



**Present:**

Mr Stefan Herms (DE), Ms Birgit Kuestner (DE), Ms Ann Irene Saeternes (NO), Mr Roger Ryberg (NO), Ms Elisabeth Traellstad (NO), Mr Pawel Maciejewski (Secretariat), Ms Magdalena Anisko (Secretariat), Mr Per-Olof Persson (SE), Mr Krzysztof Barczyk (PL), Mr Olgierd Geblewicz (PL), Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek (Secretariat), Mr Sebastian Gojdz (Brussels Antenna), Mr Arne Tilk (EE), Mr Stefan Musiolik (DE), Ms Marlene Rothe (DE), Mr Jakko Mikkola (FI), Ms Hannele Luukkainen (FI), Ms Tuula Palaste-Eerola (FI), Mr Ossi Savolainen (FI), Mr Esko Lotvonen (FI), Ms Ulle Erman (EE), Mr Vladimir Svet (EE), Ms Ingrid Klomp (NO), Mr Sten Svane (DK), Mr Louis Hansen (DK), Ms Mudite Priede (LV), Mr Toivo Riimaa (EE), Mr Uwe Ahlers (B7), Mr Tommy Eliasson (B7), Mr Janne Tamminen (FI), Mr Heinz Maurus (DE),

**Opening of the Board Meeting**

**1.1 Welcome by the host region**

Mr Heinz Maurus, State Secretary for Europe and Federal Affairs (Schleswig-Holstein), welcomed the BSSSC Board to Berlin. Mr Maurus in his welcome words mentioned the Baltic Sea Days which were currently taking place in Berlin. He referred to some of the events organized within the framework of the Baltic Sea Days: A Workshop on the Baltic Sea History Project and the Cultural kick-off of the Baltic Sea Days, where BSSSC Board members could participate the day before. Mr Maurus stressed that for the Schleswig-Holstein region the work within the network BSSSC is very valuable. He underlined that the BSSSC, over past 20 years, has developed its great reputation on the Baltic stage as well as in Brussels.

**1.2 Welcome by Mr Olgierd Geblewicz – BSSSC Chairman**

On behalf of the BSSSC Chairman, Ms Małgorzata Ludwiczek welcomed the BSSSC Board and thanked the Schleswig-Holstein region for hospitality and for inviting the Board to Berlin.

**1.3 Adoption of the meeting agenda**

The Board adopted the meeting agenda.

#### **1.4 Adoption of the BSSSC Board meeting minutes from Rovaniemi, 24 February 2012**

Ms Hannele Luukkainen requested for a correction to point 4.6 of the BSSSC Board meeting minutes on 24 February 2012 in Rovaniemi, which should be formulated as follows: Ms Hannele Luukkainen said that it would be very interesting to raise the issue of the pollution of the Baltic Sea, as Russia is the main factor to that. Ms Lukkainen noted that she would like to include this topic in the agenda of the BSSSC Board – CBSS CSO meeting in Berlin.

The remark of Ms Luukkainen was noted down. The BSSSC Board adopted the minutes of the BSSSC Board meeting in Rovaniemi on 24 February 2012.

## **2. Annual Conferences**

### **2.1 Annual Conference 2012: Report from the Norwegian host**

Mr Roger Ryberg reported on the latest developments concerning the BSSSC Annual Conference 2012. He informed the Board about the brainstorming meeting which took place on 23 April where new inputs to the conference programme were proposed. He advised sending additional comments on the conference programme as soon as possible to the conference coordinator Ms Ann Irene Saeternes.

Mr Stefan Herms proposed to include in the conference program a separate session on water issues with participants from Germany, Finland and Russia.

Mr Stefan Musiolik suggested reflecting the EUSBSR in each of the conference sessions and to present best practice examples always with links to the EUSBSR.

Ms Saeternes informed the Board that the deadline for sending the names of speakers to the conference sessions will be the end of next week (4 May) and the registration for conference participants will be opened at the beginning of May.

