



Baltic Sea States
Subregional
Co-operation

BSSSC Board Meeting
Kaunas, 9 March 2007

FOR ADOPTION

Minutes from the Board Meeting

0 **Opening of the Board Meeting**

Chairman Arne Øren opened the meeting and welcomed all Board members to the first meeting in 2007. A special welcome was given to Mr. Asger Larsen from Region Hovedstaden, new Board Member from Denmark and to Mr. Olierd Geblewicz from West-Pomeranian Region, new Board member from Polen.

Chairman Arne Ören warmly thanked the host of the Board meeting, Kaunas County and Ms Inara Zariene, Head of Foreign Relations Department.

1 **Adoption of the Minutes from the Board Meeting in Brussels, 10 November 2007**

The Board adopted the Minutes from the Board Meeting in Brussels 10 November 2006.

2 **Adoption of the Agenda**

Chairman Arne Ören proposed to take Point 6 after Point 3 in the agenda and to postpone point number 7 on ND Rapporteurship till next Board meeting in May after request from Schleswig-Holstein. The proposed changes were accepted.

The Board adopted the Agenda of the meeting.

3 **Annual Report 2006**

Mr Karl Löfmark presented the Annual Report 2006 and informed that it would be distributed. The Board thanked Mr Löfmark for the provided information.

4 **Annual Conference 2007**

The 15 Annual Conference of BSSSC will be hosted by the Region of Southwest Finland and take place 13 and 14 September 2007 in City of Turku. The main focus will be on Sustainable Energy.

Mr. Risto Ervelä from the Regional Council of Southwest Finland presented Turku and the ongoing work with the Annual Conference 2007. The event will take place at Holiday Club Caribia just outside the centre of Turku.

Ms Ann Irene Sæternes presented the paper on the Annual Conference and draft programme for discussion. The work on practical and technical issues is well taken care of by the host organisation. The organizers will highly appreciate input from the Board Members. Please send input or comments to BSSSC Secretariat by Ann Irene Sæternes.

Ms Sæternes pointed on some open questions and welcomed comments and other suggestions

on the following topics:

- The heading of the Conference – Sustainable energy –contributions to meet the treats of the climate change.
- Comments on titles and list of speakers.
- Proposal for persons to fill the open places will be highly appreciated. More female speakers will be fine.
- Best practise examples combined with the project exhibition.
- The focus on youth participation

The Board agreed on the Heading of the Conference

The Board members supported the work with the Annual Conference and the draft programme.

Session 2: The Board had no comments to titles and list of speakers.

Session 3: Ms Inger Linge informed that Stockholm could bring practical examples of sustainable public transport. Ms Inge Hyldebrandt mentioned some fish oil examples from Denmark.

Session 4: The Board was encouraged to find female speakers.

Session 5: Other BSSSC issues as Maritime Policy and Transport. Mr Uno Aldegren informed that an Interreg Project on Transport could be presented at the Conference. Mr Günther Schulz informed that it is possible for Schleswig-Holstein to invite Mr Uwe Döring as a speaker at this session.

Financial Issue: A participation fee, 100 Euro, is envisaged by the organisation committee. The Board agreed upon the financial issue.

Mr Günther Schulz had some comments on the Partner search on Friday afternoon. He asked if it would be possible to start the conference at 11.00 on Thursday, and start the Partner search Forum earlier on Friday. The BSSSC Board asked the organizers to check possible changes in the time schedule.

Mr Bruno Synak asked about the coordination meeting with other BSR organisations. The BSSSC secretariat will check up the date of the next meeting.

The Board thanked Mr Risto Ervelä and Ms Sæternes for the provided information

The Chairman encouraged the Board members to give their comments or suggestions to the Secretariat by **10 April**.

5 Follow-up of the Work Plan 2006 - 2008

5.1 Report from the consultations with BSR sub-regions - BSSSC Chairman

The Chairman Mr. Arne Ören and representatives from the BSSSC Secretariat have visited Denmark/Copenhagen (Danish Regions) in January 2007, Sweden/Stockholm (Swedish Association of Municipalities and Regions), January 2007, Finland/Helsinki (Finnish Associations of Local and Regional Authorities), February 2007 and Lithuania/Kaunas (Kaunas Country Governors office), March 2007.

