



BSSSC Board meeting Drammen, Norway – draft minutes (per 21.12.17)

Tuesday, 12 December 2017, 09.00-15.00

Meeting venue: Fylkestingsalen, Buskerud County Administration, Norway.

Present: Chairman Mr. Roger Ryberg (BSSSC), Ms. Ann Irene Saeternes (BSSSC), Mr. Lars Lund Godbolt (BSSSC), Ms. Gørill Elisabeth Trælstad (Buskerud county), Mr. Timo Nikolaisen (Eastern Norway County Network/Buskerud), Mr. Martin Rümmelein (Schleswig-Holstein), Mr. Rune Bakkevoll (Akershus), Mr. Lars Salvesen (Akershus), Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp (Brandenburg), Mr. Per Mannes (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Ms. Sari Rautio (Regional Council of Häme), Ms. Reetta Sorjonen (Häme region), Ms. Alla Ivanova (Kaliningrad Region), Mr. Ossi Savolainen (Helsinki Uusima Region) Ms. Krista Taipale (Helsinki Uusimaa Region), Mr. Stefan Musiolik (Schleswig-Holstein), Ms. Krystyna Wroblewska (Pomorskie Region), Mr. Arne Tilk (Association of Estonian Cities), Mr. Trond Myrland (Buskerud), Mr. Matti Lipsanen (Häme, Finland), Ms. Malgorzata Ludwiczek (West Pomeranian region), Ms. Rina Yamamoto (Buskerud county), Mr. Jon Petter Arntzen (Eastern Norway County Network).

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Board meeting

The BSSSC Chairman Roger Ryberg welcomed all to Drammen and the plenary hall of the Buskerud County Council. He especially welcomed the two new Board members from the BSSSC Youth Network - Timo Nikolaisen and Martin Rümmelein and the new Board member from Häme Region, Finland – Sari Rautio. Mr. Ryberg also congratulated the Finnish delegates with the 100 years jubilee for Finland's independence.

The Chairman then handed over the floor to Kristian Thowsen, head of the Regional Development department in Buskerud. Mr. Thowsen informed the Board about Buskerud County and the competences and focus areas of Buskerud within regional development. The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) constitute the basis for regional development in Buskerud. Important areas are industry and business development, management of wildlife and natural resources, culture and sport, cultural heritage, European projects – like Horizon 2020 and cooperation through national and European organisations and networks. Mr. Thowsen's presentation can be found enclosed the minutes.

Before entering into the next agenda points the Secretary General took the floor and handed over a pre-Christmas present to the Chairman – on behalf of the BSSSC Secretariat. A meeting mallet with the inscription of BSSSC is now included in the items of BSSSC Chairmanships – and will be used by Eastern Norway County Network and then transferred to the next chair. The Chairman thanked for the gift and took it immediately into use.

1.1 Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without any changes or amendments.



1.2 Adoption of the Board minutes from Potsdam

The minutes were adopted without additional comments.

2. Results from the Norwegian Chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)

Mr. Per Mannes from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed about the priorities of the Norwegian Chairmanship of the NCM and the results from the work in 2017. He also explained the difference between the Nordic Council – as the parliamentary system with their own rotating chairmanship – and the NCM as the governmental system. Norway took over the chairmanship in NCM from Finland – and continued some of the work already ongoing. In addition, they focused on three pillars – Norden in transition, Norden in Europe and Norden in the World. Sweden is taking over the Chairmanship in 2018 and there is a hope that some of the actions from 2017 will be continued in the next period. Mr. Mannes especially underlined the green economy and innovation, energy cooperation, health and the digital economy. A Nordic Digital Council was established on 8 December 2017 as a temporary project for 3 years. The presentation from Mr. Mannes can be found enclosed the minutes.

At the end of his intervention, Per Mannes also mentioned the EEA financial instruments, the priority areas and an overview of the countries receiving the money. In the BSR Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland are included. In the EEA projects, actors from these countries can cooperate with relevant partners from other countries in Europe. Programmes for each country will now be developed and call for projects opened during next year. The programming period runs until 2021.

