1. Opening of the Executive Committee

Mr Jari Nahkanen, President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, welcomed the participants, the speakers, in particular Mr Bodo Bahr, Secretary General of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and Mr Pyry Niemi, Member of the Swedish Parliament and President of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, and opened the meeting. He informed participants that Stockholm Region will continue their membership of the network and Mr Gustav Hemming, 1st Vice Chair Region Stockholm Executive Board, has been nominated the Swedish Alternate Member in the Executive Committee. He provided a short update on the Finnish elections, noting that the low turnout, due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, was disappointing.

The Agenda of the meeting was unanimously approved by the Executive Committee.

The Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in 24 March 2021 were unanimously approved.

2. Update from the BSC Secretariat

Ms Lucille Ehrhart, Executive Secretary of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, provided an update on recent policy issues, membership (interest from Östergötland to join CPMR) and about communication (publication of BSC newsflashes in March and May). She mentioned that the BSC President will represent CPMR at a high-level conference on cross-border cooperation, organised by the Committee of the Regions. She provided information on an up-coming meeting of the European Parliament’s SEArica Intergroup, co-organised by the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission together with the Baltic Sea Informal Group, on the topic of ports on 22 October 2021. An update on external cooperation with CBSS, HELCOM and BSSSC was provided as well as an update about upcoming CPMR Political Bureau held end of June 2021 and the CPMR General Assembly taking place in October 2021. Lucille Ehrhart mentioned that the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Secretariat will submit an application to organise a seminar during the next EUSBSR Annual Forum, end of September, on the topic of Connecting Arctic with the Baltic Sea Region.
3. Report on the BSC policy areas

Mr Jari Nahkanen introduced the session and welcomed the high number of participants in the recent Working Group meetings.

Mr Markku Markkula (Region Helsinki-Uusimaa), Chair of the Energy and Climate Working Group, provided an update on recent activities. There have been two meetings of the Working Group in spring, one in March and one in early June dedicated to sustainable dimension of Smart Specialisation Strategies, and feedback was provided on these events. He also noted that 9 member regions replied to a survey on smart specialisation strategies. Members of the Working Group also participated in 2 online innovation camps in between these meetings.

Mr Bosse Andersson (Region Stockholm), Chair the Transport Working Group gave an update on the activities of the Transport Working Group, including feedback from the meeting in May with MEP Henna Virkkunen. He informed participants of the 2 sub-groups that are now working on the TEN-T revision and sustainable mobility. BSC amendments to the TEN-T maps were submitted to the European Commission and a letter was sent to Ms Catherine Trautmann, European Coordinator for the North Sea-Baltic TEN-T Corridor, highlighting the importance of marking the Helsinki-Tallinn maritime link as a solid line.

In the absence of the Chairs, Ms Lucille Ehrhart provided a brief update on both the Maritime Working Group and the Arctic Task Force. The European Commission published a Communication on a sustainable blue economy on 17 May and the Maritime Working Group met at the end of May to discuss this new communication and implications for BSC Member Regions. Regarding the Arctic Task Force, the European Commission is currently reviewing the EU Arctic Policy and the Arctic Task Force has been set up to follow this process. The Task Force met in March and will meet with Arctic stakeholders at the end of June, including representatives from Lapland, the Arctic economic Council etc. More information here.

Mr Wolf Born (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) provided information on recent contact with CBSS. He noted he had contacted the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs with regard to the Arctic-Baltic Seminar, and they are looking into the possibility of having an expert there. He questioned the pending issue of the S3 Working Group, which has come to a standstill regarding the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Ms Lucille Ehrhart reminded participants that a new Working Group on S3 is being set up and so far no Region has come forward to take the lead for the Group. She noted that smart specialisation is a sub-topic of energy and climate.

Mr Markku Markkula agreed smart specialisation is a sub-topic of energy and climate and suggested that it comes under the umbrella of the Energy and Climate Working Group for at least this year.

Mr Pontus Lindberg (Skåne), Vice-Chair of the BSC Energy and Climate Working Group agreed with this suggestion.

Mr Wolf Born reached out to those regions that are not members of the Energy and Climate Working Group and were ready to work in an S3 Working Group and invited them to join in the smart specialisation work of the Energy and Climate Working Group.

Ms Lucille Ehrhart informed participants that the European Commission has established a new I3 Expert Working Group and the CPMR is part of the Expert Group.
4. Exchange with the President of Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Mr Pyry Niemi, about the role of the Baltic Sea Region in building the future of Europe

Mr Jari Nahkanen welcomed Mr Pyry Niemi, President of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and underlined the common interests of the two organisations to build a sustainable and prosperous Baltic Sea Region. He highlighted the willingness of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission to strengthen cooperation with Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference.

