



CPMR Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly

16 May 2018, Oulu, Finland

SUMMARY

- The [Activity Report](#) was adopted;
- The [Proposal](#) on the future of the secretariat was adopted;
- The [Oulu Declaration](#) was adopted;
- A new [Executive Committee](#) was elected.

SESSION 1: OPENING SESSION

Ms Annika Sandström, Vice President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, welcomed the participants to Oulu and declared the 2018 BSC General Assembly open. She stressed the importance of the Regions' role in addressing common challenges together. She welcomed Estonia to the Baltic Sea Commission as a new member after the reforms in the country, and also the Regional Council of Satakunta, who is in the process of joining the CPMR and its Baltic Sea Commission.

Ms Tiina Rajala, Development Director, City of Oulu, expressed apologies from Regional Mayor Pauli Harju, Regional Council of Oulu, who was unexpectedly unable to participate. She introduced Oulu and gave background information on the Region and Finland. She explained that the City of Oulu is a science and innovation hub and that cooperation with other sparsely populated areas is of great importance to Oulu. Reducing the emissions of black carbon is not only an environmental issue, it also a health concern. She concluded by highlighting the importance of the ESF and Cohesion Policy for the development of the Region.

Ms Päivi Laajala, Mayor, City of Oulu, welcomed all participants to the City of Oulu and noted the unusually warm weather in Arctic Europe! She gave interesting details on the 400 years of history of the City, explaining the geography with the 3 rivers, education with the university and young people and also the transport links including the busy airport. She underlined that new developments could not have been possible with Cohesion Policy funding. Cohesion Policy is an important tool to reduce regional differences and stimulate growth. Oulu, as the 5th largest city in Finland, has responsibilities to develop and implement cohesion and development policies. She stressed that it is vital to extend the TEN-T core network to the north and develop cross-cutting networks and access across the Baltic and the Arctic.

Ms Eleni Marianou, CPMR Secretary General, reiterated the importance of the all-female panel, which she stated is a first for the CPMR! She thanked Oulu for the hospitality in the happiest place in Europe. She congratulated the BSC for the work achieved and the on-going work for the future, including work on Cohesion Policy, connectivity and maritime issues. She acknowledged that uncertainty is still very much a current issue, across the world not just in the Baltic Sea area. This uncertainty is increasingly becoming a sign for Europe to be mediators for the rest of the world. Solutions can not be found in individual states, collective solutions need to be found together. It is up to the Regions to meet their aims, aspirations and objectives. Disparities and economic differences need to be overcome by addressing the source of the problem. Cohesion Policy has a vital role to play in achieving this as it is the only policy that addresses EU policies at territorial level. She referred to the [Open Letter](#) from the CPMR calling for a strong future European territorial cooperation. The CPMR alerted its Members to the potential problems of budget cuts, and the importance of cooperation on this between the CPMR and its Members, which must continue to develop. She explained the CPMR's position on the budget and invited participants to read the [CPMR briefing paper](#) and [press release](#) on this which is available on the website.

Ms Sandström passed the floor to **Ms Åsa Bjerling**, Executive Secretary. Ms Bjerling explained that the working papers had been sent out in advance, and the only change to the Agenda was the confirmation of the speakers. The Agenda for the Baltic Sea Commission 2018 General Assembly was unanimously adopted. The minutes of the 2017 Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly held in Berlin, were unanimously adopted.

SESSION 2: UPDATE ON BALTIC SEA COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

Chaired by **Ms Annika Sandström**, Vice President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

The role of Regions in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals

Ms Bjerling, Executive Secretary of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission introduced the session and the speakers and passed the floor to Mr Öberg.