In the discussion after Mr. Mannes intervention, the following issues were discussed:

- Cooperation on youth issues and involvement of the Nordic Youth Council in BSR cooperation
- Relations with Russia – cooperation
- Using the Nordic cooperation and work together in preparation for EU-programmes post 2020
- Importance of digital economy – link to the regional and local level – testing out and implementation of digitalisation in public sector
- Cross-border transport – use of Nordic cooperation to align national transport plans in border regions
- The NCM has decision-making power and can take joint decisions that will affect the member countries.
- The EEA regional cooperation fund. This new fund will be launched in the beginning of 2018. More information about the EEA financial mechanisms can be found here: <https://eeagrants.org/Who-we-are/Contact/Financial-Mechanism-Office>

Roger Ryberg thanked Mr. Mannes for very thorough information and for input to the work of BSSC.



3. Annual Conferences

Mr. Ryberg opened this agenda point by stating the importance of the BSSSC annual conferences. He also informed that the Conference Resolution from Potsdam has been widely spread and the content recognised by many actors in the BSR and in Brussels. He then asked for reflections from the 2017 conference – as input for preparation of future conferences.

Mr. Kneifel-Haverkamp stated that Brandenburg was happy to host the event and that the conference promoted Baltic Sea Region cooperation in his region in a good way. He also thanked the workshop leaders for good preparations and execution during the event. Brandenburg has translated the conference resolution into German – and can share this with other German regions.

Other comments from the Board:

- Very good representation from host region with high-ranking politicians
- Good involvement and visibility of youth participants
- The youth was heard and the cooperation between the youth representatives were good
- The conference had an interesting topic
- Missing the political debates and involvement of regional politicians in the programme – a bit too technical
- Good moderation – the combination of speeches/presentations, interviews and dialog/debates gave a more dynamic progress and different input during the sessions

The chairman thanked for the input and confirmed that they were duly noted down. He then moved on to the 2018 conference and gave the floor to Region Pommern.

3.1 Annual Conference 2018

Krystyna Wroblewska presented the venue and the ideas for the next BSSSC Annual Conference that will take place in Gdansk, Poland from 10 – 12 September at the Polish Baltic Philharmonic.

The idea for main focus, build-up of the conference and parallel session topics were presented. The presentation can be found enclosed the minutes.

The idea to focus on “Solidarity, participation and being smart in action for the better future” will be based on shared values, dialog and solidarity cross different groups and actors (age, background, level of governance). It will be about transformation through participation – using i.e. culture, innovation, subsidiarity, integration of migrants. The topic of history and independence - and lessons learnt for the future from different countries - was also mentioned.

The Chairman thanked for very good ideas and proposals from the host region and added that BSSSC is celebrating 25 years in 2018. This milestone should be celebrated during our Annual Conference. He then opened the floor for views and input.

The following points were mentioned in the round of comments:

- Future of Cohesion Policy and funding should be included in some way. The European Commission will table its proposal in May and BSSSC should have a position on this - to be adopted in the Board alongside the conference. There could be political discussions on this topic. BSSSC should launch a paper.
- Cohesion is about solidarity – and this can fit the programme focus
- Silver and youth – dialog cross generations – looking at the silver economy and the youth in cooperation



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- Having solidarity as focus – we should aim for inviting Lech Walesa to the conference as speaker. If not possible – look into the option of arranging a meeting with him at the International Solidarity Centre as part of the conference.
- Schleswig-Holstein stated their willingness to prepare the proposed workshop on culture and they want to use concrete projects as basis for the programme.
- Invite UBC to be involved in the conference – among others based on the resolution on populism and Euroscepticism. Involvement of Mayor of Gdansk and the UBC Secretariat based in Gdansk.
- Invite an inspiring good speaker – high-level intellectual – historian - as part of session 2 speeches.
- Invite previous chairmen and secretary generals of BSSSC to Gdansk – as part of the 25 years jubilee
- Contribution from Kaliningrad on the issue of independence mentioned.

