

# **BSSSC**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **2006 - 2007**



BALTIC SEA STATES SUBREGIONAL CO-OPERATION



## Annual Report 2007

Introductory by the Chairman	3
1. BSSSC and the Future	5
2. Sustainable Energy. Annual Conference 2007	6
3. Transport and Infrastructure	10
4. Maritime Policy	12
5. Sustainable Development	13
6. Work Group on Youth Policy	14
7. Co-operation with BSR Organisations	16
8. Co-operation with the Committee of the Regions	17
9. BSSSC Brussels Antenna	17
10. Board Meetings and Other Events	18



## Introductory by the Chairman



Baltic Sea Region (BSR) is a region of prosperity and challenges - bridging East and West, bringing people together, securing peace and prosperity. We face challenges. We have possibilities.

The last year of holding the chairmanship has been both busy and interesting. When I took over the chairmanship last autumn I wanted to put focus on the future of BSSSC with the key objectives to:

- Continue to promote the interests of BSR sub-regions towards national authorities, EU institutions and others – in close co-operation with other BSR organisations and interest groups.
- Further develop BSSSC to an important network for subregional interests in BSR.
- Strengthen co-operation with Russian subregions in BSR
- Continue to develop participation of young people in BSSSC work.

A visit to all national platforms of BSSSC has been one important priority. With such a “tour de BSR” I wanted to facilitate a

dialogue on priorities and ways of working in the organisation, to promote BSSSC and to encourage more subregions to get involved in our work. This exercise has been very positive and useful for me and the secretariat.

The decisions we take today influence how the future will look like many years ahead. Economic growth pushes the overall level of activity. Baltic Sea Region is a prosperous region with high growth rates and potential for strong economic development. But BSR also faces big challenges when it comes to sustainability and environmental conditions for future development, which includes the sea basin itself, the nature, the natural resources and the quality of life of its inhabitants.

In the BSSSC Work Plan 2006 – 2008 we decided to focus on:

- Transport and Infrastructure
- Maritime Policy
- Sustainable Development with focus on
  - Energy Production and Energy Efficiency
  - Quality of Life and Public Health
- Civil Security – with main focus on Trafficking in Human Beings

The BSSSC Annual Conference 2007 in Turku, Finland was dedicated to Sustainable Energy and the Threats of Climate Change, hot topics that without doubts will influence the future development of the Baltic Sea Region.

The Baltic Sea Region is rich on organisations. BSSSC has pointed to the need of an intensified co-operation with

other Baltic Sea organisations, especially those representing local and regional authorities. In its meeting in Turku in September the BSSSC Board decided to open up the BSSSC network for active and direct participation from UBC, B7 and BSC-CPMR. These organisations were invited to appoint members to the BSSSC Board and as practical steps BSSSC has proposed to set up political co-ordination groups and/or common working groups (WGs). Also the CBSS Secretariat has been invited to attend our Board meetings.

In the co-ordination meeting between the BSR organisations in Bornholm in April their representatives agreed to identify 1 to 3 areas of common interest. Energy and Climate, Transport and Maritime Policy have been mentioned by several organisations as possible areas. BSSSC will continue to strive for finding a way to turn these areas of interests into concrete co-operation.

On the European arena I would like to mention that BSSSC signed a Declaration of Common Interest with Committee of the Regions (CoR) in February 2007. Thus for the first time BSSSC has established an official relationship with an EU institution. At the same time BSSSC's Brussels Antenna was inaugurated in the premises of Oslo Region European Office in Brussels.

Northern Dimension (ND) and co-operation with Russia are both important areas for BSSSC. In this relation I would like to mention BSSSC participation in Baltic Sea Days in St. Petersburg in March 2007. I also had the opportunity to meet with the representatives of the Northwest Russian regions and encouraged them to make use of our network to a larger extent than today.

BSSSC was invited to present the idea of regional dimension within the ND Policy Framework for the ND Steering group in Brussels in June this year and BSSSC will continue this work.

The BSSSC Youth Network and WG on Youth Policy have had an active year and I was very pleased that we have managed to engage so many young people in the Annual Conference in Turku. Two new youth board members, who are given full board member status, were elected in Turku for a 2-year period.

Let me end by thanking you all for contributing to the work of BSSSC over the past year, and I look forward to continuing our efforts to develop the Baltic Sea Region and BSSSC in the year to come.



