EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
30 January 2019, Päijät-Häme, Lahti (FI)

Participants

President: Jari NAHKANEN, Regional Council of Oulu Region (Finland)
1st Vice-President: Annika SANDSTRÖM, Region Stockholm (Sweden)
2nd Vice-President: Cezary CIESLUKOWSKI, Podlaskie Regional Assembly (Poland)

Full and Alternate Members
- Estonia: Romek KOSENKRANIUS, Pärnu City Government
- Finland: Talvikki JORI, Regional Council of South West Finland
- Germany: Wolf BORN, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
- Sweden: Erik BERGKVIST, Region Västerbotten

Working Groups
Bosse ANDERSSON, 2nd Vice President Regional Council, Region Stockholm, Chair Transport WG
Kaarin TAIPALE, Member of the Board, Region of Helsinki-Uusimaa, Vice Chair Transport WG
Richard SJÖLUND, Vice-Member of the Board, Regional Council of Ostrobothnia, Chair Energy WG

Supporting officers
Hanna HONKAMÄKI, Manager of International Affairs, Council of Oulu Region
John KOSTET, Adviser, Region Västerbotten
Evert KROES, Secretary Growth and Regional Planning Board, Stockholm County Council
Jenny MOZGOVY, Senior Advisor in International Affairs, Norrbotten
Petteri PARTANEN, Business Manager, Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Toivo RIIMAA, Deputy Director, Association of Estonian Cities and Rural Municipalities (AECM)

Observers / Invited Guests
Pekka JOUNILA, DG REGIO, European Commission (held a keynote speech and engaged in discussion regarding EUSBSR Revision)
Laura LÄPPÄNEN, Regional Mayor, Regional Council of Päijät-Häme (attended Session 1)
Marko MÄLLY, PhD (gave a presentation in Session 4)

CPMR/BSC Secretariat
Åsa BIERING, Executive Secretary, Baltic Sea Commission
Clare BOOTH, Policy Assistant, CPMR General Secretariat
Eloise JONSSON, Intern, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission
Eleni MARIANOU, General Secretary, CPMR (Joined for dinner due to delay in flights)
Opening Session

KEYNOTE SPEECH Welcome to Päijät-Häme
Dr Laura Leppänen, Regional Mayor, Regional Council of Päijät-Häme, gave a keynote speech. She introduced the Region and explained it was in a good location, in the core network corridor and that the Region is constantly striving to make advances. She provided participants with facts and figures on the population and the Region etc.

She explained that Lahti is the winter capital of Finland, and hosts major winter sporting events such as cross-country skiing championships etc. It is a city which is very famous for sports and culture. She expressed her gratitude that many participants will also take part in the Conference in the Sibelius Hall. It is proof that the regions’ role in Europe is seen as important.

There tends to be concentration on cities, but Finland is sparsely populated with an aging population. There is an on-going regional reform, a healthcare reform, which aims to make regions the strongest unit in Finland. The ambition is to make this happen and looking forward to the future, it is hoped that there will be new cooperation and discussion with similar regions.

1. Opening of the Executive Committee Meeting

Opening Speech by Mr Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission
Jari Nahkanen thanked Dr Leppänen for her speech and for hosting the Executive Committee meeting. The meeting is held the day before the Future of Europe Conference tomorrow, co-organised by Regional Council of Päijät-Häme, Oulu and the Baltic Sea Commission. He explained that 2019 is pivotal year and expressed his delight to work with such a high-level organisation as the CPMR. He welcomed participants to the Executive Committee meeting.

There was a quick presentation round to introduce the participants.

1.2 Approval of the Agenda for the Executive Committee meeting
Jari Nahkanen explained the changes to the agenda.
The Executive Secretary asked to include a new agenda item on proposals of the BSC to become associated members and draft a letter of support on three Interreg BSR proposals. The budget was to be discussed late afternoon when Eleni Marianou, General Secretary of the CPMR arrived. Dr Marko Mälly will also give a short presentation on the findings of his study on Pan-Baltic Organisation in relation to the EUSBSR.

Decision
- The modified Agenda was approved and followed as can be seen in the minutes.

