



BSSSC Board meeting Hyvinkää, Finland, – Final Minutes (per 03.05.19)

Thursday, February 7, 2019, 14.00 – 19.00, thematic meeting with focus on innovation and seminar on the BSSSC Strategy post 2020. Lunch from 12:00. Dinner at 19:30

Friday, February 8, 2019, 09:00 – 13:00, Board meeting followed by lunch

Meeting venue: Hotel Sveitsi, Härkävehmaankatu 4, Hyvinkää

Present:

BSSSC Board: Chairman Roger Ryberg (Buskerud County, Norway), Alla Ivanova (Kaliningrad, Russia), Sari Rautio (Häme region, Finland), Agnes Lusti (Youth Board Member, Østfold County, Norway), Martin Rümmelein (Youth Board Member, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), Ossi Savolainen (Helsinki-Uusimaa region, Finland).

BSSSC Board Civil: Krystyna Wroblewska (Pomorskie region, Poland), Reetta Sorjonen (Häme region, Finland), Toivo Rima (Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities), Janne Tamminen (Helsinki-Uusimaa region, Finland), Matti Lipsanen (Häme region, Finland), Marlene Rothe (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), Marianne Strøm (Østfold County, Norway), Jon Halvard Eide (Vest-Agder County, Norway), Krista Taipale (Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, Finland), Marko Mälly (Häme Region, Finland).

BSSSC Secretariat: Lars Godbolt, Hilde Aarø, Ann Irene Sæternes.

Others: Markku Markkula (Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions).

1. Opening of the Board meeting

1.1. Opening of the meeting – Mr. Roger Ryberg, BSSSC Chair

Mr. Ryberg welcomed to the first Board Meeting of 2019. Mr. Ryberg said this year started with the shocking news from Gdansk. We were all moved by the terrible murder of the popular Mayor of Gdansk, Pawel Adamowicz, he said. Being an elected politician means to be a public person in contact with the people. In Europe we need more open and transparent contact between politicians and citizens – not less. We have to continue to work for openness, dialog and democracy – and not let this kind of hate crime allow for bigger distance between politics and people. Our BSSSC cooperation and work is important – every day.

1.2. Welcome by the host region – Ossi Savolainen, Helsinki-Uusimaa Region

Mr. Savolainen welcomed everyone to Hyvinkää and to Hotel Sveitsi.

1.3. Adoption of the agenda

The Agenda was adopted.

1.4. Adoption of the minutes from the Board Meeting in Brussels, November 29, 2018.



The Minutes were adopted.

2. Cooperation with Committee of the Regions (CoR)

Mr. Ryberg welcomed **Mr. Markkula** and stated that BSSC has a long history of cooperation with CoR. A joint action plan was agreed between CoR and BSSC in December 2018.

2.1. Intervention by Vice President Markku Markkula

Mr. Markkula started by paying a tribute in memory to **Mr. Pawel Adamowicz**, mayor of Gdansk and previous member of CoR. He also paid tribute to the famous Finnish ski jumper **Mr. Matti Nykänen** who recently passed away.

Mr. Markkula started with saying that the macro regional strategy (MRS) in the EU has been for more than 20 years, and it time for new thinking and renewal in the EU. The EUSBSR is now celebrating its 10 year anniversary and has served as a model for other MRS's. Recently a report on the future of MRS from the European Commission was published. The Romanian Precedency has focused on the European Union's legislative programme, which is in it's final phase of implementation and on strengthening the bond between the citizen of Europe and the Union. As Finland will take over the EU presidency on 1 July 2019, **Mr. Markkula** underlined the importance of involving the civil society, businesses and research in the implementation of MRS. He expressed a hope that the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Gdansk in June 2019 could inspire the upcoming Finnish EU presidency to put MRS on the agenda.

Mr. Markkula continued by stating the need to promote sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region, and it is important to make the business communities show how they implement their work towards these goals. Kone, located in Hyvinkää, Finland is one example of how SDGs are implemented in a business-model. The 25 + 5 SDGs Cities Leadership Platform in the United Nations is another example of an initiative towards actively achieving the goals. The Finish city of Espoo and the Norwegian capital, Oslo are participating in this initiative.