Mr Anders Öberg, Vice-Chair of the Regional Executive Committee, Region Norrbotten, explained that in the Region they aim for the best life, and the best health. He provided information on the sustainable development goals and explained that his Region has ensured that they are building on a sustainable foundation. The Regional Development Strategy is the vehicle for achieving the sustainable development goals in Norrbotten. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

Mr Sebastian Magier, General Secretary of Euroregion Baltic explained the work Euroregion Baltic and the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission has been doing throughout the past year through the project Region and the SDG. He provided information on the purpose – exchange of experience and a better understanding of Multi-level Governance in Baltic2030. He also explained the aim to actively involve more than 25 Regions in the Baltic Sea area in this work. . He listed the actions planned in the project including developing an information package, preparing 2 focused issue briefs and holding a stakeholder conference with a practical workshop. He mentioned the Transforming Our World seminar held in Stockholm on 7 March 2018, in which over 60 regional politicians and civil servants

took part. He concluded by stating the next steps in the work, including the final seminar which will be held in the last six months of 2018, and the publication of a final report. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

The creation of a Smart Specialisation Platform

Mr Erik Bergkvist, President of the Regional Executive Committee, Region Västerbotten, gave a presentation on support for the creation of a Smart Specialisation Platform and opened with a quote from Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. He explained that there are not many people in the Regions, so it is not possible to waste people, or time. Regions need to decide how they can use what they have to achieve their objectives. By sharing experiences and how work has been carried out, Regions can become smarter and even more specialised. The goal of this session is to explain that there is a good map at the moment of the work that is being carried out and that the platform can be built upon to identify stakeholders and develop smart specialisation.

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission is supporting the development of a Smart Specialisation Platform in the Baltic Sea Region. This will be presented at the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Tallinn within a month. The idea is to start this cooperation on existing Interreg projects on Smart Specialisation and that regions, being responsible for the regional Smart Specialisation Strategies will have a steering role in the joint work. The progress of this work will continuously be reported back to the Executive Committee.

Update on the Baltic Sea Commission Working Groups

Mr Kai Holmberg, Chair of the BSC Transport Working Group, presented the work carried out by the Working Group. He gave a presentation on support for the EUSBSR objective to "Connect the Region". He explained the Working Group was focusing on the revision of the TEN-T and CEF Regulation, aviation, supporting the EUSBSR Transport platform project and connections with third countries. He gave details of the Working Group meetings that had been held over the year, including a meeting with Ambassador Erja Tikka. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

Ms Marianou highlighted that it is good that there are joint meetings between the Geographical Commissions and praised these meetings, stressing that it is good way to move forward.

Ms Tiina Perho, Chair of the BSC Maritime Working Group introduced the work of the Working Group. She agreed with Ms Marianou's comment that there should be joint meetings between the CPMR Geographical Commissions. She stressed that she has learnt so much in her capacity as Chair of this Working Group over the last two years, and she thanked the rest of the members of the Working Group for the work they have done. She provided information on the mapping that has been carried out, and gave details on the work to support the EUSBSR objective "Save the Sea and Increase Prosperity", including work on sustainable blue growth, sustainable tourism, the sustainable development goals and Baltic 2030, and reflection on the EMFF post-2020. She mentioned the work carried out in collaboration with HELCOM, the CBSS Expert Group on Maritime Policy. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

Mr Richard Sjölund, Chair of the Renewable Energies and Climate Working Group, introduced the work carried out by the Working Group over the last few years on the EUSBSR objective to “Increase Prosperity”. He provided information on the LARS project (Learning Amongst Regions on Smart Specialisation), which focuses on interregional cooperation and Smart Specialisation. He summarised its kick-off meeting in Vaasa and also its meeting in Vilnius. He stressed the importance of connecting innovation networks across regions and using the CPMR as a channel to convey political messages. He concluded by summarising the meeting of the Working Group that had taken place the day before the General Assembly and that the Vice-Chair position of the Working Group is still vacant. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

Discussion and approval of the Baltic Sea Commission Activity Report 2017-2018

Ms Åsa Bjering, Executive Secretary of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, gave an overall explanation of the BSC Activity Report. She stressed that the work carried out in the working groups is the backbone of the work. She acknowledged that the Work Plan was over 2 years, and so this is now the half way point of the Work Plan. The priority areas of the organisation are:

1. Accessibility and Transport;
2. Maritime Affairs;
3. Renewable Energies and Climate;
4. Interregional cooperation in the field of Smart Specialisation across the Baltic Sea Region;
5. Sustainable Development Goals, Baltic 2030 and the role of the Regions;
6. Supporting the goals of the EUSBSR.

