



CPMR

BALTIC SEA COMMISSION

BOARD MEETING AND SEMINAR OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Brussels, 18th February 1999, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Venue: Office of the Swedish and Finnish Associations of Local and Regional Authorities,
Rue de la Science 4, Brussels. Tel +32 2 549 0860; fax +32 2 502 7227.

MINUTES

In attendance during the day:

President:

Hannu Tapiola, Regional Council of Kymenlaakso, Finland

Members:

Mr Mats O. Karlsson, Uppsala County Council, Sweden

Mr Jørgen Kvist, Bornholms County, Denmark

Mr Stig Östdahl, Vice President of CPMR, Regional Council of Ostrobothnia, Finland

Deputy member:

Ms Bente Nielsen, Århus County, Denmark

Invited speakers:

Ms Katarina Borgh-Rahm, West Zealand EU Office, Denmark

Mr Robert Shotton, DG 16, Brussels

Mr Kurt Gaissert, Committee of the Regions, Brussels

Ms Pia Ingemansson, The Baltic Sea Islands' EU Office, Brussels

Ms Anne Smith Petersen, Association of Danish County Councils, Brussels

Ms Erika Jangen, Swedish Association of Local Authorities, Brussels

Mr Stefan Hult, Federation of Swedish County Councils, Brussels

Mr Jorma Palula, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities

Others:

Ms Annemarie Elverum, Århus County, Denmark

Ms Ilze Zandere, Union of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia, Brussels

Ms Claudine Stanislas, CPMR secretariat, Rennes, France

Mr Jan Lundgren, Gotland Municipality, Sweden

Mr Henrik Eybye Nielsen, Bornholms County, Denmark

Mr Tomas Ahlberg, Swedish Association of Local Authorities, Brussels

Mr Henrik Holmer, Swedish Association of Local Authorities, Stockholm

Mr Tommy Karlsson, Stockholm County Council, Sweden

Mr Jaakko Mikkola, Regional Council of Kymenlaakso, Finland

Mr Jorma Palola, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Brussels

Mr Juha Talvitie, Regional Council of Kymenlaakso, Finland

Mr Björn Kinberg, BSC Executive Secretary, Stockholm County Council, Sweden

I : Opening

Opening the meeting the **President** addressed a few words of welcome to the Members of the Executive Committee and other persons present. He expressed his satisfaction with the fact that this meeting was being held at the common office of the Finnish and Swedish local and regional representations, which would give an interesting insight into how work was accomplished in Brussels.

- The minutes of the previous meeting, in Oulu, were approved.
- The Agenda of the day was approved.
- The **Executive Secretary** reported how the meeting had been summoned, and the procedure was approved.

II : Internal issues

The organisation and work of the Secretariat as well as the interaction between Presidents/Vice Presidents was discussed. The President informed of a presidium meeting with Vice President **Anders Gustâv** & al. in Stockholm on the 20th January. Board members' duties and the importance of their active work in order to achieve results were stressed. The Baltic Sea Commission Internet Homepage is soon to be opened. CPMR Director of Services Ms **Claudine Stanislas** informed that Ms **Silja Kasmann** from Estonia was now employed at the Rennes Head office, in charge of Baltic Sea Commission affairs.

The meeting schedule of the Executive Committee for 1999 was deliberated. Owing to concurring events the time for the next meeting, planned in **Riga** on the 8th April, was changed to the **7th April**, the session to take place in the morning. Further meetings will be held in **Stockholm 17th June** and **Åland, Finland, 11th November** (tbc).

Membership and information issues, regional contact persons etc. were discussed. Former Executive Secretary **Tommy Karlsson** gave an illustrative background to past and present activities. The Executive Secretary informed of recent contacts with Polish, German and Swedish counterparts, reporting that a formal decision was now made in the county of **Västerbotten**, Sweden, to join the CPMR and the Baltic Sea Commission. The Polish situation was referred to, allowing the CPMR and the Baltic Sea Commission to renewed canvassing efforts. Full information on the Polish regional reforms can be found under the internet address www.kprmin.waw.pl/reforma.

The findings and decisions of the Oulu General Assembly were briefly discussed. The newly published booklet "**Visions and Objectives**" and its initiator Tommy Karlsson were highly praised. According to CPMR Director of Services **Claudine Stanislas** the Baltic Sea Commission was the first one to have produced such a document. Speaking of bringing visions into action, mention was made of prospective and ongoing telemedicine projects, of the Baltic Palette and of ESDP. **Mats O.Karlsson** and **Stig Östdahl** made contributions. A request will be made to **Mr Olav Jern**, Ostrobothnia, who leads the Commission's ESDP group, to prepare

a position paper to be presented at the board meeting in Riga on 7th April. For this meeting, an invitation will be sent to HELCOM.

A short information about the preparations for the **IV General Assembly in Öland, Sweden, 2-3 September 1999** was given. The Executive Secretary spoke of a seminar that the PLANET managers were launching in connection with the General Assembly. PLANET – which encompasses regional planners' Baltic collaboration - is the first concrete project undertaken by the Commission. President Tapiola and Vice President Gustâv visited its inaugural meeting in Stockholm on the 20th January.