The EU reflection paper on how to reach the SDG's also focused on the importance of horizontal enablers when reaching the SDGs. CoR is actively working on issues related to the SDGs both from an economic and an environmental angle. They are organising a big summit for regions and cities in Bucharest in March 2019. It is important that the ambition level needs to be higher than the Paris agreement. The Finnish EU Presidency has an opportunity to influence the future implementation with regard to the SDGs. It is important to have a bottom-up approach in order to achieve these goals. **Mr. Markkula** then quoted **Mr. Timmermans** who has stated; *"Sustainable development starts and ends with people, it is about making our economy and society sustainable and prosperous at the same time."*

2.2. Discussions and feedback

Ms. Wróblewska thanked both **Mr. Ryberg** and **Mr. Markkula** for the kind words about **Mr. Adamowicz** on behalf of the citizens of Gdansk.



Mr. Ryberg encouraged the members of the Board to support the cooperation with the CoR.

The action plan between CoR and BSSC was unanimously accepted.

3. MFF and cohesion policy

3.1. Status and further follow up activities

Mr. Ryberg referred to the very good meeting with Mr. Nicola De Michelis in Brussels end of November. Based on our decision in that meeting we sent a letter to the European Commission, European Parliament and the Committee of Regions with regard to Interreg 2021 – 2027. The letter was sent mid-December – in due time before the European Parliament’s discussion on the Regulation of Interreg post 2020. It seems to be several overlaps between the position of BSSC and the ones of the European Parliament and the Committee of Regions. The BSSC received a reply from Mr. Juncker’s office (see Supporting Documents).

Ms. Sæternes said the draft regulations for Interreg and Cohesion Policy as such would be adopted earliest by end of the year, maybe spring 2020 – based on agreement of the budget (MFF). EU Commission hope to agree on the content part of the regulations during the Romanian EU presidency this spring. Last time the Board met, in Brussels, there were discussions about component 5 of Interreg, which focuses on interregional innovation investments related to smart specialization; however no one knows exactly what it will be. The Swedish regions have been actively lobbying for this new proposed instrument.

Ms. Sæternes said that Mr. Kneifel-Haverkamp proposes to create a working group on this component 5 - to have a new paper ready for discussion at the next Board Meeting.

3.2. Discussions and proposals

Ms. Taipale wanted to add the following regarding component 5: The European Parliament want to keep it in Interreg regulations, but member states want to move it to the ERDF. Also CoR wants to keep it within Interreg. This is especially important for third countries such as Norway because it could be much harder to join if these funds are in the ERDF.

Ms. Taipale wanted to join the working group preparing this paper.

The Board took note of the information and supported the proposal to prepare a paper on Component 5 to be discussed at the next meeting in May

4. EUSBSR revision of the Action Plan

4.1. Status and update



Ms. Sæternes mentioned that the EC has hired an external expert to prepare the revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan. They will deliver the first report on the thematic issues by the end of March 2019. The National Coordination Group of the EUSBSR will discuss the draft paper April 16. A report on governance is expected in the end of May 2019. The first draft action plan is expected to be presented in mid-July and a final version should be adopted by the end of 2019. The main 3 objectives (save the sea, connect the region and increase prosperity) are likely to remain the same. However, there might be changes in current sub-objectives. DG Mare wants to be better involved, to ensure more emphasis on blue growth. The SDGs will also be taken into account when revising the Action Plan. There is an ambition to highlight cross-sectoral issues, which would be a good thing for the regions. Efforts will be made to strengthen the ownership of the strategy in the different countries. Could be a role for the BSSSC in this. **Ms. Bjerling**, from the Baltic Sea Commission has invited the BSSSC to cooperate with them on the revision process. It will be a good idea to invite other Pan-Baltic organisations representing local and regional level in to the process.

