



**Present:**

Mr Jon Halvard Eide (NO), Mr Tommy Eliason (B7), Ms Ülle Erman (EE), Mr Sebastian Gojdz (PL), Mr Louis Hansen (DK), Ms Birgit Küstner (DE), Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek (Secretariat), Mr Pawel Maciejewski (Secretariat), Mr Jaakko Mikkola (FI), Mr Stefan Musiolik (DE), Ms Marlene Rothe (DE), Ms Ann Irene Saeternes (NO), Mr Ossi Savolainen (FI), Mr Vladimir Svet (EE), Mr Arne Tilk (EE), Ms Mr Thore Westermoen (NO), Ms Krystyna Wroblewska (PL), Mr Janne Tamminen (FI), Mr Kevin Kiraga (PL), Ms Agita Kaupuza (LV), Mr Asger Andreasen (DK), Ms Hannele Luukkainen (FI), Ms Josefina Bjurström (FI), Mr Olgierd Geblewicz (Chairman).

**1. Opening of the Board Meeting**

**1.1 Welcome by Mr Olgierd Geblewicz**

Chairman Olgierd Geblewicz welcomed the BSSSC Board members and thanked them for their participation in the CETC Conference entitled "Alternative & Cohesion", which was held a day before at the European Parliament. The Chairman underlined that the meeting is special, due to the fact that it is the last one under the presidency of the Westpomeranian Region. He thanked the Board for their contributions and engagement over these 2 years and expressed his conviction that the upcoming Helsinki-Uusimaa Region Chairmanship will continue the work in the best interests of the organization. Chairman Geblewicz presented the BSSSC Biennial Report developed by the Secretariat. The publication has been disseminated among the participants of the meeting together with a gift for the occasion – traditional ginger bread.

**1.2 Adoption of the meeting agenda**

The Board adopted the meeting agenda. Mr Jaakko Mikkola informed the Board that due to the absence of Mr Ossi Savolainen, a part of the point on Annual Conference 2013 will be moved to 'any other business'.

**1.3 Adoption of the BSSSC Board meeting minutes from Lillestrøm, 17 September 2012**

The Board adopted the minutes of the BSSSC Board meeting held in Lillestrøm on 17 September 2012.

**2. Presentation of the BSSSC Biannual Report 2011-2012**

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek gave more detailed information about the report entitled "Baltic issues from a regional perspective. The BSSSC biennial report 2011–2012." She informed that the publication consists of 2 parts: the first one summarizes the 2-year period of the Westpomeranian Chairmanship in which the member-regions contributed with their reports. On this occasion Ms Ludwiczek thanked the regions for their reports. The second section gives the experts' view on the Baltic issues in selected areas, which are in line with the BSSSC priorities. The Secretariat has invited many well-known professionals – scholars and researchers, representatives of ministries and regional governments, organizations from all around the Baltic Sea and major EU decision-makers.

Mr Stefan Musiolik said that certainly the content requires some time to study, although in his opinion the visual aspect is very attractive, clear and inspiring. On this occasion Mr Musiolik also thanked the Secretariat for their work and expressed his hope that the Westpomeranian Region will continue their participation in the work of the BSSSC in the future.

Chairman Geblewicz confirmed that he will keep the position of Board Member in the following years, in the case of his absence Ms Ludwiczek will represent the region.

Ms Hannele Luukkainen also gave congratulations on the work done in the past 2 years and also for the report.

### **3. Annual Conferences**

#### **3.1 Annual Conference 2012: Report from the Norwegian host**

On behalf of the conference host, the Eastern Norway County Network, Ms Ann-Irene Saeternes briefly reported about the 20<sup>th</sup> BSSSC Annual Conference. Ms Saeternes informed that there were over 400 participants signed up for the event, which has shown a great interest for Baltic cooperation. Ms Saeternes also agreed that the idea of combining the annual conference with the BSR Programme conference gave a very positive result. According to an internal evaluation (only in Norwegian for the time being) prepared for the organizers, a set budget for the event was sufficient. She underlined the great role Mr Udo Biss played once again as a moderator. The evaluation on the GREEN conference is currently also being prepared. The results from the Innovative Camp will be collected and published as a booklet, most probably by the beginning of 2013. Ms Saeternes informed that the presentations, speeches etc. are still available at [www.bsssc.no](http://www.bsssc.no). She informed that the political Board is positive to the idea of continuing the cooperation within the BSSSC and that it is willing to give support for planning of the future event if that is so wished.

