



BSSSC BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

Vidzeme planning region, Bērzaines street
5, Cēsis, Latvia
9 – 10 May 2019

BSSSC Board meeting Cesis, Latvia, – Minutes

Thursday, May 9, 2019, 09.10 – 18.00, internal seminar and thematic meeting followed by dinner

(see programme)

Friday, May 10, 2019, 09:00 – 13:00 Board meeting followed by lunch

Bus transport to Riga Airport arranged at 14:15

Meeting venue: Vidzeme planning region, Bērzaines street 5, Cēsis

Present:

Board Members: Roger Ryberg, Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp, Lars Salvesen, Sari Rautio, Ossi Savolainen, Arne Tilk, Stefan Musiolik, Martin Rümmelein,

Board Civil: Krystyna Wróblewska, Natalia Kila, Toivo Riimaa, Janne Tamminen, Reetta Sorjonen, Jon Halvard Eide, Marlene Rothe,

Secretariat: Ann Irene Sæternes, Jan Edøy, Hilde Aarø, Lars Lund Godbolt

Others: Vents Hardijs, Chairman, Vidzeme development council, Laila Gercane (Vidzeme Planning Region), Rita Merca (Vidzeme Planning Region), Santa Niedola (Vidzeme Planning Region)

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Board meeting

1.1. Opening of the meeting – Mr. Roger Ryberg, BSSSC Chair

Mr. Ryberg welcomed everyone to the second meeting of our BSSSC Board in 2019 – in Latvia and beautiful Cesis. He thanked the hosts for a very interesting thematic programme which was presented the day before. There is a lot to learn from each other - by sharing good practices and knowledge among regions, he said.

Mr. Ryberg could inform that the BSSSC have two new board members from Sweden appointed, who unfortunately could not attend the meeting. These are Mr. Lennarth Förberg from Blekinge region and Mr. Ilmar Reepalu from Skåne region. In addition, he could inform that BSSSC has a new member from West Pomerania – Mr. Dorzynkiewicz.

Mr. Ryberg underlined the importance for the BSSSC to represent and include active regions from all the BSR countries. This was also underlined in the discussion about the revision of the BSSSC strategy. He promised that himself and the secretariat will continue to strive for this in the months to come.



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1.2. Welcome by the host region by **Mr. Vents Hardijs**

Mr. Hardijs said it was a great pleasure for Vidzeme Planning Region to welcome the BSSC Board to Cēsis. He said he knows that BSSC has been working successfully for many years, bringing together cities and regions in its network, as well as making a great contribution to the development of the Baltic Sea Region. Furthermore, he emphasised the need to be more active in the planning and advocacy of the Baltic Sea Region, and that it is extra important now. He argued by saying that next year, the 2014-2020 programming period ends. How we live in the next decade and beyond, depends on our common position as a united, strong North European region. He ended by wishing the Board a fruitful meeting.

1.3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

1.4. Adoption of the minutes from the Board Meeting in Hyvinkää, February 2019.

The minutes were adopted.

2. Information about Latvia and the governmental system

Laila Gercane, Head of development and project division, Vidzeme Planning Region

Ms. Gercane made a presentation on the public administration in Latvia and the political, judicial and democratic system. Apart from the national and local level, Latvia consists of five planning regions – of which Vidzeme is one. The development Council of the planning region is the decision-making body and the administration is the executive body.

3. MFF and cohesion policy and discussion on the innovation investment component

3.1. Update from Rapporteur

Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp said that there now is a relatively fluid situation since the European Commission is soon re-elected. The heads of states will have a meeting straight after the European Parliament elections. They will come with a suggestion with regards to the positions – then of course have to be approved by the European parliament.

He could further inform the board that officially the MFF for the next period should be ready at end of 2019. However, less and less people believe this will work. **Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp** had a meeting with the Finnish MFA, and on their priorities for the EU Presidency there was no mentioning of the MFF. This means that probably the MFF will be concluded during the German EU Presidency in 2020. The Germans are not too happy about



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that, because when you have the presidency you have to be neutral and try to find solutions rather than advocate your own interests.

