



Baltic Sea States
Subregional
Co-operation

Minutes from the BSSSC Board Meeting in Saint Petersburg, 23 May 2008

Meeting Venue: Top Hotel Ambassador

Present: Mr Asger Larsen (DK), Mr Knud Andersen (DK), Mrs Inge Hyldebrandt (DK), Mr Uno Aldegren (S), Mr Romualdas Morkevicius (LT), Mr Janerik Majewski (S), Mr Ingvar Thell (S), Mr Esko Lotvonen (FIN), , Ms Liana Maximova (RUS), Mr Arne Tilk (EST), Ms Inara Zariene (LT), Mr Uwe Döring (D), Ms Katharina Kriston (D) Mr Stefan Herms (D), Ms Marlene Rothe (D), Mr Arne Ören (N), Mr Oddvar Skaia (N), Mr Igor Lonsky (R), Mr Vladislav Balsky (R), Mr Christer Pursiainen (CBSS), Mr Dirck Suess (D), Mr Reinhard Hollunder (D), Ms Eva Almhjell (N), Mr Inge Brørs (Secretariat), Mr Günther Schulz (Secretariat), Ms Ann Irene Sæternes (Secretariat), Mr Juri Tomiliov (Sekretariat), Ms Greta Juul (Secretariat).

Absent: Inger Linge (S), Risto Ervelä (FIN), Toomas Kivimägi (EST), Mr. Urmas Arumäe (EST), Alexandra Ehlers (D), Gerd Tarand (EST), Brunon Synak (PL), Ligita Zacesta (LV), Olgierd Geblewicz (PL)

1. Opening of the Board Meeting

Mr. Ören, Chairman of BSSSC welcomed to the meeting and thanked the host for a very well organised seminar 22 May. BSSSC is happy to again arrange a BSSSC Board meeting in St. Petersburg.

Mr. Lonsky, Deputy Chairman St. Petersburg Committee for Extern Relations welcomed all the Board Members to Saint Petersburg and delivered a presentation about Saint Petersburg to the Board.

2. Adoption of the Minutes from the Board Meeting in Riga, 15 February 2008

Minutes from the Board Meeting in Riga, 15 February 2008 were adopted with minor changes.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda of the Board Meeting in St. Petersburg was adopted.

4. BSSSC Annual Conference 2008

Ms Zariene from the Kaunas Region informed about the preparatory work with the Annual Conference. Kaunas Region Governor Office representatives have visited the premises/venue (together with the BSSSC Secretariat), which look very good. There will be shuttles from/to the airport. In the city everything will be within walking distance. The registration form will go directly to the Kaunas Region. 100€ in participation fee (not for BSSSC members, CoR, Youth). Ms Zariene suggested to invite the Secretary General of AER, Mr Klipp to the BSSSC Board meeting and to attend the BSSSC Conference.

The Board agreed to invite the Secretary General of AER, Mr Klipp to the BSSSC Board meeting 17 September.

Presentation of the draft programme – Ms Sæternes, BSSSC Secretariat informed about the latest development in preparatory work with the Conference. DG Regio has asked if the conference could be one of four roundtables during the process with the Baltic Sea Strategy. The topics of the roundtable will be Accessibility and Attractiveness, and the session will be from 15.30 – 18.30 on 18.09.

5 parallel activities will go on at the same time. It is important to have connection between the sessions. Mr. Skaia said that it is positive to involve the youth in every session. He also underlined that the panel debate should not include too many people. Ms Almhjell suggested including a point of information on the follow up of the youth work from the last annual conference.

Mr Schulz informed that DG Regio would be actively involved, and the EU organisations are very interested in our conference. Mr Lotvonen underlined that it is a good idea to include the roundtable. Ms Rothe suggested that the Maritime session should not be only for politicians, but also for the representatives of business.

The Board appreciated DG Regio`s proposal to a roundtable at the BSSSC Annual Conference.