Chairman Geblewicz congratulated her on the excellent organization of the event, especially the cultural part.

#### **3.2 Annual Conference 2013: Report from the Finnish host**

Mr Janne Tamminen informed that the 21<sup>st</sup> BSSSC Annual Conference will take place on 16-18 October at the Marina Congress Centre in the center of Helsinki. Although the programme is not prepared yet, Mr Tamminen confirmed that the following organizations will be invited: HELCOM, CBSS (at that time the presidency in the Council will be held by Finland), the John Nurminen Foundation on the protection of the Baltic Sea. The conference programme will correspond to the themes of the presidency which will be presented later on. The first day of the conference will be concentrated on political issues, whereas the second one will consist of presentations on various projects.

Mr Jaakko Mikkola presented the main priorities of the upcoming chairmanship (an update of the article which is in the BSSSC Report 2011-2012). The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, entrepreneurship and innovation, and cooperation with Russia and Belarus will be cross-cutting themes that will be addressed during the Presidency. Next, Mr Mikkola presented the 5 main priority areas:

- 1) Maritime issues – biological state of the BSR, maritime safety, integrated coastal management, green shipping. At this point the Helsinki-Uusimaa Chairmanship will also focus on synergy between different working group in the BSR.
- 2) Energy and Climate Issues – renewable energy solutions, bioenergy and sustainable development.
- 3) Youth Policy – at this point Mr Mikkola referred to the long-term work of the Westpomeranian Region and Norwegian partners in the area and hoped that it can be continued.

- 4) The Northern and Arctic Dimension – this area of interest would cover Iceland and the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Federation. Mr Mikkola informed that the Presidency will primarily focus on improving connectivity, strengthening accessibility and promoting the transport corridors of the BSR.
- 5) Cohesion Policy – the Finnish Presidency will continue the work related to the preparations of the future EU programming period for 2014–2020 with an emphasis on the principles of subsidiarity and multi-level governance and on promoting regional innovation strategies for smart specialization and the implementation of the objectives of the EUSBSR through relevant Operational Programmes.

Mr Mikkola informed that the document presenting these themes will be sent to the Board and it could be further discussed at the next meeting in 2013.

Mr Thore Westermoen, on behalf of Norwegian Regions, declared the support and approval for the priorities presented.

Ann Irene Saeternes suggested informing the European Commission about the date of the conference in order to avoid overlapping the terms. She also proposed to consider inviting the former Chairmen of the BSSSC to that anniversary edition. The last suggestion concerned the participation of the Russian partners, as in Lillestrom there was an evident lack of their representatives. Ms Saeternes informed that Mr Roger Ryberg has already declared the interest of the Buskerud Region in cooperating in the area of energy security. The Eastern Norway County Network therefore would be able to cover this issue during the conference.

Mr Stefan Musiolik gave thanks for the report and proposed to add one topic-priority – culture. Mr Musiolik underlined that this issue together with regional identity is currently high on the agenda and it is included as a new priority area in the EUSBSR Action Plan. Land Schleswig-Holstein will take over the role of co-coordinator of this priority within the Baltic Strategy together with Poland, namely the Polish Ministry of Culture. The final decision will be taken in January/February 2013. Mr Musiolik sees also an opportunity for the BSSSC in this area. He informed that the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) and the Nordic Council of Ministers is also willing to develop the collaboration in the area.. Culture could be this joint point of interest which will bring the Russian representatives back to the BSSSC, he added.

