



General Assembly

Hotel Radisson Blu, ul. Długi Targ 19 / Powroźnicza, 80-828 Gdansk, Poland

TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2019

Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission and Member of the Board, Council of Oulu Region, welcomed the members to the 24th General Assembly of the Baltic Sea Commission and to Gdansk, the City of Solidarity. He congratulated Erik Bergkvist on his election to the European Parliament.

Erik Bergkvist, Member of European Parliament, thanked the BSC for the invitation to speak. He stressed the importance of coming together and seeking compromises and solutions to find better ways to influence the brain of the European institutions. He acknowledged that if he is going to do a good job in the European Parliament, he will need all the regions to work together with him. He thanked the regions for being there, and for being kind and cooperative people.

STATUTORY ISSUES

- The Agenda for the Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly 2019 was unanimously approved.
- The Minutes of the 2018 Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly held in Oulu were unanimously approved.

CPMR STRATEGIC PLAN: Why territories matter: CPMR contribution to a renewed European Union

Nick Brookes, CPMR Executive Director, thanked the BSC for the invitation to speak. He explained the next steps of the EU agenda over the next few months. He noted that in September the Council of the Member States would start negotiating the future budget, with the hope that an agreement can be reached by the end of the year. He then addressed which European common goods are worthy of EU added value, and what the CPMR can do to provide added value to its Member Regions. He discussed specific policy issues relevant for the Member Regions including the future of maritime and migration policies. He stressed that the CPMR is nothing without its Members and invited the participating regions to contact him to discuss any of the issues in more detail.

Krista Taipale, Helsinki-Uusimaa, thanked Mr Brookes for his presentation and asked about Interreg maritime cross-border programmes. She acknowledged that there is support in principle, but the final decisions will be made in the autumn. She asked if there anything we can do together to remind the Council Members about this? During the European Maritime Days there was a lot of references to oceans, but not the seas, and she asked what the CPMR is doing to ensure that seas are taken into account in EU discussions, not just oceans?

Nick Brookes agreed that it is only half the battle, and budget issues must also be taken into account. It is important to pay attention to details. The CPMR is aware of the issue of using the terminology oceans and is open to discussions on how to deal with this. It is important that the regions continue their dialogue with respective Member States.

Annika Annerby-Jansson, Skåne, commented on the role regions can play in migration. She expressed her belief that the big question is how to solve migration and border issues, and this has to be left to the European Parliament and Commission. The regions are important to provide input but cannot solve the issue. However, regions have a larger mandate on the topic of integration. A possible strategy in this field will be addressed during the CPMR Political Bureau later that week. She also invited any interested Member Regions to join the CPMR Migration Task Force.

Kaarin Taipale, Helsinki-Uusimaa, noted that speech is a political act. Concepts change as times change, and it is important to talk about mobility, not only transport and accessibility. She noted that she would like to see climate change mitigation mentioned, as it is often only climate change adaptation, which is giving the impression that we are giving up, when we need to keep fighting climate change.

Nick Brookes thanked the participants for their comments and agreed that words do matter. He noted that perhaps it is necessary to also change transport and accessibility and use mobility more often.

SESSION 1: Revision of the EUSBSR

Jari Nahkanen, BSC President introduced the session and passed the floor to Wolf Born.

Wolf Born, Head of Unit, Baltic Sea Affairs, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, welcomed participants from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and gave an update on the state of play, addressing how the EUSBSR and how it looks today. He demonstrated the different levels of governance with a diagram of the governance system of the EUSBSR. He then described the EUSBSR Revision Process, including the objective and scope. He introduced the BSC Task Force and described the mandate of the group to develop a local and regional perspective for the revision process, to interact with relevant stakeholders and to draft a Policy Position. He then explained the activities of the Task Force and the involvement of Member Regions and BSC Working Groups. Mr Born then invited Member Regions to give examples, including by **Kaarin Taipale** (Helsinki-Uusimaa) who spoke about BSR Access showcasing relevant cooperation in the field of transport and **Pontus Lindberg** (Skåne) showcasing regional development and climate.

Wolf Born presented the key messages of the draft *Policy Paper: the BSC supports a strong Strategy targeting joint challenges*. The Policy Paper represents a joint regional vision for stakeholders in the region; the formulation of objectives in an open and constructive way; and Regional Authorities should have a role in setting goals and the implementation process. He proposed an amendment to the list of policy areas so that the mentioned policy areas in the document reflect the official wording.