4.2. Discussion on how to follow up from the BSSSC

Ms. Rothe informed that there is a recommendation from the European Commission (EC) that the objectives of the strategy should be aligned with those of the Interreg BSR programme. The programming committee for a new Interreg BSR programme and the strategy revision should come together. BSSSC should address both the programming committee and the national contact group of the EUSBSR.

Ms. Taipale underlined the importance of also consulting regions and cities and suggested that we should highlight that to the EC. She mentioned that CPRM has established a task force on the revision, and that **Mr. Tamminen** can act as a liaison to this group.

Mr. Markkula suggested that members of CoR from the BSR (CoR intergroup Baltic) should be contacted and invited to a BSSSC board meeting once BSSSC has worked further on input to the new Action Plan.

Ms. Wróblewska supported a joint position between CPMR Baltic Sea Commission and BSSSC.

A BSSSC ad hoc Working Group on the revision process of the EUSBSR Action Plan will be established. **Ms. Rothe**, **Mr. Tamminen** and **Ms. Wróblewska** will contribute to this. Cooperation with other BSR organisations was supported.

5. Upcoming Finnish EU Presidency autumn 2019

Mr. Markkula referred to his opening intervention. Finnish Ministries are making their own preparations at the moment. **Mr. Ossi Savolainen** said it is too early to discuss with ministries now and that the priorities and programme for the Presidency will be published at a later stage. More information will be available at the next board meeting.



6. BSSC 2020 – 2024

6.1. Revision of the BSSC Strategy 2020 – 2024 – summing up from seminar and next steps

Ms. Sæternes thanked for the active participation in the workshop yesterday. She encouraged all the members of the Board to look at the proposed questionnaire. Comments and remarks can be sent to **Mr. Godbolt** by 15 February 2019. The results will be presented at the next Board meeting in May.

6.2. Next BSSC chairmanship 2020 – 2021

Ms. Sæternes informed that there is an ongoing process and dialogue with potential chairmanships. As soon as we have more information the secretariat will inform the Board.

COFFEE BREAK

7. BSSC Annual Conference 2019 in Klaipeda, Lithuania

7.1. Status report

Ms. Sæternes went through the updated programme. She informed that in May there should be a draft programme ready for promotion. She hopes that representatives from the host region will attend the next BSSC Board meeting.

7.2. Comments, questions and proposals

Ms. Taipale informed that the BSSC Annual Conference is taking place when the European Commission and the member states are revising the EUSBSR Action Plan. She said we should make use of this good timing to put forward what we want for the EUSBSR. She proposed that both DG Mare and DG Regio should be invited to the AC.

Ms. Rothe informed that BalticRIM project wanted to arrange a parallel seminar at the AC. She also proposed to broaden the thematic scope of the AC by adding the maritime protection issue, e.g. by having a key note speech by a HELCOM representative.

Mr. Eide informed that KIMO could be a potential partner for parallel session at the AC. He also mentioned the EP intergroup on Seas and Rivers. CPMR has the secretariat responsibility for this group.

Ms. Ivanova proposed to explore projects from the CBC programme Russia-Lithuania to be included in some of the sessions.

8. Reports from the Chairman and Secretariat

8.1. EUSBSR Annual forum 2019 in Gdansk by Ms. Ann Irene Sæternes



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Ms. Sæternes reminded the members of Board of the possibility to apply for organising seminars during the EUSBSR Annual forum in Gdansk 2019. The seminar invitations have been sent out, and the deadline for submission of proposals is 15 February.

Registrations will open in April. All members of the Board will be informed once the registration is open. The Director of the World Economic Forum, Børge Brende, has been invited to speak, but has not yet responded to the invitation.

The Baltic Sea Commission will organise their General Assembly in Gdansk 11 June and this could be an opportunity to engage in further conversation with them about the EUSBSR Action Plan revision.