Chairman Geblewicz questioned the lack of tourism and culture issues among the 11 priorities of the next budgetary perspective. In his opinion these two topics could be also a point of interest for the BSSSC.

Ms Agita Kaupuza suggested to include also the area of creative industries. This topic is very high on the agenda in Brussels as well in Latvia. Ms Kaupuza had also a question concerning the connectivity of the Baltic States within the Arctic area.

Mr Mikkola responded that the initiative came originally from Lapland and could be developed with other regions.

Ms Luukkainen gave thanks for the comments and stressed that pollution of the Baltic Sea remains the main issue for the Finnish presidency.

Ms Krystyna Wroblewska expressed her hope that the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as a cross-cutting priority will not be given less care than during the Westpomeranian Chairmanship. As regards to the issue of including culture, Ms Wroblewska agreed with this proposal. What is more, the area of the creative industries should be also taken into consideration, as many regions are highly interested in this topic at the moment. She also stressed that apart from the Polish Ministry of Culture,

the Baltic regions in Poland should be involved. Ms Wroblewska mentioned the flagship project on tourism coordinated by Pomorskie Region, which is related to culture as well.

Ms Ann Irene Saeternes recalled the Northern Dimension issue, which was part of the BSSSC area of interest and cooperation in previous years. The ND has a cultural pillar which in fact was considered by the BSSSC as the most interesting part, as it lays in the competences of the regions. MS Saeternes stated that this could be of interest while speaking about the inclusion of the culture aspect to the BSSSC Work Plan 2013-2014.

Mr Musiolik shared the opinion of Ms Wroblewska on the EUSBSR to put more focus on this issue in the future. As regards to the comment on the Northern Dimension by Ms Saeternes, Mr Musiolik underlined that this could be also a platform to include the Russian representatives. Besides, the forthcoming Finnish presidency should use its experience in cooperating with Russia to engage them more in the work of the BSSSC.

#### **4. Political Aims and Goals of the BSSSC – Westpomeranian Region**

Chairman Geblewicz thanked the Board for the valuable contributions to the debate on the future of the organization. He recalled the first statement presented during the Board meeting in Rovaniemi and the second prepared for this meeting (sent in advance). He expressed his hope that during the Helsinki-Uusimaa Chairmanship the BSSSC Board will continue its involvement in improving the work of the network. The Chairman gave floor to Ms Ludwiczek.

Ms Ludwiczek stressed that keeping this point in the agenda for future meeting depends on the decision of the new chairmanship. The papers attached to the documentation summarize the discussion undertaken during the last year. These were the bullet points, major drivers:

1. It has been indicated that the organization should intensify cooperation with other Baltic organizations, especially in the area of synergies between the working groups. A concept of a new ad hoc working group within the BSSSC has also appeared.
2. As regards to intensifying the engagement in the EUSBSR implementation, the Westpomeranian Chairmanship put much effort into influencing the implementation process. However, there is a question of being more decisive in this respect. Another idea was to establish a flagship project where the BSSSC member regions will be partners.
3. It has been also been pointed out that the member regions could propose concrete projects and actions.
4. When it comes to the cooperation with the European institutions, the BSSSC should in first place intensify contacts with the European Commission in order to apply influence on new developments in the policy areas which are in the scope of the organization's interest. The fact that some of the BSSSC Board member are members of the Committee of the Regions should be used.

#### **5. Follow-up Work Plan 2011-2012**

##### **5.1 Cohesion policy – Danish Regions**

Mr Asger Andreasen on behalf of Mr Knud Andersen presented the recent developments in this area. He recalled the latest debate on the future budget. He underlined that, apart the Danish government calls for savings, the Danish regions are pro-reinforcing the budget with sufficient finance. The Danish regions have been trying to influence the position of the government in this matter. There is a question of allocation funds to either to the Cohesion Policy or the Common Agriculture Policy – different countries have different approaches to this issue.

