

Common Commission meeting Schleswig-Holstein/Eastern Norway County Network

March 8, 2018 in Fredrikstad, Norway

Final Draft Minutes *(as of 08.06 2018)*

Opening and welcome

Roger Ryberg welcomed everyone to the Common Commission meeting and congratulated the female participants with the 8 March. He stated that 20 years ago – on 18 May 1998 – all the eight counties in Eastern Norway County Network signed the cooperation agreement with the Government of Schleswig-Holstein in Kiel. He also underlined that through the cooperation a large number of persons have met over the years, and we have carried out numerous big and small projects and actions. The partnership with Schleswig-Holstein constitutes a strong part of the European policy work in Eastern Norway County Network.

Mr. Ryberg also touched upon the cooperation in the Baltic Sea and in the North Sea region and mentioned especially the ENCN Chairmanship of BSSSC.

Minister for European Affairs of Schleswig-Holstein, Sabine Sütterlin-Waack thanked for the invitation and for the excellent dinner with very good food yesterday evening. She also underlined that she was new to the cooperation, but looked forward to the meeting and to future cooperation.

Chair of Östfold County Council, Ole Haabeth, wished all participants welcome to Fredrikstad and Östfold. He underlined the geographical location of Östfold at the Boarder to Sweden – in the important corridor towards Gothenburg, Copenhagen and Schleswig-Holstein. Mr. Haabeth informed about the changes of economic development from industry to knowledge and green economy. He also informed about the ongoing dialog with Akershus and Buskerud to form the new Viken Region from 1 January 2020. He underlined that the regional reform was a state driven reform. Mr. Haabeths presentation will be made available online after the meeting.

Short presentation of participants

A short round to introduce the participants of the meeting was made.

Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without any comments.

Adoption of minutes from 2016 in Kiel

The minutes were adopted without any additional comments.

Exchange of information - report about current political topics

Roger Ryberg gave a status report about the ongoing regional reform in Norway – adopted by the Norwegian Parliament in June 2017. The existing 19 counties will be merged into 11 (10 counties + Oslo) by 1 January 2020. Discussion about new competences are just now high on the agenda, and consultation process is ongoing until 9 May. Mr. Ryberg informed that the eight counties in ENCN will become four and he named the new counties.

- Oppland and Hedmark will become Inland Norway County
- Akershus, Buskerud and Østfold will become Viken County
- Telemark and Vestfold will merge into Vestfold and Telemark County
- Oslo will continue as a region of its own.

In addition Mr. Ryberg informed about the change of government in Norway – where the Liberal party now has joined the government from end of January 2018. He also touched upon European cooperation and mentioned especially Brexit.

Ms. Sütterlin-Waack informed about the new land government in Schleswig-Holstein since June 2017 as well as about the new federal government with a coalition consisting of the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats. It is foreseen that Angela Merkel will be re-elected on 14th of March.

Ms. Sütterlin-Waack highlighted the issue of infrastructure and stated that improvement of major transport routes will continue - also for the benefit of the neighbours. In this context, she also mentioned power grids as important infrastructure connecting national electricity grids. The works on the “NordLink” subsea power cable project between Wilster in Schleswig-Holstein and Tønsund in southern Norway were started last August. This interconnection cable will balance electricity supply needs and surpluses of electricity generation from renewable energy sources in both Norway and Germany.

Minister Sütterlin-Waack also mentioned the STRING cooperation and welcomed Akershus and Østfold as new members. She also underlined the good work done by BSSSC under the ENCN Chairmanship and mentioned the upcoming BSSSC Annual Conference in Gdansk in September.

Finally Ms. Sütterlin-Waack pointed to the climate change and the effects in Northern Germany - including a lot more heavy rain fall across the country resulting in heavy flooding which neither the soil nor the rivers were able to absorb. She underlined that the current forecast on further climate change tell us that we will have to develop and implement serious and costly measures for adaptation already in the near future.

Anette Solli, Akershus thanked for the interesting update and for the support to Akershus and Østfold becoming full members of the STRING cooperation. She mentioned that ENCN will continue its observer role with new persons from the Regional Cooperation Board.

Ms. Solli also gave some added information about the regional reform work and explained the role of the Joint Committee (“Fellesnemd”) consisting of 36 politicians from the three counties forming the new Viken County.

Mr. Haabeth explained why the new region will be called “Viken”. This is an old name used for the Oslofjord area - going back to the Viking-age.

Topic 1 “Use of EU-programmes as strategic elements in European cooperation

Under this topic, two concrete examples of European cooperation projects using EU-funds were presented.

➤ The Bioeconomy Region (Interreg A project)

Bio-economy is an important topic for regions in Eastern Norway and the topic was included as a joint area in the Cooperation Perspectives from the last meeting in 2016 in Kiel. The project manager on the Norwegian side, Monica Svanberg from Akershus, presented the project.