Conference Resolution – Ms Sæternes presented the Conference Resolution paper. This year there is suggested two steps. The first step should be a pre-prepared paper to be adopted by the Board in Kaunas. The second step would be to collect results from the BSSSC Annual Conference in Kaunas and the paper will also be consulted with UBC, B7 and BSC/CPMR.

The Board agreed to the proposal. The work with the Conference Resolution will continue along these lines.

5. **Baltic Sea Strategy (EU Commission)**

Mr Schulz informed about the ongoing work with the Baltic Sea Strategy. It is a Swedish initiative and the process will be finished during the Swedish chairmanship next year. It will be 2 Stakeholder Conferences and 4 roundtables during the period. BSSSC should come with some input to the process and the strategy. We suggest 2 stages – general remarks and elements for actions. Important to push for more involvements of National authorities.

The Secretariat needs Boards suggestions before going into details. EU is very open and will get a lot of input from all the actors in the Baltic Sea Region.

BSSSC is invited to the Informal Baltic Sea Group meeting 4 June, and Mr Andersen will be BSSSC representative. Mr Andersen will also take a special responsibility as a rapporteur on the Baltic Sea Strategy in BSSSC. It is important to be involved in the work with the strategy. The process should include Norway and Russia. Another point of importance is infrastructure. The question is how to make it easier for the Baltic sea to be competitive with other regions.

Mr Döring supported Mr Andersen`s including of Russia and Norway. Mr Döring also underlined the importance that the regions take part in the debate at an early stage. It is the first position paper from the BSSSC. It should not be a short paper with reference to other papers, which would be difficult to read, but a sound BSSSC position which clearly describes the expectations of the regions in particular concerning the contents. We should ask the working groups for input and contribution.

Mr Aldegren also supported to give Mr Andresen responsibility as rapporteur for the strategy. Mr Aldegren: One important point – the cooperation with the research institutes and the universities. The cooperation on regional and local level in the BSR region is good, but not so good on national level. National level has the money and the influence. A Baltic Sea strategy should also include the countries from the outside of EU.

Mr Herms – the first draft is a good step. He wanted to add some points; energy policy and climate, competitiveness and employment, education, research and knowledge society.

Mr Andersen suggested that our strategy should be consulted with the other BSR organisations.

6. **BSSSC Chairmanship and annual conferences**

BSSSC Chairmanship 2008-2010 – Mr Herms informed that Hamburg would be interested in taking over, but the new government have redefined the focus on international relations. The top priority is education. Due to the consequence of the changes, Mr Herms suggested managing by joint efforts – a Troika with outgoing Chairman, entering Chairman and next Chairman (Norway, Hamburg and West Pomeranian).

Mr Herms asked the Board to give Hamburg and the Troika a mandate to develop the Chairmanship. The work will follow the strategy that BSSSC developed before – active working group where lead partners of the work groups take responsibilities. The Secretariat will take care of the Chairmanship, the website, newsletters and information. The finale decision will be made in the end of June.

The BSSSC Board gave Hamburg and the Troika a mandate to develop the next Chairmanship.

Annual conference 2009

The next BSSSC Annual Conference will take place in Denmark. Proposed conference dates are 9 – 11 September. To secure a good link to the Zeeland Region, that will host the conference in 2009, Denmark asked to open for an additional representative to the board from Denmark.

The Board welcomed an additional representative from Zeeland Region to the BSSSC Board.

BSSSC Annual Conferences 2009-2015

The BSSSC annual conferences have over the years been arranged on a rotating basis between the BSR countries. To give the host countries and regions possibility to prepare well in advance the Secretariat has made a list of those who are next in the line for the coming years.

The Board thanked for the information.

