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Present:

Mr. Knud Andersen (DK), Mr. Asger Andreasen (DK), Ms. Josefina Bjurström (Secretariat), Mr. Wieslaw Byczkowski (PL), Mr. Rogaciano Cavadas Kaipainen (Brussels Antenna), Mr. Jon Halvard Eide (NO), Ms. Ülle Erman (EE), Mr. Louis Hansen (DK), Mr. Stefan Herms (DE), Mr. Lauri Hämäläinen (FI), Mr. Kevin Kiraga (PL), Ms. Birgit Küstner (DE), Mr. Lasse Lehre (NO), Mr. Matti Lipsanen (FI), Ms. Malgorzata Ludwiczek (PL), Ms. Tuula Palaste-Eerola (Secretariat), Ms. Mudite Priede (LV), Mr. Toivo Riimaa (EE), Ms. Ann Irene Saeternes (NO), Mr. Ossi Savolainen (Chairman), Mr. Janne Tamminen (Secretariat), Mr. Arne Tilk (EE), Ms. Satu Vehreävesa (FI), Mr. Alexander Wendt (SE), Mr. Thore Westermoen (NO), Ms. Krystyna Wroblewska (PL).

1. Opening of the Board Meeting

1.1. Welcome by Mr Ossi Savolainen – BSSSC Chairman

Chairman Ossi Savolainen opened the meeting by wishing everyone a warm welcome and thanking the hosts for a wonderful seminar day and meeting. Referring to the speech of the special dinner guest, MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen, Chairman Savolainen pointed out that the Baltic Sea States can set an example for the whole Europe by carrying out strong co-operation. Chairman Savolainen stressed that BSSSC has an important role in implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). He also mentioned it is a great honour to work as the Chair for the BSSSC and to co-operate with all of the member regions. He pointed out that it is important to start the discussions about the next Chair for the 2015-2016 period in order to establish a troika between the former, the present and the forthcoming Chairmanships.

1.2. Roll call and presentation of the participants

Each participant presented themselves and their regions.

1.3. Adoption of the agenda

Mr. Knud Andersen asked for point 7. BSSSC Board meetings 2013 to be discussed earlier. It was moved to be discussed after point 3. After this the agenda was adopted.

1.4. Adoption of Board meeting minutes Brussels, 4 December 2012

Minutes of the previous meeting were adopted.



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2. EU programming period 2014+, Baltic Sea Region Programme and Finnish point of view – Mr. Matti Lipsanen

Mr. Matti Lipsanen from the Häme Region, also representing the regions in the Finnish programming committee, presented the current state and preparations of the Baltic Sea Region Programme for the 2014+ period from a Finnish point of view (please see presentation attached). The three main priorities for the programme will be innovation, environment and transport and accessibility. Other topical issues are discussions on how co-operation with Russia and Belarus will be conducted in the future since the ENPI tool of the current program isn't functioning. Other topics Mr. Lipsanen touched upon were simplifying and making the programme more understandable and a better inclusion of private sector partners as supporting innovation and competitiveness of the SMEs is considered very important. Mr. Lipsanen pointed out that a large involvement of stakeholders is ongoing through e.g. questionnaires, interviews and thematic workshops. A finalized paper on the 2014+ period will hopefully be ready in 2013 - the application rounds would thus start in 2014 and the projects in 2015.

Mr. Stefan Herms pointed out that during former Board meetings there have been discussions on possibilities to concentrate geographically within the Baltic Sea Region Programme, i.e. create projects for a smaller amount of participants, which would enhance the foci of the projects. These possibilities should be included in the wording of the programming. Mr. Lipsanen agreed that in some cases it could be justified and technically possible. Ms. Ann Irene Saeternes said that the Monitoring Committee has put up a task force, who now discusses the implementation of the programme parallel to the thematic approach and the contents, which gives better possibilities to take these kinds of things in account.

Mr. Knud Andersson asked Mr. Lipsanen on his impressions on co-operation with Russia, which Mr. Lipsanen answered by saying that the tools and the financing exist, which is why co-operation could be possible as soon as an agreement with the Russian central administration is found. Mr. Alexander Wendt pointed out that e.g. Blekinge has good relations with Kaliningrad and that these relations could be used for promoting co-operation between other regions. Mr. Janne Tamminen pointed out that Helsinki-Uusimaa has good relations with the Leningrad Oblast and the City of St Petersburg, which the region tries to improve continually.



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3. Report from Brussels – Mr Rogaciano Cavadas Kaipainen

Mr Cavadas thanked the Board for the opportunity to participate in the meeting and presented the Helsinki EU Office which is the new BSSSC Brussels Antenna for the 2013-2014 period. The Brussels Office will help with all kinds of BSSSC matters e.g. when organizing meetings, seminars or policy briefings and members are also invited to use the office premises if needed. Mr Cavadas also gave a briefing on the ongoing MFF negotiations where the 960 billion proposal of Herman van Rompuy was on the table. Main points of the proposal were that cuts would be made on the agricultural and cohesion funds, while the R&I funds would get substantially bigger. President of the Parliament, Mr. Martin Schulz, had initiated that the Parliament will give free hands to all of the MEPs as the vote on the MFF will be conducted by secret ballot. There were indications however that the Parliament isn't going to approve this proposal.

