EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
9-10 May 2019, Turku, Southwest Finland (FI)

The PowerPoint presentations made during this meeting are available upon request for the BSC Secretariat.

THURSDAY 9 MAY 2019

Opening Session of the Executive Committee meeting

Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission opened the meeting and welcomed the Executive Committee participants to Turku. He thanked the representatives of Southwest Finland for their warm welcome and passed the floor to Kari Häkimies.

Kari Häkimies, Regional Mayor of Southwest Finland gave a welcome keynote speech which addressed the key issues of regional development, promotion of regional interest and land use and the environment. He stressed that the Baltic regions are the power of Northern Europe. He welcomed Helena Tuuri to the BSC Executive Committee meeting.

Jari Nahkanen invited Erik Bergkvist to reflect on the Baltic Sea Commission. Mr Bergkvist explained he had been active in the CPMR and its Baltic Sea Commission since 2007, and things have changed. He noted that the CPMR is more EU-oriented than before and that the BSC is more stable and successful.

Mr Nahkanen noted also that he wanted to increase cooperation between the BSC President and Vice-presidents, add value for the organisation and set goals for the future. Progress has been made, but more can still be achieved.

After a few minor changes, the Agenda for the Executive Committee meeting was unanimously approved.

Åsa Bjering gave an update from Norrbotten on the procedure of transferring the membership fees from the CPMR Secretariat to the Hosting Region (Norrbotten). This is carried out by the procedure of an invoice.

Åsa Bjering also noted that a report on added value had been included in the Activity Report. The Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting in Lahti, 30 January 2019 were adopted.
Session 2. Approval of the proposed Activity Report and Work Plan 2019-2021

Åsa Bjering introduced the Activity Report 2018-2019. The participants discussed the goals that had been set and the work carried out in line with the Leadership Strategy. She noted there were areas that are awaiting confirmation, and the Executive Committee agreed to mandate the Executive Secretary to make any minor changes to the sections awaiting final comments. The Executive Committee also gave the Executive Secretary the mandate to finalise the layout of the document.

During the meeting, there were presentations from the various BSC Working Groups:
   a.) Maritime Affairs Working Group, by Tiina Perho
   b.) Transport and Accessibility Working Group, by Bosse Andersson
   c.) Climate and Renewable Energies Working Group, by Richard Sjölund

The Activity Report 2018-2019 was unanimously approved.


The Executive Committee gave a mandate to Richard Sjölund to complete the section on Energy and Climate, including the newly elected Vice-Chair(s), which is to be submitted to the Secretariat by 16 May 2019.

The Work Plan 2019-2021 was unanimously approved.

Session 3. EUSBSR Revision

Wolf Born gave an update on activities of the BSC Task Force on the EUSBSR Revision and introduced the BSC Technical Paper on the EUSBSR Revision. He thanked the members of the Task Force for their active engagement and input to the process. He explained the purpose of the paper is to develop a regional perspective and increase the BSC’s reputation as a stakeholder in the EUSBSR. The input paper was developed as a bottom-up exercise involving stakeholders in the regions and analysis of the Interreg BSR Programme. The next step is to start lobbying with people active in the field. A meeting will be held on 15 May 2019 with national coordinators. No decisions are expected. The second COWI report will be published during the month of May, focusing on governance aspects. Directly after the BSC General Assembly, there will be a joint event with the BSC, UBC and BSSSC and the external consultant from COWI.

The BSC Technical Paper on the EUSBSR Revision was approved. The Executive Secretary is to ensure that the national coordinators, HA Capacity and external consultants receive the Technical Paper. The BSC Task Force on the EUSBSR will continue to liaise with stakeholders and be an advocate of regional interests in this issue.

The Executive Committee acknowledged the work achieved by the Task Force and thanked the members for their efforts.
Wolf Born introduced the Position Paper on the EUSBSR Revision. Participants discussed the content of the political message and the need for a strategy to be part of the vision.

Save the Baltic Sea, increase prosperity, and enhance connectivity should be connected to the BSC horizontal and content tasks, and linked to Member States. The BSC regions understand the obvious importance of the regional level as it is between the local, national and European levels. The regions have a key role in achieving results, conveying relevant messages and therefore need to be increasingly involved as stakeholders in the process. Further discussions need to be held on what should be included in the Strategy and the priority areas to work on. Richard Sjölund highlighted the importance of the environment and that the measures taken are not adequate.

The Executive Committee agreed to delay the Policy Position and the Executive Secretary was asked to finalise the proposal by 16 May 2019. The document will then be approved by email.

