



Baltic Sea States
Subregional
Co-operation

BSSSC Board meeting
Brussels, 10 November 2006

FOR ADOPTION

Minutes from the Board Meeting

0 Opening of the Board Meeting

Chairman Arne Ören opened the meeting and welcomed all Board members to the fourth meeting in 2006. A special welcome was given to Mr Arne Tilk (a new Board Member from Estonia).

1 Invited Speakers

- Mr Inge Thygesen, representative of the Norwegian Mission to EU.
Norway and EU
- Mr Gerhard Stahl, Secretary General, Committee of the Regions (CoR)
Committee of the Regions
- Ms Beatriz Yordi, DG Tren A3
Energy
- Mr Kjell Nybacka, West Finland European Office
Energy

Please find a short report from this session enclosed.

2 Adoption of the Minutes from the Board Meeting in Kiel, 20 September 2006

The Board adopted the Minutes from the Board Meeting in Kiel, 20 September 2006.

3 Adoption of the Agenda

The Board adopted the Agenda of the meeting.

4 Annual Report 2006

Mr Karl Löfmark presented the Draft Annual Report 2006. Mr Löfmark encouraged the Board members to submit their comments to Ms Katarina Lewalska, Katari-na.Lewalska@skane.se before 30 November. The Annual Report 2006 covers the period from the Annual Conference in Szczecin to the Annual Conference in Kiel.

The Board thanked Mr Löfmark for the provided information.

5 BSSSC Work Plan 2006 - 2008

Chairman Arne Ören presented the BSSSC Work Plan 2006 – 2008. According to the

Work Plan, BSSSC's key policy areas 2006-2008 will be Transport and Infrastructure, Maritime Policy, Sustainable Development and Civil Security.

During the constructive discussion on the Work Plan, Board members gave several valuable comments on the paper (see the detailed report below), which resulted in adoption of 2 changes of significance in the proposed BSSSC Work Plan 2006-2008, i.e:

- **BSSSC *the Mission – Our values are:***
To be a credible organisation representing the views of member regions,
is changed to
To be a credible organisation representing the views of subregions in the Baltic Sea Region
proposed by Ms Inger Linge, Sweden
- **Proposal for policy areas 2006 – 2008,**
point 3.1 Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
is changed to
Energy Production and Energy Efficiency
proposed by Mr Stefan Herms, Germany

The discussion on Work Plan went on as described below:

Ms Inger Linge, Sweden, agreed with the proposed key areas. She also underlined the importance of having Russian regions in the organisation. BSSSC will be then representative for the whole Baltic Sea Region. She pointed out the fact that BSSSC is not a member organisation, as it might be understood from the Draft Work Plan 2006-2008 (see **BSSSC Mission**) but a representative of the subregions in the Baltic Sea Region. This formulation should be changed, she suggested.

The Board adopted the proposed change (from *member regions* to *subregions in the Baltic Sea Region*).

Mr Hans-Jörgen Holm, Denmark, underlined the importance of having priorities. He said that the Danish regions need some time to further discuss the Work Plan.

Mr Tommy Karlsson, Sweden, pointed out the importance of having an overview of activities that other BSR organisations are involved in and having a closer cooperation with secretariats in the other Baltic Sea Region organisations (such as Helcome, CPMR, CBSS, etc.)

Ms Krystyna Wroblewska, Poland suggested having a coordination meeting with all secretariats in BSR in order to exchange information – for example in connection with the Annual Conference.

Mr Arne Ören informed that BSSSC have got a CBSS-produced overview on what activities and working groups the different BSR organisations are involved in.

Mr Karl Löfmark, Sweden said that BSSSC can take a co-ordinator role, but it is necessary to act quickly and take initiative.

Mr Arne Ören reflected on that by saying that The Baltic Sea Region has a lot of voices, which are not unison. We should try to speak with one voice, he said.

Mr Stefan Musiolik, Germany thanked for the ambitious Work Plan. The topics of the Plan seemed to be very interesting. He said that the Work Plan should be used as a pragmatic document and it would be a good idea to bring businessmen and politicians together. Further he said that it is important to have a balance between political issues and practical outcomes. The Work Program is an invitation to all of us, he added. Mr Musiolik confirmed Schleswig-Holstein`s readiness to take the lead role in the work with Maritime Policy in BSSSC.