1.3 Adoption of the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in Bialystok (PL), 25-26 September 2018
Decision
- The minutes were approved with one amendment proposed by Richard Sjölund regarding the list of participants.
2. Updates

Update on the outcome of national elections in Sweden and Poland
Cezary Cieslukowski gave an update on elections in Poland. Poland consists of 16 voivodeships and elections at all levels were held at the same time. He explained the election procedure and the results for his region to the participants.

Annika Sandström provided participants with an update on elections in Sweden and the current situation.

Wolf Born made a point on the development of political systems in the Baltic Sea Region countries, including different strategies on how to deal with situations. He noted that it is very interesting to notice the differences and similarities. Four German Lander (Federal States) will have elections in 2019.

Romek Kosenkranius informed participants that there will be parliamentary elections on 3 March 2019 in Estonia.

Regional reform in Finland
Jari Nahkanen informed participants about the social and healthcare reform, which is the most significant reform made in Finland by this government. Laws are being discussed and expected to come into force in 2021.

3. CPMR BSC Organisational Matters

Update on CPMR BSC projects
Åsa Bjering gave an update on the current state of play for calls for projects and project applications. She explained that the BSC is supporting the transport platform BSR Access (already approved) and the Smart Specialisation platform, S3 Ecosystem (to be decided upon at the next Monitoring Committee Meeting).

The Baltic Sea Commission Secretariat had, earlier the same week, received requests for letters of support and associated partnership from two prolongation projects (relating to Transport) and one platform (relating to Maritime Spatial Planning) to the current Interreg BSR call.

Decision
The Full Members discussed the requests in detail and decided:
- to not write a letter of support nor become Associated Partners at this stage;
  The Executive Committee stresses that this is not a decision regarding the content of the proposals;
- to task the Secretariat to present a proposal on how the Baltic Sea Commission can handle requests for projects;
- The Executive Committee also discussed the legal possibilities for the organisation to become Full Partners (not only Associated Partners). This should be further investigated by the Secretariat and discussed at a later stage in the Executive Committee.
Financial Report as of 31 December 2018
Åsa Bjering introduced and explained the Financial Report for 2018. There were no questions and this Financial Report will be presented at the General Assembly by Region Norrbotten.

3.3 Information on discussions with the CPMR Auditor
Åsa Bjering noted that information on this issue had already been sent out to participants. Discussions have been held with the CPMR auditors and internal accountant.
Jenny Mozgovoy explained the current situation with regard to a CPMR/host region contract, which has not yet been signed. Norrbotten will keep the members of the Executive Committee informed about the developments.

3.4 Membership update
Åsa Bjering introduced the new map of Member Regions. The BSC had 1 new Member in 2018 (Region Värmland in Sweden) and 1 new Member in 2019 (Regional Council of Satakunta in Finland).

3.5 Internship Spring 2019
Åsa Bjering introduced Eloise Jonsson, the BSC’s new intern. She has a 50% internship with the organisation during spring 2019.

3.6 BSC General Assembly

Decision on host Region of the Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly 2019
Jari Nahkanen explained to participants that there was one proposal for this year’s General Assembly and gave the floor to Åsa Bjering. She explained that for the first time ever in the history of the BSC there is no hosting region for the General Assembly.

A proposal was presented for a shorter General Assembly of either one full day or one half day, on 11 June 2019, to be held back-to-back with the EUSBSR Forum (12-14 June 2019). Åsa Bjering specified that the hotel has been pre-reserved, and that the prices are correct compared to Brussels in the documents sent out. She noted that this was not normally a cost covered by the BSC core budget, as it usually covered by the host region.

Decision
After a brief discussion, the Executive Committee decided that:
• the General Assembly is to be held in Gdansk in parallel with the EUSBSR Forum;
• however, exceptionally this year, the proposal is that BSC will take on the extra cost incurred by not having a host region.

Wolf Born asked for the Agenda to be sent to the members of the Executive Committee and not only to the Presidium. According to internal rules it is the Executive Committee that decides. As the Executive Committee will not meet before the Agenda is sent out, this will be done in writing.