Ms Ludwiczek asked about the procedure of drafting the conference resolution. She requested contact details of the session coordinators.

Ms Saeternes explained that usually the Secretariat prepares a draft of the resolution, which is then consulted with BSSSC Board members.

Ms Ludwiczek pointed out that this year the conference topic was created by the steering committee and she asked for the names of persons responsible for those issues. Ms Ludwiczek remarked that the Secretariat was not involved in the process of developing the conference programme and therefore it will be difficult for the Secretariat to draft the conference resolution alone.

Ms Saeternes explained that the major input to the conference resolutions always comes from the BSSSC, not from external actors.

Ms Birgit Kuestner gave an example on how the procedure of developing the conference resolutions during the Hamburg Chairmanship was organized. Ms Kuestner clarified that Hamburg contacted the session moderators for the reference materials, which were afterwards used as the input to the resolution.

Ms Saeternes suggested concentrating on the resolution draft on the results coming directly from the conference but also on such general issue as EUSBSR, energy, clean Baltic Sea, youth involvement, which are areas of BSSSC interest. She proposed to prepare the final draft of the resolution by the end of August.

## **2.2. Annual Conference 2013**

Ms Hannele Luukkainen on behalf of the Finnish delegation declared that the Helsinki-Uusimaa region will organize the next BSSSC Annual Conference in 2013.

## **3. Political Aims and Goals of the BSSSC**

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek summed up the discussion on the BSSSC political goals which was started during the BSSSC Board meeting in Rovaniemi and presented the proposals for future work. She presented some of the conclusions agreed upon during the previous Board meeting:

- BSSCC should reconsider its most important goals
- BSSSC should focus on networking with other organisations
- BSSSC should have a stronger influence on the implementation process of the EUSBSR
- establishing the BSSSC reform working group.

Ms Ludwiczek informed that the Secretariat sent an email to the Board members with request to appoint members of the working group. So far the Danish and Estonian representatives have submitted to the working group. She told the Board about the plan to prepare a questionnaire on particular points relevant for the BSSSC, which will be distributed among the working group members. On that basis there will be formulated a discussion paper for the next BSSSC Board meeting in September.

Mr Stefan Herms asked the initiators of the discussion to explain what is the idea standing behind the BSSSC reform. He mentioned that the BSSSC in the past had faced discussions on its priorities which resulted in the creation of the Terms of Reference. He pointed out that the upcoming EU funding period will be crucial and will also be an occasion for the BSSSC network to discuss on more clear actions and projects. At this particular stage of the BSSSC work Mr Herms underlined that he does not see a need for conceptual work on the BSSSC priorities. As he concluded that the discussion on the BSSSC's future relates very closely to the next Finnish chair of the BSSSC and the question was whether they will wish to continue this point as their action.

Mr Esko Lotvonen explained that the Finnish chair did not initiate a debate on changes of the BSSSC working structure. He added that the general goal of the debate was the effectiveness of the BSSSC work and its working groups and also to specify and concentrate on the most relevant issues.

Ms Ludwiczek added that the idea was to look into BSSSC priorities and activities and to decide how the BSSSC is going to tackle this issues. If through the working groups there should be representation of all member regions and if there is no interest from member regions in taking part in such working group, then such areas should be excluded from the BSSSC Board meeting's agenda.

Another aim was to identify the BSSSC long-term priorities and to discuss if the BSSSC wishes to work on its priorities through working groups, rapporteurs or maybe by establishing ad hoc working groups on particular issues.

Ms Birgit Kuestner pointed out that the BSSSC work is always stimulated by the chairmanship who decides about the priority areas and if there are regions interested in other priorities they should be free to work on them for instance by creating a working group. Ms Kuestner reminded the Board that the previous BSSSC reform concluded with the Terms of Reference, which finally ended the work of the BSSSC permanent working groups.

Mr Sten Svane clarified that the idea of Mr Knud Andersen, who was one of the initiators of the discussion, was to adjust the BSSSC work to the changing reality.