III : Activities within the CPMR

a)

The Executive Secretary informed about the present state of collaboration with and within the CPMR intercommissions and thematic groups:

Medbalt: a fresh start foreseen after some reorganisation in the Mediterranean area later in the spring. The Youth Forum project should start in collaboration with the Stockholm region, which will invite some youths and politicians to the ongoing Forum in September 1999.

Coastal zones: Under Swedish direction. Political and managerial responsibility assumed by the City of Norrtälje, Stockholm region.

Fishing: So far not a prioritised item. Efforts made to interest prospective BSC members.

America latina: Under observation. Executive Secretary had declined invitation to the group's last meeting, since it coincided with the present CPMR and BSC meetings.

Culture: Initiated by the Swedish Political Bureau Member, Ms **Evalisa Birath-Lindvall**, responsibility for Rogaland, Norway. Enhanced Baltic participation is welcome.

Scientific council: BSC represented by Professor **Urpo Kivikari**, Turku, Finland, Professor **Björn Hårsman**, Stockholm, Sweden, and Mr **Bjarne Lindström**, Mariehamn, Finland. At the next meeting, in Porto 19-20th March, Mr Hårsman and the Executive Secretary will raise the question of making the findings of the council of more palpable use to the CPMR members.

Further, representatives of the North Sea Commission will be invited to the Executive Committee meeting in Riga 7th April.

The Executive Committee members were admonished to inform and to inspire prospective participants in their home regions to join relevant activities and to submit their requests to the secretariat.

b)

Mr Östdahl informed about the preparations for the XXVII CPMR General Assembly in Vaasa, 22-24th September 1999. (Three days: 1st Commissions, 2nd and 3rd General Assembly). The current aim was to prepare three political documents, dealing with EU Enlargement, the Northern Dimension, and the concept of Northern Peripherality.

IV : General information about CPMR and Member Regions actions

Ms Claudine Stanislas informed under this heading. Of immediate consequence to the commission was her report that the CPMR head office had now received a formal application for membership by Västerbotten County, Sweden.

Ms Stanislas' Activity Report is annexed to these Minutes. The CPMR Newsletter is to be found under the internet address www.crpm.org.

IV: Miscellaneous

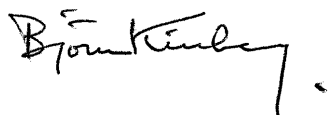
Upcoming events and invitations were reported, i.a. from the Council of Europe (Kaliningrad), and CLRAE (Kaunas, Lithuania). The President would look at Kaliningrad and Vice President Gustâv is announced speaker at Kaunas, on the 21st April.

Mr Östdahl expressed a wish for meeting documents to be sent to Members earlier than hitherto. Ms Stanislas explained the difficulties in doing this, but there was consent that relevant information should always be dispatched or transmitted without unnecessary delay.

V : Conclusions

The President closed the meeting, welcoming the party to lunch and to the afternoon seminar "EU and the Baltic Sea Region".

Keeping the minutes:



Seminar

EU AND THE BALTIC SEA REGION

President Tapiola opened the seminar with a few welcoming words to the guest speakers and other participants.

Mr **Robert Shotton**, Head of Unit, DG16, European Commission, spoke on EU and the Baltic Sea Region: Structural policy, instruments and future; Enlargement; Co-operation within the Baltic Sea Region.

Some of the main points of the lecture were that, in terms of **machinery**, the means to support a growing ambition for Baltic Sea Co-operation with EU funds exist and can be further consolidated by “imaginative application of rules”. In terms of European **politics**, though, the picture is less clear. It must become widely appreciated that a focus on the Baltic Sea Region is not a call for more money at the expense of the Mediterranean basin, but for more impact from the considerable resources already allocated there.

It is a big mistake to focus only on winners in the transition process and on central governments. If severe political and social strains are to be avoided in candidate countries in the run up to Accession, the regional and local level needs attention too, as well as the lagging sectors and groups in society.

Further DG 16 information can be found on the internet: www.eu.int/comm/dg16.

Ms **Katarina Borgh-Rahm**, Phare/Tacis CBC Project Facility, West Zealand EU Office, gave an introduction to the PHARE and TACIS programmes, especially the CBC Project Facility and the development in the Baltic Sea Region. Her overhead slides are annexed to this document.

Mr **Kurt Gaissert**, Secretariat of the Committee of the Regions, described the organisation and activities of the Committee, with special reference to the Baltic Sea Area; work of the “Kaliff group”, seminar series, a summing-up conference, reports this year. Referring to the question of admitting pre-accession observers to the Committee, a suggestion conveyed by CPMR President **Vannino Chiti**, Mr Gaissert deemed an outcome in that direction as all but impossible. Further information: internet www.cor.eu.int.

Short presentations by above-mentioned **representatives** were made of the activities of the Brussels offices of the associations of Danish, Finnish and Swedish regional authorities and B7-The Baltic Sea Islands' EU Office. A Finnish information brochure was circulated and is to be found on the internet www.kuntaliitto.fi.