Åsa Bjering asked participants who wanted to be part of the group to help prepare the General Assembly. John Kostet, Jenny Mozgovoy, Hanna Honkamäkiä and Wolf Born expressed their willingness to be part of the Preparatory Group for the General Assembly.
Decision
The Working Papers to be submitted to the General Assembly were decided according to the internal rules.
- A proposal from the Secretariat to adopt a 2-year Work Plan (2019-2021) was agreed;
- A decision was made previously not to raise membership fees in 2019 but discussions will be held on this issue next year;
- A report on the reforms implemented after last year’s discussion on added value will be submitted to the General Assembly;
- A Final Declaration will be drawn up.

3.7 Current situation regarding the Vice-Chair of the BSC Energy Working Group
Richard Sjölund stressed the importance for there to be a Vice-Chair for the Energy Working Group. It is crucial to the work.

Decision
- The Secretariat will send out a new Call for Nominations, to be discussed and decided upon at the next meeting.

3.8 Budget 2019 and 2020
This Agenda item was moved to later in the meeting. See below in the minutes.

4. Strategic issues

4.1 BSC involvement in the revision of the EUSBSR
Wolf Born presented the Baseline Report that has been drafted after the Member Regions of the CPMR answered a questionnaire on the state of play of regional involvement in the Baltic Sea Commission.

He then provided information on the timeline of the revision process.

Decision
- The BSC Executive Committee takes note of the Baseline Report of the Task Force for the Revision of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). It encourages the Task Force to follow closely the revision process for the EUSBSR and strongly interact for this purpose with the relevant stakeholders at EU, Baltic Sea Region, national and regional level;
- Based on the Oulu Declaration adopted by the 23rd BSC General Assembly on 16 May 2018, the Executive Committee underlines its commitment for a stronger implementation of multi-level governance within the EUSBSR and advocates stronger synergies between the EUSBSR and Cohesion Policy instruments;
- Accordingly, the Task Force shall develop a local and regional perspective for the revision of the objectives and scope of the EUSBSR Action Plan and its governance structures, with the aim of promoting a stronger involvement of local and regional stakeholders in the EUSBSR implementation process.
- The successful implementation of the EUSBSR also depends to a large extent on the alignment of funding instruments on EU, national and regional level. Against this background, the BSC
Executive Committee supports the strong interconnection of INTERREG programmes with macro-regional and sea-basin strategies for the post-2020 period as it is proposed in the EU Draft Regulation for the European Territorial Cooperation;

- The Task Force is asked to report on its activities at the following Executive Committee meeting and to submit a draft Position Paper on the EUSBSR revision for the BSC General Assembly 2019.

4.2 BSC Goal Document

**Annika Sandström** discussed what a goal paper is, how can it be formulated how it should be used in order to steer the work of the organisation. She introduced the goal document and explained that the BSC needs to be able to manage actions and implement the goal document. She presented the goals and stressed that the action plan needs to specify how to achieve the goals. It is important that a goal can be measured to ensure that the goals have been achieved.

Each Working Group needs to formulate their goals and objectives. This is currently taking place within the various Working Groups.

**Decision**

- The Goal Document was approved and is included as an appendix to these minutes;
- The Goal Document should function as the Executive Committee input to the Work Plan 2019-2021:
  - The introduction (vision and mission statements should be included in the Work Plan 2019-2021)
  - The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Working Groups and the Task Force Coordinators are responsible for providing suggestions on measurable SMART goals, by 29 March 2019, to be included in the drafting process of the Secretariat;
- The Secretariat should develop a zero-measurement report (written by the Secretariat) on all the goals as of 1 January 2019. The purpose of this report is to follow-up on the goals that the Executive Committee has decided upon. This should be ready for the next Executive Committee meeting.

4.3 Areas for improvement

**Åsa Bjering** gave an update on action taken to deliver improvements, especially in the field of communication and information. Further improvements are to be made and a group of officials will meet later in February to discuss the continuous work of the areas of improvement.

**Extra Agenda Item**

**Dr Marko Mälly** gave a speech and a presentation on the work of his thesis and the outcomes of his studies on International Cooperation Organisations of Regional Governments (ICORGS) in the multi-level governance (MLG) system of the Baltic Sea macro-region - A Q Methodological Study.