Conclusion: The Board fully supports the ideas and focus of the conference – as proposed. Focus on European values and Baltic Sea Region as for-runner was deemed very good. The youth should be invited to take part and contribute to all parallel sessions and give their input to the programme and resolution. A task force will join the host in preparing the conference. Schleswig-Holstein and Malgorzata Ludwiczek will take part together with the BSSSC Secretariat. The youth members and network will be involved. More details will be presented to the next Board meeting.

4. EUSBSR Forum 2019

The Secretary General presented the invitation from Poland to BSSSC – to become a partner in the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2019. Krystyna Wroblewska added some information from the Polish side. The general view was that the idea was good. Based on experience from BSC's participation as partner in 2017 it will be valuable for BSSSC to become partner in such a big event.

Conclusion: The BSSSC Board fully supported the participation of BSSSC as partner in the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2019 and encouraged the Norwegian chairmanship to continue the dialog and prepare for becoming partner in the Interreg project application.

5. BSSSC paper on subsidiarity and democracy

Ms. Sæternes briefed on the proposed paper. The Secretary General recalled the discussion in the Board meeting in Potsdam and presented the paper from the task force. There were now additional comments or remarks and the Board signalled full support to the proposal.

The Board adopted the BSSSC paper on subsidiarity and democracy.



6. BSSSC contribution to the regional consultation of the HELCOM report 'State of the Baltic Sea', first version 2017

Mr. Savolainen presented their recommendation of the BSSSC input to the regional consultation of the HELCOM report. He said they pointed out some weaknesses and strengths in the paper. From the point of view of the Regions, it is necessary to save a viable marine environment. However, the competences of Regional Authorities vary a lot between different countries.

Holistic assessment is a practical tool for the Regions in their own strategic planning processes. Especially land use planning and maritime spatial planning need such an information. Even the holistic approach is very practical way to present the state of the environment, there may be a risk that it is not effective enough. It may be difficult to point out concrete suggestions for improvement.

The BSSSC contribution was adopted by the Board.

7. Action plan discussion

Ms. Ann Irene Sæternes introduced the action plan. The action plan goes into detail in every policy area within the BSSSC with key activities, expected results and outcomes, instrument, and who is taking the lead. It is an easy way to follow up on the issues from one Board Meeting to the next.

Mr. Stefan Musiolik said it is a good overview of our work.

The Board Meeting adopted the BSSSC action plan – adding that it will be a dynamic document continuously updated.

8. BSSSC support and contribution to other initiatives?

8.1 Support for #CohesionAlliance

Mr. Reiner Kneivel Haverkamp introduced the CohesionAlliance. It follows the discussions on the future of cohesion policy in the European Union. It is important to sign this very short paper to push for cohesion policy. The #CohesionAlliance is a coalition of those who believe that EU cohesion policy must continue to be a pillar of the EU's future. The Alliance was created through cooperation between the leading European associations of cities and regions and the European Committee of the Regions. It demands that the EU budget after 2020 makes cohesion policy stronger, more effective, visible and available for every region in the European Union.

The Board supports the idea and the Chairman signs up on behalf of the BSSSC.



8.2 UBC resolution *Appeal on Tackling Rising Populism and Euroscepticism*

Ms. Ann Irene Sæternes presented the UBC resolution. During the XIV UBC General Conference in Växjö, Sweden, 24-27 October 2017, 230 representatives from cities, institutions and organisations around the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), endorsed an appeal on tackling rising populism and Euroscepticism. Due to the advocacy of democracy, understanding and cross-border cooperation in our Work Plan, and our close cooperation with the UBC, the BSSC Chairmanship asks the Board to consider if the BSSC should issue a letter of support for the UBC appeal.

Ms. Krystyna Wroblewska said it is extremely timely and important to support this document.