She also explained how the Baltic Sea Commission works, by formulating and communicating political messages, securing the interests of the Baltic Sea Regions towards EU institutions, Baltic Sea organisations and relevant stakeholders, building partnerships and creating synergies, monitoring the political agenda, providing relevant information on policy developments, exchanging best practice and knowledge, serving as a platform for projects. The [PowerPoint presentation](#) is available on the BSC website.

Ms Sandström opened the floor for comments and questions.

Mr Wolf Born thanked the Maritime Working Group for their work and recognised that Smart Specialisation is a difficult issue. The regional innovation strategy is just one step, and the drivers of regional development are interested in getting funding. This is not the regional development strategy, which is often not tangible enough. He noted the importance of being as tangible and specific as possible when talking about smart specialisation platforms. In his Region, there are no resources to waste, and it is hard to get the drivers on board. He stressed the importance to look beyond the projects to the assets that are already in the regions, and how they can be involved in cooperation.

Mr Jerker Johnson thanked Wolf Born for his pertinent comment. He asked what is the added value of the cohesion fund? He also mentioned the definitions, which are often hard to define. The regions should work with innovation. He asked what is the role of cohesion policy? It is challenging work, but this challenge should be grabbed. The Regions can learn from each other’s experience and form a

Baltic Sea network to achieve a critical mass to transnational cooperation, which is the core of what is trying to be achieved. Knowledge networks are vital drivers of development today. There is a digital revolution that can affect our future.

There were no further comments and the BSC Activity Report for 2017-2018 was unanimously adopted.

Mr Jari Sainio, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, expressed his gratitude to see so many of the Baltic Sea Commission Member Regions together to discuss important issues. The BSC and the CPMR has been very active especially in relation to EU policies and proposals. There has been remarkable work carried out by the Baltic Sea Commission over the four years of his mandate as President, and he offered his sincere thanks to Åsa Bjering, for her work as Executive Secretary, the Vice-Presidents and Chairs of the Working Groups for their hard work and great efforts. He wished the Baltic Sea Commission the very best for the future work.

SESSION 3: FUTURE OF THE BALTIC SEA COMMISSION SECRETARIAT

Chaired by **Mr Jari Sainio**, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Mr Sainio explained that a decision was made last year to draft a proposal for the future of the Secretariat and passed the floor to Wolf Born.

Mr Wolf Born, Member of the BSC Executive Committee, Mecklenburg Vorpommern explained that during the BSC General Assembly in 2017, the Executive Committee had been mandated to work out a proposal for the future of the BSC Secretariat. This work has been developed in a Task Force throughout the year and Wolf Born acknowledged that the solution is a compromise. He thanked the hosting regions of Norrbotten and Västerbotten for agreeing to continue hosting the Secretariat for another 2-year mandate. Whilst it was agreed that the Secretariat should continue to be located in Brussels, there is a gap between the costs and the membership fees, which creates a financial burden for the hosting Regions. Therefore, a decision was made to increase the membership fees gradually, with the hope that by the mandate period 2021/2022, the Secretariat costs will be covered by the membership fees. It is hoped that a CPMR and BSC reform can be implemented within one year, in order to offer a package to Member Regions that gives value for money. The decision on recruitment has to include the hosting regions.

There were no comments, and the [proposal](#) was unanimously adopted.