Mr Stefan Herms, Germany had a comment on the title of Renewable Energy under the key policy area of Sustainable Development. He proposed to use broader term, not limiting the issue just to a specific "Renewable Energy". It is also important to have Energy Production on the agenda. The "Energy Production and Energy Efficiency" was thus proposed as a title.

The Board adopted the change concerning the title of Energy under Sustainable Development accordingly.

Mr Karl Löfmark, Sweden supported the Work Plan. It gives us possibility to continue the work, and work with new issues, he said. He confirmed that Region Skåne would take the responsibility for Transport and Infrastructure issue.

Mr Thomas Pfannkuch, Germany encouraged the Board members to indicate whether they would take the lead role in different issues/key areas, for example, if they were already involved in the area-related activities. He asked whether Finland could be in charge of Energy key policy area.

Mr Tommy Karlsson, Sweden said that it would be a great idea to combine Public Health and Civil Security. The issues of Trafficking and Illegal Immigration are also related to the key area of Civil Security. He indicated that it would be of interest to Stockholm to participate in the work within the key policy area of Civil Security.

Ms Ann Irene Sæternes provided the Board with the information about the idea of creating an information network in order to improve information exchange and said that AER (Assembly of European Regions) have already done that.

Mr Karl Löfmark, Sweden emphasised the importance of sharing information. He added also that BSSSC should try to go further by, for instance, participating in the working groups with other BSR organisations.

The Board adopted the Work Plan 2006 – 2008 with the above-mentioned changes. Please find enclosed the approved Work Plan 2006 – 2008 with the adopted changes.

6 BSSSC and the Future

At the Board Meeting in Kiel on 20 September 2006 it was decided that the New Chairmanship should formulate and present proposals on the future of BSSSC. Ann Irene Sæternes informed the Board that the BSSSC Chairman would like to visit all national platforms in BSSSC during the first months of the Norwegian chairmanship period.

The tour around the BSR will be an important part in the process of preparing concrete proposals to the Board with regard to the future policies and activities of BSSSC. "Future Paper" (Point 6, the Board Agenda) will be used as a guide for the round trip. Based on

the outcomes of the dialog with national platforms, the Chairman will prepare a paper for the Board during Spring 2007.

Mr Karl Löfmark, Sweden welcomed the idea of round trip.

Mr Stefan Herms, Germany also welcomed it and said that his region would try to co-ordinate such a meeting with a regular meeting between the Northern German regions and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs on BSR affairs.

The Board welcomed the initiative from the Norwegian Chairmanship to visit the national platforms of BSSSC. The outcomes of the meetings will be presented to the Board in Spring 2007 and will form a basis for discussion and adoption of future policies and activities of BSSSC.

7 BSSSC Ad hoc Work Groups and Rapporteurs

7.1 Cooperation with Russia

Ms Katarina Borgh-Rahm, EU-commission DG Relex could not take part in the Board Meeting. Ms Ann Irene Sæternes, BSSSC Secretariat, elaborated on the issue of Co-operation with Russia and Belarus within the new objective 3 programme for the Baltic Sea Region.

The Joint Programming Committee for the new "Interreg IV" transnational programme in the Baltic Sea Region has decided to go for an integrated programme with ENPI (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument). An updated version of the programme will be elaborated with input from Russia and Belarus, and this will be an important tool for financing projects involving Russia. The new transnational programme for 2007 – 2013 will also provide financial means for implementing the Northern Dimension policy from 2007 on.

The Board thanked for the information.

7.2 Northern Dimension

Mr Thomas Pfannkuch, Germany presented the final report on Northern Dimension (ND) and the experience, which has been gained from the work in the ad hoc working group. He informed that EU is discussing the matter of ND with Russia in order to develop a new agreement for 2007. He emphasised that ND should include more than just cross-border co-operation with Russia. Seen from a Baltic Sea Region perspective the new Baltic Sea programmes can be important for BSSSC. European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) seems to become a significant tool for implementation of ND. A "ND Steering Group" will be established to coordinate future ND implementation. Mr Pfannkuch said that it would not be necessary to form a new BSSSC ad hoc group on ND by now, and that active observation and reporting back to the Board could also be done by a region represented in the Board, which was already active on this issue. The ND Work Group was by this report declared formally closed.

The Board thanked Mr Pfannkuch for the excellent work.