4. BSSSC Board meetings 2013

It was agreed that a working meeting on the agenda of the BSSSC Annual Conference is going to be held in Brussels on April 30th. It was decided that the next Board meetings will be held in Bornholm on June 24th-25th and in Helsinki on October 16th back to back with the Annual Conference. The last Board meeting of 2013 will be held in Brussels during week 48 or 49. The Hanse Office and Helsinki EU Office will come up with possible dates, which will be decided upon at the June Board meeting.

5. Presentation of the BSSSC Work Plan 2013–2014

5.1. The themes and policy priorities for 2013–2014

5.2. Co-operation with other Baltic Sea policy organizations during 2013–2014

Mr. Janne Tamminen presented the main themes and policy priorities for 2013-2014 (please see presentation attached).

Mr. Alexander Wendt asked for the Euroregion Baltic (ERB) to be added as partner as he knows the organization is interested in co-operating with the BSSSC. Ms. Satu Vehreävesa suggested that the Network of the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) should be added to the list of partners, since the NSPA shares common goals with the BSSSC concerning e.g. accessibility and sustainable use of national resources. The NSPA also has activities in Brussels and co-operation could be beneficial for both networks. Mr. Toivo Riimaa pointed out that the youth board members aren't mentioned in the work plan under point 3 BSSSC Resources 2013-2014 and suggested that they should be added.



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Mr. Thore Westermoen asked for an appendix with abbreviations and explanations on the different Baltic Sea Region organizations to be added to the work plan. Mr. Westermoen was pleased that the Northern and Arctic Dimension was one of the main topics of the work plan but suggested that transport and infrastructure issues would be moved from this topic to a 6th topic, since these questions also are very crucial and topical for the southern parts of the BSR.

At this point the next BSSSC Chairmanship was discussed. Mr. Alexander Wendt said that Sweden would be very interested in chairing the BSSSC in 2017-2018, but that upcoming elections and uncertainty of their outcome makes it hard for Sweden to chair during 2014-2015.

Mr. Lasse Lehre pointed out that the last meeting of the Joint Platform on Energy and Climate was held in 2009, and therefore suggested that this point should be erased and more focus should be put on the working group.

Mr. Stefan Herms pointed out that co-operation with Russia could have a broader role in the work plan and not only be mentioned under the Northern and Arctic Dimension. He suggested that co-operation with Russia should be mentioned as an own topic or cross cutting theme. Ms Ann Irene Saeternes suggested that it could be mentioned and underlined in the introduction.

Mr Asger Andreasen said that the Danish Regions are willing to give updates on cohesion policy also in the future. He suggested however that the work plan bullet points would be revised, since the working group has fulfilled its political goals trying to influence the planning of the next program period. He suggested that focus should be laid on more relevant matters, e.g. exchanging experiences on how the cohesion policy schemes are being implemented in the member states. Mr. Stefan Herms thought this was an excellent idea and said Hamburg would be willing to contribute to the working group. Mr. Jon Halvard Eide suggested that the work plan could mention the BSSSC as a project developer and would have a good chance to function as a good thematic platform for Interreg projects. Regarding the topic of smart specialization, Mr. Andreasen pointed out that in Denmark the subject is tackled by existing organizations, growth fora and strategies. Instead of creating new layers existing ones are used and combined to achieve goals.



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Mr. Janne Tamminen presented the suggestions Mr. Stefan Musiolik had sent in prior to the meeting as he unfortunately wasn't able to attend. Mr. Musiolik suggested that referring to previous discussions and due to the envisaged engagement of Schleswig-Holstein for a new priority "Culture & Regional Identity" within the EU Baltic Sea Strategy a Rapporteur on Culture & Regional Identity could be added to the BSSSC Resources. Mr. Tamminen pointed out that the secretariat unfortunately doesn't have the resources to take responsibility of this, but if Schleswig-Holstein is interested in taking the responsibility it is supported by the secretariat. Mr. Musiolik also pointed out that the future of the Maritime Issues working group should be discussed. Ms. Ann Irene Saeternes informed that the Norwegians would be interested in participating in the working group. Mr. Alexander Wendt promised to find out if Sweden would have the resources to chair the working group since they are Lead Partners in many major maritime issues projects.

Mr. Stefan Herms pointed out that co-operation with Baltex can continue. Regarding co-operation with Baltic21 Hamburg has to discuss with the ministry in charge and the matter will be clarified within some weeks.

Chairman Savolainen asked the Board members to send in their input and revisions for the work plan in writing as soon as possible. The secretariat will draw up a revised version of the work plan, which then will be distributed to the Board and it will be up for discussion and approval at the Board meeting in June.

6. Organization of the Working Groups for 2013–2014

Mr. Janne Tamminen presented the situation of the existing working groups and the Chairmanship's suggestions for working groups to be established or relaunched.