Mr Herms raised a suggestion to the next BSSSC Finnish chair to prepare their priorities by the end of the Westpomeranian Chairmanship, which the BSSSC Board could discuss during its last meeting in 2012 or at the beginning of 2013. As Mr Herms underlined that it would be a good opportunity for the BSSSC to react to the changing reality when one chairmanship ends and the next one takes over.

Ms Ann Irene Saeternes agreed with the BSSSC Secretariat proposal to consult with the BSSSC members and with those who are working with the network about BSSSC priorities. The results of such check could be very informative and helpful for preparing the next BSSSC chairmanship. Ms Saeternes pointed out that there is no need to establish working group on the BSSSC reform and that it would be sufficient to ask regions for their feedback on the BSSSC work, about the expected improvements etc. This kind of input could be prepared in written form and discussed during the next BSSSC Board meeting.

Mr Olgierd Geblewicz summed up the discussion and pointed out that the next BSSSC Chairmanship and the new EU budgetary perspective will also be for the whole BSSSC a good opportunity to bring new ideas and start discussing how the BSSSC can implement them.

## **4. Follow-up Work Plan 2011-2012**

### **4.1 Cohesion policy – Danish Regions**

The report on Cohesion Policy prepared by the Danish Regions has been enclosed to the meeting documentation. It concerns the proposal of making an updated version of the BSSSC statement 'Cohesion Policy in the Multi Annual Financial Framework 2014-2020'. The report presents the results of the consultation within the ad hoc working group on the EU Budget 2013+, which proposed not to change the very good common basis in the existing BSSSC statement but rather to reflect and specify additional views of the BSSSC on the draft regulations by a clear and brief letter to the Commission. Among members of the ad hoc working group it has been suggested to draw the attention of the European Commission to some areas of concern in the draft legislative package, especially regarding the proposal for a Regulation for European Territorial Cooperation.

Mr Stefan Musiolik supported the proposal of the ad hoc working group to put forward those topics to the European Commission with demands formulated by the BSSSC.

Mr Stefan Herms thanked the ad hoc working for the report, which is a very good example of useful work of the BSSSC. He pointed out that it is relevant that the meta-regions subject has also been transferred to this report.

The BSSSC Board agreed to formulate a letter to the Commissioner for Regional Policy with BSSSC recommendations concerning post 2013 Cohesion Policy. It was proposed that the delivery of the letter should be followed up with a meeting with the Commissioner or if that is not possible, then with the Director General of DG Regio.

Mr Olgierd Geblewicz informed that the Secretariat will arrange a meeting of the BSSSC representatives with the Commission, in Brussels.

### **4.2 EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – Westpomeranian Region**

Ms Małgorzata Ludwiczek reported on latest developments of the revision of the EUSBSR and its Action Plan. She informed the Board about the overall aims of strategy review: improvements to the strategic focus; alignment of policies and funding; clarification of different actors' responsibilities; better communication. She informed that there will be a clear plan for the revision of the Action Plan and the time for the input from the regional organizations will be after the forum in Copenhagen (18-19 June 2012). The first version of the Reviewed Action Plan will be sent to National Contact Points, Priority Area Coordinators, Horizontal Action Leaders for consultation in the second part of 2012 and the reviewed EUSBSR Action Plan shall be endorsed by the Member Countries by the end of 2012/beginning 2013. She

stressed that 2012 will be a crucial year for negotiations on the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes and the EUSBSR Action Plan.

Mr Geblewicz informed that the presentation on the EUSBSR revision will be sent after the meeting to all BSSSC Board members.

Mr Stefan Musiolik referred to the issue of culture and regional identity within the EUSBSR, which was unfortunately not integrated into the “Joint position on the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region”. He proposed that culture and regional identity could be a sub-priority area within the EUSBSR. In order to support the integration of the culture and regional identity into the EUSBSR the BSSSC Chairman could promote this idea during the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Copenhagen.

Mr Stefan Herms suggested that the BSSSC should use the opportunity of the European Commission presence in Copenhagen to organize individual meeting or even a talk with the Commission in order to present the organization's voice on EUSBSR related issues.