The BSSC could also use the opportunity to have a joint dinner in the evening 11 June. If there is a need to have a meeting on the 11 June then **Ms. Wrobleska** will ensure to find a location. There has been a dialog with CoR on the possibility of having a seminar on the governance of macro strategies. In addition, it would allow the Board members to join the Baltic Sea Youth Camp and be available for dialogue and discussions.

8.2. BSR Youth Camp 2019 in Gdansk by Mr. Lars Godbolt

Mr. Godbolt informed that the working group in the Youth Camp had a meeting in Gdansk last week back to back with the steering group meeting of the PA Culture. Several good proposals came from the workshop they held at the PA Culture meet. The working group went to the island and the Hotel Orle where the camp will be. He said it is a beautiful area with many possibilities of outdoor and inside activities.

Furthermore, he added that the working group has received many good proposals for arranging workshops from: PA secure – fire brigades. HA climate. HA Neighbors. Baltic Sea Region Maritime spatial planning game, et cetera. He will distribute a “seminar application” to get more people involved in the camp.

There will now be an “open day” at the youth camp on Monday June 10. The organisers will invite schools in the area, local youth councils. The working group are also working on an invitation inviting the foreign minister of Latvia – since they have the presidency of the CBSS - for the last day, Tuesday June 11 in the morning. On this morning, the youths will present their work through the youth camp – their own youth declaration. We invite you, politicians and stakeholders in the BSR, to join us on the last day – come a bit early for the AF to listen to the youths. There will be speed-dating, exchange of ideas and experiences.

Mr. Godbolt added that registration for the camp opens mid-February. Closes end of March. Please help us share this information.

8.3. Questions, comments and proposals from the Board

Ms. Ivanova asked if the topics of the Youth Camp back to back to EUSBSR Annual forum will be a topic of discussion in Kaliningrad in April 2019. **Mr. Ruemmelein** could confirm this.



9. Report from Brussels antenna

In the absence of Mr. Edøy the Chair asked if Ms. Taipale could give some update from Brussels. **Ms. Taipale** informed that no new pieces of legislation are likely to come from the EC until the expiration of its mandate in June. She said that two things are making things uncertain for the future: Brexit and European parliament elections. The EP elections and Brexit will both affect the Multi-Annual Financial Framework of the EU (MFF). The Brexit situation changes almost every day. At the day of the BSSC Board meeting, there was less than fifty days until Brexit. Ms. Taipale informed that the deadline might be postponed even if she had the feeling that EU does not want to delay.

Ms. Taipale said that with regard to the EP elections, the big questions are: how big will the changes be? How many delegates will the populist parties get?

Furthermore, she informed that the MFF negotiations will go forward to the Finnish EU presidency in the second half of 2019. Nothing on the cohesion ETC envelope will be decided before everything is decided. The issue of thematic concentration under ERDF will be challenging. Not all member states (in particular the cohesion countries) agree to the principle of focusing on two priorities – whereas many "old member states" favor stronger thematic concentration. She said that the EP + CoR would like to increase the MFF to 1,3 % of global GNI. Net contributors would like to reduce to 1,08 %.

Concerning the Interreg maritime Cross Border programmes **Ms. Taipale** informed that there are strong support for maintaining these as separate programmes together with land-based programmes. The European Council has not yet made the final decision, but is expected to support this.

The Board thanked for the update and took note of the information

10. Reports from other organizations, programmes and networks

10.1. CPMR Baltic Sea Commission by Mr. Janne Tamminen

Mr. Tamminen reported on CPMR Baltic Sea Commission. A "Future of Europe conference" was held in Finland in the end of January. The Executive Committee had a meeting in Lahti last week and it was decided that the Baltic Sea Commission will establish a task force on the revision of EUSBSR Action Plan. The Working Group on Transport is quite active and will meet early March. The energy group also met in Lahti and they will keep their focus on climate change issues and renewable energy. The CPMR Political Bureau meeting will be held 7 March in France and this is their first meeting in 2019. The agenda is not yet issued.

Mr. Savolainen has become a member of the financial committee of the CPMR. The Baltic Sea Commission will have their General Assembly in Gdansk 11 June back to back with the



EUSBSR Annual forum. The CPMR will have its General Assembly in Sicily, Italy, in the end of October.