As regards to the BSR dimension of the cohesion policy, Mr Andreasen listed some of the developments:

1. New Small Scale Funding Facilities: the Council of the Baltic Sea States project Support Facility EU and the EU Seed Money Facility.
2. A last call for the flagship projects within the Baltic Sea Programme 2007-2013.
3. Drafting of the Operational Programme which will start in January 2013.

More detailed information will be circulated among the participants after the meeting.

Mr Musiolik recalled the amount of funds for the INTERREG cooperation all over Europe. Between 2007-2013 it was 7.7 billion EUR, for the next programming period the European Commission proposed 11.7 billion EUR, which is an increase of approx. 15%. The Cyprus presidency in the Council of the EU proposed 8.7 billion and then 9.7 billion. President Herman Van Rompuy proposed 8.7 billion EUR, in fact which is an increase.

## **5.2 EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – Westpomeranian Region**

Since the developments in the new priority area of culture were already discussed, Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek presented in addition 5 main objectives (as of 15 November):

1. Promotion of BSR culture, cultural heritage and creative industries
2. Joint presentation of BSR culture, cultural heritage and creative industries
3. Mobility of artists
4. Common BSR cultural identity
5. Efficient framework of BSR cultural cooperation

Ms Ludwiczek, in her report, underlined that the indicators are particularly difficult to be set, as the objectives are hard to measure. Ms Ludwiczek informed that she takes part in EUSBSR Working Team founded by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which clearly shows the interest of cooperation between the national authorities and the regions. She informed also that a High Level Group meeting will be held most probably in January.

Ms Saeternes recalled the session of the CETC seminar where Prof. Danuta Heubner in her speech pointed out that the European Parliament works on multilevel governance and there is an evident lack of some focus on how to involve the regional level while considering the next programming period and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. What is more, the regions are not that visible in the Action Plan. Ms Saeternes stressed that this could be a point of action for UBC, the Baltic Sea Commission and the BSSSC at the following EUSBSR Forum.

Mr Tamminen informed that the Baltic Sea Commission has established a working group on multilevel governance (coordinated by the Swedish region). The group will organize a meeting in spring 2013, this could be an occasion to join forces in this matter.

## **5.3 Maritime policy – Schleswig-Holstein**

Mr Stefan Musiolik informed about developments within the topic of Clean Baltic Sea Shipping in which the BSSSC takes part on the political committee. He recalled the midterm conference of this project which was held in Riga, Latvia on the 18th and 19th of September. He noticed that there were problems with some of the partners; nevertheless visible results were achieved. A good example would be the shore side power supply for ships which was built in Oslo harbour. He mentioned that it was planned to be enlarged so that cruise ships would also have power supply in Oslo harbor in the future. He added another example of a new power supply for ship facilities in Ystad, Sweden and in Trelleborg. It is

believed is has been implemented also due to the CleanShip project. Mr Musolik mentioned the presence of the representatives of the expert group on CBSS maritime policy, the Russian presidency of the group and also the CBSS Secretariat. He informed that the presence of those people shows that all actions are interlinked and that CleanShip was not only a project but that there was a close connection of the project with the BSSSC, the Council of Baltic Sea States and the EU Baltic Sea Strategy. At that point he reminded the Board about priority area 4 within the renewed Baltic Sea Strategy: to become a modern region for clean shipping. The priority area coordinator who is comes from the Danish maritime authority, Mr Bjarke Wiehe Bötcher also participated in the conference. It affirms the fact that it has been real progress not only on the project level but also on the policy level. Russian participation at the Riga conference was also a good sign for future cooperation. The lead partner who comes from Trelleborg, Sweden organised a further meeting especially for the Russian stakeholders in Kaliningrad in October. It was indicated that more than 20 participants from Russia had come to that meeting. Mr Musolik underlined that the organisers succeeded in getting Russians involved and even though it is uncertain how sustainable this development would be, it was a good milestone. However there's a little bit of standstill in cooperation with the CBSS, Helcom and other actors as concerns maritime dialog. He said a meeting of different Baltic Sea organizations with maritime activities should have occurred in November, but it was cancelled. Mr Musolik was informed that the former presidency chair in the expert group has had some problems. At the moment, he informed that the successor to that position would be Lolan Eriksson from the Finnish Ministry of Transport. She is also responsible for the maritime group in Helcom. Mr Musolik expressed his belief that there is a strong partner on that side - who will try to carry on the maritime dialogue. The aim for the nearest future is to have a common meeting of the different maritime actors within the Baltic Sea Region during the Baltic Sea Days in Sankt Petersburg.