Mr. Jan Edøy added that the issue of cohesion policy has been many times back and forth between the Council and the Parliament. He said that generally speaking we are back to basic with the areas we are interested in (Interreg etc.).

Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp added that it seems that commission has excluded state aid from Interreg. If so - this will be victory for the BSSSC lobby work.

3.2. The Innovation investment component

Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp gave a clarifying remark with regards to the much discussed “Component 5”. The component 5 is a new element that was proposed by the European Commission. It includes 1 billion euros to promote interregional innovation investments. The idea behind this is that good innovation often has to happen on an interregional scale, because the value chain are usually spread out over several regions, often in many member states. The idea with the component is thus to subsidise much the costs that the cooperation across borders entails. **Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp** said that there is now a basic agreement that this is a good idea, however, some dispute if it should be under Interreg or in the mainstream ERDF. The Swedish regions and Helsinki are very much interested in this topic, and **Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp** suggested that the BSSSC should establish an ad-hoc working group to prepare a paper on this issue.

3.3. Discussions and proposals

It was agreed that the BSSSC will establish an ad-hoc working group to prepare a paper on the innovation investment component. The group will be led by Brandenburg and will include representatives from Finland, Sweden, Poland, Latvia and the BSSSC Secretariat from Norway. The paper will be discussed at the Board meeting in Klaipeda 18 September.

4. EU reflection paper “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030”

Mr. Ryberg informed that the European Commission published a reflection paper with visions for a sustainable Europe by 2030 in the end of January this year. The paper is part of the Future of Europe discussions. BSSSC contributed to the Future of Europe discussions with a policy paper on Democracy and Governance – adopted in December 2017. As the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are high on everyone’s agenda, and BSSSC has focus on the SDGs in the Baltic Sea Region context. Furthermore, the upcoming EUSBSR Annual Forum will focus on circular economy – as part of transforming our societies in a sustainable direction. The BSSSC chairmanship proposes to develop a policy paper - sending signals from our side to the EU Commission paper as input to the further work and to the incoming European Parliament and new commission from autumn 2019.



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4.1. BSSSC position paper

Ms. Sæternes introduced the three scenarios from the reflection paper. She proposed to forward a BSSSC position paper on the reflection paper to the European Commission President, the Committee of Regions Presidency, and the ECON Committee Chair and Rapporteur. Further, the position paper could be presented to the new European Parliament after the elections and to the CBSS meeting of Foreign Ministers in Riga, 3 June this year.

In our work plan BSSSC has underlined the need to mainstream the SDGs at all levels and through all dimensions of our work. **Ms. Sæternes** further suggested that the BSSSC support scenario 1 in the EU reflection paper as it is the only option addressing both EU's internal and external actions and encompassing all policy fields.

4.2 Discussion and adoption

Ms. Rautio expressed that she finds this very important and underlined that the BSR need to be in the frontline when it comes to mainstreaming the SDGs. BSSSC can set an example for the national governments.

Mr. Musiolik stated that it is important to connect the SDGs in a broader sense. This is also important for the youth.

Mr. Riimaa referred to the issue of culture to implement the SDGs. This was among others discussed at the UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) summit. He proposed to look into this and included a point in the paper on the role of culture.

BSSSC will make a position paper on the EU reflection paper "Towards a sustainable Europe 2030" based on the points in the working paper and the discussion in the Board meeting. Any additional comments and input in written should be sent to the Secretariat before 20 May 2018. A final draft will be circulated by the end of the week 21. The final paper will be forwarded to CBSS Ministerial meeting on 3 June and then sent to EU institutions and CoR.

5. TEN-T Revision

5.1. BSSSC positions

Mr. Jon Halvard Eide proposed that the BSSSC makes a general position, not answer the survey. He asked if the position paper should say something about the Tallink link? **Mr. Eide** welcomed a suggestion from Helsinki-Uusimaa on that issue.