The Board agreed to support the UBC appeal.

9. Reports from policy areas

9.1 Culture, creative industries and regional identity

Mr. Stefan Musiolik informed about the work within the Policy Area Culture (PA Culture) of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy on a policy paper showing the value of culture/creative sector. There are also plans to advocate for better funding of the sector after 2020. They have received recommendations to put funding demands in a separate paper in order to facilitate discussions. There is close cooperation with the CBSS. The draft of the paper will be sent on a hearing to cultural actors later. Hopefully, there will be a draft ready for the next board meeting.

Other PA Culture activities include working for better alignment of funding. A strategic workshop is planned during the macro strategy funding seminar, together with the manager of the EUSBSR Horizontal Action Capacity on the 7th of March, 2018, in Gdansk. A back-to-back seminar on cultural heritage and digital cooperation is also planned. Efforts will be made to follow up contacts made with Russian actors, and they will be encouraged to participate.

The Creative Ports project would like support from BSSSC again, because they will apply for funding in the third call of the Interreg BSR programme. Maybe it is a good idea to arrange for a presentation of the project at the board meeting in Stockholm?

9.2 Transport

Mr. Rune Bakkevoll referred to the attached report, and pointed out that it covers all we know in an excellent way.

9.3 Maritime policy and HELCOM

Mr. Ossi Savolainen pointed out important pieces of information from the attached report, and informed about the European Maritime Day (EMD) which will take place in Burgas, Romania 31.05-01.06.2018. Main focus will be on the Black Sea.



9.4 Northern Dimension

There is nothing new to report on that area at the moment.

9.5 Cohesion Policy post 2020

Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp reported that there are numerous ongoing activities focusing on Cohesion Policy at the moment. He emphasized the 7th Cohesion report and said that he had heard some talk about changing the financing from 80 – 100% for a larger number of regions (referring to what he called the “the middle income trap”). A policy paper will be prepared for the annual conference in Gdansk in September, or perhaps earlier. A draft will be presented to the Board, who can discuss the paper during the two scheduled board meetings in the spring of 2018.

9.6 Sustainable development and climate change – Baltic 2030

Mr. Lars Godbolt referred to the written report, and highlighted the CBSS Baltic 2030 plan of making a collaborative web-based platform for, among other things, to share best-practices. He also mentioned that the BSSSC Youth network’s video on YouTube was shown as a best-practice example during the first meeting of the Baltic Leadership Programme (BLP). Finally, he mentioned that the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) is planning a conference in Åland in August 2018, that will bring together youth organisations that work on sustainable development and climate change. The NCM wants to include BSSSC in the work.

9.7 Working group on youth policy

Mr. Martin Rümmelein and Mr. Timo Nikolaisen referred to the written documentation attached and emphasized the goal to start writing a declaration of youth during youth conferences, which can be presented to the Committee of the Regions (CoR) by the BSSSC Board. This will give the youth a voice into the CoR.

The importance of strengthening the Baltic identity by developing a “Baltic festival of youth” was highlighted, underlining the importance of strong connections to Russia and between Non-EU and EU-member states. Possible financing tool could be Europe for Citizens or Erasmus+.

Ms. Malgorzata Ludwiczek referred to the youth network action plan and pointed out the need for structured work in order to achieve the goals listed in the plan. There will be organized a spring meeting in the Häme region. They are enthusiastic about youth work and has a successful Youth Parliament in their own region. Efforts are made to bring Sweden on board the youth work by working closely with the Östra Götaland region on participation.

Mr. Stefan Musiolik made remarks about the fact that CBSS are now bringing aboard the youth in a serious way. This has not always been the case and the youth need a strong institution to take a leading role. He launched the idea of joining youth networks/organisations in a new Baltic Sea Youth Forum and maybe establish a secretariat that could be located for instance in Stockholm. This would provide more stable work and join the forces of youth in a strong way.

Mr. Musiolik also suggested that a Baltic festival for youth could be organized as back-to-back with the EUSBSR annual forum in 2019.