Furthermore the Board was informed about the working group on the MP meeting which took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December in the Hansa Office. There was a presentation by Mr Rajewski from Szczecin Maritime University who gave an introduction to clean shipping issues for fishing boats. At this meeting the member of the European Commission, responsible for the topic of green shipping was also present. She presented the background on funding possibilities for green shipping within the TNT programme and Marco Polo programme.

At the end of his input Mr Musiolik raised the topic of participation in the working group meetings which was, as he described, not overwhelming. Therefore, the structure of the group work might be reflected upon. It might be useful to switch from a working group structure to one of rapporteur, following the example of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. The topic of maritime policy is important and it should be continued in perhaps a modest structure, he concluded.

At this point Mr Eide came up with a question and some comments. He asked if the maritime group was addressing the issue of how to implement IMO and EU directives on reducing the emissions of sulphure from maritime transport. He informed the Board that the level should be reduced by 1.7 % both in the Baltic and North Sea. He underlined it's an important platform for cooperation with various actors from the pan Baltic area and he gave information about the so-called funding instruments which the European Commission came up with.

Mr Stefan Musiolik mentioned that the main topic during the meeting of the working group on maritime policy on the day before (3<sup>rd</sup> December) was the discussion of how real players will adapt to the stronger regulations concerning sulphure dioxide after 2015.

The COM presented the idea of a toolbox- with different measures to help real players to adapt to the stronger standards. He followed up with information about a programme where you could apply for

utilities and where it was possible to get money from the EU side, from the TNT programme. It was indicated that the call was opened until the end of November thus it will be closed at the end of February. It is a chance to get refinancing for the process of adapting to the stronger standards. He noticed there was a chance of receiving up to 50 % of financing. There was an idea to install a sustainable shipping forum- where different actors could have been brought together to discuss concrete measures. The 'toolbox' would be presented at the end of this year or in the beginning of 2013. He believes the next step would be proposing the sustainable shipping forum. Chairman Geblewicz concluded by saying that it is a big challenge because of the short transition period for the fleet to be modernised.

#### **5.4. Climate policies and energy security**

Mr Geblewicz informed the Board about the attached paper- "Recommendations on the development of renewable energy systems in the Baltic Sea Region presented by the Baltic 21 which was presented at the Board meeting in Lillestrom, adopted by a written procedure and thus became the BSSSC paper.

Ms Küstner reported to the Board that the latest Baltic 21 meeting took place in Stockholm on the 20th and 21st of November. The main topics were:

- Russian priorities of the CBSS presidency
- Update of Baltic 21 lighthouse projects
- Baltic 21 input to the revision of the Baltic Sea Strategy Action Plan

Ms Küstner declared to send a report regarding this topic.

Chairman Geblewicz asked the Board for further comments on that matter and upon a lack of questions moved on to the 'Science and education' point of the BSSSC Board Meeting Agenda.

#### **5.5. Science and education**

Ms Küstner informed the Board that the summary of that BSSSC priority area has been presented in the BSSSC biannual report. She reported that the revision of the action plan of the Baltic Sea Strategy was engaging intensively with the PAC and HAL. She also confirmed that, more than likely, the priority area 'education, youth and health care' would be split up. There was a discussion concerning the "education" priority area. It is highly possible that there will be a priority area of education and youth of its own and Hamburg and the Northern Association might be coordinators. The High level group will probably decide on that issue on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January.