7. **Follow-up of Work Plan 2006 – 2008 – information**

Maritime Policy

Ms Rothe, Land Schleswig-Holstein informed about the ongoing activities in the Work Group on Maritime Policy (WGMP). The first meeting was held 3 March in Hamburg with participants from Denmark, Poland, Norway, Sweden, Germany and BSSSC. Kaliningrad would like to join the working group. The WGMP will cooperate with other political organisations; bring together

maritime actors, support and initiate projects. The web page will be used for information and communication (www.bsssc.com - Maritime Policy). The WG will contribute to the parallel session in Kaunas and to the resolution (input to the BSR Strategy) and will provide a proposal for a maritime INTERREG event around the Annual conference 2009. Two political initiatives are planned: organizing support for ship-to-shore electricity supplies in the ports of the Baltic Sea region and for the introduction of environmentally differentiated harbour dues in the BSR ports. Mr. Döring gave support to the projects. Ms Rothe asked the Board members to identify members to the group (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania still missing). The Board thanked Schleswig-Holstein and Ms Rothe for the provided information.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Energy – Ms Sæternes informed that the next meeting in the joint Energy and Climate Platform of BSR Organisations would be in Stockholm 3 June. The host is CPMR-BSC. BSSSC will try to make structures for best practice, information exchange- what is going on, and how to involve the business sector and academia. BSSSC doesn't need its own working group; this forum can be the cooperation platform for BSSSC. We hope to get a step further as well as to prepare a joint presentation at the BDF summit in November/December in the Oresund region.

Baltic 21 SOG meeting

Mr. Ören participated the SOG meeting in Helsinki, Finland 10 April 2008. SOG supported 6 lighthouse projects for the 1st application round of the Baltic Sea Region Programme.

Quality of Life and Public Health

Cooperation with NDPHS - Mr Tomilov gave a brief report from the NDPHS meeting in Brussels. Norway chairs the NDPHS for the moment with Russia as co-chair. Cooperation with BSSSC is very positive. The meeting gave reports from the expert groups, very concrete data was provided. The regional dimension was very welcomed by the Partnership. The database with projects is very successful, and the regions are welcome to participate in the projects.

The Stockholm region (in absence) asked to convey a following message to the Board: We will take an initiative to promote strengthened Baltic cooperation in the field of communicable diseases. A lot of important work is already going on, and our intention is to start with mapping and discussions with different stakeholders. Hopefully this work can give a contribution to the Baltic strategy that EU plans to launch by fall 2009. We are looking forward to further discussions on this issue in the BSSSC-meeting in September.

HEPRO Forum (coordinated from the County of Østfold, Norway) has joined SIHLWA at the NDPHS. Hamburg indicated its interest in the NDPHS work, especially with regard to the HIV/AIDS-related projects.

The Board thanked for the information.

Youth Policy

Mr. Skaiaa informed that the Work Group on Youth Policy is active, and at the conference in Kaunas they seem to be more included than earlier. From 29 May to 1 June there will be a conference in Cesis, Latvia. The topics are: 1. Youth policy through Youths Councils and NGO's (experience, strong points), 2. Youths and Culture (different influences, preserving national culture), 3. Youths at Risks (different risks nowadays – drug and alcohol abuse, trafficking).

The Board thanked for the information.

8. Other issues

Northern Dimension (ND) - report from the Steering Group meeting in Oslo

Ms Sæternes reported from the ND Steering Group meeting. The different partnerships and concrete projects were on the agenda, among others sustainable energy, transport and logistic. A possible partnership on transport and infrastructure is under discussion and will be decided in end of the year. BSSSC presented the final proposal for a questionnaire on a sub-regional dimension in the ND Policy. The Steering Group supported the idea, and will send it out in their name. BSSSC will act as backup organisation and collect the results.

There will be a conference during the Swedish EU-Presidency in Helsingör. The BSSSC Board can be involved.