Ms Saeternes underlined that the BSSSC Annual Conference in Lillestrøm will gather representatives of the Commission and BSR Programme. The conference will be also a good opportunity for the BSSSC to present its requests and recommendations concerning the future BSR Programme and the EU Territorial Cooperation in the period 2014 - 2020. She proposed to refer in the conference resolution to the update of the EUSBSR.

#### **4.3 Maritime Policy – Schleswig-Holstein**

Mr Stefan Musiolik informed the Board that due to a number of rejections, the meeting of the BSSSC Working Group on Maritime Policy has been rescheduled to May (on the occasion of the European Maritime Day in Gothenburg). What is more, together with HELCOM, the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, the Baltic Sea Forum, BONUS, NDPTL and VASAB a common seminar is also to be held then. Mr Musiolik added that in the future the private sector, specifically harbors’ authorities and ships’ associations should also be included in this collaboration. He also mentioned new funding opportunities within the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund which could also be used for integrated maritime policy. Mr Musiolik underlined the need of one, common voice of all expert groups working in this field.

Mr Musiolik recalled the short report on cooperation with other Baltic organizations in the area of maritime policy which was given a day before during the joint meeting with the CBSS CSO. He mentioned also the last joint meeting of the Baltic organizations’ working groups on maritime policy which was held in Gdansk on the occasion of the European Maritime Days in 2011.

In closing, Mr Musiolik thanked the Westpomeranian Region for appointing a representative to the working group – PhD. Eng. Przemyslaw Rajewski, who unfortunately couldn’t come to Berlin, but he already has confirmed his attendance in the Gothenburg’s meeting.

[BREAK]

Chairman Geblewicz began after the break with an announcement concerning the list of the host regions of the annual conferences attached to the documentation. The BSSSC Annual Conference in 2000 was held in Estonia, not in Latvia as was written. He added that the corrected list will be sent once again via e-mail.

#### **4.4 Climate policies and energy security – Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg**

Chairman Geblewicz informed that the report has been attached to the documentation.

Ms Birgit Kuestner added that the Baltic 21 Expert Group met a day before, but since she couldn't contact the representative from Hamburg, she asked Ms Saeternes who participated in the meeting to give a brief report. The Hamburg rapporteur will give a written report later on.

Ms Ann Irene Saeternes attended the first part of the meeting where the policy recommendations were discussed. Some of them coming from the lighthouse projects were addressed to the regional level. It has been decided that the BSSSC will represent this level in the BSR. The draft report has been developed partly and it is devoted to the issue of funding and recommendations in the following areas: sustainable energy and climate, sustainable transport, urban-rural interaction. The joint comment of the BSSSC representation was to give a clearer message. It has also been decided to revise this proposal – to give a one-page recommendation. The Baltic 21 Expert Group will send these recommendation before the summer break. Ms Saeternes proposed to include some of these statements in the BSSSC resolution and to invite a B21 representative to the BSSSC Board meeting in Lillestrom. Then the BSSSC Board should decide what to do next with this document and the exact procedure is up to the Secretariat. Projects which are involved in developing the recommendations are: EcoRegion, Bioenergy Promotion Project, New Bridges. In closing she informed the Board about some of the upcoming activities of the Baltic 21 Expert Group.

Mr Roger Ryberg noticed that the Norwegian representative is very eager to discuss the issue of the Northern Dimension, especially in the areas of transport, climate, economy, oil and gas. Since the last meeting in Rovaniemi Mr Ryberg met 3 times with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He also recalled the meeting with the CSO, where the high-ranked Russian Official was very open for cooperation in this dimension. Mr Ryberg mentioned the concept of the Northern Sea Route – a lane which connects Europe and Asia through the Arctic waters. He underlined that he looks forward to the cooperation during the upcoming Finnish chairmanship particularly in this matter.

