

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

11 November 1999, 10.30 – 15.30.

Venue: Lagtinget (Legislative Assembly), Mariehamn, Åland.

## MINUTES

- ◇ President **Hannu Tapiola** opened the meeting and let the participants give a short presentation of themselves.
- ◇ The agenda was adopted.
- ◇ Minutes from Executive Committee meetings in Öland 2 September and Vaasa 22 September 1999 were adopted.
- ◇ Head of Åland Government **Roger Jansson** in a welcoming speech made an exposé on Åland: its cultural identity and history of self-determination, its legal and political situation. The Committee was then guided on a tour covering the parliamentary building and its interesting pieces of art.
- ◇ Ms **Susanne Andersson**, from the Government of Åland and a Baltic Palette action group leader, gave a lecture on *Åland and the Baltic Sea Co-operation*, in particular from the viewpoint of the Baltic Palette project.

### I : Internal issues

- ◇ The executive secretary recalled the composition of the Executive Committee after recent by-elections. Mr **Claus Gerloff** of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, had been presented as full board member already in Vaasa, and Mr **Wolf Born**, from the State Chancellery, was now introduced as substitute.
- ◇ The meeting schedule of the Executive Committee for the activity year 2000 was discussed. According to stated policy of the Baltic Sea Commission, meetings with the Executive Committee are conceived as integral parts of the knowledge and network building activities that are one of the main objectives of the organisation. Thus, in 1999 meetings were combined with seminars and lectures, to which a wider audience than the board members themselves had been welcome. – For the year 2000, the principle of convening in member regions, at their invitation, was set against the practical view of holding meetings in connection with big events, like General Assemblies or major conferences, which board members in any case would be expected to attend. – The decision was to meet on the following days:  
**18 February** in Gdansk, in connection with the CPMR/BSC Accession Conference,  
**12 May**, in Kymenlaakso, Finland,  
**15/16 June**, in Bornholm (BSC General Assembly),  
**10/13 October** in Florence (CPMR General Assembly).
- ◇ Autumn/winter agenda: the executive secretary reminded of relevant meetings in Brussels (2), Kaunas, Marseille, Stockholm and Lyon.
- ◇ Report on the BSC 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly: the executive secretary read a letter from the organiser, Mr **Jörgen Samuelsson**, Öland. The report described, among other things, that after a hesitant start politicians as well as media and the public had come to realise the usefulness to a region such as Öland of big international events like the General Assembly.

- ◇ Mr **Stig Östdahl** reported and drew some conclusions from the CPMR 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Vaasa. The project was a big and eventful one, heightened in weight and significance by the involvement of Finnish President Mr Ahtisaari, EU Commissioner Barnier and others. The themes discussed were highly appreciated, but delegates' zest could well have been channelled into more of workshop activity, at the expense of plenary sessions.

## II : Projects, intercommissions, thematic groups, etc

- ◇ Following the decision from Vaasa, **the President** made concrete proposals (encl.) for establishing a Northern Dimension intercommission. He suggested that the region of Åland, presently chaired by Mr Jansson, lead the intercommission. He also argued that St Petersburg be allowed to join the intercommission as an observer. – This view was strongly seconded by Vice President **Anders Guståv**. The question was thus referred to the CPMR Political Bureau meeting in Kastoria 21 January. – Many regions declared their willingness to participate and some, e.g. Finnish regions and Västerbotten, also named suitable persons for this intercommission.
- ◇ The executive secretary, in the absence of Mr **Ulf Johansson**, chairman of the BSC Spatial Development Group, distributed a paper (encl.) outlining the organisation and terms of reference for this group, thereafter explicitly dealt with by Mr **Juha Talvitie**. A «kick-off» meeting was held in Vaasa, the next one will be called in Stockholm before the end of this year.
- ◇ Following another decision in Vaasa, the region of Valencia will set up an intercom or working group on the framework programme concerning Research/SME. So far, Uleåborg and Aarhus have claimed interest in this group, not yet officially established.
- ◇ At this point the agenda foresaw an account of the Coastal zones management intercommission by its leader Mr **Christer Stighäll**, Norrtälje, Sweden, who, however, was not present. The executive secretary explained that Mr Stighäll was taking part in the coinciding Nordic Royal and Sacerdotal visit to the Vatican and the Pope, celebrating the Proclamation as Patron Saint of Europe of *Sancta Birgitta* (b.1303 in Norrtälje, d.1373 in Rome). The Executive Committee admitted that Mr Stighäll under the circumstances must be excused. – In any case, Mr **Wolf Born** declared that Mecklenburg-Vorpommern was interested in joining this group.
- ◇ Scientific Council and Forward Studies Unit. The BSC representative at the Council, Mr **Bjarne Lindström**, reported on past and future activities, including involvement in the AER Summer School (see below).
- ◇ AER Summer School. The proposition on collaboration with the AER Summer School, put forward in Vaasa by Mr **Mats O. Karlsson**, was discussed and approved. Mr Karlsson and EU Co-ordinator **Stéphanie M. Kristensson**, Uppsala, who is a member of the Organising committee of the school, supplied additional information. It was pointed out that the involvement is supposed to be of a scholarly kind, with the intention of bringing into the curriculum matters of particular interest to the regions, applying aspects in line with basic CPMR and BSC philosophy. – The BSC will not assume any overall economic or administrative responsibility. The executive secretary had been asked to join the Organising committee, which will meet next at the AER General Assembly 1-3 December in Lyon.
- ◇ HELCOM - The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission. – The executive secretary reported that an application for observer status for BSC had been sent in. In consequence, BSC will in the near future receive official invitation to the next HELCOM General Assembly 20-22 March 2000 in Helsinki.