Mr. Mälly gave some additional information about the "Future of Europe conference" in Finland. The regions were encouraged to organise similar discussions on the regional level.

Ms. Taipale commended **Mr. Mälly** for having organised a very good conference with high level speakers with good messages – focusing on the role of Europe in a global context. The message from the conference in sum was; we need to work together.

10.2. Interreg BSR programme by Mr. Matti Lipsanen

Mr. Lipsanen reported from the task force meeting of the Interreg BSR programme on **Interreg Baltic Sea Region post 2020** in Berlin end of January. This meeting functioned as an unofficial "kick off" for a future BSR programme – although no budget or geography has been decided yet. Due to the delay of the MFF discussions it is likely that the programme will not be ready to start from 1 January 2021.

Highlights from the discussions in the meeting:

- "Niche" programme – targeted only to the challenges relevant for the BSR.
- The balance between focus and flexibility in terms of the number of priorities.
- The new programme should be in line with the EUSBSR.
- Could expect about the same budget as for the current programme at 240 MEUR. Too small for investments, but larger than only exchange of experiences. This could open up for greater variations between projects in terms of budgets and number of partners
- Universities and R&D institutes have been dominating the current programme. The regions should take the programme back.

The drafting phase is a good point for BSSSC to get involved in the process. It will be too late during the public consultation process.

The Board thanked for the information. BSSSC's involvement in the drafting process for a new Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme should be addressed at the Board meeting in May 2019.

11. Reports from policy areas and projects

Mr. Eide informed that the European Commission has started preparing for the TEN-T review in 2023. Its public consultation is to open during the first quarter 2019 (the next Inter-commission Transport Working Group meeting will focus on this consultation). He assumed that the consultation would still be open at the time of the next Board meeting in May, and offered to draft a response from the BSSSC.

The Board thanked for the update and agreed to Mr. Eide's proposal.



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Ms. Ivanova said that Kaliningrad was invited to Moscow by the EU ambassador to Russia to have a presentation on their international work. She also invited the Board members and Board civil for the next international partner region forum 19-20 June in Kaliningrad. She informed that in the close future new visa application procedures will be implemented in Kaliningrad so one can digitally apply and stay for eight days.

Ms. Rothe informed that CBSS has hired a new person on culture and youth. Her name is Kaarina Williams, who is employed in the unit of Stefan Musiolik, but for the time being working as Senior Advisor for Regional Identity including culture, youth and education. She also gave a short update on the work with the Cultural Cities project. CBSS has decided to become lead partner of a project application submitted for funding by the Swedish Institute by Ms. Williams for the further development of the Cultural Cities project. Partners are e.g. the UBC Cultural Cities Commission, some BSR cities and regions, e.g. International Affairs unit of Oblast Kaliningrad and the Ministry of European Affairs Schleswig-Holstein. **Ms. Rothe** suggested that perhaps BSSSC can be an associated partner in this work. **Ms. Rothe** proposed that BSSSC writes a respective support letter.

Mr. Tamminen informed that HELCOM will have its annual meeting in beginning of March in Helsinki. Baltic Sea Day will take place in St. Petersburg 21-22 March. The Baltic Sea Day is arranged in cooperation with HELCOM, the Russian federation and the city of St. Petersburg. European maritime day will be in Lisbon 16-17 May.

Mr. Rümmelein informed about the youth event in Kaliningrad April 16-18. The Youth Board Members have been talking with the organisers of the youth event and it seems promising. Mr. Rümmelein said they have a good programme that will engage the youth participants.

12. Coming events

12.1. Next BSSSC Board Meeting 9 – 10 May 2019

Ms. Sæternes informed that the next Board meeting will take place in Cesis, Latvia. The MAMBA project will be there to give information and discuss results from their project. She encouraged the members of the Board to come to Cesis in the evening 8 May as the programme will start early the next day.

END OF MEETING