#### **4.5 Public Health and Quality of Life – Westpomeranian Region**

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek presented a brief report on the NDPHS Senior Officials meeting, which was held in Helsinki. She informed the Board that during the meeting the awareness and importance of health issues

in the Strategy and the BSR programme was raised – the NDPHS will have a session during the BDF Summit in Copenhagen with a main focus on involving Russia in the health projects. The NDPHS secretariat informed during the meeting that there is a special fund for the projects on health with Russia. Because Russia has no legal recognition, the money has to be transferred through the CBSS.

The second point which Ms Ludwiczek raised was the list of the projects attached to the documentation. The NDPHS Senior Officials turned to the Secretariat with a request to disseminate the information among the BSR regions and institutions located in the regions which would be interested in joining the projects. Ms Ludwiczek asked the Board to send out this table and to inform the Secretariat if there are some potential partners.

#### **4.6 Youth policy – Westpomeranian Region**

Chairman Geblewicz informed the Board that the report on youth policy has been attached to the documentation. Mr Louis Hansen informed about the proposal of the Youth in Action project – Tools for Mobility which aims to give better possibilities for getting jobs and education in different countries.

Ms Ingrid Klemp informed that she and Mr Vladimir Svet took part in the Baltic Sea NGO Forum and in the Baltic Sea Youth Session – a collaboration of the German European Youth Parliament and the youth of the CBSS member states, who come together in order to discuss the key issues for youngsters. Later that day there will be a meeting organized with the Parliamentarians from the CBSS. The Baltic Sea NGO Forum will release a joint communication which will be forwarded to the CBSS.

Mr Vladimir Svet presented the idea of creating (together with other youth association in the BSR) a general declaration of youth policy and co-management that could be adopted by BSSSC and addressed to the regions. The draft document probably will be available at the BSSSC Annual Conference in Lillestrom. Another point, Mr Svet raised was a competition among the regional and local authorities in the BSR on youth-friendly governments.

Ms Ludwiczek added an announcement concerning the project on Baltic identity supported by the BSSSC Working Group on Youth Policy. The idea of this project is to form an entire Baltic community among youngsters, including even those who moved outside the BSR. The project has been developed by the Norwegians.

Ms Ann Irene informed the Board that the youth event to be held in Lillestrom has received funding from the Youth in Action Programme – 40.000 EUR. This amount includes the event in Tallinn in May.

On this occasion Ms Ludwiczek informed that there were already over 20 participants registered for the meeting in Tallinn.



#### **4.7 Co-operation with Russia – Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg**

Mr Stefan Herms gave a brief report on three prime points concerning this area:

Firstly, was the conference in St. Petersburg on 21 March which gathered a number of high ranked Russian representatives including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The following ventures were presented: the EU Strategy for the BSR, Europe 2020 and Russia 2020 Strategy and some of the subregional strategies such as the North-West, covering the Baltic Sea Region. Mr Herms informed that the Russian side is very interested in participation after the structural funds will be reformed. The speech he delivered that day was distributed among the Board members.

The second activity presented covered a tri-pod cooperation between Hamburg, Turku and St. Petersburg. With support of the European Commission several areas of cooperation had been identified: labor market, innovation and cooperation of SMEs, cooperation between chambers of commerce and environment – where the Finnish partners are particularly interested. The issue of pollution had caused a very lively and constructive discussion during that meeting – Mr Herms mentioned and encouraged all BSSSC Board members who are interested in this topic to join this venture. He recalled the EU funded project called Baltic Manure. He underlined that it creates also a possibility for closer cooperation with Russia.

Mr Herms informed the Board also that on 11-12 September a Biannual Meeting with the authorities of St. Petersburg will be held in Hamburg. A memorandum of understanding about future projects is foreseen to be signed. He requested to add this date to the calendar of the BSSSC events.

Mr Stefan Musiolik recalled the conversation with the Russian side from the day before. Mr Musiolik turned to the Chairmanship to be more active in making contact with the Russian regions, at least to have the representative from St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad Region present at the BSSSC Board meetings.