SESSION 4: ADDED VALUE OF THE CPMR BALTIC SEA COMMISSION

Introduction and moderation by **Mr Evert Kroes**, Stockholm County Council

Mr Evert Kroes introduced the session and described the three questions that were sent out to Member Regions in late 2017 on the added value of the BSC and areas for improvement. He stressed that it is impossible to discuss what the Secretariat should be if no-one knows what the Member Regions want. To break the ice, he used an online questionnaire to ask participants how many Member Regions there are in the BSC. The responses were shown on the screen as they were submitted. He then invited all participants to stand, and to change table so they were no longer sat

with colleagues from the same Region. The [Discussion Paper](#) and the [PowerPoint presentation](#) are available on the BSC website.

Ms Marianou, Secretary General, CPMR, then gave a keynote speech, in which she provided participants with details of the CPMR Strategic Plan. She explained that a questionnaire had been sent to all CPMR Member Regions, to discover what the Regions think the CPMR should be doing in the future to achieve their political objectives, and how this can be implemented. A Paper is being drafted based on the results of this questionnaire. This initial Paper will be discussed during the CPMR Political Bureau in June, and then developed for discussion and decision during the CPMR General Assembly in October.

Mr Kroes stated that 4 ideas for reform had been suggested by the Executive Committee, which are included in the Paper on added value and the table groups were invited to discuss these four ideas, and note any extra ideas they may have:

1. Create contact groups for improved involvement of the Members;
2. Strengthen the link between the BSC and CPMR General Secretariat;
3. Identify the key activities of the BSC Secretariat to create effective work methods;
4. Create communication formats to improve communication.

There was a panel discussion on added value and ideas for improvements.

Ms Annika Sandström, President of Stockholm County Council acknowledged that Stockholm can contribute a lot, but in order to do this, decisions need to be made at political level. Local politicians, unless they have a keen interest in international affairs, do not give it a high priority.

Ms Kristiina Hämäläinen, Vice-Chair of the Board, Regional Council of Päijät-Häme, provided some background information on her Region. She stressed that the BSC brings added value as a network to Regions and it is important that things get done and that Regions show own initiative and strengths. She added that the BSC depends on every Region being active.

Mr Filip Reinhag, Vice-Chair of the Executive Board, Region Gotland, stressed that a small Region such as Gotland would not be able to have the possibility nor the ability to react on its own, and that it is important to work together to address the challenges of today. Common challenges need to be met with common solutions.

Mr Kroes then asked the participants to use the online questionnaire again, this time to identify which proposed added value is most important to them.

Ms Sandström stressed that it depended on the definition of a platform.

Ms Hämäläinen was pleased that the Regions agreed on the answer.

Mr Reinhag mentioned that it was hard to choose just one as they are all important and relevant.

Mr Kroes moved onto the next question and asked which of the four ideas for reform should be prioritised. Again, the results were displayed on the screen as they are submitted. There was no clear response to this with results split between the four results.

Mr Reinhag stressed the importance to know what is expected from the Regions and perhaps there is a lack of political involvement and that the regional politicians should be more involved in the BSC.

Ms Hämäläinen agreed that politicians were not active in the working groups or meetings, but also addressed how to deal with the number of emails and meetings and suggested skype meetings could be a solution.

Ms Sandström agreed that contact is important and calls for the politicians around the Baltic Sea to be more involved. In order to lead, rather than manage, it is necessary to identify how we want Europe to evolve and how we want it to be linked to the global arena.

Mr Kroes asked the panel for their vision of the BSC in five years' time.

Mr Reinhag stressed that the Regions' interest is in the Baltic Sea and the reason why it exists now will be the reason why the BSC will exist in five years.

Ms Hämäläinen mentioned that challenges and issues are the same for all regions in the Baltic Sea area and multi-level governance should be strengthened. He suggested that the BSC Executive Committee should take a more active role than it does at the moment.

Ms Sandström stated that this depends as the BSC is at a crossroads. The BSC has to be active and strong otherwise there is no point.

Mr Kroes invited participants to go back to the website and add one word in their mother tongue that sums up the BSC and this discussion. He thanked the panel members for the discussion.

Mr Sainio thanked all participants for their active participation in the discussions and closed the morning session of the General Assembly.

