



CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS
BALTIC SEA COMMISSION

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INTERNAL RULES

Revised Internal Rules adopted by the BSC General Assembly in Sandviken, Sweden in May 2016.

Ratified by the CPMR Political Bureau in Kotka in June 2016.

Article 1: Preamble

This paper sets out the internal regulations of the Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR). It is a text for which the CPMR Statutes makes provision and is in conformity with the provisions of the latter. In the event of differences of interpretation, the provisions of the CPMR Statutes shall take precedence over the BSC regulations. These Internal Rules are ratified by the CPMR Political Bureau in accordance with Article 7.5.d of the CPMR Statutes.

Article 2: Objectives

The aim of the Geographical Commissions is regulated in Article 7 of the CPMR Statutes, where Article 7.5b states: "...Their aim shall be to facilitate decentralisation and carry out more efficiently work which applies to large geographical areas which share common interests. In this respect, each Commission has the right to initiate actions concerning the specific problems of the geographical area it represents, subject to keeping the Secretary General systematically informed."

Since its foundation in 1996, the BSC has established itself as a Forum for policy-orientated cooperation and project-related development among Regional Authorities in the Baltic Sea macro-region.

The BSC, together with its Member Regions, supports the main goals of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea – save the sea, increase connectivity and increase prosperity – and contributes to the implementation process of the strategy. In pursuing its goals, the BSC voices the interests of the Regions in network cooperation with other actors in the macro-region and together with the CPMR at EU level.

Article 3: Constitution

The following Regions can be Members of the Baltic Sea Commission:

- All Member Regions of the CPMR, who, due to their geographic, economic or political situation are considered part of the Baltic Sea area, and
- Sub-state regions and authorities, associate members of the CPMR.

The Member Regions and Associate Members of the CPMR who wish to join the Baltic Sea Commission are expected to follow this procedure:

- Submit a written application to the Executive Secretary of the Baltic Sea Commission who will then submit the application to the Executive Committee for approval. The Executive Committee will decide by unanimity;
- The decision of the Executive Committee must be ratified by the General Assembly.

The Baltic Sea Commission brings together the Presidents or persons exercising an equivalent function, of the Member Regions. The Presidents, who may delegate their own representative, should be appointed by the Regional Authorities immediately below the level of Central Government.

Organisations concerned by the work of the Baltic Sea Commission may be invited to discuss common topics or be called as experts.

Article 4: Bodies

The Baltic Sea Commission will be organised through:

- A President and two Vice-Presidents;
- An Executive Secretary;
- An Executive Committee;
- An annual General Assembly;
- Working Groups.

Article 5: Election of a President, 2 Vice-Presidents and nomination of the Executive Committee

The Call for Candidates for the position of President of the Baltic Sea Commission will be sent to the Member Regions two months before the end of the President's Term of Office. All candidates must be sent to the Executive Secretary at least one month before the election, together with a Curriculum Vitae and a two-page declaration on the Baltic Sea Commission strategy. All candidatures received will be sent to all Member Regions one month before the election. The candidate having obtained an absolute majority of the votes of the delegates present will be declared elected.

In accordance with the CPMR Statutes, Article 7, each Member of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a period of two years.

The elections of the President, the two Vice-Presidents and the nominations for the Executive Committee will take place every two years, following the procedure outlined below:

- General Assembly shall elect a President, two Vice-Presidents and an Executive Committee shall be nominated.
- The Executive Secretary asks the Assembly if there are any nominations to the post of President of the Baltic Sea Commission. Each nomination must be seconded by a region other than the region represented by the nominee.
- Once the nominations are known, a vote by show of hands will be taken. However, if any of the regions so request, the vote will be by secret ballot. The candidate having obtained an absolute majority of the votes of the delegates present will be declared elected.

- Then the nomination of the Executive Committee takes place. Each member country shall nominate one Full Member and one Alternative Member. Two Vice-Presidents shall be elected, who must be from different countries, both between themselves and the President. In case of absence of the President during the period of his/her mandate, the first Vice-Presidents assumes his/her functions.

Article 6: President and vice presidents (moved from Article 5)

The President represents the Baltic Sea Commission. The President convenes the General Assembly and the meetings of the Executive Committee. In the case of absence of the President during the period of his/her mandate, the Vice-Presidents assumes his/her functions.

Article 7: Executive Secretary

The Baltic Sea Commission has an Executive Secretary whose responsibility is to ensure the day-to-day organisation of its work and implementation of its decisions, in conjunction with the CPMR General Secretariat. On the recommendation of the Executive Committee the General Assembly shall appoint the Executive Secretary. The appointment shall be made in conjunction with the Secretary General of the CPMR, who shall be kept regularly informed. His/her mandate is renewed every 2 years.

