



## CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Executive Committee Meeting

25-26 April 2017, European Office of the Region of Occitanie, Brussels

### List of participants

|    | First Name | Last Name     | Position                                 | Region                                |
|----|------------|---------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Mr | Merten     | Barnert       | Advisor                                  | Region Mecklenburg-Vorpommern         |
| Mr | Erik       | Bergkvist     | Regional Councillor                      | Region Västerbotten                   |
| Ms | Åsa        | Bjering       | Executive Secretary                      | CPMR Baltic Sea Commission            |
| Mr | Nicholas   | Brookes       | Director Responsible for Regional Policy | CPMR                                  |
| Mr | Kai        | Holmberg      | Vice Chairman of the Board               | Regional Council of Kymenlaakso       |
| Mr | Gregg      | Jones         | Director of Finance and EU Programmes    | CPMR                                  |
| Ms | Talvikki   | Jori          | Member of Managing Board                 | Regional Council of Southwest Finland |
| Mr | John       | Kostet        | Adviser International Affairs            | Region Norrbotten                     |
| Mr | Evert      | Kroes         | Regional Planner                         | Stockholm County Council              |
| Ms | Saara      | Nuotio-Coulon | Head of Office                           | Turku-Southwest Finland EU Office     |
| Ms | Tiina      | Perho         | Member of Managing Board                 | Regional Council of Southwest Finland |
| Ms | Sointu     | Räisänen      | Senior Advisor                           | East and North Finland EU Office      |
| Ms | Annika     | Sandström     | Chair of Stockholm County Council        | Stockholm County Council              |
| Mr | Niklas     | Schmalholz    | Policy Analyst                           | CPMR Baltic Sea Commission            |
| Mr | Richard    | Sjölund       | Member of the Board                      | Regional Council of Ostrobothnia      |
| Ms | Krista     | Taipale       | Head of International Affairs            | Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council     |
| Mr | Toni       | Vanhala       | Head of International Affairs            | Regional Council of Kymenlaakso       |



## 1. Opening of the Executive Committee Meeting

### 1.1. Opening of the meeting – Mr Jari Sainio, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

President Jari Sainio welcomed the chairs of the three working groups, the Executive Secretary and all members of the Executive Committee to the meeting. He offered the floor to the participants for a brief round of presentations.

### 1.2. Adoption of the agenda

John Kostet, Region Norrbotten, proposed to move the adoption of the “Position on the Arctic” to the General Assembly in Berlin. Jari Sainio, Regional Council of Helsinki-Uusimaa, proposed to postpone the creation of a Task Force on the future of the Secretariat until next meeting. The updated agenda, as visualised in this minutes, was adopted unanimously after the above-stated changes.

### 1.3. Adoption of the minutes of the Executive Committee held in Schwerin, 11-12 January 2017

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, which took place on the 11-12 of January 2017 in Schwerin (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), were adopted.

### 1.4. Presentation of internal routine procedures for meetings

Asa Bjering, Executive Secretary of the Baltic Sea Commission, gave a short presentation on the new internal routine procedures. The proposal was accepted by the Executive Committee.

### 1.5. Secretariat Report CPMR BSC, Ms Åsa Bjering (please note that there is no written report)

Åsa Bjering gave a brief presentation of the main focus of the secretariat since the last meeting in Schwerin. The draft [Activity Report](#) was sent out prior to the meeting to provide a more detailed presentation.

### 1.6. Current State of Play for CPMR, Mr Nicolas Brookes, Director

Nick Brookes informed participants of the current on-going procedures of the CPMR with a specific focus on the future of EU Cohesion Policy and the European budget post-2020. The CPMR will provide a position on the “Multiannual Financial Framework” for the post-2020 period and on the review of the “Connecting Europe Facility” regulation. On maritime policy, the CPMR has analysed and mapped maritime investments and is currently hosting the secretariat of the [SEARICA Intergroup](#) in the European Parliament. One major focus is the future of Cohesion Policy in light of a smaller, post-Brexit budget. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

## 2. Activity Report 2016-2017

### 2.1. Report from the Transport Working Group, Mr Kai Holmberg, Chair, Transport Working Group

Kai Holmberg gave a short presentation on the activities and meetings of the Transport Working Group, which have taken place over the last two years. He specifically emphasised the fruitful back-to-back meeting with the TEN-T days in Rotterdam. Special thanks were given to the Secretariat, who helped to acquire funds, which enabled participants from the Baltic States to participate in the Working Group meetings during 2016.