5.2. Discussion and adoption

Mr. Ossi Savolainen said he would like to mention the connection between Helsinki and Tallinn, but his prime concern is to complete Rail Baltica.

Ms. Rautio agreed in principle, but added that with BSSSC it is very important to see the



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continuity. She suggested that the BSSSC can focus more on how important these transportation links are for the benefits for the European (BSR) people.

Mr. Lars Salvesen said it is a good paper. We just need to follow up.

Mr. Jan Edøy added that the Oslo Stockholm group is trying to get that link into the ten-t.

Mr. Eide mentioned that the CPMR are also working a draft position on this.

Mr. Eide said the deadline for the consultation is 17 of July. If the regions make policy papers on their own he encouraged the Board member to put him in copy, to keep him in the loop.

The paper was adopted – any additional amendments must be sent to Mr. Eide before June 1.

6. EUSBSR revision of the Action Plan

Mr. Ryberg gave the floor to **Ms. Sæternes** for an update on the EUSBSR revision process.

6.1. Status and update

Ms. Sæternes introduced the basis of the background paper. And informed about a planned workshop in Gdansk 11 June. She invited the Board to participate in the revision process. She suggested to invite two members of the Board to present short statements to the most important policy areas in the action plan, and two members of the Board to provide statements with regards to the government aspect.

6.2. Discussion around BSSSC positions

Input to the opening of the seminar and the speech can be forwarded to the secretariat by 1 June 2018.

Ms. Rauti, Mr. Musiolik and Mr. Tilk volunteered to participate as representatives of the BSSSC at the workshop in Gdansk on 11 June. A representative from the youth network was also proposed to be included.

7. Upcoming Finnish EU Presidency autumn 2019

Mr. Ossi Savolainen said that because they had parliament elections three weeks ago they do not yet have a national Government in place, and thus the information is scarce. Without the new Government in place the Ministries lack the political background to plan more. Helsinki-Uusimaa region is cooperating with CoR and DG Move to arrange 3-4 meetings. 160 arrangements are planned during the half year of Presidency. A celebration of 20 years of the Northern Dimension will take place in November. Mr. Savolainen will keep the Board informed.



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8. BSSSC Annual Conferences

Mr. Ryberg gave the floor to **Ms. Sæternes** for a status report on the BSSSC Annual Conference in Klaipeda 2019.

8.1. Status report AC 2019 in Klaipeda, Lithuania

Ms. Sæternes informed that Klaipeda's mayor has been re-elected, however the discussions concerning the head of cooperation of municipalities - through the Klaipeda Region - has not yet been settled. Unfortunately, the organisers from Klaipeda could not attend the Board meeting, but have informed on the latest updates of the programme. Helcom is now part of the conference – organising a parallel session, and a variety of Interreg projects will be represented at the AC. The private sector is involved, and they will be included in the panel discussions. The idea is to get a debate between the private sector and the politicians.

The organisers and the secretariat will appreciate input on who could be a keynote inspirational. We also need input on the session on capacity building. It is important that we balance the speakers both regarding nationality and gender.

A conference web-page will be made. Registration will be opened mid-June.

8.1.1. Comments, questions and proposals

Mr. Eide remarked the title of the first parallel session. The title and content is not consistent. **Mr. Musiolik** stated that it is important that we draw the link between economy and ecology with reference to SDG 14.

8.2. BSSSC AC 2020

Ms. Sæternes suggested that possible options for the BSSSC AC 2020 could be in Estonia or Russia.

Mr. Tilk expressed that 2021 would be a more suitable year for Estonia.

9. Reports from the Chairman and Secretariat

9.1. Next Chairmanship by Roger Ryberg

Mr. Ryberg informed about the efforts of finding a new chairmanship after Eastern Norway County Network - expiring end of 2019. There have been positive signals from Brandenburg, but they would have to await outcome of regional elections beginning of September. An option has been to ask Region Pomerania to "bridge" until Brandenburg is ready to take over.