Keynote speech by Ambassador Helena Tuuri

A panel discussion was held with Ambassador Tuuri and Members of the BSC Executive Committee. Ambassador Tuuri introduced herself and provided background information to the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. She explained that the preparation had been challenging but Finland would be an efficient leader and will put forward an agenda to MEPs and the Commission. Finland will push for a common EU agenda and will do its utmost for the whole of Europe.

Annika Sandstrom asked if there was a Finnish vision for the revision of the EUSBSR. Ambassador Tuuri replied that meetings will take place in Helsinki, but no dates are prepared. It is better to find the common denominator, prioritising is good but it is also important to participate and be included in projects. This is a marketing tool and added value for the EU.

Anders Oberg highlighted the problem of parts of Finland and Sweden being missed off maps.

Jerker Johnson noted that funding is needed. He asked what the relation is between the strategic work on the EUSBSR in relation to Interreg BSR. He pointed out that there is a lot of work on innovation, transport and environmental concerns, this is good, but it is also more demanding for stakeholders.

Ambassador Tuuri replied that there will be less money available in the EU if Brexit takes place, with the biggest holes being defence and migration. She pointed out that it shouldn’t be only the EC budget used in order to implement the EUSBSR.

John Kostet mentioned government negotiations. He asked if Ambassador Tuuri had any insight into whether the EU should have overarching goal for the EU as a whole that would have an effect. He noted that the civil service machinery is working and they have plans, although they cannot be discussed yet due to government discussions.

Wolf Born explained about the Task Force and mentioned that there is room to improve how regions are perceived in the governance of the EUSBSR.
Session 4. European Projects

Åsa Bjering introduced European projects that the BSC and its Member Regions are involved in, and noted that the final report is not ready yet. It is included as a working paper for information only, so that the Executive Committee members can understand that this process is being undertaken by the BSC and CPMR Secretariat.

The next step is to develop a routine and legal framework for the BSC to operate with projects. The Executive Committee approved the following procedure relating to a letter of support/associated partnership:

- Requests for partners should be submitted to the BSC Secretariat at the latest three weeks prior to the programme deadline;
- Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the relevant BSC Working Group should be asked to give an opinion prior to the final decision;
- The Executive Committee makes the final decision on whether the Baltic Sea Commission should support a project application or not;
- If the Executive Committee does not have a meeting before the deadline, the Presidium should make the decision.

Session 5. Pan-Baltic Organisations

Åsa Bjering presented the Pan-Baltic Organisations Background Report and suggested focus for the CPMR BSC Work Plan. The Executive Committee thanked the Secretariat for the report.

The Executive Committee approved the level of presentation and cooperation. It proposed that the Presidium, with the support of the Executive Secretary puts forward a suggestion on representatives to be decided upon during a special Executive Committee meeting prior to the General Assembly on 11 June 2019.

Session 6. CPMR Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly

Åsa Bjering introduced the Agenda for the 2019 General Assembly. The Executive Committee approved or reiterated the approval of the following working papers:

- Agenda
- Minutes 2018 BSC General Assembly
- Financial Report 2018-2019 (approved by the Executive Committee in January in Lahti)
- Forecast budget 2019-2020 (approved by the Executive Committee in January in Lahti)
- Activity Report 2018-2019
- Work Plan 2019-2021
- Technical Paper on Added Value (as part of the Activity Report)
- Policy Position on EUSBSR (per capsulum decision after 16 May)
Erik Bergkvist, Region Västerbotten, presented a proposal on a Policy Position on the EU Post2020 Smart Specialisation Agenda.

The Executive Committee approved to suggest this Policy Position to the General Assembly.

Anders Öberg, Region Norrbotten, presented a proposal on a Policy Position on legalising trade on Seal Products. Tiina Perho argued that this had not been discussed in the framework of the Maritime Working Group and she suggested that if the General Assembly adopts this it should not be forced on the regions in the Maritime Working Group to work on this.

The Executive Committee approved to suggest this policy position to the General Assembly.

**Session 7. Nomination of the Vice-Chair of the BSC Energy Working Group**

Åsa Bjering presented the applications received for the position of Vice-Chair of the BSC Energy Working Group as of 15 April 2019:

The Executive Committee decided to approve
1st Vice Chair: Mr Pontus Lindberg, Chairman, Region Skåne Staff Committee

2nd Vice Chair: Mr Kimmo Kiljunen, Member of the Board, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Member of Parliament of Finland

**Session 8. Update from the Working Groups that have been active since the last Executive Committee meeting in January 2019**

None of the BSC Working Groups had anything specific to raise for discussion.

**Session 9. Any Other Business**

No other issues were raised.

**Closing session**

The timetable of BSC events for 2019 was agreed upon.

Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission gave a closing speech and thanked the members of the Executive Committee for their active participation.

**End of proceedings**