



CPMR **BALTIC SEA  
COMMISSION**

## CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS BALTIC SEA COMMISSION

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### GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CPMR BALTIC SEA COMMISSION 25-27 May 2016 -Sandviken, Region Gävleborg (SE)

## MINUTES

**THURSDAY 26 MAY 2016**

#### **The assessment of pan-Baltic cooperation. Current state of play in the South Baltic, Central Baltic, Botnia-Atlantica and Baltic Sea Region Interreg Programmes**

The meeting opened with a special session on the assessment of pan-Baltic cooperation including the current state of play in the South Baltic, Central Baltic, Botnia-Atlantica and Baltic Sea Region Interreg Programmes. Moderator Anders LUNDELL, an EU Strategist from Sandviken Municipality welcomed participants and introduced the session and speakers. He then passed the floor to the speakers.

Thorsten KOHLICH, Head of the Joint Secretariat, Interreg South Baltic provided an overview of Interreg South Baltic.

Rolf WÄNNSTRÖM, Head of Secretariat, Interreg Botnia-Atlantica introduced the Interreg programme to participants and provided an update on the current state of play.

Merike NIITEPÕLD, Head of the Managing Authority, Interreg Central Baltic Programme provided information on the Central Baltic Programme.

Ronald LIESKE, Team Leader Programme Unit, introduced Interreg Baltic Sea Region.

#### **Opening session of the BSC General Assembly**

The official General Assembly session was opened by Tommy BERGER, Vice-President of the Regional Executive Board, Region Gävleborg, who welcomed participants to the Region. He gave a short introduction to the Region of Gävleborg, and explained its statistics, geography and history. The port of Gävle is of strategic importance with wood and steel being exported and raw materials imported through the port. It is a highly innovative region with several clusters being developed. Sustainability is a driving force for Gävleborg and it already generates a significant amount of its energy through renewables. He offered special thanks to the CPMR - Baltic Sea Commission and the Nordic Council of Ministers for making this event possible. He expressed his hope this event would be of benefit to the individual Regions as well as to the work of the organisation.

Mr Jari SAINIO, President of the Baltic Sea Commission and Vice-President of Region Helsinki-Uusimaa welcomed participants to the General Assembly meeting and thanked Gävleborg for hosting the event. He highlighted that this General Assembly is a special occasion as it celebrates the 20-year anniversary of the Baltic Sea Commission. Over the last year the strength of the organisation has been discussed. A new vision and mission statement and other various documents will be reviewed and approved during the meeting. Representatives from the BSC Working Groups will present the work carried out over the year. Partnerships have been sought on various policy areas that are of interest to the BSC. He introduced the agenda for the 2016 General Assembly, which was unanimously adopted. The minutes of the 2015 General Assembly were then put to the vote and unanimously adopted. He introduced and passed the floor to the honourable President of the CPMR.

Mr Vasco Alves CORDEIRO, President of the CPMR and President of the Regional Government of the Azores gave a keynote speech. He commended the work carried out by Mr Sainio in his capacity as President of the BSC. He thanked the hosts for the invitation to speak and acknowledged the opportunities offered by the work of the BSC. He provided an overview of the excellent work achieved by the CPMR over the last year and gave examples including the work carried out on maritime issues. The BSC contribution to the work of the

CPMR is of utmost importance and President Cordeiro gave examples of the work achieved and upcoming work such as the joint organisation of several events.

President Cordeiro illustrated the key milestones in hot topics at European level, including the Juncker plan. It is essential that the Juncker plan and the structural funds are combined and go hand in hand in order to achieve goals in all Regions. There is a vital need to do more to harness the potential of the Juncker plan. The CPMR has been working to understand how Regions are using S3 strategies to support maritime investment and increase cooperation. The Region of the Azores will organise a Conference on "Maritime Spatial Planning in the International Context" on 23-24 June 2016 and invited all participants to take part.

