent task for the Conference on the Future of Europe that should begin soon. Ms Anna Drążek reminded that the EU only complemented as well as coordinated actions in the field of public health so far and it would be more beneficiary to give the EU more floor and power in this respect.

The issue of human rights was mentioned by the EU President. Ms Anna Drążek informed also that the EU Commission planned for a new Anti - Racism Action Plan. The idea is to appoint the first-ever EU Anti - racism coordinator. The EU wants to extend the list of EU - level crimes to all crimes, also hate speech regarding people based on their race, gender, origin, and sexual preferences. Ms Anna Drążek informed that Ursula von der Leyen had underlined the need for strengthening LGBT+ rights.

President Ursula von der Leyen announced the new Pact of Migration. The aim is to set rules to make it clear which immigrants are welcomed in the European Union and who will be asked to return to the origin countries. The Commission wants to introduce and see more solidarity between the Member States. The idea is to help *frontline countries* e. g. Italy or Greece who are overloaded now. Ms Anna Drążek added the Commission was determined to coordinate and synchronise the national migration management system.

**Ms Anna Drążek** informed that the kick-off meeting of the Conference of Europe was expected in the autumn under the German presidency. She added that there was progress, meaning a green light from all main European institutions, including the European Council.





#### 9.1.2. Updates on fight with COVID-19 crisis

The legal framework for setting minimum wages was underlined and announced and it would be introduced quite soon. Ms Anna Drążek said that the President of the EU had put attention to the question of values. She stressed then that no EU money would be given to the Member States that did not observe the rule of law.

#### 9.1.3. Updates on EU Green Deal

**Ms Anna Drążek** gave an update on the EU Green Deal (EGD). She said that the Commission plans were very ambitious. Emission reduction would go up to at least 55 % till 2030. 30 % of the Next Generation EU budget would be raised through green bonds. Ms Anna Drążek noticed that 37 % of this funding would be devoted to EGD objectives, including flagships of European projects such as hydrogen, green buildings, electric mobility as well. She brought also attention to the call under Horizon 2020, opened to 01/2021 where 1 € billion would be devoted to project supporting Europe's ecosystems and biodiversity.

#### 9.1.4. European Democracy Action Plan

European Democracy Action Plan is a new European initiative and the EU response to the signs of democratic erosion that appear across the EU. It will be presented at the end of 2020. Ms Drążek said also that the European Commission wanted through this tool to enhance the integrity of the European elections, the resilience of democratic processes, and to strengthen media freedom, pluralism, as well as to tackle disinformation. Ms Drążek said that basis was underlined the need for supporting civil society and active civil partnership.

#### 9.1.5. Incoming EU-related events

**Ms Drążek** added that the European Week of Regions and Cities would start soon. She noticed that registration was still opened.

#### 9.1.6. Digital/Innovation/Research/Education

**Ms Drążek** shared information in the field of digital innovation, research as well as education, referring to Research and Innovation Days that had taken place in a digital formula. She said that the EU Commission had announced the European Innovation Area, but more details would be followed. She mentioned that two new documents would be expected - *Achieving European Education Area by 2025* and *Digital Education Action Plan 2021 - 2027. Resetting education and training for the digital age*.

**Ms Krystyna Wróblewska** on behalf of Ms Secretary General thanked Ms Drążek for her informative report, and expressed hope that those ambitious plans would become a reality. Ms Secretary General gave the floor to Ms Marta Czarnecka – Gallas.





## 10. BSSSC communication activities report

**Ms Marta Czarnecka – Gallas** presented a brief report on the BSSSC communication activities. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

The BSSSC communication activities mainly focused on the BSSSC website updated regularly on the issues most relevant for the Baltic Sea Region cooperation. Ms Marta Czarnecka - Gallas invited the Board Members to give their content e. g. about seminars to promote on the BSSSC website. She mentioned that the recent newsletter was devoted to the BSSSC Autumn events and the next was planned for December. She said that the BSSSC Secretariat had focused on social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram). She presented a digital campaign prepared for the BSSSC Digital Autumn Youth Event 2020 as well as the BSSSC Digital Annual Conference 2020. Ms Marta Czarnecka – Gallas said that the BSSSC Secretariat had elaborated a brochure which would be presented at the digital booth during the Annual Conference.

## 11. Next online Board meeting, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> December 2020

### 12. Upcoming events

12.1. 18<sup>th</sup> European Week of Regions and Cities - October 5<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>

12.2. Interreg Annual Event. Presentation of Manifesto for Young People by Young People to Shape the European Cooperation Policy – October 15<sup>th</sup>

12.3. 11<sup>th</sup> EUSBSR Virtual Annual Forum – October 20<sup>th</sup>

12.4. The EU Green Week 2020 – October 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>

### 13. Any other business

There were no special reports, so the BSSSC Secretary General thanked everybody present on behalf of Mr Mieczysław Struk, who had had to leave, for the very good meeting as well as valuable discussions and invited everybody to the BSSSC Annual Conference.

**END OF MEETING ■**