Ms. Svanberg explained what comes from the three and pointed to the fact that Bio-economy is the largest growth area of today. Inland Scandinavia is especially relevant in light of the Bio-economy and this is basis for the project. Ms. Svanberg's presentation can be found enclosed to the minutes.

Minister Sütterlin-Waack stated that the bio-economy sector in Schleswig-Holstein mainly comes from marine recourses and agriculture – not from the forest. Cooperation within this sector will have to be on ways of work, knowledge and research and cluster development – taking into account different raw materials.

Håkon Noren, member of the County Council in Oppland explained Oppland County's high political ambitions to be at the forefront in fighting climate change. The goal is to be climate neutral in 2025. Oppland now participates in three European cooperation projects related to the green shift. One of them is the Bioeconomy Region – on the agenda today.

Oppland has high ambitions regarding climate neutrality, climate adaptation, and the Green Shift. The natural resources, in combination with expertise, makes the county a strong partner for European cooperation. In order to stay competitive and to be at the forefront, cooperation with the best is needed. Oppland therefore uses European cooperation projects strategically in order to reach their goals. Mr. Noren ended his intervention by presenting Oppland County's slogan “Opportunities in a Green Future”.

Mr. Ryberg thanked for the very interesting interventions and congratulated Oppland with their approach for a greener future. He pointed to the challenges related to climate change and underlined that we all have to take this into account. He especially focused on the new sea transport corridors emerging in the North due to melting of the

ice. The new routes save time and money in relation to transport of goods between Asia and Europe - but the development also have risks related to environmental effects in a woundable area.

Anette Solli pointed to the fact that Akershus and Östfold now are full members of the STRING cooperation. Consequences of climate change is highly relevant in the transport sector - and this could therefore become an important topic for cooperation. Here one could foresee actions together with regard to lobbying EU-institutions in Brussels.

She proposed to put climate change on our agenda and define targets for the work. A lot has to be developed and implemented at regional and local level fighting the climate change. By working together, our regions could address the issue from a regional perspective and lobby our national governments and EU.

➤ **Northern Connections (Interreg B North Sea Programme)**

Mali Hole Skogen from OREEC presented the project - that among others focuses on creating new jobs in the renewable sectors. Clusters are involved from the partner regions and they represent project ideas, knowledge and experiences that are pooled together to create new ideas. One big city in each region is also involved. Why cooperate? Working together makes it easier to compete globally and allow for the businesses to grow faster. Interreg projects help to build trust between countries, regions, public-private partners and cross sectors. Each partner region establish living labs. A green visit programme is included. Political and strategic capacity building is part of the project. OREEC is Norwegian partner in the project together with City of Oslo. Ms. Hole Skogen's presentation can be found enclosed the minutes.

Thomas Pfannkuch, Schleswig-Holstein added that the project connects public entities to help speeding up their strategy work. Exchange of good practises on how to better support businesses and to opt for more international cooperation. The outcome should be new and better strategies in the cities and regions. The project consults with national ministries and EU-institutions to improve the strategic work.

Mr. Ryberg thanked for interesting presentation and input to our work. He then invited all for a coffee break.

Topic 2 “The added value of cooperation through culture”

Culture has been and is an important part of our cooperation throughout the more than 20 years. Svein-Helge Treimo, Östfold on behalf of the ENCN WG Culture presented the work done in 2017 and the perspectives for the coming years. The new project idea that was suppose to be presented in the meeting had to be postponed. The WG Culture in ENCN will prepare written information and open a dialog directly with the cultural department in the Ministry in Kiel. Mr. Ryberg thanked for the information.

Anette Solli underlined the importance of cultural cooperation in a European perspective, and she proposed to renew our cooperation through reinforce cultural cooperation. More concrete activities was called for – including the possibilities to present different areas of culture to audiences in each other's regions. Ms. Solli proposed to develop a cultural road map for our cooperation – especially taking young talents into account. The Norwegian concept UKM ("Ungdommens kulturmønstring" – youth cultural festival) was mentioned. She called for a political dialog on culture in the context of European cooperation, and proposed to start in ENCN for example at the next Regional Cooperation Board meeting in June 2018. Next CC meeting in Schleswig-Holstein could have renewed cultural cooperation as one of the focus areas.

Topic 3 "Youth cooperation and pupils exchange & encounters"

Mr. Ryberg opened this topic by underling that involvement of young people in our work is a priority. This means youth projects, exchanges, school cooperation and involvement of youth in the policy work in our regions and in European cooperation platforms – such as BSSSC. He then passed the floor to Margit Müller, Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs in Schleswig-Holstein.