He explained that the BSC is taking an active role in the accessibility campaign launched by the CPMR. Currently the CPMR is collaborating with MEPs on transport issues including corridors etc. that need to be properly addressed. The EU institutions need to understand that transport and accessibility is essential and vital for our Regions. He is looking forward to more contributions from the BSC to the work of the CPMR. He acknowledged the need to expand our membership base and to continue our work on this. He expressed his thanks at being offered the opportunity to participate as a speaker in the BSC General Assembly and his hope for successful work over the next few days ahead. This work is very important to the CPMR as the CPMR is not a theoretical organisation, it leads from the work that its Geographical Commissions do. The work of the Geographical Commissions provide input to the overall strategy of the CPMR. The BSC is an essential pillar of the CPMR. Without that pillar, things would get shaky!

Mr Sainio thanked the President for taking the time to attend and for his excellent speech.

### **Challenges of Baltic Sea Cooperation**

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The next session focused on the challenges of Baltic Sea Cooperation and was introduced by Moderator Mikael OLSSON, HA Capacity EUSBSR. He extended his thanks to the Baltic Sea Commission for inviting him to participate. He introduced the speakers and explained the organisation of the Session, which will focus on the challenges in the Baltic Sea Region and will include questions to receive input from the floor. During the session, the panellists will discuss 3 main challenges. He briefly introduced himself and his background, and introduced Horizontal Action Capacity. He explained the objectives and policy areas of save the sea, connect the region and increasing prosperity, as well as the governance system of the EUSBSR. Mr Olsson provided details of the HA work programme and activities for Members including educational programmes and Baltic leadership programmes, as well as the programme for non-member implementers. He described the problems encountered and how they are being tackled.

Pekka MYLLYMÄKI, Chairman of the Assembly, Regional Council of South West Finland took the floor and thanked his fellow speakers. He introduced himself and gave details of his studies and working background. He then continued to present the "Three E's" - key energy, environmental and educational issues.

Bernd HEMINGWAY, Deputy Director, Council of Baltic Sea States thanked the BSC for inviting him to speak and the region for hosting the event. He introduced himself and presented his organisation to participants.

Mikael OLSSON invited the panellists to participate in a questions and answers session.

### **Debate**

The questions were then opened up to all participants.

Wolf BORN expressed that there are different worlds, and these worlds are not sufficiently connected. We need to bring people together and strengthen and improve communication. There has to be more resilient corporation, we need to focus on areas where there can be added value for the Regions.

Annika ANNERBY JANSSON discussed the role of politicians in transnational cooperation, and expressed her belief that the regional level is not involved enough. She stressed that it is very important for the political level to be increasingly involved.

Mikael OLSSON thanked the panellists and the floor for the input into this interesting session.

### **Organisation of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission - how to get involved in the work**

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Åsa BJERING, Executive Secretary of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission explained to participants how the Baltic Sea Commission was organised and how the Regions can get increasingly involved in the work. She explained how the Regions can get involved in the Working Groups, how the Baltic Sea Commission is preparing for the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2016 and what the Baltic Sea Commission's responsibility is for the

EUSBSR Annual Forum 2017. She concluded her speech by explaining initiatives from Members and providing information on various Task Forces.

## 12.00 Lunch on site

### **Baltic Sea Commission Working Groups**

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After the lunch break, the General Assembly continued with presentations from each of the Baltic Sea Commission Working Groups.

#### **Transport Working Group**

Mr Kai HOLMBERG, First Vice-Chairman, Regional Council of Kymenlaakso and Chair of the Transport Working Group gave an update on the work of the BSC Transport Working Group and presented the 2015 Work Report. He also informed participants of the Baltic Sea Commission's input and participation in the CPMR inter-Commission Transport Working Group. He explained that the Working Group was closely following the Corridor Forums. He then passed the floor to Mr Erik JOHANSSON, Regional Councillor, Region Örebro County and Vice-Chair of the BSC Transport Working Group, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on the transport projects that the Working Group is involved in (Scandria2Act and TENTacle) and regional pilot actions.

