EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
1-2 October 2019, Brussels

1. Opening of the Executive Committee meeting

Mr Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission welcomed participants to this meeting of the Executive Committee and invited them to introduce themselves.

- The agenda for the meeting was unanimously approved, with the addition of a brief proposal from the Polish delegation on adopting a Policy Position to draw particular attention to the situation of the peripheral regions situated along the eastern border of the EU. (below agenda item 4);
- The Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in Turku, 8-9 May 2019 were unanimously approved;
- The Minutes from the General Assembly held in Gdansk, 11 June 2019 were agreed and will be put to the 2020 General Assembly for approval.

2. Update from Member Regions

This session provided an opportunity to address the on-going issues in the Regions that are of concern for the work of the Baltic Sea Commission.

Jari Nahkanen gave a brief update on the Finnish election. Ms Tytti Tuppurainen has been appointed Minister for EU Affairs. Jari Nahkanen informed that he is trying to ensure her participation at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Cezary Cieslukowski provided information on the Polish elections, which will be held on 13 October.

Wolf Born informed participants that regional elections have been held in Saxony and Brandenburg since the last meeting.

Jonas Lundström, informed participants that Richard Carstedt has now been appointed Chair of the Regional Development Committee in Västerbotten, following 15 years of leadership by Erik Bergkvist, who got elected to the European Parliament in June.

He also informed participants that the EU Arctic Stakeholder Conference is currently being organised in Umeå, which is why Tomas Mörtsell is not attending this Executive Committee meeting.
Saara Nuotio informed the Executive Committee that it is now agreed that the city of Turku in SouthWest Finland will host the next EUSBSR Annual Forum on 16-17 June and informed that there are discussions underway regarding the possibility for SouthWest Finland to host the BSC General Assembly in parallel.

Toivo Riimaa informed participants of the meeting of the Annual Meeting of the BSSSC that was recently held in Klaipeda. The next annual Conference will be held in Kaliningrad in 2020 and the board of BSSSC has decided that the annual Conference 2021 will be held in Estonia.

3. Written reports

There were no comments on the following written reports:
- EUSBSR Annual Forum in Gdansk/ Energy Working Group seminar;
- Dissemination of the Policy Positions of the CPMR BSC General Assembly;
- Gathering political support from MEPs from the Baltic Sea Region for the SEArica Intergroup in the European Parliament.

- The Executive Committee thanked the Secretariat and Energy Working Group for the reports.


Cecary Cieslukowski presented a document that Podlaskie proposed to the Executive Committee to adopt. The document included positions that draw particular attention to the situation of the peripheral regions located along the eastern border of the EU.

The Executive Secretary informed participants that previously, the BSC had not taken positions regarding domestic concerns on Cohesion Policy.

The Executive Committee had a principle discussion on this. There was not an agreement in the Executive Committee and Jari Nahkanen proposed Podlaskie to rephrase the wording so that it would be more in general terms and to send it to the Secretariat so that it can be included in the preparatory documents before next meeting.

- The Executive Committee decided to postpone the discussion and decision to the next executive committee meeting.

5. CPMR Update

Åsa Bjering gave a quick update on the core areas of work for the CPMR Secretariat.

She then provided information on the CPMR General Assembly, to be held on 17-19 October 2019. The Proposal on the CPMR Manifesto was discussed, and the amendment process was explained.
Bosse Andersson, Chair of the Transport Working Group, presented the TEN-T workshop and the Open Forum that the organisation is preparing in Helsinki-Uusimaa, on 9-10 October. The purpose of the event is to provide the regions of the Baltic Sea with the opportunity to raise awareness of their interests in light of the TEN-T revision. The workshop will also be a Members-only event with a panel discussion with Catherine Trautmann. All BSC Member Regions except four have already registered to participate in the events. The Open Forum at the moment has more than 70 registered participants and a wide range of speakers, including high ranking officials from both the European Commission, the Finnish Government and private sector. He pointed out that the CPMR Atlantic Arc and North Sea Commissions are holding similar events relating to TEN-T revision.

6. EUSBSR Revision Update

Wolf Born had provided a written update on the process and timetable of the EUSBSR Revision prior to the meeting. He stressed that in a mid-term perspective, it will be necessary to look at the programming of the Baltic Sea Region programme. He stated that it is relevant to continue working together with the BSSSSC and UBC to work out clearly what is the local and regional perspective.

- The Executive Committee thanked the Task Force and Wolf Born for the report.

7. CPMR BSC Organisational matters

6.1 Financial Report as of 31 August 2019
- The Executive Committee thanked the Secretariat for the report.

6.2 Project update for CPMR BSC
Åsa Bjering presented the document that had been sent out prior to the meeting. Currently, the CPMR BSC is not legally nor financially involved in any project. It is however, acting as an associative and supportive partner in several projects.