Mr Pyry Niemi, President of Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, thanked Mr Nahkanen for the invitation and highlighted the common issues faced by the Baltic Sea Region. He provided background information on the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and its Members. He explained the priorities of the Swedish Presidency this year and next year, including highlighting the importance of democracy. Democratic institutions, strong cooperation as well as environmental and social sustainability are cornerstones of the work of the BSPC and preserving these are clear objectives of the Swedish Presidency. The priorities and work of the BSPC were introduced, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were then addressed. He invited Mr Nahkanen, as President of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission to address the Annual Conference. He concluded by stating more can be accomplished by standing together, the BSC and BSPC have similar goals and visions in fundamental policy areas, and it is worthwhile exchanging ideas in these areas and initiating similar activities to achieve synergy effects in implementing the goals.

Mr Pontus Lindberg stressed the appreciation for the work together with the BSPC and the opportunities to visit the Parliamentary Conference. The BSC members will continue to strengthen the dialogue with the BSPC in the future.

Mr Wolf Born noted that the green transition also needs a sustainable blue economy and hoped it would be possible to bring the operational level together with the legislative or parliamentary level.

5. Preparation of the 2021 BSC General Assembly

Ms Lucille Ehrhart informed participants that the BSC General Assembly would be held on 23 September 2021. The host region of Helsinki-Uusimaa, together with the BSC Presidium have made the decision to suggest that the meeting be held online due to the continuing uncertainty regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision was unanimously approved. The intention is to use an interactive platform to ensure a more lively event.

Ms Lucille Ehrhart introduced the draft agenda and working papers for the General Assembly 2021, including the draft Resolution and the draft Activity Report. She invited the Executive Committee members to contact her for any amendments or suggestions, before the documents will be send to General Assembly, end of August.

Mr Evert Kroes (Region Stockholm), on behalf of Mr Gustav Hemming, introduced an initiative taken with 11 Swedish regions on sustainable and locally based commercial fishing. He mentioned that Stockholm Region requests a reference to sustainable fishing be included in the BSC Resolution.

Mr Wolf Born asked if Stockholm Region intends to pursue this issue of locally based commercial fishing in the future work of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission.
Mr Evert Kroes acknowledged that is part of the discussion on the Work Plan. It is not the intention to write down that the BSC Maritime Working Group should work on sustainable fishing, but it should be included as a priority in the Work Plan. There should be a pragmatic solution as to how the BSC works with this question.

Ms Lucille Ehrhart introduced the draft Work Plan and explained the changes that had been made since the last Executive Committee meeting.

Mr Evert Kroes presented the proposal put forward by Region Stockholm to include a reference to sustainable fishing, but also to include a reference to the mission, vision and goals of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission.

Mr Wolf Born noted it was difficult to discuss and make a decision on a document that has not been seen before. The Executive Committee should take the time to make a decision on the amendments and raised the possibility of a written procedure.

→ It was agreed that Stockholm Region will send a proposal of amendments to the BSC Executive Secretary on both, the BSC Resolution and the BSC Work plan. The amendments will be sent to the Presidium first and then to the BSC Executive Committee for written approval. The finalised document would then be distributed with the other working papers two weeks before the General Assembly.

The proposed timeline for the preparation of the General Assembly 2021 was presented and approved.

- 31st August: Draft Resolution to be sent out to Members
- 9th September: Working papers and final agenda to be sent out to Members
- 13th September: deadline to submit amendments to the Resolution to the BSC Secretariat
- 16th September: consolidated Resolution, including amendments, to be sent out to Members

6. Financial documents

Ms Lucille Ehrhart provided an update on the Financial Report 2021 and the proposed Forecast Budget for 2022, which were already presented at the last Executive Committee.

7. Closing session

It was decided to hold the next Executive Committee meeting early November 2022. The BSC Secretariat is looking for a host Region for the next Executive Committee.

Mr Jari Nahkanen thanked the participants and closed the meeting.
CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Executive Committee

List of Participants

TUESDAY 15 JUNE 2021

Bosse Andersson, 1st Vice-President, Regional Assembly, Region Stockholm
Bodo Bahr, Secretary General, Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
Clare Booth, Policy Assistant, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission
Wolf Born, Head of Unit "Baltic Sea Cooperation", Mecklenburg-Vorpommern / Ministry of the Interior and for Europe
Lucille Ehrhart, Executive Secretary, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission
Pia Hurtta, Communication Specialist, Regional Council of Kymenlaakso
Britt Karlsson Green, Strategist Sustainable Fuels, Region Skåne
Daniela Kober, Clerk, Ministry of the Interior and for Europe, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Romek Kosenkranius, Mayor (Local Government), Estonia
Evert Kroes, International Strategist, Region Stockholm
Pontus Lindberg, Chairman, Human Resource Committee, Region Skåne
Maria Lindbom, Region Skåne
Markku Markkula, Energy and Climate Working Group Chair, Helsinki-Uusimaa
Otto Meri, Member of the Board, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council
Jari Nahkanen, President of BSC, Oulu
Pyry Niemi, President, Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
Sonja Palhus, Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Isak Sidestam, Adviser External Affairs, Region Västerbotten
Davide Strangis, Executive Director, CPMR
Janne Tamminen, Senior Adviser, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council