SESSION 5: FUTURE OF EUROPEAN AND BALTIC SEA COOPERATION FOR POST-2020

Introduction and moderation by **Mr Kari Aalto**, Director of North East Finland EU Office

Ambassador Erja Tikka, Ambassador for Baltic Sea Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland gave a keynote speech. She noted that the preparations for the next multi-annual financial period are being made in a difficult situation due to Brexit, and emerging needs have to be addressed on a European level. She noted that a successful European Union can only be built on the basis of rule of law and common values. She explained that it is difficult to estimate the effects of the proposed cuts before more details are known. Finland aims to strengthen the bio-economy and circular economy and fight climate change. Future cohesion policy needs to be more result-oriented, efficient and thematically focused. The proposed objectives, for example a smarter Europe promoting competitiveness, digital transformation, circular economy and climate change, and a more social Europe reflect the priorities of the Finnish Government. She noted that cross-border programmes have been very important

Estonian and Finnish ministers agreed to work together for the continuation of these programmes, including cooperation over maritime borders. Other countries are welcome to join this effort. The proposed post-2020 Cohesion Policy seems to need adjusting to fully serve the implementation of the EUSBSR. The Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme cannot be the only funding source for the EUSBSR. The updating of the EUSBSR Action Plan will start next autumn. Finland's Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is to make the Baltic Sea Region a pioneer in the circular and bio-economy and sustainable development in all its aspects. It should be more ambitious in promoting blue growth. In 2015 the contributions of pan-Baltic organisations were included in the updated EUSBSR Action Plan for the first time. She expressed her hope that this will be the case this time, and reiterated that the views and ideas of pan-Baltic organisations and NGOs are welcome.

Mr Bernd Hemingway, Deputy Director of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, thanked the BSC for the invitation to speak to the General Assembly, and congratulated Oulu and Finland on winning the ice hockey! A wide range of activities are covered by the CBSS. The Latvian Presidency will take over from the Swedish Presidency and will have its own focus on integrity and societal security. The CBSS's work is guided by political documents released at the end of each Presidency. There is a need to maintain and strengthen the role of the CBSS to enhance regional cooperation. Sustainable development, youth, and civil protection are included in the issues addressed. There is a Vision Group, which has produced a report which will be discussed by the group of Ministers in June. It is not possible at this stage to discuss this before that meeting. There is a lot of discussion around the future of the Baltic Sea Region. There needs to be alignment to ensure closer cooperation. He addressed how Baltic 2030 connects to the CBSS. He concluded by noting that the CBSS are also looking into cooperation with neighbours.

There was a panel discussion with a strong focus on European Territorial Cooperation.

Mr Kari Aalto introduced the panel participants and invited them to take the floor.

Ms Annika Annerby-Jansson, Vice-President of Region Skåne, and Vice-President of the CPMR, explained that she was going to cover the question of added value of Cohesion Policy for Regions. She gave the example of her own Region of Skåne, which has a shared labour market and on a daily basis a large number of people commute to work across the border. She provided participants with facts and figures to illustrate the situation and reality experienced by Skåne. She stressed that the regions do fight for it and appreciate it.

Ms Tiina Perho, Member of the Board, Regional Council of Southwest Finland, Chair of the BSC Maritime Working Group, gave the Finnish point of view and stressed her concerns that there will be more cuts, especially to Cohesion Policy. She gave examples of her experience working in the European Parliament, and emphasised that all Regions should have benefits from Cohesion Policy. There still needs to be projects, but from the point of view of Southwest Finland they share the concerns and will also continue to fight for this. The overall budget is something that Regions should give more to, and get more from.

Mr Aalto opened the debate with participants and highlighted the importance of Interreg for the Baltic Sea area. It is a challenge for all regions but especially for the smaller regions.

Ms Tikka mentioned the meeting between the governments to work for the cross-border programmes and she expressed her hope that other countries follow suit.

Ms Perho acknowledged that the regions have already highlighted this and that they need to continue as long as possible.

Ms Annerby-Jansson stressed the importance for small, local actors to take part in these programmes. There has been some positive developments lately and they have been invited to take part in national discussions, and the invitation is from the national level which is very positive.

