

**BSSSC Board Meeting
Turku, 13 September 2007**



FOR ADOPTION

Baltic Sea States
Subregional
Co-operation

Minutes from the BSSSC Board Meeting

Present: Asger Larsen (DK), Knud Andersen (DK), Inge Hyldebrandt (DK), Uno Aldergrén (S), Tommy Karlsson (S), Janerik Majeovski (S), Mats Petersson (S), Risto Ervelä (FIN), Esko Lotvonen (FIN), Arne Tilk (EST), Toomas Kivimägi (EST), Toivo Riimaa (EST), Zane Duze (LV), Vizbaras Virginijus (LT), Inara Zariene (LT), Krystyna Wroblewska (PL), Malgorzata Ludwicek (PL), Stefan Musiolik (D), Stefan Herms (D), Marlene Rothe (D), Alfred Eberhardt (D), Arne Ören (N), Oddvar Skaia (N), Ann Irene Sæternes (N), Inger Brørs (N-Secretariat), Günther Schulz (D-Secretariat), Greta Juul (N-Secretariat)

Absent: Inger Linge (S), Visvaldis Gercans (LT), Ligita Zacesta (LT), Olgierd Geblewicz (PL), Bruno Synak (PL), Vladis Balsky (RUS)

1. Opening of the Board Meeting

Chairman Arne Ören opened the meeting and warmly welcomed all the Board members. A special thank to the host Mr. Risto Ervelä, Regional Council of Southwest Finland. Mr. Ervelä welcomed all the Board members to Turku and Finland, and gave the Board an introduction about the region Southwest Finland and the regions history.

2. Adoption of the Minutes from the Board Meeting in Gardermoen, 4 May 2007

The Board adopted the Minutes from the Board Meeting in Oslo 4 May 2007.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

The Board adopted the agenda (with minor changes).

4. Annual Conference 2007

Mr. Hannu Elo, Head of International Affairs, Regional Council of Southwest Finland welcomed the Board to Finland and gave brief information about the status of the Annual Conference in Turku 2007. The preparation of the conference has gone very well, and the cooperation between the host region and the BSSSC Secretariat has been very good. About 300 participants will take part in the conference. Busses will bring all the participations between the hotels and the conference. Many high level speakers will take part (40 speakers) and give interesting input to the conference topics. Around 40 from the youth working group will take part in the conference and the discussions. The interest for the Partner Search Forum and the exhibition have been very good, 150 have registered for the Part Search Forum. On Friday the participants will have possibilities to take a trip to the Aker Yard. A press conference will be held at 13.00, after the Board meeting.

The Board thanked for the information and thanked the host region for excellent work.

5. Annual Conference 2008

The next Annual Conference will be in Kaunas, Lithuania. The vice president from Kaunas confirmed their willingness to host the 2008 Annual Conference. The conference will take place 18 and 19 September. Günther Schulz informed the Board that CoR has given positive feedback to be a co-arranger at the next BSSSC Annual Conference 2008.

The Board thanked the vice president and the Kaunas region for the invitation.

6. BSSSC and the future

Ms Ann Irene Sæternes informed the board about the consultation process to all the Baltic Sea countries/regions and ideas about the future of BSSSC (the form and direction of the organisations and its work). Based on the consultation process the future paper (sent out with the Board papers) lined up some results from the tour around the BSR. In Estonia the other large organisation representing local authorities will like to join the board on political level. The Board supported the request and at the same time hoped that Thoomas Kivimägi will continue as Board member and as a link to BSC/CPMR.

An important point for the future was the proposal to open BSSSC for other BSR organisations (BSC/CPMR, B7, UBC) on local and regional level and invite them to appoint one representative each to the BSSSC Board. BSSSC has a signed agreement with the CoR on administrative level. The Chairman proposed to invite the three other organisations to join this agreement and make it a common agreement for the four organisations representing local and regional level in the BSR.