Chairman Geblewicz said that the bilateral cooperation with the authorities of the Kaliningrad Oblast will be used.

Ms Hannele Luukkainen asked Mr Herms if he knew about any discussions concerning the emission of phosphorus coming to the Gulf of Finland from the "Phosphorite" plant through the Luga river. The amount of phosphorous produced by this factory alone is bigger than the production of Finland in total.

Mr Herms answered that the discussion in which Finland and St. Petersburg are taking part are not on this particular matter.

#### **5. Baltic Sea Region Programme – Ms Ann-Irene Saeternes (Eastern Norway County Network)**

Ms Ann Irene Saeternes informed that some of the points were taken up already in the point on the Baltic Strategy. Ms Saeternes updated the Board about the 5th call. There were together 6 projects – 3 in the area of multi-level governance and 3 on branding. The programme can support only 2. Among those, there is the INVOLVE project which is supported by the BSSSC. The Eastern Norway Country Network together with

Buskerud and Telemark regions are partners in this project. She also mentioned the BSR TransGovernance, supported by the Blekinge Region in Sweden and the project from the area of branding. Ms Saeternes informed that the results will be known on 12 June.

Ms Saeternes informed the Board about the 1st Joint Programming Committee meeting 2014-2020. It was held in Riga on 29 March. The Russian side was present at the meeting as an observer, showing a great interest in the next programming period. It has been said by the European Commission that moving money from the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) to the DG Regio is being considered which will make easier to include Russia.

Ms Saeternes underlined the need to support this solution.

Ms Saeternes informed the Board that the existing Baltic Sea Region Programme is financed both from ERDF and ENPI funds which are run according to both ERDF Regulations and the PRAG Rules. This is why the calls are open longer than for other ERDF programmes.

The next meeting will be on 13 June, back to back with the Monitoring Committee. The next one is on 20 September in Lillestrom as part of the 2012 BSR Programme Conference.

Then Ms Saeternes informed the Board about the questionnaire for the programming of a future Baltic Sea Region Programme developed by the JTS. It has been sent to all BSR organizations with a request to fill it in and send it back before 15 May. She proposed that the Secretariat will disseminate this among the Board members in order to collect the input.

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek said that as soon as the Secretariat will receive it, it will be sent out. She also mentioned another possibility to influence the process of designing the new programme. She recalled the reference group which will consist (among many) of Baltic organizations and will aim to gather the expectations related to the scope and content, as well as other important aspects of the transnational BSR Programme 2014-2020. Ms Ludwiczek proposed to check the possibilities of joining the group as the BSSSC.

Ms Saeternes said that the group most likely will consist of the recipients of the questionnaire and it will not meet often.

## **6. Report from Brussels – Mr Sebastian Gojdz (Brussels Antenna)**

Mr Sebastian Gojdz referred to the “Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding the sulphur content of marine fuels”. He briefly presented the content of the document and expressed his concern regarding the prices of oil which in his opinion will raise as a result of reduction of sulphur emissions. This also could lead to problems with the competitiveness of the Baltic ports, as the Directive does not apply to all seas and could shift the transportation from seas to roads.

He asked the Board to discuss this issue with their MEP and the regional experts.

Mr Stefan Musiolik said that this issue was raised last year in the discussion with the Norwegians. The Swedish side was also involved in this matter. Afterwards the Swedish government recognized the ambitious aim of 0,1 sulphur. Mr Musiolik underlined that the overall aim of the European Parliament of decreasing the standards before 2015 should cover all the EU seas. He added that the CPMR North Sea Commission is also in favor of higher standards but the idea was not supported by the CPMR as it cover also other basins. Mr Musiolik expressed his opinion that this solution could only lead to an increase in the environmental standards in all seas, including the Mediterranean sea.

Chairman Geblewicz gave thanks for the report and said that increasing environmental standards should be supported in general.

Mr Sebastian Gojdz underlined that his intention was to present the issue, raise the awareness. He added that the document criticizes the reduction to 0,5 sulphur in Southern Europe seas until 2020 because it in fact depends on the supply of oil.