4.4 Update on discussions and action taken regarding forming a closer working relationship between the BSC Secretariat and MEPs from the Baltic Sea Region

**Åsa Bjering** explained about European Parliament Intergroups that exist on specific issues and concerns, and provided details on the specific example of SEArica. She expressed the action that the CPMR Secretariat is taking in order to support the hope that SEArica will continue after the European
Parliament Elections. She asked Regions to let the Secretariat know of any MEPs from their countries who will re-run or who will be a new candidate, so that early contact can be made with them. She also gave an update on discussions and actions taken to help form closer relationships.

4.5 Mapping of relevant Actors for the CPMR BSC to have a strategic cooperation with
The meeting tabled this discussion to next Executive Committee Meeting and asked the Secretariat to prepare a suggestion on strategic focus.

4.6 Work Plan 2019-2020
Åsa Bjering identified the need to know who is working on this. The Working Group Chairs and Vice-Chairs will send a one page, max 2-page, document on the Work Plan. In addition, Task Force Coordinators will make suggestions on the Work Plan. The Preparatory Group and the Presidium will suggest the Work Plan for the Executive Committee to approve.

Cezary Cieslukowski suggested that Working Groups complete The Work Plan with goals for the groups. The Executive Committee set the deadline of 20 March for the submission of texts.

4.7 Final Declaration General Assembly 2019
Åsa Bjering asked participants to send any suggestions or proposals to her before 25 April 2019.

5. Reports from the Working Groups/Priority Areas that have been active since the last Executive Committee meeting in September 2018

Maritime Working Group
Petteri Partanen provided an update on the activity of the Maritime Working Group. He highlighted that it is actively formulating a manifesto from the Regions on the leadership process update.

Transport Working Group
Bosse Andersson explained there was not much to report yet, as he has just taken over as Chair. The next meeting of the Working Group will take place on 6 March in Brussels, and the Vice-Chair of the Working Group will be there.

Energy Working Group
Richard Sjölund reminded participants that a Working Paper was sent out with an update. He pointed out that the Lars newsletter is worth a read. He explained that he had participated in a round table in Riga with participants from around the Baltic Sea Region, but there were no Finnish regions present. The Working Group will meet the following day and around 10 people are registered to attend this meeting. He ran through the agenda for the meeting and noted that Jerker Johnson will speak about the results of the project relevant for the Energy Working Group. He stressed the importance of spreading news and messages.

Regions role in implementing Sustainable Development Goals and S3 Financial Platform
Åsa Bjering presented the activities that have taken place over the two last years. This should be described in the Activity Report and the proposal is to involve both SDGs and Smart Specialisation as cross-cutting fields of Baltic Sea Commission work in the future.
KEYNOTE SPEECH
Pekka Jounila, Coordinator for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, DG REGIO

Åsa Bjering introduced Pekka Jounila. He then provided background information on his career. He explained that the revision process for the EUSBSR has started. It is owned by the Member States and the European Commission has a coordinating role to support the Member States in the implementation of this strategy. There is now a need for the action plan to be revised in order to have a relevant Action Plan for the 2021-2027 period. Targets and objectives are set for 2020 so will soon be out of date, hence the need for a revision. He addressed how comprehensive a revision the Member States want to make and noted the need to agree on the future focus of the EUSBSR first.

He addressed what the revision process will entail. It will include a review of the Action Plan itself, a staff working document from the Commission, which will include thematic issues and governance issues. 3 areas are to be covered, as well as whether the objectives are still relevant or whether they should be changed. He addressed the updating of targets and the continued relevance of policy areas and horizontal actions. He then looked at what we want to address with the EUSBSR and what the relevant macro-regional challenges are is a good starting point. He explained the links between PAs and HAs. The continued relevance of PA and HA should also be addressed.

He acknowledged that the EUSBSR is not the simplest thing to discuss. There needs to be understanding of the flagship concept, the role of Steering Committees, and indicators for HAs and PAs. He noted the timeline for the revision of the Action Plan, which was decided last year. Discussions decided that there was need for an open and transparent process that takes into account other negotiations, such as the EMFF negotiations. There are differing views in the Member States on the extent of the revision plan, some are more cautious, and others want to make more changes. Coherence with other macro-regional strategies will be taken into consideration.