The paper was discussed in the meeting and the Board members supported the ideas. Mr. Knud Andersen thought it was a good idea to invite the other organisations to our Board meetings and to take part in the agreement with CoR. It's a good way of defining a platform. Mr Stefan Musiolik was positive to the proposal, and underlined the agreement to create political coordination groups on the three issues the BSR organisations have agreed on; Maritime Policy, Transport and Infrastructure and Energy and Climate. Mr. Uno Aldegren underlined that it is a good proposal with meetings between these organisations. Mr. Oddvar Skaia underlined that our organization will be stronger by adopting the points in the paper. Mr. Musiolik stressed the importance to have a dialog with the North Sea Commission, and Mr. Esko Lotvonen suggested that we also should include the Barents region. Ms Sæternes pointed on the possibilities BSSSC has as an open network organisation. BSSSC is the only organisation around the BSR who are open and not a membership organization. This momentum gives us possibilities to involve other organisations in the Board.

Conclusion: The Board adopted the proposed platform for BSSSC in the future. The Board asked the Chairman and Secretariat to revise the ToR accordingly and put them forward to the Board in the next meeting in Gdansk in November.

To be able to realise this work and for BSSSC to continue as organisation – a new chairmanship from 2008 – 2010 must be identified ASAP. The Chairman challenged the Board members to go home and think through if they can host the Chairmanship for 2008-2010.

7. Follow-up of Work Plan 2006 – 2008

7.1 Transport and Infrastructure

Mr. Uno Aldegren informed about the ongoing activities in the High Level Group on Transport for Sustainable Growth in the BSR. The Group had an interesting meeting in Bodö 15 June. Participation in the group from regional level is satisfactory, but could be better from national level. The next meeting in the group is 11 October.

Mr. Mats Petersson, Region Skåne presented a pan-Baltic Transport Strategy/Master Plan. Please find enclosed the presentation.

Mr Esko Lotvonen proposed to make a link to corresponding work in the Barents region.

Mr Arne Ören thanked for the presentations and concluded that the work is going on and will hopefully be successful.

Mr. Stefan Herms presented a project initiative with the title Amber route (brief information about the project was distributed in the meeting). Mr. Herms ask the Board members to inform possible stakeholders in their regions.

7.2 Maritime Policy

Mr. Stefan Musiolik informed the Board about the ongoing activities on Maritime Policy. The establishment of a Work Group on Maritime Policy has not been as successful as hoped. Only few persons have sign up for the working group. He asked the Board members to find interested persons to joint the group!

The Maritime Policy process is going on, and a Blue Paper will be tabled 10 October. The process will go on until December. Mr. Musiolik informed that Schleswig-Holstein had tried to get support from CBSS to the idea of the Baltic Sea as a model region, and had hoped for more engagement from the Swedish Chairmanship. On the other hand Schleswig-Holstein has got backing from the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (Conference Resolution 28 August 2007).

Baltic Sea Maritime Cluster project – an Interreg project is under development. Schleswig Holstein, Turku, Oslo and Gdansk are onboard. Unfortunately Sweden and Denmark are not included in the work, and Mr Musiolik hoped the Board Members from these countries could help to find partners from these countries.

In addition to the Maritime Cluster project another Interreg project are under elaboration; Northern Maritime University (NMU). In this project partners from Latvia and Lithuania are missing.

A Baltic sea group within the CoR will be established 10 October with members from our regions. This initiative can help to put the Maritime Policy on the agenda. The presentation of the Blue Paper is on the same day (10 October). Mr Musiolik suggested making a BSSSC paper to the Blue Paper. Such a paper should be discussed in the next Board meeting in Gdansk.

Regarding a Political Coordination Group on Maritime Policy - CBSS should be an overall umbrella.

Mr Uno Aldegren informed that there was a university in Malmö with the same name as the NMU project. Mr. Musiolik underlined that he want to have them onboard in the project.

The Board thanked Mr. Stefan Musiolik for the information and supported the further work on Maritime Policy.