Ms Marianou agreed completely that the Regions needs to identify how can the CPMR and BSC can lobby for two interconnected issues, as both issues need to be addressed immediately.

Mr Aalto addressed the internal fight between financial ministries and raised the issue of macro-regional strategies and cooperation structures. He asked the panel what they felt are the most important things to focus on.

Ms Perho mentioned that the strategies will be updated, but they are here to stay. The discussion of why we are here today, why we have a BSC will help to get more from the macro-regional strategies, and the Regions need to do more together. She felt that although the goal is the same, the Regions are not working for it together enough. They need to address together what can be achieved. All Regions should do more and get more out of it.

Ms Annerby-Jansson provided a brief background on the history of the macro-regional strategy.

Ms Tikka provided details of the Annual Forum in Tallinn. She wondered what is most important for macro-regional strategies in the future. There is already a close connection between the transnational programmes and this needs fine-tuning, but the most important thing is the mainstream programmes. This must be done with the regions. There has been reluctance to use money for transnational cooperation.

Mr Hemmingway emphasised that the multitude of actors and networking is one of the successes. He stressed that the regions are involved and recognised the importance of the regional actors. The European strategy is the only one that is able to bring everyone together for an annual forum, and he hopes that this continues.

Mr Born drew attention to the fact that in autumn work will start on updating the action plan, and this is not self-evident. The developers of the mainstream programmes are not the same as those for the Baltic Sea Strategy. Efforts are being made for the Baltic Sea Strategy to be anchored in the transnational programmes. We need to find a way to move forward smoothly.

Mr Cezary Cieslukowski provided the participants with details of the experience of Podlaskie Region and stressed that he would support all activities to take this forward.

Ms Tikka highlighted that the programmes on the borders of Europe are very important for all regions. In the future it should be important to fund infrastructure programmes in a smaller scale across borders.

Ms Marianou highlighted the importance of external borders for all macro-regional strategies across Europe and the importance of funding external cooperation. She stressed the importance that any ideas of examples of how this could work would be very useful for the CPMR.

Mr Aalto mentioned the arctic dimension, which is also part of the discussions and stressed the northern sparsely populated areas. The Baltic Sea Region is a large area with all kinds of regions, and he looked into how the heterogenous characteristics of the Baltic Sea Region can be taken into consideration to help the Regions unite.

Mr Bergkvist highlighted that the programmes are not merged. The trans-national component in national programmes should not be forgotten. It is quite easy for national programmes to work with others outside their own country. It is important to ensure that this aspect continues with a transnational component.

Mr Aalto referred to the basics of the MFF and the discussions. He asked what is the added value that the regions would like to see from cooperation, or that they can offer from the negotiations that will follow, particularly in the Baltic sea regions.

Ms Tikka said one argument could be that the Baltic Sea Region is a forerunner for the rest of Europe, thinking about sustainable development and the circular economy, fighting climate change etc. If the regions join forces they can really make an impact on the status of the sea and also in climate issues. Helcom is an example which does not exist anywhere else.

Ms Perho emphasised that the Baltic Sea Region should be proud to be a forerunner. It gives equality throughout the regions and the countries in the Baltic sea area and in other strategies too. If something is left out, it will not quite be equal.

Mr Born noted that although a front-runner, the Baltic Sea area is also a fragile region. He asked Bernd Hemmingway what the regions can do to highlight that cooperation with third countries exists, it is an actual reality.

Mr Hemmingway replied that there are examples where third country policies have an impact on the Baltic Sea countries and regions. Those that should be involved should also be outside the EU and although it is successful, the Baltic Sea Region is paying the price for being the first EU strategy. He encouraged cooperation with third country regions and people-to-people contact.

Mr Aalto concluded the session by highlighting the good track record which stands as an example for the rest of Europe. The story has to be clear and the good examples have to be emphasised.