#### **5.6. Youth policy**

Mr Louis Hansen gave words of appreciation to Ms Małgorzata Ludwiczek for all her work for young people and in the Working Group on Youth Policy during the last years. He underlined the great importance of the youth meetings both in Tallinn as in Lillestrom. He congratulated the leaders of the youth group especially Vladimir Svet for all his work in the Working Group on Youth Policy. He expressed his hope for the future cooperation with Russian young people.

Chairman Geblewicz gave the floor to the Youth Representative to the BSSSC Board – Vladimir Svet. He presented the Youth Declaration which was adopted by the BSSSC youth network in Lillestrom and sent out by the Secretariat to all Board members. He underlined the long-lasting process of creating the declaration. The aim of this declaration was to create a universal basis of youth participation on the local and regional governing level and to create similar standards of involving youth into the decision making process. He expressed his feeling that inclusion of youth into the decision making process depends only on the will of local leaders as there is no strict regulation in that matter. He presented the whole



declaration to the BSSSC Board. He emphasized the cooperation of different youth bodies that were engaged in the creation of this declaration and asked the Chairman to accept the adoption of the Youth Declaration.

In discussion Mr Westermoen, underlined the importance of youth participation. He suggested that the BSSSC should appreciate the youth network in our organization. He expressed his belief of uniqueness to all European 'institutions'.

Next the Board discussed the situation in the CBSS Expert Group on Youth and the Youth Secretariat in Kiel.

Mrs Małgorzata Ludwiczek informed that the CBSS expert group on youth affairs is about to decide whether they want to support the Youth Secretariat in Kiel financially. She added that a letter of support for the Secretariat in Kiel was sent, but there was no reply so far and the situation is uncertain.

Mr Stefan Musolik informed that Schleswig-Holstein region received information from the Kiel Secretariat and their regions Foreign Ministry was asked to get further information. He reported there was a positive movement during the Russian CBSS presidency in the expert group on youth affairs. Members of the expert group on youth affairs were invited to come to Moscow. He mentioned also about another meeting in Strasbourg on which the members decided they do not want the expert group on youth affairs and the secretariat to function any longer.

He proposed a letter to be sent to the CBSS CSO with the support of the BSSSC Board to the Expert Group and the Secretariat in Kiel

Mr Krystyna Wróblewska strengthened what Mr. Stefan Musiolik said and suggested sending the letter not only to the Secretariat, but to all Member States because they were the ones to decide. She suggested that the BSSSC youth network should look for other youth organizations within the Baltic Sea Region.

The Board accepted the proposal of sending the letter to the CBSS CSO before their meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> December in Stockholm.

Chairman Olgierd Geblewicz moved to the discussion on adopting the 'Declaration of Youth Participation'

Mr Louis Hansen suggested it is high time to adopt it, because of the importance of the issue and the high quality of the work performed by the youth team.

Chairman Olgierd Geblewicz confirmed the adoption of the "Declaration on Youth Participation"

## **5.7. Public Health and Quality of Life**

Ms Ludwiczek gave a report about the Best Agers project which took place on November 21<sup>st</sup>. The project was said to be a great success. She mentioned that the project took place in Schleswig-Holstein. She added that the project had not finished yet- because it had only got funds for its extension until 2013. From now it would be called 'Best Agers Lighthouse Strategic Age Management for SME in the Baltic Sea Region' and will be financed by the Baltic Sea Region Programme. She recalled the BSSSC Board meeting in Rovaniemi in which the BSSSC decided to promote this project on BSSSC website. She informed that BSSSC is now the host of Pan Baltic regions network for innovative age management. She invited all the Board member to the main page of BSSSC website. The aim of the website is to communicate between regional institutions on age management and demography issues. Ms Ann Irene Saerseness reminded the Board about an expert group from Norway that contributed to the project. She asked not to exclude Norway from being part of this pan Baltic network. She informed the Board that this is the idea of the Baltic Sea Programme to go beyond country borders. She requested to update the map.