10. Report from Brussels antenna

As Mr. Jan Edøy is on sick leave, **Ms Krista Taipale** was challenged to give a spontaneous report from Brussels. The main topic at the moment is the future of Europe, and a meeting will be held for Heads of state in December.

Focus on funding for the next programme period. The Commission is expected to present a proposal in May/June 2018. That means the right timing for influencing measures will be January – March. Brexit is top of the agenda of course. There is some progress at the moment, but the impact makes the future challenging. We know there will be cuts.

Cohesion policy is especially important as it has also a lot to do with the legitimacy of the EU.

The role of EU into the future: Every time possible it is important to deliver the message of collaboration across borders and sectors. Solutions can only be reached through collaboration, in EU and the rest of the world.

11. Reports from other organizations, programmes and networks

- 11.1 Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme: referring to the document attached. There is concern about the financing in the future. Now there are 74 projects ongoing. Universities are overrepresented as partners, but there are some SMEs on board. 3rd call is open and the deadline is 15th of January, 2018 for ideas/concept notes. Deadline for full application 9 April. Last projects in the programme will start approximately a year from now, meaning that there will be activities carried out after 2020 (even though there will be no more open calls). There is a call open for project platforms, but there is not so much knowledge yet as to how this tool will be like. It was proposed that the BSSC could act as an associated partner in one or two of the platforms.
- 11.2 EuroRegion Baltic – as representative was not present at the meeting, report will be given later.
- 11.3 UBC – representative was not present, but **Ms. Ann Irene Sæternes** informed about a conference she attended in the autumn. Among other things they had a youth event. Better connections with the UBC is a good idea. They have joined a specific reporting system with regard to climate changes that might be interesting to learn more about.
- 11.4 CPMR Baltic Sea Commission – representative was not present in the meeting, but **Ms. Krista Taipale** informed about a transport event taking place in Finland 15-16. February 2018. There will also be a conference in Stockholm on the 7. March 2018. One important issue is to set up a macro-regional financing platform for smart specialization. Another question is about how to organize the work of the secretariat. An established task force is discussing the structure and identifying development needs. A decision will be made at the General Assembly in May 2018.



12. BSSSC MEETINGS 2018

6 March	Board Meeting, Stockholm, Sweden
22 – 23 May	Board Meeting, Kaliningrad, Russia
18-20 April	Youth Event, Häme, Finland
10 September	Board Meeting, Gdansk, Poland
10 – 12 September	Annual Conference, Gdansk, Poland
28 – 29 November	Board Meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark

Other relevant events

6-8 June	EUSBSR Annual Forum 2018, Tallinn (Estonia)
18 May	General Assembly Baltic Sea Commission-CPMR, Oulu (Finland)

13. Short reports from events and coming events

CPMR: General Assembly in Helsinki at the end of October 2018. Focus on the future of Europe, transport and cohesion policy.

AOB:

Ms. Alla Ivanova informed about the WC of football which is hosted by Russia in 2018.

Mr. Reiner Knifel-Haverkamp informed about a survey that will be conducted in Brandenburg to see what contacts the region has to the BSSSC area.

Mr. Stefan Musiolik informed regarding lack of Danish representatives in the BSSSC. There is a new development in Sjælland after the recent elections. This could mean that the BSSSC could get a new representative from Sjælland. Mr. Musiolik is following his contact in Sjælland up on this. Mr. Musiolik suggested to a letter from the BSSSC Chairman inviting them to join. He also suggested that the Board Meeting in December 2018 could be in Sjælland.

Mr. Ryberg informed that BSSSC has been contacted by the Norwegian Chairmanship of the regional Barents cooperation about a possibility for a cooperation. **The Board said yes to this.**

Mr. Ryberg ended the meeting by thanking for a good year and gave his best wishes for the Holiday and the New Year. He said he looked forward to continuing the good work of the BSSSC in 2018.

15:00 END OF MEETING