SESSION 6: FINAL DECLARATION

Chaired by **Mr Jari SAINIO**, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Mr Sainio thanked the moderators of all the sessions for their good work and explained the procedure for approving each article and amendment of the Final Declaration.

Ms Bjering presented the Final Declaration and explained the main messages for a strong post-2020 EU budget delivering sustainable regional growth, and for a more resilient EU strategy for the Baltic Sea regions. She explained that 2 amendments have been received for additions to Article 20 on transport.

Podlaskie Region explained the addition on the Via Carpathia trans-European corridor. The addition was unanimously approved. The **Finnish Regions** explained the proposed small addition regarding the comprehensive networks. The addition was unanimously approved.

The [Final Declaration](#) was put to the vote and unanimously adopted.

Ms Bjering explained that the Final Declaration would be sent out to relevant stakeholders, to all Members and will be promoted to the stakeholders of the EUSBSR, not only decision-makers in the EU institutions but also in Member State governments. A shorter version will be made available to summarise the Final Declaration.

SESSION 7: FINANCIAL REPORT

Chaired by **Mr Jari Sainio**, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Mr Öberg, Vice-Chair of the Regional Executive Committee, Region Norrbotten, gave details on the Financial Report 2017 and up to 30 April 2018. He explained that Norrbotten and Västerbotten are the joint hosts of the BSC Secretariat and part of their responsibilities is to provide a financial report.

There were no comments and financial report was adopted.

SESSION 8: BUDGET AND MEMBERSHIP FEES

Chaired by **Mr Jari SAINIO**, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Mr Sainio explained the forecast budget for 2019. There were no comments and the forecast budget was adopted.

SESSION 9: ELECTIONS

Chaired by **Mr Jari SAINIO**, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

The session was introduced by **Mr Erik Bergkvist**. He put forward a suggestion from the Swedish Regions that Mr Jari Nahkanen be elected as President of the Baltic Sea Commission and Annika Sandström as Vice-President, and for the first time a Polish Vice-President be elected, Mr Cezary Cieslukowski, from Podlaskie Region.

Mr Cieslukowski, Councillor of the Regional Assembly, Podlaskie Region commented that although he had submitted his application for President, he had reconsidered and now felt it would be better to work in harmony and share the responsibility. He declared his decision to withdraw his application for President and agreed with the suggestion by the Swedish regions.

Mr Sainio asked if anyone has any other comments. Jari Nahkanen was then unanimously elected as President of the Baltic Sea Commission. Annika Sandström was unanimously elected as first Vice-President.

Mr Richard Sjolund seconded the application for Mr Cieslukowski to be elected as second Vice-President. Mr Cieslukowski was unanimously elected second Vice-President.

Ms Bjerling explained that there is no vote for the Executive Committee, and that each country nominates a full member and an alternate member. She listed all the nominations that have been received from each country. There were no comments on the nominations, and the Members of the Executive Committee were approved. The [list of the Executive Committee](#) members is available on the BSC website.

CONCLUSIONS

Mr **Kari Hietala**, Regional Advisor, Regional Council of Satakunta had to leave unexpectedly at the lunch break and Ms Asa Bjerling conveyed a short message on his behalf, that the Region was looking forward to working in cooperation with the CPMR and its BSC.

Ms Bjerling then announced the upcoming statutory meetings. The CPMR General Assembly will be held in Madeira in October. She invited all Member Regions to express their interest to host the upcoming Executive Committee meetings and the 2019 General Assembly.

Mr Sainio officially handed over the Presidency to Mr Nahkanen.

Mr Jari Nahkanen, the newly-elected President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission gave the closing speech. He stressed that the real status of the regions is as a regional policy player in the implementation of EU programmes. The BSC is a strong player across the whole Baltic Sea area. He welcomed the recognition of the EUSBSR. He emphasised that the importance of improving transport across the region and regional development cannot be stressed enough. There is need to tap into the arctic potential. He thanked the Member Regions for their confidence in him and congratulated the Vice-Presidents on their election.

He declared the 2018 BSC General Assembly closed.