Mr Esko Lotvonen said that environmental standards are very important for Finland since the transportation between Finland and EU goes mostly via the Baltic Sea and the Finish coast line is very long. He recalled also the trends which will shift the transportation to the ice-free ports in the far North.

Stefan Musiolik added that the strict environmental framework is an innovative driver for new technologies, such as the usage a LNG.

The second issue taken up by Mr Gojdz was the Declaration of Common Interest. Mr Gojdz had spoken with both Cabinets of the Secretary General Mr Gerhard Stahl and Ms Bresso's. The Committee suggested that Mr Stahl is the one who should put a signature, as it has been in the past. Mr Gojdz informed that it has been agreed that Mr Stahl will join the 8th Self-government Forum in Szczecin, on 5 June and on this occasion the document can be signed.

The Chairman noticed that the information is absolutely fresh. He invited the Board to take part in the event. He expressed also his concern regarding the signing procedure – the parties could be either invited to Szczecin in person or the document can be sent out to the Secretariat of the Baltic organizations which joined the agreement.

Mr Stefan Herms said that the decision is up to the secretariat.

Ms Ann Irene Saeternes said that the Brussels Antenna (under the Norwegian presidency) was responsible for the previous declaration. Only the Chairman and the Secretariat and the Committee's Secretary General were present at the ceremony, as firstly the document was only between the BSSSC and the CoR. The Baltic organizations which joined the agreement sent their representatives (or deputies) for the "second" signing ceremony.

Ms Saeternes forwarded a request from Mr Thore Westermoen from Vest-Agder who was absent: since the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission can't be a part of the declaration, he turned with a request to include in the document that the BSC supports the declaration.

Chairman Geblewicz said that it will be discussed internally.

## **7. BSSSC Board meetings 2012**

Chairman Geblewicz informed that the date of the following Board meeting is already agreed. It will take place in Lillestrom, Norway on 17 September.

The Chairman underlined that the exact date of the last meeting in 2012 still remains unknown. As regards to the place, Chairman Geblewicz said that according to tradition the meeting should be held in Brussels. The previously proposed date – 5/6 December is not suitable because at that time the B7 Annual Conference is held. On 6 December Finland celebrates its independence day – added Mr Ossi Savolainen.

The Board agreed on the date 28/29 of November (the Board meeting on 29<sup>th</sup>). The exact venue in Brussels will be proposed later on, probably in the Committee of the Regions. The Secretariat will confirm the details via e-mail.

## **8. Reports from meetings and events**

Mr Stefan Herms said that the report on the meeting in St. Petersburg was presented earlier in a point on the cooperation with Russia.

Ms Malgorzata Ludwiczek briefly presented the Meeting of Four Regional Councils' of the North held on 29 March in Stockholm. The authorities of the Arctic, Euro-Barents, Nordic and Baltic Councils met in order to discuss the common areas of cooperation. The outcome of the meeting was reflected in a joint conclusion that the organizations have to cooperate closely and be more project-oriented, especially on the level of working-expert groups. It was also decided that the Northern Dimension will join the following meetings.

Ms Saeternes asked about the name of the observer to the BSSSC Board from the CBSS.

Ms Ludwiczek informed that Ms Nanna Magnadóttir will succeed Mr Christer Pursiainen.

## **9. Coming events**

The full list of the events is enclosed to the agenda of the meeting.

Mr Stefan Herms added some more information about the conference entitled "From Education to Employment: Optimizing Transition Management" (organized in Hamburg), invited the Board once again and disseminated some materials. He underlined that those who will register before the next day will have the accommodation covered by the host.

Mr Vladimir Svet asked on this occasion if there is a possibility to issue an invitation to the National youth Council in Estonia.

Mr Herms confirmed.

#### **10. Any other business**

No item was reported.

In closing Chairman Geblewicz thanked once again the Schleswig-Holstein region for its hospitality and organization and also he thanked the members of the BSSSC for presence.