



**Council of the Baltic Sea States
The Secretariat**

**10th CPMR – Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly
(Naantali, 27-28 May 2005)**

Presentation

By Senior Advisor Philipp Schwartz

Dear Mrs. Gunn-Marit Helgesen,

Dear Mr. Inge Andersson,

Dear Mr. Ilkka Kanerva,

Ladies and gentlemen,

INTRODUCTION

First, I would like to thank the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission for inviting the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States to the 10th General Assembly and to provide me the opportunity to address you on behalf of the Secretariat. At the same time, the Polish CBSS Presidency asked me to wish all success to the 10th General Assembly here in Naantali.

The CPMR-BSC enjoys the status of a Special Participant in the CBSS since May 2003. Special Participants are encouraged to actively participate in the work of the CBSS structures and working bodies as appropriate, on an ad-hoc basis and according to their expressed interest. Such a status provides for an improved interface between our organisations, opening wider opportunities to address the topics of common interest. Since May 2003, there has been a lot of contact between our Secretariats and networks and we are hopeful they would even further increase. Therefore, even if I have participated already at the 9th General Assembly in Schwerin, that time still working for the State Chancellery Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, I would like to use this opportunity to introduce myself as the new liaison person to the CPMR-BSC in the CBSS Secretariat.

13th CBSS MINISTERIAL SESSION (SZCZECIN, 9-10 JUNE 2005)

At the 5th Baltic Sea States Summit in Laulasmaa, Estonia, in June 2004, the Heads of Governments met to reassess and adjust the role of the CBSS and its priorities to the new political environment in the Baltic Sea region especially with regard to the EU-enlargement. One year has passed since the 5th Baltic Sea States Summit and it is time to follow-up the conclusions of the Summit. In this concern, intensive preparations are ongoing for the 13th CBSS Ministerial Session, which will take place on 9-10 June 2005 in Szczecin, Poland. On invitation of the Polish CBSS Presidency, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CBSS member countries will receive a special Interim Report on the follow-up and implementation of the tasks set by the Laulasmaa Summit.

Already now, it can be said that the EU-enlargement just underlined the special importance of the CBSS as a unique political forum for a continued dialogue aimed at avoiding new dividing lines in the Baltic Sea region as it unites all the EU and the non-EU countries around the Baltic Sea region. In addition, the new CBSS Terms of Reference will be submitted to the Council in Szczecin for endorsement, too.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION – BALTIC EUROREGIONAL NETWORK

One of the main initiatives of the CBSS at present is a joint project with the Nordic Council of Ministers to result in a strong network of Euroregions – the Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN). As you might remember, we informed about this initiative and its main outlines already at the 9th CPMR-BSC General Assembly in Schwerin last year. In the meantime, the project was finalized and submitted for INTERREG III B BSR funding at the 7th call at the beginning of March this year. The final decision will be taken at the INTERREG III B BSR Steering Committee meeting at the beginning of June. However, to make it clear, the BEN-project has to be seen as a joint NCM-CBSS political pilot project stimulating and orientating the cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. In addition, the BEN-project comes in line with the recommendation of the CPMR-BSC CBC Working Group in its Final Report 2002-2004 confirmed by the 9th General Assembly in Schwerin in favour of a “*more significant role of Euroregions in the process of cross border cooperation.*”

TRANSPORT ISSUES - MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA

The CPMR-Baltic Sea Commission attributes special importance to transport issues having set its own BSC Transport Working Group. CBSS was many times invited to contribute to discussions on the Motorways of the Baltic Sea initiative, for which we are very much thankful. We have been closely following developments in this area, maintaining constant contacts with the Transport Working Group Chairman, Mr. Per Strømhaug. We acknowledge the outcome of the yesterday's Workshop on Motorways of the Baltic Sea and Nature Conservation, which we will convey gladly and immediately to our respective responsible working bodies.

With great interest, we also follow the BSR INTERREG III B project application "Intermodality and Interoperability around the Baltic Sea - InterBaltic" in which the BSC Transport Working Group plays a leading role. To recall, Mr Per Strømhaug was featured in our CBSS Baltinfo issue 71 (March 2005) introducing some insights about the initiative.

BALTIC SEA INITIATIVE 2010

The CBSS is actively involved in the stakeholder-driven Baltic Sea Initiative 2010, which provides a platform to formulate a strategy and action agenda for strengthening competitiveness and innovative potential in the Baltic Sea region towards 2010. Within the Baltic Sea Initiative 2010, a separate workshop has been devoted to the creation of a Common Baltic Information Space, aimed at improving information flows between parts of the region, and at reducing misconceptions. The CBSS – having experience in setting up and maintaining the Baltic Sea Region Portal www.balticsea.net – was asked to take the lead in developing this strategy together with the CBSS Business Advisory Council, the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association and the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA). At present, the CBSS Secretariat serves as a focal point for activities of this Task Force on Information Space. The outcome of this stakeholder driven process will be presented along with the "State of the Region Report 2005" at the upcoming 7th BDF Summit in October 2005 in Stockholm.

COOPERATION BETWEEN CPMR-BSC AND CBSS

The CBSS counts on the active cooperation with and contribution by regional and sub-regional organisations. They have a special importance for the regional shape and identity of the Baltic Sea region. The attribution of the Special Participant status to the CPMR-BSC is a proof for the importance the CBSS attaches to the role of the CPMR-BSC in the Baltic Sea regional cooperation.

To strengthen this cooperation and to provide a platform for interaction, the CBSS Presidency convenes once a year a Coordination Meeting of the Heads of Baltic Sea regional organisations. The last, up to now already 4th coordination meeting took place on 23 October 2004 in conjunction with the 12th BSSSC Conference in Malmö, Sweden. The CPMR-BSC, of course, was also participating. The 5th Coordination Meeting is planned to be held at the end of September this year in conjunction with the 8th UBC General Conference in Turku.

These coordination meetings are not only a tool for an “internal” exchange between the Baltic Sea regional organisations. The CBSS hereby rather provides the opportunity to synchronize and streamline the representation of Baltic Sea region interest towards European institutions. A common lobbying is an essential task to increase awareness and funding for our Baltic Sea region.

In addition, just two days ago, the Presidents and the Heads of Secretariats of BSSSC, BDF, B7, CPMR-BSC, UBC and the CBSS met in Malmö to discuss the future coordination of the regional cooperation.

We look forward to a further fruitful and result-oriented cooperation in our common interest. Let us use the chance for an intensive exchange and mutual contributions for the benefit of our common Baltic Sea region. In this respect, let me wish the 10th CPMR-BSC General Assembly all success!

Thank you very much for your attention.