6.1. Maritime Issues

Point 6.1. was discussed under point 5. Mr. Alexander Wendt will find out if Blekinge/Swedish regions could take the main responsibility of the Maritime Issues working group.

6.2. Youth Policy

Ms. Malgorzata Ludwizcek gave an update on the field of youth policy. A summary and a rapport on the GREEN conference held in Lilleström, Norway in September 2012 has been conducted. In March 2013 a youth meeting will be organized in Szczecin, Poland. The youth themselves came with the idea that other



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Baltic Sea organizations should be invited to a common meeting. Mr. Kevin Kiraga elaborated further on the issue and told that invitations have been sent e.g. to South Baltic Four Corners, B7, AER, ERB, UBC and CBSS. The goal of the common meeting is to set short term goals for solid co-operation and create a structure for interaction.

Ms. Birgit Küstner asked if the BSSSC Youth Network will participate in the BS NGO Forum and urged the Network to get in contact with the PA Youth and Education in the EUSBSR whose co-ordination lies with Hamburg, since they would be very interested in getting in contact with the network regarding e.g. possible projects and funding. Ms. Ludwiczek replied that the Network will get in touch with the contact person of the PA to discuss possible co-operation and projects.

In this context the state of the CBSS Youth Secretariat was discussed. Ms. Birgit Küstner and Mr. Stefan Herms pointed out that the future of the secretariat is a matter of funding and without it the secretariat will cease to exist. Mr. Herms stressed that it is important for the youth to have some kind of structure to rely on. He urged the regions to get in contact with their national ministries to allocate some funding for the secretariat as it isn't a big amount of money that is needed. Mr. Lasse Lehre told that the Norwegians had been in contact with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Norway and gotten the answer that they support some kind of co-operation in the youth policy field but that no extra funding for it exists. The ministry in charge of the secretariat will thus follow the recommendation of the CBSS. Mr. Janne Tamminen pointed out that as Finland will take over the chairmanship of the CBSS in July 2013 this is something Helsinki-Uusimaa also can discuss with the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Alexander Wendt pointed out that similar problems have been tackled in the ERB and that the ERB youth board could be contacted for discussion.

Mr. Louis Hansen pointed out that this youth co-operation also should promote young people's possibilities to go work, train and study abroad which in addition to university students also should cover workmen with practical education. Denmark has good experiences of co-operating with Schleswig-Holstein in this matter and they are further working on improving the contacts and possibilities.

6.3. Cohesion Policy

Mr. Asger Andreasen promised to circulate an informational note on cohesion policy later.



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6.4. Energy and Climate Issues

6.5. Northern and Arctic Dimension

6.6. Transport and Infrastructure

Points 6.4., 6.5. and 6.6. were discussed simultaneously. Mr. Janne Tamminen informed about the Finnish regions BSSSC meeting, which was held February 6th. Some Finnish member regions had shown strong interest to support the work of the possible working groups and e.g. the region of Central Finland is especially interested in contributing to the Energy and Climate Issues working group. Mr. Tamminen will contact the Finnish regions in order to find out what their possibilities are in contributing to or possibly chairing some of the groups.

7. Annual Conferences

7.1. Annual Conference 2013: Report from the Finnish host (Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, Finland)

Mr. Janne Tamminen presented the dates and the current situation concerning the preparations for the Annual Conference, which will be held October 16th till 18th at Marina Congress Center in Helsinki, Finland. The BSSSC Board Meeting and the youth event will be organized on Wednesday the 16th and the 17th will consist of general seminars and parallel workshops on policy areas such as maritime and energy issues. E.g. projects and good practice examples will be presented on the 18th.

Ms. Ann Irene Saeternes suggested that the secretariat prepares a draft programme for the conference and distributes it to the Board in order to get the other regions to participate in the planning and to contact some possible speakers as well.

8. Reports from meetings and events

Mr. Janne Tamminen told the Board that the new BSSSC secretariat from Helsinki-Uusimaa visited the previous BSSSC secretariat from West Pomerania on January 7th -8th 2013. The meeting was fruitful for information exchange and e.g. deals on the BSSSC website were made.

Ms. Malgorzata Ludwiczek pointed out that in order to invite the former BSSSC Chairmen to the 21st Annual Conference to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the organization invitations need to be sent out early enough. It was agreed that this will be discussed during the working meeting in Brussels on the 30th of April.



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9. Coming events

No additions were made to the list of coming events.

10. Any other business

Mr. Alexander Wendt raised the issue that the Board meetings always tend to run out of time. He suggested that future meetings will be scheduled for at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of or a whole day. Mr. Wendt also urged all of the regions to send in their strategic plans for the 2014-2020 to the BSSSC secretariat for informational purposes, as they cover a lot of the same topics as are discussed in the BSSSC.

Ms. Ann Irene Saeternes pointed out that the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy has sent out an evaluation on the added value of macro-regional strategies. She suggested that the BSSSC should participate in order to show interest to the Commission. Previous BSSSC material could be used for input.