CBSS strategy process – information by Christer Pursiainen

The 7th Baltic Sea Summit will be from 2 – 4 June in Riga. Mr. Pursiainen informed that the long-term priorities in CBSS would be energy, economic development, education, environment, civil security and human development. In the future CBSS will be a more project-oriented organisation. Mr. Pursiainen also informed about the developments within the Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN) and asked for support.

The BSSSC Board thanked for the information, and expressed its full support to the BEN and encouraged further concrete project-based cooperation between the BSSSC members and the BEN.

Report from the BSSSC Brussels Antenna

Mr. Schulz informed that BSSSC has become more visible in Brussels. BSSSC was invited two times to inform at cooperation meetings within Mediterranean area. A new declaration of cooperation with CoR for 2 years will be worked out. The declaration will include UBC, B7 and BSC. Mr. Schulz asked the Board to reflect on another leg to be added in Brussels – cooperation with the European Policy Centre. They are of interest in the debate on the future policy and economy in EU.

The Board thanked Mr. Schulz for his excellent work.

9. Reports from meetings and events

Baltic Sea Day, St. Petersburg Russia

Focus on the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the steps to be taken to implement the plan. Ms Demina from BSSSC youth network (Kaliningrad region) made a good presentation on the youth perspective of the future BSR.

CoR Intergroup Baltic – Uno Aldegren

Mr Aldegren informed about the topics in the Work Plan for 2008:

1. Baltic Sea strategy – adopted paper sent to the Commission.
2. Maritime Policy – main point at the meeting 19 June
3. Financial issues – EU budget.

Baltic Sea Region Conference, St. Petersburg Russia

Ms Sæternes took part on behalf of BSSSC. The topic was the Transnational Cooperation Program – how BSSSC can take part as strategic partner and how BSSSC can use political structures in strategic projects. The idea was also to show how BSSSC could cooperate with the Interreg programmes.

VASAB Annual Conference - Baltic Sea Region Spatial Development Policies in European Context. VASAB is working with Visions for the Baltic Sea 2030 and Mr Ören was invited to give some perspectives from sub-regional side to their work. VASAB is a central cooperation partner in the BSR.

10. Coming events of importance for BSSSC

- Youth Conference in Cesis, Latvia, 29 May – 2 June
- 52nd meeting of the UBC Executive Board in Kuressaare, Estonia 5 June 2008
- AER Board meeting 10 – 11 June 2008 Poland

The BSSSC Chairman cannot take part. The BSSSC Secretariat was asked to approach the Polish Board members to ask if they were interested and had possibility to take part. Plan B is to ask the representative from Eastern Norway County network in the AER Board to also represent BSSSC.

- BSC-CPMR and North Sea Commission's General Assembly 11-13 June 2008 in Herning Denmark
- Next Board meeting in Kaunas, Lithuania 17 -19 September 2008.

11. Marine Research and study programme POMOR

Dr. Heidemarie Kassens, Laboratory for Polar and Marine Research in St. Petersburg gave a presentation about marine research results of the Otto Schmidt Laboratory for Marine and Polar Research and study programme POMOR.

12. Any other business

Ms. Maximova presented the idea to establish a festival with youth participants from different regions. If BSSSC regions support festival idea, Kaliningrad is ready to lead the process in the future.

The second project idea is enhanced access to professional education for rural youth of the Kaliningrad oblast of Russia. Kaliningrad is looking for partners to support this project and asked the Board members to distribute the invitation. Information was distributed in the Board meeting.

The Board agreed to disseminate the information from Ms. Maximova.

Mr Andersen informed about the changes in the Council of Europe's work with the Charter on Regional Self-government. In the draft it was earlier underlined to support directly elected regional level. Now it has been changed to open for indirect elected bodies. With reference to the resolution from Turku Conference, Mr Anderesen encourages the Board members to contact their delegates and underline the support for direct elections.

Great thanks went to Mr Janerik Majewski from Skåne Region, who will retire after 11 active years in the BSSSC Network!

The BSSSC Chairman thanked the Board members and closed the meeting