The Executive Secretary shall be invited by right to the annual General Assembly and Executive Committee meetings of the BSC. S/he has the freedom to express the views of the organisation as a whole on issues that s/he deems relevant and the duty to draw the attention of the Members to the potential risks of making certain decisions. S/he may be represented where necessary.

The Executive Secretary of the Baltic Sea Commission assists the President in his/her task and acts under his/her authority. In the event that the Executive Secretary is managed directly by a Member Region of the Geographical Commission, which covers his or her salary and operating costs, (rather than being employed directly by the CPMR), then his or her status falls solely within the legal framework of said Region. In the event that the Executive Secretary is employed directly by the CPMR, normal CPMR recruitment procedures are to be followed.

Article 7: Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is made up of:

- A Full Member and an Alternate Member nominated by the college of Regions of each State within which the Baltic Sea Commission has Member Regions. The nominations shall be ratified by the General Assembly;
- A President and 2 Vice-Presidents, who must all be from different countries;

Members of the Executive Committee should be office-holding representatives of the Member Regions and each Member of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a two-year term. If any Member loses his/her position within the Region, this implies ipso facto withdrawal from the Executive Committee, on which s/he shall be replaced at next BSC General Assembly. The Member may be replaced before the end of his/her term of office by the Regions of the country that elected him/her at the next BSC General Assembly.

Owing to the fact that the Internal Rules have provided for the substitution of Full Members of the Executive Committee by Alternate Members, instruments of proxy shall only be used in cases of absolute necessity.

The Executive Committee is capable of decision if one third of the board's full members, or alternate members, are present. The group should include at least the President or one of the Vice-Presidents.

Article 8: General Assembly

A General Assembly, bringing together all Member Regions, will be held once a year, or more frequently if required.

The General Assembly shall pronounce on the Executive Committee's Activity Report and Financial Report. It shall approve the Baltic Sea Commission's Work Plan (or equivalent) and Forecast Budget, put forward by the Executive Committee. Any Resolutions to be submitted to the CPMR General Assembly must be approved by the BSC General Assembly.

The General Assembly can only legitimately make decisions if at least one quarter of the Member Regions are present. During votes, each Member Region present has one vote. Only the elected Member Regions belonging to the European Union may vote on resolutions concerning the internal functioning of the Single Market.

Delegates representing a Region must be elected members of the Regional Government or Regional Assembly. Only Regions that have paid their membership in full for the calendar year preceding the meeting shall have the right to vote. The possibility for instruments of proxy is not anticipated.

The President of the Baltic Sea Commission shall chair the General Assembly sessions, with the assistance of the Vice-Presidents and the President of the host Region. The Secretary General of the CPMR shall be invited by right to the annual General Assembly and Executive Committee meetings of the BSC. S/he has the freedom to express the views of the organisation as a whole on issues that s/he deems relevant and the duty to draw the attention of the members to the potential risks of making certain decisions. S/he may be represented where necessary. In order to promote exchanges between the Geographical Commissions, the Presidents and Executive Secretaries of all other Geographical Commissions shall automatically be invited to the General Assembly as observers.

Article 9: Working Groups

The Baltic Sea Commission has a number of thematic Working Groups to progress key issues identified by the General Assembly or Executive Committee.

Each Working Group shall have a Chair, who need not necessarily be drawn from the Executive Committee, but who shall be a regional elected politician from a Member Region. However, on taking up the position as Chair they will be granted ex-officio Executive Committee membership during the period of their office. The Chairs of the Working Groups shall not have the right to vote in the Executive Committee.

Regions participating in the Working Groups should appoint a politician and a senior official to participate in the Working Groups. The senior officials of the regions that hold the position of Chair and Vice-Chair are responsible for the daily running of the groups and for progressing initiatives decided by the BSC Annual General Assembly, Executive Committee or the Working Group.

The mandates for the Chair and Vice-Chair are renewed by the Executive Committee every two years, on the first meeting following the General Assembly that held an election.

Article 10: Financing

The Baltic Sea Commission shall be funded through the following resources:

- An annual contribution from the Member Regions as stipulated in Article 5.2 of the CPMR Statutes. The amount of the annual membership fee will be decided by the General Assembly of the Baltic Sea Commission;
- Possible exceptional voluntary contributions from the Member Regions;
- Payment from EU Programmes and Projects;
- Other sources of funding proposed by the CPMR Political Bureau.

Article 11: Communication

Any policy material, such as resolutions and brochures, shall bear the logos of both the CPMR and the Baltic Sea Commission.

Article 12: Amendments to the Internal Rules

Amendments to the Baltic Sea Commission Internal Rules can only be made by the General Assembly and will normally be based on the recommendations of the Executive Committee.