The Chairman mentioned that on request of the Hanse-Office he had given support to the “Brussels Call for the Protection of the Sea”. The Brussels Calls gives strong support to protection of the environment of the European maritime waters and asks for a strong legally binding EU Marine Strategy Directive. The Board had no comments to this information, and accepted that due to the time limit, the Chairman had not had the possibility to discuss this support with the Board in beforehand.

7.3 Sustainable Development

Energy Production and Energy Efficiency

An Energy paper had been distributed to the Board Members for discussion. Mr. Stefan Herms had some minor changes to the text. The Board agreed to the proposed changes. The Board gave the BSSSC Chairman mandate to initiate a consultation process with the aim of establishing a Political Coordination Group on Energy and Climate issues in the Baltic Sea Region.

Helcom Action Plan

Rapporteur on Baltic 21 Alfred Eberhard informed about the ongoing work in Baltic 21.

His first point was about BSSSC input to the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. BSSSC is raising its voice to this aspect. BSSSC should be ready to take action – to help implementing the plan.

The Board adopted the input to the HELCOM Action Plan. The paper will be sent to HELCOM together with the conference resolution.

The Second point from Mr. Eberhard was the Lighthouse Interreg projects. The Baltic Sea process – Urban rural – Interreg 4 B. Mr. Eberhard hoped the project could get financed in the first round. Hamburg, Schleswig Holstein, Eastern Norway County Network (Norway), Lithuania, Turku (Finland) and Stockholm (Sweden) are possible partners. The project would like to have onboard Russia and more of the new EU members. Mr. Eberhard underlined the fruitful cooperation with UBC who have the environmental secretariat located in Turku.

Mr. Alfred Eberhardt informed the Board that he could not be responsible for the rapporteurship on Baltic 21 anymore. Mr. Eberhardt has got other assignments and will not have possibilities to be responsible for BSSSC questions regarding Baltic 21. The Board thanked Mr. Eberhardt for the excellent work and wished him every success in his new assignments. The Secretariat will take responsibility for trying to find a new person who can represent BSSSC in Baltic 21.

7.4 Quality of Life and Public Health

BSSSC approved as new Partner in the NDPHS

A paper about BSSSC joins the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPS) and becomes a Partner was sent out to the Board. The Board thanked for the information and had no questions/comments to the paper on NDPHS.

Draft of task list for WG - Danish regions

A paper with propositions on working themes for the BSSSC Group on Public Health was distributed out with the board papers. Unfortunately Denmark has not possibilities to lead the work because of the changes and new competences for regions in Denmark. The Board members was invited to come with suggestion on who could take leadership of the proposed work group (within the next Board meeting).

The discussion about working themes and leadership of a BSSSC Work Group on Public Health will continue in the next Board Meeting.

7.5 Youth Policy

Report from the youth

The Chairman of the Youth Policy WG, Mr. Oddvar Skaia informed the Board about an active youth working group. All the countries are represented at the conference in Turku, except Sweden and Denmark (also many from Russia).

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek, coordinator for the Youth Working Group informed about the ongoing work (a report from the work in the Working Group on Youth Policy was sent out with the board papers). The Youth Policy Group have got funding (25 000€) from the Youth in Action program, so all the countries can take part in the meetings. The youth Board Members can also get their participation in the Board meetings financed. The future is bright, and the youngsters are active. Ms Ludwiczek also informed from the meeting Wednesday afternoon – before the conference, and about the election of two new youth Board members. The Youth representative in the Board, Mr. Lasse Lehre thanked for the opportunities he had had, by being a youth representative in the BSSSC Board. He informed that he had learn a lot and thanked for good cooperation.

Mr Toomas Kivimägi suggested taking the Youth Board Members as full members- not only as observers. Chairman Arne Ören asked the Board to support the idea from Mr. Kivimägi.

The Board adopted the suggestion to grant the Youth Board Members full membership.