## **2.2. Report from the Maritime Working Group, Ms Tiina Perho, Chair, Maritime Working Group**

Tiina Perho summarised the activities of the Maritime Working Group by giving a short presentation of the meetings held since the last General Assembly (7 September 2016, online meeting & 8 March 2017 in Stockholm). The focus of the Working Group is DG MARE's "Blue Growth Agenda" and the mapping of Blue Growth Value Chains, connected to the Growth Agenda. The outcomes of the mapping will be presented during the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Berlin. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

## **2.3. Report from the Energy Working Group, Mr Richard Sjölund, Chair, Energy Working Group**

Richard Sjölund reminded participants that the Energy Working Group had a relaunch during the General Assembly in Vaasa, 2015. Since then, the Working Group focused on applying for the project development of LARS (*Learning Among Regions on Smart Specialisation*) project. The results of the application are expected to be published at the end of May. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

## **2.4. Overall report from the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Ms Åsa Bjerling, Executive Secretary**

Åsa Bjerling presented the overall Activity Report for 2016-2017. The Executive Committee discussed the necessity for future work plans to state much clearer goals and expected results. The Executive Committee concluded that the Activity Report, as presented to the meeting, was too descriptive and changes should be made accordingly. In the near future, the Executive Secretariat has ensured that the BSC Members will be well-represented in the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Berlin. In general, the BSC has a well-established liaison with the EUSBSR.

Focusing on the number of BSC members, we have witnessed a decline in the last ten years, which has changed in the last year. The BSC is increasingly visible in the Brussels, and the Baltic, political arenas.

## **2.5. Adoption of the process of how to finalise the Activity Report, which will be presented at the General Assembly in June.**

The Executive Committee decided upon the following timeline for the finalisation of the Activity Report, which will be sent out by 29 May 2017 at the latest:

- Remaining texts to be submitted to the Secretariat by 10 May at the latest;
- The Proposal of the final document shall be circulated among Members of the Executive Committee by 12 May;
- Changes or remarks should be sent to the Secretariat until 18 May at the latest;
- The President and Vice-Presidents have a phone meeting on the 24 May, should any changes be made that require a decision to be made.

## **3. Work Plan 2017 – 2019**

### **3.1. The overall position of the Work Plan for CPMR – Baltic Sea Commission**

The Executive Committee decided that the Work Plan should include four "chapters". These are:

1. Vision and Mission Statement of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, adopted at the General Assembly in Gävleborg, May 2016;
2. Special priorities of the overall organisation 2017-2019;
3. Policy priorities of the Working Groups;
4. Future Secretariat of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission.

The Executive Committee had a discussion on how to ensure clear and tangible goals and political steering, and commitment in the Work Plan. The Executive Committee decided to go more in depth on this discussion. It will be coordinated by the President and the presumed start of such a discussion will be the General Assembly in Berlin.

In general, all Working Group contributions to the Work Plan emphasised that texts should express the goals and expected results of the working groups' actions in a much clearer and direct way.

### **3.2. Discussion on the Work Plan for the Transport Working Group, Mr Kai Holmberg, Chair, Transport Working Group**

Kai Holmberg emphasised that the role of the Motorways of the Sea should be strengthened in the Transport Working Group. Furthermore, he recalled that three out of the nine current TEN-T Corridors run through the BSR, thus transport is of utmost importance for the BSC.

The Executive Committee agreed on the following thematic focus suggested by the Transport Working Group:

1. Review of the Connecting Europe Facility;
2. TEN-T Review 2023;
3. State Aid for Regional Airports;
4. Connections to third countries.

### **3.3. Discussion on Work Plan for the Maritime Working Group, Ms Tiina Perho, Chair, Maritime Working Group**

Sustainable Blue Growth is proposed to be the continuous thematic focus of the Maritime Working Group, especially transnational processes of Smart Specialisation Strategies, Sustainable Tourism and enhanced discussions with representatives from ports were discussed during the last Maritime Working Group meeting. The Maritime Working Group will also continue to monitor and follow the work of the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive. Sustainable Blue Growth continues to be the main focus of the Working Group. The Executive Committee agreed on the following focus:

1. Monitor and relate to the proposals that the Baltic Blue Growth Agenda puts forward;
  - a. Relate this to the current on-going discussions of the Smart Specialisation Financial Platform;
  - b. Special focus on investment and current on-going processes of alignment of funding;
2. Initiate round-table discussions with stakeholders in our own Regions on policy and platforms of sustainable tourism and ports;
3. Monitor and exchange experience on the implementation of the MSP Directive.