She asked for more information distributed via email between the regions so they can get more involved in the project and reminded that the Best Agers conference was organised together with the 20 th BSSSC Annual Conference in Lillestrom.

### **5.8. Co-operation with Russia**

Ms Kustner informed that the work concentrated on the Turku process. The meeting was organized in Hamburg where the stakeholders met. There was a steering group and political stakeholders have spoken in working groups to represent their ideas in concrete projects.

She reported the main issues concern funding, because the rules of EU grants and difficulties in travelling have been recognized.

Mr Stefan Musiolik informed about a new rule in Russia, which orders all international organizations including NGOs to register as 'foreign agents'.

### **6. BSR Programme**

Ms Ann Irene Saeternes informed the Board that the last call was held in June, 3 projects were adopted (2 on multilevel governance and 1 within branding). TransGovernance is being led by the Blekinge region, Sweden which is a continuation of the TransBaltic project (supported earlier by the BSSSC). This one could be followed up by the network in the future.

At the end of November there was another meeting in Riga where the extension stage for projects was mainly discussed. One of them was Best Agers. Ms Saeternes informed about the new initiative – SEED Money Facility for the EUSBSR which is planned to take off early next year. Approx. 1,5 million Euro is being provided by the European Commission, and it also applies to Norway.

The Monitoring Committee still follows the implementation of the projects. Ms Saeterens gave some more details about the upcoming programme. There has been a national procedure regarding the topics on which the programme should concentrate (from an 11-point list). The preliminary decision is that the programmes should have 3 main areas: innovation, environmental resources and connectivity. This division, similar to the EUSBSR has been approved by all 11 countries. The Russian side is also involved in the process (on the ministerial level). The money will be transferred from Foreign policy to DG Regio.

The first roundtable talks involving the political organizations and other stakeholders will be held in March 2013. There was also a debate on involving private partners – the idea is supported by all 11 countries.

### **7. Report from Brussels**

Mr Sebastian Gojdz informed that most of the main EU-topics were already covered. Mr Gojdz thanked the Board for the cooperation as a Brussels Antenna.

### **8. BSSSC Board meetings 2012**

Chairman Geblewicz informed that by now there is only one meeting confirmed in 2013 – on 16th October in Helsinki. The Chairman informed that a formal letter to the CBSS Russian Presidency has been issued recently with a proposal to organize a joint meeting with the CBSS CSO in St. Petersburg (March/April). He also recalled the declaration from the Danish and Latvian partners to organize a meeting in 2013.

Ms Birgit Kuestner in accordance with the BSSSC tradition offered to organize a meeting in Brussels by the end of the year. It could be done together with Schleswig-Holstein.

Mr Asger Andreasen confirmed the invitation issued earlier by Mr Knud Andersen. The meeting could be held on Bornholm Island. The date is to be decided.

#### **9. Reports from meetings and events**

Ms Ludwiczek mentioned just the outcomes of the agreement between the BSSSC and the Best Agers project which was discussed earlier.

#### **10. Coming events**

The Board members declared their participation in events mentioned during the BSSSC Board meeting

#### **11. Any other business**

Mr Ossi Savolainen thanked the BSSSC Chairman and the Secretariat for the work. Special thanks went to Ms Ludwiczek for her engagement over the past 2 years.

Mr Savolainen expressed his hope for good cooperation with all of the BSSSC Board members. He wished a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! In closing, he invited all the Board to the first meeting under the Finnish Chairmanship in Hämeenlinna, Finland in February. The upcoming Secretariat presented a 2013 calendar with the dates of 20<sup>th</sup> BSSSC Annual Conference displayed.

Ms Saeternes called to confirm the exact dates of the Board meetings because the calendar, especially in May/June is full.

Ms Ludwiczek informed that Mr Uno Aldegren had resigned from the mandate and that Ms Eva Anderson from Norkoping will replace him in BSSSC. In her last words she gave her thanks to all the Board members and civil servants for their two-year cooperation.