Ms. Krystyna Wroblewska said they would have to settle some organisational issues before the region is ready to answer. But they are not negative to this idea. She hopes to be able to provide a



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more final answer at the time of the AF of the EUSBSR in Gdansk. She will let the Board know as soon there is more to report.

Mr. Ryberg informed that the Chair hopes to be able to form a troika – consisting of Eastern Norway County Network as outgoing chairmanship, Pomerania as incoming chairmanship and Brandenburg as next chairmanship. This will be a very positive and long-term solution for the BSSSC's work towards 2025 – building on the achievements and fuel the work with new energy.

Mr. Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp said that they cannot commit something for the next government and they have to come back to the issue and update the Board in the autumn.

Mr. Ryberg said that he had a meeting with the current European Minister of Brandenburg, Mr. Ludwig, and that the meeting was positive. He said he hopes to have the pieces in place by September – so that we can present the next BSSSC chair at the Annual Conference.

Mr. Stefan Musiolik added that he highly appreciates this troika approach. They could also offer to help the Pomerania region in the transition period.

9.2. Senior Officials meeting of the Northern Dimension in Brussels 5 March by Ann Irene Sæternes

Ms. Ann Irene Sæternes could inform that she and **Mr. Janne Tamminen** represented the BSSSC. The meeting was at vice minister level with representatives from the EU, Russia, Iceland and Norway. BSSSC used the opportunity to inform about concrete activities, with emphasis on the youth work which was positively received. The conclusions from the meeting has been distributed to the board. The BSSSC representatives also met with the ND partnerships. There, the BSSSC was invited to take part in a midterm evaluation of the ND partnerships.

Mr. Janne Tamminen could inform that the celebration of the ND 20th anniversary will be at ministerial level. **Mr. Tamminen** will try to represent the BSSSC at an ND Steering group meeting in Iceland as **Ms. Sæternes** is occupied with another meeting the same date. Mr. Tamminen will confirm soon.

9.3. Baltic Sea Day in St. Petersburg 21-22 March by Ann Irene Sæternes

Ms. Sæternes could inform that she, **Mr. Tamminen** and **Mr. Lars Lund Godbolt** took part. They met the Russian sub-committee to the BSR programme. It was interesting to follow their discussion on the content of the next programme. They were clearly eager to participate, said **Ms. Sæternes**. The BSSSC representatives also met with St. Petersburg representatives with a view of having them back in the BSSSC. The BSSSC are invited to talk at their conference in October.

9.4. EUSBSR Annual forum 2019 in Gdansk by Ms. Ann Irene Sæternes



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Ms. Sæternes referred to the programme which was handed out by Krystyna Wroblewska on 9 May. Programme is more or less ready. There will be ministers in the opening sessions. Special forum with regard to youth involvement and Norway as partner country will be more visible. 800 participants registered. Several interesting parallel sessions with several angles on Circular Economy.

Three reports will be presented. One from BSSC (best practises on circular economy), one from the hosts, Pomorskie Region (a circular vision for the Baltic Sea Region), and one by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (a review of the ten years of EUSBSR).

Ms. Wroblewska said she hopes that BSSC will be presented as broadly as possible. The BSSC network is specially invited to Gdansk to this conference. She said it is an important event, not only because of the SDG circular economy aspect, but also because of the EUSBSR revision and the timely option to feed into this revision process. It is also the first Annual Forum where Norway is so strongly involved from day one. And it is special when we look at the involvement of the youth. The Polish Prime Minister is coming, the PM from Lithuania. The organisers estimate 800 participants. The deadline for registration is May 15 – but will be postponed with a few weeks. Please register as soon as possible.