The Executive Committee has previously discussed the possibility to form a legal entity which would be eligible for applying for project funds in for example the Interreg BSR territory. The CPMR Secretariat has started to investigate also the possibility for the CPMR to establish legally recognised antennas in other countries/GCs territories. This option would possibly respond to our needs, but we are seeing that it entails a very complex setting up at administrative and statutory level in order to ensure at the same time a legal recognised base and a full and sound connection with the CPMR and even some costs (e.g. creation and maintenance of a legal entity).

Possible solutions for increasing eligibility for EU programmes is not part of the CPMR Strategy on Projects that will be presented at the General Assembly. The Secretariat will draft an internal report in the potential establishment of CPMR antennas/other solutions for increasing eligibility for EU Programmes.

Cecary Cieslukowski suggested that the Secretariat also should look into the possibility of forming an EGTC.
• The Executive Committee will come back to this issue once the overall picture of possibilities is better explored.

6.3 Information on discussions with the CPMR Auditor
Åsa Bjering informed the Executive Committee about the agreement with the CPMR that the hosting Region should invoice the cost of the Secretariat to a sum equivalent to the amount of membership fees. This has been an approved procedure with the CPMR Auditor.

6.4 Membership update
Region Jämtland – Härjedalen was accepted as a Member of the CPMR and BSC from 1 July 2019. That means that the CPMR BSC Member Base now is 20 regions and 1 country (Estonia).

6.5 Hosting Region for the CPMR BSC General Assembly 2020 and future Executive Committee meetings
The Secretariat informed participants that there has been a Call for hosting Regions for the CPMR BSC General Assembly 2020 and future Executive Committee meetings.

6.6 Future Secretariat of the Baltic Sea Commission (2021-2023)
At the 2020 General Assembly, the Executive Committee should present:
• A Region or Regions to host the BSC Secretariat for the 2021/2022 mandate period;
• A corresponding draft budget which, on the basis of the expected cost for the BSC Secretariat, aims to have the BSC Secretariat staff costs covered by the BSC membership fees;
• A mandate for the recruitment of an Executive Secretary for the 2021/2022 mandate period based on an open and competitive recruitment process.

The Executive Committee decided that:
• Jari Nahkanen, Annika Sandström and Cezary Cieslukowski should prepare a proposal for the next Executive Committee meeting on how the structure, finances and process of ensuring a sustainable Secretariat will look 2021-2023;
• Executive Secretary, Åsa Bjering, should support the three politicians in drafting the proposal;
• The first meeting to draft this proposal will be held in Palermo, back-to-back with the CPMR General Assembly.

8. Increasing the number of Member Regions
The Executive Committee discussed the target of increasing the number of Member Regions in the Baltic Sea Commission. The Executive Committee discussed the need to have good information material, both for existing and potential Member Regions. It was agreed that a leaflet or flyer was needed to distribute to potential new Members, explaining what the BSC and CPMR are, what they do, and their objectives, as well as describing the benefits of being a Member and what the Regions can achieve through membership. This needs to be provided in the original languages of the Regions.

Proposed responsibility for 2019/2020, with regard to recruiting new Members was also decided.
The Executive Committee discussed the necessity of the politicians of current Members to be involved in the recruitment process. In Sweden, Finland and Germany the Executive Committee agreed that the first action is to be taken by Member Regions, not the Secretariat. In order to do so, the material should be produced soon. (Jari Nahkanen, Finland, Annika Sandström, Sweden, Wolf Born, Germany).

The Executive Committee decided to:
- Have priority on Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Denmark for 2020. Proposed Actions should be drafted prior next Executive Committee meeting;
- Responsibility in this will be shared, with Cezary Cieslukowski covering Poland and Lithuania, Åsa Bjering will cover Denmark and Toivo Riima and Åsa Bjering working together on Latvia;
- Encourage Chairs of the Working Groups to get more current Members involved and open up meetings to non-Members in order for Regions to understand how the CPMR and BSC functions;
- The Secretariat is tasked to follow up with new Members and Region Blekinge to ensure their involvement in Working Groups during 2020.

9. Strengthening Member Regions input into policy discussions at European Level

Targets that have been set:
At least 50% of the BSC Members shall provide textual input to relevant CPMR Papers
At least 25 % of the Members shall participate in CPMR Working Groups

Information on the current situation with regard to input provided by Members was provided. It is the CPMR and BSC Secretariats’ role to ensure that all Member Regions are informed about what documents are being drafted and when the different meetings are. It was noted that it would be good to get a Members area where monitoring of policy and Members-only information could be shared. The Secretariat informed that this is being developed and should be released in the beginning of 2020.

10. CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Working Groups

Information was provided, together with an update on past and planned activities of the Transport Working Group, Energy and Climate Working Group and Maritime Working Group. At the moment there are no policy positions foreseen for the next meeting.

11. Calendar of the Baltic Sea Commission Executive Committee 2019/2020

The BSC Calendar of the year was discussed, but no specific dates were set. The date of the next Executive Committee meeting will be decided at the CPMR General Assembly in Palermo.

12. Closing of the meeting

Jari Nahkanen closed the meeting by thanking the participants for a good meeting.