Ms. Müller informed about the Regional Vocational Education and Training Centres and Vocational Education and Training Schools in Schleswig-Holstein's cooperation with European partners in 2017. They cooperated with partners from 28 different countries – among others Norway. Programmes used to implement the projects were Erasmus+, Interreg and e-twinning. Actions were; Exchange with youth organisations or youth meeting places, collaboration with National Agencies, school partnerships, student exchange, cooperation with foreign institutes or universities, teachers training and through the European day. 30 teachers and 288 students took part in student exchange with Poland, Denmark and Norway. Among others the cooperation between RBZ Wirtschaft in Kiel and Gjøvik Upper Secondary School in Oppland, Norway.

The teachers and students from Kiel and Gjøvik presented the background and results from their cooperation to the participants. This was done via interventions and video-clips. The students Kimberly Schwartz and Niklas Kielmann from Kiel and Ai-Na Ngoc Nguyen and Amund Lillejordet from Gjøvik gave an interesting glimpse into the challenges and experiences of youth meeting youth from another country and visiting, staying over and learning from each other. Their statements underlined the importance of student exchange for understanding and awareness of neighbouring countries and the feeling of togetherness between young people cross borders. Also for the sake of developing themselves as persons and actors in a European/global society. Both the students and the teachers plead for a continuation of the cooperation and exchange. Support is needed from the regional authorities to make it happen. New visits are under preparation (Gjøvik in April and Kiel in October 2018) and the good work continues.

Both Roger Ryberg and Sabine Sütterlin-Waack thanked the youth and the teachers for the information and insight into their school cooperation. They recommended a continuation of the good work. Haakon Noren from Oppland replied that he would work politically to find means within the budget of Oppland to support a continuation of the exchange project. He underlined that it is a good investment for the future.

The other counties were encouraged to find interested schools in their region to start up cooperation with schools in Schleswig-Holstein. The Kiel-Gjøvik partnership offered to share experiences and useful information.

Mr. Ryberg then gave the floor to Haakon Slang-Sundsetvik from the Regional YouthCouncil in Østfold. He reported from the youth project under Erasmus+ focusing on climate change. The gathering took place in Schleswig-Holstein in October 2017. The project had two parts – one in in Mözen and the second sailing on the ship “Passat” in the Baltic Sea. Role-play was used to simulate different organisations and actors in the global climate debate. Questions discussed were: What are the problems? How can we solve them? What is our attitude with regard to take the right decisions and steps in our everyday life?

Mr. Salang-Sundsetvik pointed to the fact that food is a key area with regard to climate. Production and consumption of food were high the agenda in this project meeting. The experiences from participation in the project was good and a lot of information and knowledge were brought back home. The youth in ENCN will like to continue to take part in this kind of youth cooperation projects.

Tuva Tøien Bakken, member of the regional youth council in Buskerud (BUFT) informed about youth involvement in regional and European cooperation. She explained the organisation of youth involvement in Buskerud County, the cooperation within ENCN youth network (ØstsamUng) and the participation in European youth networks like BSSSC. The UN Sustainable Development Goals have been on the agenda in several youth meetings both regional in Buskerud, in Eastern Norway and in BSSSC. Ms. Tøien Bakken reflected on her experiences from her participation as youth representative and underlined the friendships that comes with it as well as learning to know the people, new knowledge about the topics and about democracy in the different counties.

Roger Ryberg thanked Haakon and Tuva for their presentations - enthusiastically sharing their reflections on results and ideas from youth involvement at many levels in European cooperation. He mentioned that the regional cooperation Board of Eastern Norway County Network meets with the ENCN youth network once a year. The last meeting was held on 2 March – this time as a workshop discussing the youth involvement in the regional reform and how to organize youth participation in the new regions. Mr. Ryberg ended by stating that support to youth participation and involvement will continue.

Approval of the Cooperation Perspectives and summing up and any other business

If was agreed that the Cooperation Perspective had to be revised with the input from the meeting. Climate change, green transport and culture were mentioned. The coordinators will prepare a new draft after agreeing on the minutes. The renewed Cooperation Perspectives will be sent out for a final decision via written procedure.

Roger Ryberg thanked for a good and inspirational meeting and thanked everyone for his or her active contributions.

Minister Sütterlin-Waack thanked for a good and interesting meeting and invited to the next Common Commission in Kiel or Lübeck in 2019.

Roger Ryberg invited Minister Sütterlin-Waack on behalf of the BSSSC Board to the BSSSC Annual Conference 2018 in Gdansk, Poland. He underlined that the BSSSC will be happy to have her as a speaker in session 2 of the programme. Mr. Ryberg promised a written invitation to be sent in a few weeks and expressed his hope that she would be able to attend this important event.

Ms. Sütterlin-Waack thanked for the invitation.

End of meeting – lunch