Some outcomes from discussions:

- Good support for the issues laid down in the Work Plan 2006-2008. It seems that BSSSCs work are well in line with the interest of the BSR sub-regions and also with what is on the agenda in Europe.
- Positive comments given in all meetings to the efforts to include Russian Regions into the work of BSSSC.
- BSSSC as an arena for information, exchange of experience and best practice. Many positive reactions on the wish to combine the work as a political organisation with the stimulation of concrete projects between regions.
- Financial issues have not been so broadly discussed. Signals so far give a good support to the introduction of a conference fee to finance annual conferences. This will be helpful in finding host regions in the future.

The Chairman briefed about the planned meetings in Russia/St. Petersburg in March, and the dates for the meetings with Poland/Gdansk, Latvia, Estonia and Germany will be identified in due course.

Mr Bruno Synak welcomed the Chairman to Poland to the Parliamentarian Forum in Gdansk 20 – 22 May. Competitive energy will be one of the issues on the agenda. Mr Synak handed over the formal invitation to the Chairman who accepted it.

5.2 Transport and Infrastructure

High Level Group on Intermodality and Interoperability - Preparatory work for establishing a project under upcoming Transnational BSR Programme – Mr. Uno Aldegren, Region Skåne

Mr Aldegren informed about the ongoing work in the High Level group led by the Region Skåne. The group has been renamed to High Level Group on Transports for Sustainable Growth in the Baltic Sea Region. The next meeting of the group will take place in Bodø, Norway in June.

The overall objectives are:

1. Better communication East/West
2. Better communication North/South.
3. Better communication between metropolitan areas
4. Better communication - goods transport/infrastructure to Asia

It is important to discuss the financial issues and every country has to prioritise infrastructure investments.

Mr Aldegren informed that a draft of the Interreg project hopefully can be presented at the Annual Conference in Turku.

The Board thanked Mr Uno Aldegren for the information

5.3 Maritime Policy

Follow-up of declaration from Annual Conference 2006 – Land Schleswig-Holstein

Mr Günther Schulz informed the Board about ongoing activities related to the Maritime Policy on behalf of Schleswig-Holstein. The final conference on the Green Paper will take place in May.

Its possible to use the structure funds money to make projects, and a Maritime Day can be used to demonstrate best practices.

In October the Action Plan (a Blue Paper) will be presented. BSSSC should be active and strengthen cooperation with other organisations in this field.

The Chairman requested Schleswig-Holstein to take responsibility to establish an ad hoc Work Group on Maritime Policy, which can be formally established in the next Board meeting in May.

Initiation of cooperation between maritime clusters in the BSR

The BSSSC Secretariat informed about an ongoing process to establish a network between maritime clusters in the Baltic Sea Region. The first meeting will take place in Hamburg 14 March between Schleswig-Holstein, Turku, Gdansk and Oslo to discuss common interests. The work is lead by Mr Fritz Lücke, Schleswig-Holstein. Mr Uno Aldegren pointed at Baltic Master as a possible partner in the Maritime Cluster network. The Secretariat will contact the Baltic Master and ask if the project will take part in the cooperation.

5.4 Sustainable Development

Ad hoc WG on Energy

Mr Günther Schulz informed about the paper on Energy.

The Board agreed to establish an ad hoc Work Group on Sustainable Energy. The Board asked Finland to take the leadership, and encouraged the interested regions to appoint members to the Work Group.

Mr Ervelä agreed to identify the chair of the group in Finland and report to the Board about the results.

Rapporteur Baltic 21

Ms Ann Irene Sæternes informed about the ongoing process on establishing a project on urban rural relations. The project welcomes interested regions onboard. Additional information will be distributed by e-mail.

The Board was positive to the invitation and thanked for the information.

5.5 Civil Security

Mr Oddvar Skaiaa summed the results of the Seminar on Trafficking in Human Beings. He concluded that there are many actors working with this issue. Mr Arne Ören emphasised the importance of awareness raising and preventive work and pointed on the youth perspective in this area. Ms Inger Linge agreed on that. Mr Lasse Lehre, the youth representative in the Board added that there is ongoing work with the issue in Eastern Norway. Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek, the coordinator of the Youth Working Group confirmed that the Youth Working Group would be ready to include the issue in their work and report to the Board.

5.6 Youth policy

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek informed about the ongoing work in the Youth Policy Group and presented a paper on Youth Policy. She emphasised that youth participation give extra value, not only to the youngsters, but also to the adults. The Youth Work Group is working with producing a web site, and will promote the best practice examples through the web site.