Jari Nahkanen thanked Pekka Jounila and opened the floor for discussion. Issues that were discussed included:

- Political commitment;
- Funding instruments;
- Current EC proposal on “merging” maritime cross-border programmes with the Transnational Programme;
- Alignment of transnational programmes with macro-regional strategies;
- Alignment of operational programmes with macro-regional strategies;
- Regional ownership of the EUSBSR;
- Involvement of Russia in the EUSBSR.

Jari Nahkanen concluded the discussion and informed Pekka Jounila about the input the Baltic Sea Commission has decided to prepare in the form of an input paper and a political message to be discussed at the General Assembly in Gdansk, on 11 June 2019.

Åsa Bjering announced that Eleni Marianou’s flight was delayed so Agenda Item 3.8 Budget 2019 and 2020 would now be addressed.
Agenda Item 3.8 Budget 2019 and 2020
Åsa Bjering explained that the excel spreadsheet had been sent to participants with the working papers.
A brief discussion was held on the forecast budget and membership fees.
Wolf Born highlighted that the BSC needs to be as attractive as possible but needs money from membership fees to cover the Secretariat and General Secretariat staff. This means potentially a large increase in fees if no more new members join, so will not be easy, especially as the CPMR is also currently having a discussion on increased fees.
Åsa Bjering noted that the Members have raised this in the CPMR Political Bureau that the CPMR needs to be more selective with projects and be careful which projects are selected. She highlighted a problem with the French National Administration as they will not accept projects in the BSR.
Jenny Mozgovoy questioned who will employ the Executive Secretary. She asked if all membership fees go to the CPMR and the hosting region has to send invoices to the CPMR, who will employ the Executive Secretary and also wondered about the legal side of employing the Executive Secretary.
Wolf Born raised the issue of whether there needs to be a hosting region. If everything goes to CPMR, why does there have to be a hosting region? This discussion will be further addressed at later meeting since the Executive Committee is supposed to come with a proposed solution after December 2020, when the contract of Åsa Bjering and the hosting by Norrbotten and Västerbotten has ended. This should, according to a decision by the General Assembly, be presented and decided at the 2020 General Assembly.

Decision
• The Executive Committee approved the 2019-2020 Budget to be put to the General Assembly.

6. Any Other Business
No further issues were addressed.

7. Closing session

7.1 Timetable of BSC events for 2019
Åsa Bjering gave details on upcoming events and noted that the timetable of events is regularly updated on website.

7.2 Next meeting
2 different options were tabled. The next meeting could be held either in Brussels, lunch-to-lunch on 2-3 May or in Berlin in the offices of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. It was pointed out that 1 May is a public holiday in a lot of countries, so the date of 9-10 was suggested.

Decision
• The proposal for 9-10 May in Brussels was approved. (NB: After the meeting, Southwest Finland offered to host the meeting and also invite the new Finnish Ambassador for Baltic Sea Affairs, this was welcomed by President Jari Nahkanen, hence, the next meeting will be held in Turku).

Jari Nahkanen thanked everyone for the good meeting especially Åsa and Clare for the good preparation.
GOAL DOCUMENT

VISION
A united voice of the Baltic Sea Region

GOALS:
1 Increase the number of Member Regions
   a) In 2021, the BSC shall have four new Member Regions compared to 2018;
   b) In 2021, the BSC shall have Member Regions from each EU Member State within the Baltic Sea Region;
   c) In 2021, 80% of Regions with a Baltic Sea coastline shall be Members of the BSC;
   d) In 2021, all Member Regions should have at least one political representative in one of the BSC’s working bodies.

2 Strengthen Member Region’s input into policy discussions at European level
   On yearly basis:
   a) At least 50 % of BSC Members shall provide written input to relevant CPMR papers;
   b) At least 25 % of BSC Members shall participate in CPMR Working Groups.

3 Promote the accessibility of the Regions in the Baltic Sea Region

4 Promote a globally competitive sustainable growth in the Baltic Sea Region

5 Promote the use of fossil-free energy in the Baltic Sea Region

MISSION
A platform for policy-oriented cooperation