### **3.4. Discussion on the Work Plan for the Energy Working Group, Mr Richard Sjölund, Chair of the Energy WG**

The Energy Working Group had a meeting in March 2017. They proposed to the Executive Committee/General Assembly to focus their work on climate, Smart Specialisation and Energy, Learning Among Regions on Smart Specialisation (LARS), as well as Clean Tech and the Circular Economy. The Executive Committee agreed on the focus.

### **3.5. Main priorities of the organisation for the next two years, Ms Åsa Bjering, Executive Secretary**

Based on previous discussions at the Executive Committee meeting, it was decided that the two priority areas for the coming two-year period should be:

- Supporting the process of creating a Smart Specialisation Financial Platform for Regional Authorities and other stakeholders with the purpose of aligning existing funding sources that will support the development of cross-regional Smart Specialisation areas in the BSR;
- Raising awareness and creating capacity at the regional level on how to bring home the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In a pan-Baltic setting, the BSC aims for a regional voice and participation in the Baltic2030 process.

The two priority areas should be written with an explanatory text on:

- The overall relevance for the Regions;
- Why it is of relevance to work on a pan-Baltic scale;
- How this relates to the EU arena;
- It is suggested that a Task Force for each priority area be set up. Suggestion is that the Task Forces should not include politicians but only civil servants. The Task Forces are to be responsible to the Executive Committee. In June 2017 (just after the General Assembly), the Executive Committee should appoint a Region responsible for coordinating each Task Force.

### **3.6. How the process will look upon finalising the proposal of Work Plan for the General Assembly**

The following timeline for finalising the proposal, which will be sent out by 29 May at latest, was agreed:

- Remaining texts to be sent in to the Secretariat by 10 May at latest;
- Proposed Work Plan to be circulated among Members of the Executive Committee by the 12 May;
- The proposal should be sent to the Secretariat by the 18 May at latest;
- If a decision on the changed proposal is necessary, the President and the Vice-Presidents will have a phone meeting on the 24 May.

## **4. CPMR Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly**

### **4.1. Practical Information from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern as the General Assembly host region**

Merten Barnet, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, gave a brief update on the organisational status of the General Assembly, taking place on the 12 June in the Federal representation of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (In den Ministergärten 3, 10117 Berlin). The Minister of the Interior of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern will welcome the Members, followed by a keynote speech by Ms Eleni Marianou (CPMR Secretary General). The General Assembly will end with a dinner reception at the Nordic Embassies in Berlin.

### **4.2 Proposed seminar “Future of Europe Reflection”**

The Executive Committee discussed the selection of speakers for the “Future of Europe” panel. The Executive Secretary will coordinate the process together with Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the regions of the President and Vice-Presidents of the CPMR BSC.

### 4.3 Discussion on special positions to adopt at the General Assembly

Region Norrbotten proposed that the Position Paper on Connecting the Baltic with the Arctic which was discussed later during the meeting by the Executive Committee, should be proposed as a position for the General Assembly. The Executive Committee decided that the Position should be proposed to the General Assembly.

### 4.4 Decision on the proposed agenda for the General Assembly

A first draft agenda was sent out to the Member Regions together with the invitation on the 7 April. The proposed agenda will be updated with the agenda item of the Position Connecting the Baltic with the Arctic.

## 5. EUSBSR Annual Forum - Report by Åsa Bjerling

### 5.1. Practical Information

The Baltic Sea Commission is organising the EUSBSR Annual Forum together with the German Federal Foreign Ministry. Åsa Bjerling reminded participants to register on time, since the number of participants is limited to around 800. In addition to around 30 seminars, the Annual Forum also offers a “connectivity launch” with diverse activities, mainly organised by the Foreign Ministry. In the morning of the 13 June, the 19<sup>th</sup> Baltic Development Forum will take place. The Annual Forum takes place until the evening of 14 June and is followed by the BSC Transport Meeting, taking place on the 15 June in the morning. The whole programme, and the latest update of the programme is visible on the [formal website of the Annual Forum](#).

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission has applied for, and been approved, funding for our contribution to the Forum. Member Regions have agreed to pay a voluntary contribution of 1,500 Euro during 2017. So far, only two Regions have paid the financial contribution. The Executive Secretary will send out reminders to the Member Regions that have agreed to contribute.

## 6. Invited Guest from European Commission

### 6.1. Current state of play of EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Mr Peter Schenk, DG REGIO

Peter Schenk, Representative of the European Commission, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, informed the audience of the European-wide implementation of the EU macro-regional strategies. Specifically, he provided a summary on the [Commission Report](#) on the different macro-regional strategies. Even though the EUSBSR is the oldest and most-established strategy, it is in danger of losing momentum, if political coordination and ex-post evaluation cannot be increased. Mr Schenk emphasised the necessity to enhance the alignment of funds, which is currently promoted by the BSC. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

## 7. Financial Reports

### 7.1. Financial Report, 2017 up to 31/03/2017

John Kostet, Region Norrbotten, presented the financial report for the period of January to March 2017 in a new and detailed format. The latter provided further clarity on the financial situation of projects currently undertaken by the BSC. The new version was well received by the Executive Committee and they thanked Norrbotten for the report.