9.5. BSR Youth Camp 2019 in Gdansk by Mr. Lars Godbolt

Mr. Godbolt said that the registration for the youth camp recently closed. There was good interest, about 200 applicants for 100 slots. At the end there will be 110 youths from every country in the BSR (minus Iceland). They also received plenty of application and interest from Russian regions. The programme starting to take shape. There are sixteen different workshops, many BSR institutions are involved. Martin Rümmelein, Stefan Musiolik and Krystyna Wroblewska are involved. He referred to the website for the event (www.balticyouthcamp.org). He also mentioned that he has sent out an invitation letter to the Board and Board civil to attend the last day of the youth event before the seminar on 11 June. He hopes to see many BSSC representatives there.

9.6. Questions, comments and proposals from the Board

Ms. Rautio informed that she last year was appointed by the BSSC Board to take part in the advisory board of the RDI2club project. After some experience she finds that she is not the right person to be in this advisory board – but that rather an expert on bio-economy should be appointed

Ms. Reetta Sorjonen added that it doesn't give any value for the project or for the Häme region if they cannot give anything with regard to the substance.

Mr. Ryberg encouraged them to propose a new person and send the information to the Secretariat. This could then be agreed at the next Board meeting.



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Mr. Toivo Riimaa could inform that **Ms. Marili Nits** has withdrawn from the BSSC board. The Association of Cities and Municipalities in Estonia will nominate a new person. **Mr. Riimaa** will let the Secretariat know as soon as a new person is elected.

10. Report from Brussels antenna

Mr. Edøy presented three topics of importance at the current moment; Brexit, the future of Europe and the elections for the European Parliament. An informal EU summit took place in Sibiu, Romania. The European Commission had made a lot of preparations for this meeting and **Mr. Edøy** recommended the members of the Board to read the preparatory documents. It is a reflection of what the Junker Commission has done and the overview of macro-economic developments in the EU. The economic situation is getting stronger. The unemployment rate is reduced, also among the youth. The socio-economic picture in Europe is positive. Regarding the procedure of nominating a new European Commission, including a President, there is a question on whether or not the governments will follow a "Spitzen Kandidat procedure". The new president has to be approved by the European Parliament. During the elections to the European Parliament 23-26 May the United Kingdom will take part.

11. Reports from policy areas and projects

11.1. Youth network meeting in Kaliningrad

Mr. Rümmelein gave an updated on youth affairs. He said there was a successful youth spring meeting in Kaliningrad. 25 international youth attended. There was a full programme prepared and they continued their work of the youth declaration. The youths got to meet the Governor of Kaliningrad. He asked the youth to be critical and ambitious when writing their declaration. **Mr. Rümmelein** congratulated Board member **Ms. Alla Ivanova** on excellent job with this.

Mr. Rümmelein also attended a Baltic youth 2030 meeting in Gdansk under the CBSS Latvian chair. There they discussed how to involve youth in the BSR over the next years. They came up with two alternatives:

1. They could to apply for Erasmus funding for a youth project. They would encourage all the BSR countries to apply. The negative thing with this alternative is that an Erasmus project fund will end and the youth of the BSR need permanent funding.
2. CBSS could take a leading role and create a permanent youth platform. **Mr. Rümmelein** described this with three circles. 1: BSR youth networks. 2 national youth councils. 3. Affiliated organisations. There would be at least one meeting in the inner circle, and one big one (like the youth camp) for everyone. This platform should help the youths to have a voice in the CBSS, but also in Europe. This platform should also start new projects. To convince the CBSS to allocate funds for this, there will be a video shown next week at the CSO (Committee of Senior Officials) meeting of CBSS where the group behind this idea ask the CBSS to find finances for such a platform.

Mr. Jan Edøy added that it is a pity that council of Europe has cut their youth budget.



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Ms. Sæternes asked if the Chairman, on behalf of the Board, should write a letter to the CBSS Ministerial meeting on June 3 to support this youth platform.

Mr. Musiolik supported that idea. He suggested that we wait and see the results of the CSO meeting when the video is shown. After the conclusions from that meeting the Board could make a letter for the Foreign Ministers meeting. In that letter the Board could also remind them to come to the youth camp June 11.

The Board agreed to write a letter and support the idea of a CBSS youth platform and send it to the CBSS Foreign Ministers meeting June 3.