7.3 Maritime Issues

Mr Stefan Musiolik informed that the feedbacks on BSSSC Annual Conference in Kiel have been very positive. He also informed about the further procedures in connection with

the Action Plan/White Paper, which will probably be finalised and produced in the year 2008.

Mr Musiolik informed that the Kiel Declaration would be distributed to central stakeholders, inclusive CBSS and other Pan-Baltic organisations. He stressed the importance of trying to influence with regard to the Maritime Issue on the national level in respective countries. It would also be of importance to disseminate information to the public on the issue. Mr Musiolik encouraged the representatives of the Board to use the International Ocean Day 8 June to show diversity future perspectives in Maritime Issues.

The BSSSC Secretariat informed that BSSSC would have discussions with the maritime clusters of Turku, Oslo, Schleswig-Holstein and Gdansk in order to arrange a workshop. It would be also of importance to cooperate with Northern Sea Commission (where Norway also holds the presidency at the moment).

The Board thanked Mr Stefan Musiolik for the information.

7.4 **Youth Policy**

Mr Lasse Lehre, Norway - the Youth Representative of BSSSC - informed the Board about the Youth and the City conference in Tallinn, Estonia. On 23 – 25 November the Youth will continue its work in a meeting/workshop in Szczecin, Poland. Public Health is selected as one of the subjects. The Youth would give a more detailed report after this meeting. Ms Ann Irene Sæternes informed the Board that youth participation would be included in the work with the Annual Conference in Turku.

7.5 **Transport and Infrastructure**

Region Skåne have responsibility for the work with Transport and Infrastructure. Mr Karl Löfmark, Sweden informed the Board that due to the national election in Sweden the Region of Skåne would have to wait for a set up of new political structure before the work with Transport and Infrastructure could continue. In the next meeting the region Skåne will give a report on this matter.

7.6 **Others**

There was not any significant news with regard to the Baltic 21 Project. BSSSC Chairmanship has decided to participate in "The Baltic Eco-region Project" led by the German Federal Ministry of the Environment. The project consortium consisting of 27 Baltic 21 members and affiliated actors (BSR Interreg III B NP). The Secretariat will provide more information on the issue at the next Board Meeting.

8 **Coming events of importance for BSSSC**

8.1 **BSSSC Annual Conference 2007 in Turku**

The next BSSSC Annual Conference will take place in Turku, Finland, 13-14 September 2007. The main theme of the Annual Conference will be Energy. Mr Ville Roslakka from the Regional Council of Southwest Finland informed the Board about a planned working meeting in Turku with the BSSSC Secretariat on 17 November. It was proposed by the BSSSC Secretariat to have a Partner Search Forum for the new Objective 3 Programme for the BSR 2007 – 2013 during the Annual Conference – also with a focus on Energy. It was suggested to include time to present and discuss other BSSSC related issues (eg. Maritime Policy).

The Secretariat informed that in order to establish a contact with Mr Andris Piebalgs, the

EU Commissioner on Energy, the Secretariat would take up contact with Ms Evita Grzibovska (Adviser to the Chairman on EU issues at the Brussels` Office of Latvian Association of Local and regional Governments) to get assistance.

The Board thanked for the information.

8.2 **Board Meetings 2007**

8-9 March in Kaunas (LT) – confirmed

3-4 May in Riga (LV) – dates to be confirmed

13-14 September in Turku (FIN) - confirmed

15-16 November in Gdansk (PL) – dates to be confirmed

The Board approved the dates for the Board meetings in 2007.

9 **Any other business**

Mr Gerhard Stahl, CoR invited BSSSC to co-operation with CoR. Ms Krystyna Wroblewska, Poland suggested that BSSSC should accept the invitation.

Mr Gerhard Stahl proposed to sign a contract between BSSSC and CoR on administrative level.

The Board agreed to sign a contract on administrative level with CoR.

Mr Stefan Herms announced an Interreg IV Partenariat in Hamburg in May. He asked whether it would be of interest to BSSSC to participate as co-organiser of the event. He added that additional information about the event would be provided later.

Chairman thanked the Board Members for the constructive work and closed the meeting. Chairman specially thanked Mr Hans-Jürgen Holst, Denmark, who announced that he would withdraw from the Board by the end of this year - due to the structural reforms in Denmark.