## **7.2 Discussion and Adoption of the Financial Report for 2016, to be presented at the General Assembly in Berlin**

John Kostet, Region Norrbotten, presented the Financial Report for 2016. The Executive Committee thanked him for the report and decided that it should be presented in the new format at the General Assembly. Anders Öberg will present the financial report at the General Assembly in June.

## **8. Budget 2018**

### **8.1. Discussion and decision on the budget for 2018 to be presented at the General Assembly in Berlin**

John Kostet, Region Norrbotten, presented the budget proposal for the year 2018, which will be the last year for the Regions of Norrbotten and Västerbotten to host the Secretariat. The raise in the membership fee will decrease the cost for the Region(s) hosting the Secretariat. The Executive Committee agreed on the budget for 2018, to be proposed to the General Assembly. This will be presented by Erik Bergqvist, Region Västerbotten.

The membership fees will be an agenda item at the General Assembly, as stated in the internal rules of the organisation. However, the decision on membership fees for 2017, 2018 and 2019 was made by the General Assembly in Gävleborg 2016. Information on this should be sent out to all the Member Regions prior to the General Assembly.

## **9. Future of Europe Discussion**

### **9.1 Update from Mr Gregg Jones, Director, CPMR**

Gregg Jones, who started to work for the CPMR in January, is responsible for the “Future of Europe” discussion, which is currently taking place within the CPMR organisation and in cooperation with other regional entities in Brussels. This process was launched during the [CPMR General Assembly](#) in the Azores in 2016. Since then the Political Bureau discussed and emphasised the process during its last meeting in Malta, in March 2017. During spring, a technical expert group was established, which organises events in Brussels and engages CPMR Members in discussions with external guests. Furthermore, a [web forum](#) was established. The Geographical Commission are invited to contribute to the process.

A political position will be released on Europe Day to emphasise the pro-European, pro-cohesion policy and pro-regional position of the CPMR. The CPMR General Assembly, taking place in Helsinki in October 2017, will also include agenda items on this subject. Nevertheless, a manifesto from CPMR is not planned to be agreed upon until the CPMR General Assembly in 2018. The CPMR Secretariat welcomes contributions from Regions for the newly set-up web forum and encourages Regions to contribute with events and discussions that feed into the overall process of the CPMR. For further details on the “Future of Europe” discussion, refer to the [PowerPoint presentation](#) available on the BSC website.

## 10. Position: Connect the Baltic with the Arctic

### 10.1 Presentation of the position by Mr John Kostet, Region Norrbotten

After John Kostet presented the position paper on the Arctic, several paragraphs in the position were discussed. The changes, which the Executive Committee agreed on, are available from the Secretariat. This will be sent out to the Member Regions for further contribution.

The Executive Committee will especially ask for contributions relating to Research and Sustainable Blue Growth. The deadline for possible amendments is 10 May, followed by the finalisation process of the Work Plan and the Activity Report.

## 11. Preparation for the CPMR Political Bureau Meeting, 22 June 2017, Stavanger

The Baltic Sea Commission Transport Working Group has a special Task Force contributing to the draft of the Position Paper on Transport and Accessibility that is planned to be discussed and adopted during the next Political Bureau meeting.

The other agenda item of high relevance for the member base of the Baltic Sea Commission is the CPMR position on Cohesion Policy, presented by Nicolas Brookes earlier during this meeting.

Jari Sainio will participate in the next Political Bureau Meeting. The Executive Secretary will have contact with the members and alternate members from the Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Germany prior to the meeting.

## 12. Any Other Business

### 12.1. Next meeting will be held in Stockholm, 3 October 2017

### 12.2. Proposal to host the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly, May 2018

Regional Council of Oulu invited the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission to Oulu in May 2018. They will be the hosts of the 2018 General Assembly. A date will be agreed between the President, the hosting Region and the Secretariat and communicated at the General Assembly in Berlin.

12.3. Jari Sainio thanked the members of the Executive Committee and the Chairs of the Working Groups for good and active discussions and closed the meeting.





**Contact Person:** Ms Åsa Bjering, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission  
**Email:** [asa.bjering@crpm.org](mailto:asa.bjering@crpm.org)