Secretary General Ms. Ann Irene Sæternes and the Board thanked **Mr. Martin Rümmelein** for his great work and dedication in as youth board member over the last two year. She wished him all the best in his future assignments.

11.2. Culture

Mr. Stefan Musiolik could inform:

Baltic Sea Cultural Cities:

- Project application „Baltic Sea Cultural Cities“ with lead partner CBSS Secretariat submitted for funding to the Swedish Institute in February
- Decision expected in May
- If the application fails a new attempt is planned
- In any case: the project is open for interested cities or regions to join in!

Funding of cultural projects:

- COM's proposal for the future ERDF regulation specifies policy objective 5 („a Europe closer to citizens“) with „fostering the integrated social, economic and environmental development, cultural heritage and security in urban areas“.
- End of February the EP proposed to add „culture“ to this specification. This could mean that not only cultural heritage projects but also cultural projects in a broader sense would become eligible for funding.

Mr. Musiolik quoted from the welcome speech of Schleswig-Holstein's Minister for European Affairs, Sabine Sütterlin-Waack, at the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Conference on 9 April in Lübeck:

„Today's political situation is fundamentally different from what it was seven years ago when we discussed the objectives of the current programme. Seven years ago, the over-arching objective of European politics was the creation of more growth and more jobs. Of course: Still relevant today! But the world has changed: Today, we are confronted by a frightening rise of nationalism, accompanied by a growing public acceptance for populist and Eurosceptic politics. I am shocked to see fundamental European values under increasing pressure to an extent inconceivable only seven years ago. The European idea is running the risk of losing its citizens. So: What could this mean for the Interreg programmes? Transnational cooperation in itself is an instrument for bringing Europe closer to its citizens. But we need to do more:“



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- *Projects to strengthen intercultural exchange, tolerance and democracy.*
 - *Projects promoting European values and our common cultural roots:*
 - *For example by highlighting the Baltic Sea Region's cultural heritage.*
- Personally, I would absolutely welcome if the Interreg programmes were to put a stronger focus on social and cultural cohesion. We have to win the people back for the European project. Without that, we can forget about successful European and regional integration."*

Ms. Susanne Scherrer, Director of the Interreg BSR Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat thanked for this „strong and positive message“ and promised that the programme will try to fulfil these expectations.

11.3. Maritime Affairs

Mr. Tamminen represented the BSSSC in a CBSS expert group meeting on sustainable maritime economics in Jurmala, Latvia. A seminar was held back to back where among others the SDG no.14 was discussed. There were panel discussions on strategic planning of sustainable blue growth in the BSR in the context of EUSBSR. Presentations by DG Mare and national coordinator in Denmark. Practical session on the role of small and med-sized ports. **Mr. Tamminen** presented the maritime activities of BSSSC and the importance of maritime policy for our regions (also for the land-locked members). Address from incoming Danish CBSS chairmanship. Denmark seems to be still interested in CBSS.

Mr. Tamminen also attended the HELCOM annual meeting in Helsinki in March. Here they discussed possibility of feeding into the next UN Ocean Conference on the basis of HELCOM implementation plans. It was noticed that OSPAR is developing a new science agenda. Draft recommendations on marine biotopes and habitats were adopted. There was also a statement from EU on the influx on rivers. Next meeting of HELCOM head of delegations will be held in June.

European Maritime Days will be next week next week (13-17 May) in Lisbon. **Mr. Tamminen** and **Mr. Savolainen** will participate.

Mr. Tamminen could also inform that CPMR BSC organised maritime working group in Riga in March. A Helsinki-Uusimaa politician has been elected new vice chair in BSC Energy group.

12. Coming events

- 12.1. Kaliningrad Partner region forum 18-19 June, Kaliningrad, Russia
- 12.2. EUSBSR seminar – giving input to the revision 11 June in Gdansk, Poland
- 12.3. Next BSSSC Board Meeting 18 September 2019 in Klaipeda, Lithuania

END OF MEETING