#### **Renewable Energy Working Group**

Mr Richard SJÖLUND, Member of the Board, Regional Council of Ostrobothnia and Chair of the Renewable Energy Working Group introduced the Work Report for 2015 for the Renewable Energy Working Group and informed participants about the LARS project (Learning Among Regions on Smart Specialisation). He presented the work of the CPMR and the partners in a Concept Note proposal that has been submitted to the Interreg BSR during spring 2016.

#### **Maritime Affairs Working Group**

The 2015 Work Report for the Maritime Affairs Working Group was presented by Ms Tiina PERHO, Member of the Board, Regional Council of Southwest Finland and Chair of the Maritime Working Group. She gave a brief overview over the current work in the Maritime WG where the mapping of Blue Value Chains is central. During the past year, the Maritime Working Group has had an event in the European Parliament, 3 Working Group meetings and organised a workshop during the European Maritime Days in Turku on the topic. She also explained that she took over as Chair of the Working Group in January 2016 and thanked Mr Jaakko Mikkola for the work accomplished during his time as Chair of the Working Group.

### **BSC Activity Report and BSC Financial Report**

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Mr Jari SAINIO, President of the BSC, Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, thanked the Chairs of the Working Groups for their presentations and welcomed the high number of Regions that actively participate in both the meetings and the work of the Working Groups. He reminded participants that this year, the Working Groups are open to non-Member Regions so that they can discover the benefits of the Working Groups for their Regions. Mr Sainio presented the BSC Activity Report 2015-2016 and reminded participants of the major events that have been held over the last year. He thanked all those involved for helping to ensure a successful year for the Baltic Sea Commission. He invited questions from the floor.

#### **Debate**

Marko MÄLLY, Senior Advisor, International Affairs, Regional Council of Päijät-Häme asked for further information on how the Baltic Sea Commission could help the Regions be more involved in the EUSBSR.

Asa BJERING replied that there will be a more in-depth discussion on how the Regions can be involved in the governance of the EUSBSR. It doesn't have to be more projects, but the creation of a platform, an arena, for the Regions. The German Regions have made a lot of effort to ensure that the Baltic Sea Commission can be a co-organising partner in the EUSBSR Forum next year. The Baltic Sea Commission will continue to support the Regions to take on more work in relation to the governance and implementation of the EUSBSR.

Jari SAINIO thanked Asa Bjering for all her hard work over the past year on this issue.

The BSC Activity Report 2015-2016 was unanimously adopted by the Member Regions.

Mr John KOSTET from Norrbotten County Council presented the BSC Financial Report 2015-2016, and the efforts that have been made to keep expenses as low as possible and to ensure a lower budget for the next year. The BSC Financial Report 2015-2016 was unanimously adopted by the Member Regions.

### **Discussion on and approval of Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly – Working Papers**

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After a coffee break, the General Assembly discussed and approved the Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly Working Papers.

Erik BERGKVIST introduced the BSC Vision and Mission Statement. He explained that during last year's General Assembly in Vaasa, concrete decisions were made. It is necessary to communicate to all Regions what the Baltic Sea Commission is all about, as well as to open up dialogue between the Regions to demonstrate what is important to the Regions from across the Baltic Sea area. He emphasised that the vision is that the Baltic Sea Commission is **THE** united voice of the Baltic Sea Regions. The mission is to be a platform for policy-orientated cooperation. With a fixed mission and vision it is easier to pave the way forward.

John KOSTET, Strategic Planning Officer, Norrbotten County Council, explained the forecast Budget for 2016-2017 to participants. He informed participants that they had successfully managed to lower the budget for 2016-2017.

A proposal to increase the Baltic Sea Commission Membership Fees in 2017, 2018 and 2019 was put forward by Jari SAINIO, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Helsinki-Uusimaa Region. He explained that discussions had been held on how to obtain more funds for the Baltic Sea Commission, especially to cover the costs of the Executive Secretary as it is a high cost for the hosting regions every year. A small group was set up to evaluate the situation and find a solution to increase the membership fees. The Executive Committee deliberated the results of the discussions and agreed on a method to slowly increase the membership fees over a couple of years. Janne TAMMINEN, Liaison Manager, Region of Helsinki-Uusimaa, explained the discussions that were held in more detail, including how a compromise was negotiated and that the Executive Committee accepted the final proposal put forward.