- ◇ Short information was given about recent activities of various groups: *Fishery. Culture. -Ecomar*: organising the Ports conference in Lorient, France, 9-11 March 2000. *America latina*, last convened in Vaasa. Written report by Mr **Rickard Lalander** of the Latin American Institute, Stockholm University.
- ◇ *Medbalt*: the executive secretary informed about the co-operation between the BSC and the Intermediterranean Commission, reminding of decisions taken in Vaasa: the General Assembly passed one Resolution, proposed by the Baltic Sea Commission, on the Northern Dimension, and another, proposed by the Intermediterranean Commission, on the Mediterranean («Southern») Dimension. The Final Declaration of Vaasa combined the two perspectives, calling upon the commissions concerned to collaborate closely on the implementation of their visions.

So far four areas of co-operation have been envisaged:

- (1) Tourism. A suggested project («Medbalt Express») is presently being considered by the Baltic Sea Tourism Commission (see below).
- (2) Youth exchange. 10 Mediterranean students invited to the Baltic Sea Youth Forum in Sweden, 6-9 April 2000. Reciprocity expected.
- (3) The environment. Exchange of experience/HELCOM.
- (4) EU Enlargement. Mediterraneans invited to Accession conference, Gdansk 17-18 February 2000 (see below), and Summer School, Vilnius 6-12 August 2000.

In addition, the Intermediterranean working group on «Cohesion and Spatial Development» has recently challenged the new BSC Spatial Development group to identify joint projects for practical co-operation.

- ◇ BTC – the Baltic Sea Tourism Commission is one of BSC's collaboration partners. The executive secretary takes part in its reference group on spatial planning/tourism industry, which met in Helsinki 29 September 1999. The group meets only once or twice a year.
- ◇ Gdansk conference «*The Enlargement Perspective for the Regions of the Accession Countries in the Baltic Sea Area*». The conference, organised by CPMR/BSC and the city of Gdansk, is now set to take place 17-18 February 2000. The Executive Committee made some remarks and suggestions concerning the timing and the agenda etc, and let details of the organisation of the conference into the hands of CPMR and Gdansk.

### III: General information about CPMR and Member Regions actions

Director **Philippe Cichowlaz**, CPMR, informed about steps taken, results achieved and actions to be taken before the Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions (*inter alia* a presentation by Mr **Stig Öst Dahl**), the National Parliaments and Governments (including the Swedish one). Mr Cichowlaz also gave a briefing on the agenda for the next meeting of the CPMR Political Bureau, in Kastoria, Macedonia, Greece, 21 January 2000.

### IV : AOB

Mr Gustâv gave some interesting information from his viewpoint as member of the Committee of the Regions. New President, new Secretary General. Closer co-operation between Committee and Parliament. Much more work to do after Amsterdam! EU constitution a hot topic – in many countries as important as the enlargement, or more important.

### V : Conclusions by President Tapiola

President Tapiola thanked the participants, in particular the hosts of Åland for excellent reception and interesting presentations. Proroguing the Executive Committee until next year in Gdansk, the President closed the meeting.

Keeping the minutes:



## Participants

<i>Tapiola Hannu, President</i>
<i>Gustâv Anders</i>
<i>Nielsen Bente</i>
<i>Born Wolf</i>
<i>Karlsson Mats O.</i>
<i>Klintbom Hans</i>

<i>Jansson Roger</i>
<i>Andersson Susanne</i>
<i>Lindström Bjarne</i>
<i>Elverum Annemarie</i>
<i>Kristensson Stéphanie M.</i>
<i>Mikkola Jakko</i>
<i>Talvitie Juha</i>
<i>Cichowlaz Philippe</i>
<i>Kinberg Björn, Secretary</i>

<i>Kymenlaakso</i>
<i>Stockholm</i>
<i>Aarhus</i>
<i>Schwerin</i>
<i>Uppsala</i>
<i>Gotland</i>

<i>Åland</i>
<i>Åland</i>
<i>Åland</i>
<i>Aarhus</i>
<i>Uppsala</i>

<i>Kymenlaakso</i>
<i>Kymenlaakso</i>
<i>CPMR, Rennes</i>
<i>BSC</i>