7.6 Other issues

Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions (CoR)

Mr. Günther Schulz informed the Board that the cooperation between CoR and BSSSC has been strengthened the last period. BSSSC will be an active partner in the next structure dialog, and Mr. Knut Andersen will be the BSSSC speaker. CoR has also given positive feedback to be a co-arranger at the next Annual BSSSC Conference.

Northern Dimension (ND)

Mr. Günther Schulz attended and had a presentation at the ND Steering Group meeting in June in Brussels. BSSSC was asked to formulate a questionnaire on how to create a regional dimension within the ND. ND can also be one of the issues at the next BSSSC Annual Conference.

The Board thanked Mr. Schulz for the information.

8. European Charter of Regional Democracy

Mr Knud Andersen informed about the ongoing process regarding the Charter on Regional Democracy. The Charter focus on three core principles:

1. Directly elected regional assemblies
2. Appropriate regional finances
3. The right of regional assemblies to freely dispose and prioritise in the execution of their own tasks and the use of financial resources.

Mr Andersen said the Governments will not accept the charter at this stage. The discussion will continue – there will be a new chance to have acceptance in some years.

Mr. Andersen proposed to have the three points in the BSSSC resolution and continue the discussion.

The Board agreed to the proposal and thanked for the information.

9. Conference Resolution – for adoption

Ms Sæternes presented the conference resolution. She underlined that the Conference resolution is the BSSSC Board's resolution from the conference.

Mr. Esko Lotvonen proposed to include a point about ENPI programmes under ND.

The Board thanked for the presentation and adopted the resolution with the amendment proposed by Mr. Lotvonen.

10. Board Meetings 2008

Proposed dates for the Board meetings 2008 was sent out with the Board Papers.

14-15 February in Riga (LV)

22-23 May in St. Petersburg (RU)

17 September in Kaunas (LT)

13-14 November Tallinn (E)

The BSSSC Annual Conference 2008 will take place 18 and 19 September in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Mr Musiolik suggested combining the Board meeting in St. Petersburg with the Baltic Sea Day. The Board supported the idea but also stated that it can be a problem concerning the progress of the work with the Annual Conference program 2008. Mr Esko Lotvonen informed the Board that the proposed dates for the Board meeting in Tallinn (13-14 November) should be changed due to the General Assembly of AER 2008.

Mr Andersen informed the Board that Denmark also can host a Board Meeting in 2008.

The BSSSC Secretariat will take a look at the dates for the Board meetings 2008 and put forward a final proposal for confirmation in the next Board meeting.

11. Reports from meetings and events

CBSS Annual meeting, Malmö, Sweden, 13 June

Chairman Arne Ören informed from the meeting of the CBSS. The Latvian Chairman-

ship has invited BSSSC to the youth meeting in October. The coordinator of the Youth Working Group and the Secretariat will take part in the meeting.

General Assembly of CPMR-BSC, Bodö, Norway, 14 – 15 June
Mr Uno Aldegren and Mr. Arne Ören participated in the meeting and took active part in the discussions.

Board meeting in Assembly of European Regions (AER), Istanbul, Turkey, 6 – 7 September

Chairman Arne Ören and Ms. Ann Irene Sæternes participated in the AER Board Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey. The Chairman gave an intervention on BSR and BSSSC. Sustainable Energy and Youth work is two themes BSSSC proposed for closer cooperation with AER. BSSSC Chairman are invited to the AER Energy seminar in Montpellier in December

The Board thanked for the report from the meetings.

12. Coming events of importance for BSSSC

The next Board meeting will be held in Gdansk, Poland, 15 – 16 November. There will be a seminar on Sustainable Energy and a seminar on the Blue Paper on Maritime Policy.

25 September the Chairman and Mr. Günther Schulz will meet with the Baltic Intergroup of the European Parliament (also a meeting with Mr Göran Fern). Mr. Knud Andersen and Mr. Schulz will meet at the Structured Dialogue with Commissioner Spidla on 28 September.

The Board thanked for the provided information.

The Chairman thanked the Board members for a constructive meeting and closed the meeting.