Kaarin Taipale suggested amending climate change to climate action in the same list. The amendments were unanimously approved.

- The Baltic Sea Commission Policy Position on the Revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan was unanimously approved.

Amb. **Helena Tuuri**, National Contact Person for Finland in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region addressed the General Assembly and thanked the Regions of the CPMR for their active contribution and engagement in the revision process.

SESSION 2: UPDATE OF BSC ACTIVITIES – Related to EU Policy Areas

Jari Nahkanen, BSC President introduced the session and passed the floor to Asa Bjerling.

Åsa Bjerling, Executive Secretary of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, gave a general overview update on the activities of the Baltic Sea Commission Working Groups and priority areas.

Daria Akhutina, Senior Advisor, CBSS gave a speech on global challenges and priorities. She explained the current priorities and key areas of work for the CBSS. She noted that the CBSS looks forward to continuing collaborating with the BSC in the future.

Thomas Erlandsson, Policy Area Transport, gave a presentation on Policy Area Transport – from priorities to processes. He provided background information on Policy Area Transport and introduced the PA Transport Action Plan. He explained the benefits that a flagship process can bring and said that the cooperation with regions is important for PA Transport.

Anders Öberg welcomed the good railway links between Sweden and Finland.

Simon Stermann, National Contact Point of EUSBSR, German Federal Foreign Office, asked if there is a regional local effort to make groups or somehow join forces in applying to structural funds, to have the local essence and needs assessment and then combine it with proposals and project development to solve the problems of the community. He acknowledged that there are projects that make sense that we want to develop, and it could be possible to use a local approach to access funds that are difficult to reach.

Thomas Erlandsson replied that they discuss common issues and great progress has been made, but more can always be done.

Wolf Born noted that there will be a gap in financing projects, different EU programmes can be looked at, but it is also necessary to give continuity to projects. He called for more flexible instruments.

- The BSC Activity Report 2018-2019 (including the report on the BSC Added Value 2019) was unanimously approved.

SESSION 3: WORK PLAN 2019-2021

Annika Sandström, BSC Vice-President, introduced the session.

Each Working Group provided a general update on the activities and future plans of the Baltic Sea Commission Working Groups:

- Transport Working Group by **Bosse Andersson**, Chair of the Transport Working Group
 - Maritime Working Group by **Harry Bouveng**, Vice-Chair of the Maritime Working Group
 - Energy Working Group by **Richard Sjölund**, Chair of the Energy Working Group
- The BSC Work Plan 2019-2021 was unanimously approved.

Krista Taipale, on behalf of the Finnish Regions, requested that the Baltic Sea Commission work to either re-establish the Baltic Sea Intergroup or a similar body in the European Parliament for the mandate period 2019-2024.

SESSION 4: FINANCIAL REPORT, BUDGET AND MEMBERSHIP FEES

Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission introduced and moderated the session.

The Financial Report 2018 and up to 30 April 2019 was introduced by **Anders Öberg**, County Council Commissioner, Region Norrbotten.

- The Financial Report was unanimously approved.

The forecast budget 2020 was presented by **Erik Bergkvist**, President of the Regional Executive Committee, Region Västerbotten.

- The Forecast Budget was unanimously approved.

SESSION 5: Adoption of Political Messages

Anders Öberg, Region Norrbotten presented the Baltic Sea Commission Policy Position on legalising trade in seal product from controlled hunting.

- The Policy Position on legalising trade in seal product from controlled hunting was unanimously approved.

Erik Bergkvist, Region Västerbotten presented the Baltic Sea Commission Policy Position on the EU Post-2020 Smart Specialisation Agenda: Boosting competitiveness through Innovation Cooperation.

- The Policy Position on The Baltic Sea Commission Policy Position on the EU Post-2020 Smart Specialisation Agenda: Boosting competitiveness through Innovation Cooperation was unanimously approved.

CONCLUSIONS

Presentation of new Members - Regional Council of Satakunta gave a short presentation and video to introduce the region of Satakunta.

Next Statutory Meetings:

- Plenary meeting of the Baltic Sea Commission in the framework of the 2019 CPMR General Assembly (Palermo, Italy)
- Invitation to the 2020 Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly

Regions interested in hosting the 2020 BSG General Assembly and future Executive Committee meetings were invited to contact the BSC Secretariat.

Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission gave a closing speech and thanked participants and the Secretariat for a successful meeting.

End of proceedings