Financing of Youth activities is a challenge, for example to find money for travel and accommodation in connection with meetings and annual conferences. Ms Ludwiczek also stated that there are still not representatives from all countries and encouraged the Board to nominate representatives to the Youth Working Group.

Mr Lasse Lehre informed the Board about the Youth Policy group meeting in Szczecin in November 2006.

Mr Arne Ören underlined that the Board supports the Youth Policy Group work and thanked Ms Ludwiczek and Mr Lehre for the information.

6 **BSSSC as a partner of NDPHS (Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being)**

NDPHS was introduced by Mr. Viktoras Meižis, Chairman of the Committee of Senior Representatives (CSR) and Mr. Marek Maciejowski, Head of Secretariat, NDPHS.

The Board discussed BSSSC as a partner of NDPHS. The intention of the partnership is the possibilities for the regions to cooperate and take part in different projects through NDPHS. Ms Inge Hyllebrand asked for some concrete results from the NDPHS. Mr Marek Maciejowski said that the detailed information on the partnership could be found at NDPHS' web site, www.ndphs.org and underlined that the partnership could give a better involvement of the subregions and BSSSC activities related to the health and social well-being issues.

Ms Inger Linge proposed to postpone the decision to the next Board meeting. The Board agreed to postpone the decision.

7 **Northern Dimension (ND)**

Proposal regarding BSSSC rapporteurship on ND

The decision on the rapporteur on Northern Dimension was postponed till next meeting after request from Schleswig-Holstein.

ND Policy Framework Document

During his visit in Brussels BSSSC Chairman was asked to give an input to EU Commission DG Relex on subregions' contribution to the ND Steering Group Meeting 14 March 2007. Ms Ann Irene Sæternes informed about the ND Policy Framework Document. The new ND is more focused on cooperation with Russia. Russia has delivered a list over possible projects, which the Secretariat will try to obtain.

8 **News from Brussels**

The Committee of the Regions and BSSSC signed a Declaration of common interests

By signing a Declaration of Common Interests, the BSSSC has for the first time established an official relationship with an EU Institution.

As a possible follow-up of the Declaration of Common Interests, the idea of establishing a Baltic Intergroup in the Committee of the Regions was launched. The Chairman asked Mr Uno Aldegren, together with Mr Günther Schulz and other BSSSC Board members in CoR, to look further into possibilities.

Other events – Brussels Antenna, Mr. Günther Schulz

Mr Günther Schulz informed about the official opening of BSSSC Brussels Antenna in February. He also elaborated on the planned meetings. Among others, a letter is sent to Commissioner Ms Margot Wallström, where she is asked for a meeting.

9 **Information-related activities**

The BSSSC Secretariat has produced an information folder about the BSSSC 2006-2008. The folder was distributed in the Board meeting. The Secretariat has also updated the BSSSC web site, and will publish the minutes of the board meetings and adopted papers.

The Chairman asked the Board to support the idea of establishing a BSSSC Information Network. The BSSSC Board gave its support to the idea.

10 Coming events of importance for BSSSC

- Baltic Sea Day, St. Petersburg, Russia, 21 – 23 March
- Next Board meeting, 3 – 4 May
- Cooperation with other organisations – meeting in Bornholm, Denmark, 16 and 17 April
- The BSSSC Annual Conference 2008.

Ms Inge Hyldebrandt informed that hosting of the Annual Conference in 2008 should be discussed by the Danish regions. The results of the discussion should be reported as soon as possible.

The Board thanked for the information.

11 Any other business

Ms Inge Hyldebrandt reported from a meeting in a working group under the Council of Europe in Paris. The group is trying to find an agreement on a Charter for regional self-governance. This seems to be a difficult issue and it is hard to find a common agreement. The work group is chaired by Mr. Knud Andersen, Danish Regions

Mr Karl Löfmark informed the Board about the Swedish-American entrepreneurial days 20-23 August 2007 and invited BSSSC Board members to participate.

The Board thanked for the invitation.

12 Partnership agreement between Vestfold County (Norway) and Kaunas City and Kaunas County (Lithuania) – Vestfold Information Centre

The Chairman of the Vestfold County Council Ms Tove Lisbeth Vasvik, Norway and Vytautas Valaitais, the Director of the Vestfold information Centre in Kaunas informed about the Kaunas Office. They also invited all the Board members to use the services of the office.

More information can be found at www.vestfold.lt

The Board thanked for the invitation.

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