Erik JOHANSSON, Regional Councillor, Region Örebro County, asked if the budget is reduced, why are the fees increasing? It does not balance? Erik BERGKVIST explained that the Secretariat used to move, and change hosting Region every few years. Now a new method is being set up, where the Secretariat is established in Brussels, which costs more than having the secretariat hosted within a Region. If we want to continue with this method then the membership fees need to increase to cover the expenses.

The Baltic Sea Commission Vision and Mission Statement was unanimously approved.

The proposed increase to the membership fees was unanimously approved.

Åsa BJERING, Executive Secretary of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission explained the amendments to the Internal Rules that have already been approved by the Executive Committee. She informed participants that once the document has been adopted by the General Assembly, it would be put to the CPMR Political Bureau in June for ratification. After consulting the current Internal Rules, a decision was made to change them slightly so that the document would be in line with the vision and mission statement. The Executive Committee suggested changing the wording so that the Internal Rules reflect reality. The changes to the Internal Rules were approved by the Baltic Sea Commission Executive Committee during its meeting in March 2016 and will officially come into force once they are ratified by the CPMR Political Bureau in June. The amendments were unanimously adopted.

Mr Erik BERGKVIST from Region Västerbotten had the pleasure to inform participants that the mandate for the Executive Secretary has been renewed for the two-year period 2017-2018. He congratulated Åsa BJERING on the excellent work achieved so far. The renewal of the mandate was unanimously adopted.

### **Elections**

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Annika ANNERBY JANSSON chaired the elections for the positions of President and 2 Vice-Presidents of the Baltic Sea Commission and the nominations for the Political Bureau. She explained the election procedure to participants, as the newly adopted Internal Rules have not yet been ratified. However, it was suggested that the new Internal Rules are used for this election. This election will be ratified by the CPMR Political Bureau and the CPMR General Secretary and CPMR President have approved this decision. The decision was unanimously approved by the Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly.

Annika ANNERBY JANSSON explained that the President and 2 Vice-Presidents must come from different countries. Richard SJOLUND nominated Jari SAINIO as President. Annika ANNERBY JANSSON nominated Annika SANDSTRÖM as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President and Richard SJOLUND put forward Kalev KALJUSTE as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President. Erik JOHANSSON seconded all three nominations.

Mr Jari SAINIO was unanimously elected President of the Baltic Sea Commission, whilst Ms Annika SANDSTRÖM, President of the County Council of Stockholm, was unanimously elected 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President and Mr Kalev KALJUSTE, Pärnu County Governor, was unanimously elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President.

The national delegates were called upon for the nominations:

- Estonia: Full Member: *to be nominated*  
Alternate Member: *to be nominated*
- Finland: Full Member: Richard Sjolund, Ostrobothnia  
Alternate Member Talvikki Jori,
- Germany: Full Member: Wolf Born, Mecklenburg Vorpommern  
Alternate Member: Merten Barnert, Mecklenburg Vorpommern
- Norway: Full Member: *to be nominated*  
Alternate Member: *to be nominated*
- Poland: Full Member: *to be nominated*  
Alternate Member: *to be nominated*
- Sweden: Full Member: Erik Bergkvist, Region Västerbotten  
Alternate Member: Anders Öberg, Norrbotten County Council

### **Closing Session**

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The final session provided information on the 2017 Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly and the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2017.

Asa BJERING explained that it is important to look forward to the future and passed the floor to Wolf BORN from Mecklenburg Vorpommern, who invited participants to Berlin for the 2017 Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly, which will be held in mid-June 2017 and a short film was presented.

Asa BJERING informed participants about the EUSBSR Forum and provided details on the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the BSC Working Groups. It was explained that the nominations for these positions will be made during the next Executive Committee meeting.

Jari SAINIO thanked the members for their active participation and closed the meeting.

**End of proceedings**