Arne Ören  
Chairman of BSSSC



## 1. BSSSC and the future

In the first Board meeting under the Norwegian chairmanship in November 2006 the BSSSC Chairman proposed to visit all national platforms of BSSSC – to talk about the present, discuss the future of BSSSC and elaborate on the key priorities of the BSSSC Work Plan for 2006-2008.

This consultation process started in Denmark on 16 January and was finalised in Estonia on 17 August 2007. The visits have been a very positive and useful exercise for the Chairman and the Secretariat. Meeting old and new BSSSC friends have given valuable inputs to the work of the organisation. The tour conducted a good opportunity to inform about BSSSC's potential as a useful arena for the regional co-operation in the Baltic Sea area, and have reminded the regions and actors in the BSR of BSSSC as an active network on behalf of the regional authorities.

### Some outcomes of the tour:

- New Board members from Russia, Latvia and Finland were appointed
- The third Polish region (Warminsko-Mazurskie) has shown its interest in BSSSC again and
- The other large organisation, representing local authorities in Estonia has become member of the Board on political level.

### Main conclusions of the Chairman's talks with national platforms are as follows:

- The key priority areas determined in the Work Plan 2006 – 2008 seem to be highly relevant to most of the subregions around the Baltic Sea.
- BSSSC strength lies in the organisation being an open network. None of the national platforms wish to transform BSSSC into a membership organisation
- National platforms in the countries around the BSR are differently organised, but they form a good basis for the work of BSSSC. Based on the Board and National Platforms the BSSSC - as an open network organisation – have legitimacy, representativeness and commitment of the regions.
- The national platforms expressed the

wish that in addition to being a political organisation BSSSC should also be an organisation actively striving to initiate and support concrete projects. BSSSC should become an arena for finding partners, participating in regional projects, exchanging information and best practises.

- The work through Ad hoc Working Groups seems to be feasible for all national platforms, but it is still a challenge to attract regions and to find persons to be engaged in these Ad hoc WGs. The structures of WGs should be flexible and relevant to their topics.
- Co-operation and co-ordination with other relevant BSR organisations considered important and BSSSC was highly recommended to continue its efforts to seek co-operation with other Pan Baltic organisations also in the future.
- Youth involvement is very important and can be further developed to engage young people in BSR issues (i.e. BSR identity, democracy, etc.) and to support broader youth exchange in the BSR countries.
- BSSSC shall be a political body promoting the interests of subregions in the BSR towards national authorities and EU institutions, and serve as an arena to promote and support project activities and exchange of best practices among the BSR subregions.
- BSSSC shall invite other BSR organisations on local and regional level to join BSSSC (BSC/CPMR, B7, and UBC). Each of the organisations will be asked to appoint one representative to the BSSSC Board.
- To support more concrete activities and projects the BSSSC shall co-operate closely with the territorial co-operation programmes in the Baltic Sea area. As far as possible BSSSC should strive to have partner search activities and/or seminars for project generation and dissemination at the annual conferences.
- BSSSC shall initiate and take part in political co-ordination groups on policy areas of importance to the subregions of BSR.
- BSSSC shall have a partner status in NDPHS (Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being) and continue to participate in the meetings of Baltic 21 SOG (Senior Officials Group).

Based on the talks with all national platforms the Chairman forwarded a paper on the future of BSSSC to the Board meeting in Turku 13 September. The Board supported the Chairman's proposal and steps are now taken to form the new structure. The revised BSSSC Terms of Reference will be available.

#### **Main elements in the BSSSC structure for the future**

- BSSSC shall be a network organisation open for all regional authorities in the Baltic Sea area - based on national platforms in each of the 10 countries – with no membership fee

## **2. Sustainable Energy. BSSSC Annual Conference 2007**

*A successful BSSSC Annual Conference in Turku.*

The BSSSC Board has selected Sustainable Energy as one of the key priority areas in the BSSSC Work Plan for 2006-2008. Energy in relation to the threats of climate change has been one of the most important themes





on the political agenda on international, national and regional levels last year. Global warming is a threat to the whole Planet and the consequence and the costs of inactivity in this regard will be disastrous. These questions were the main topics of the 15 BSSSC Annual Conference 2007 in Turku, Finland. At the plenary sessions around 300 participants listened to the prominent speakers and took part in the four sessions on different Energy and Climate-related topics.

The Annual Conference started with an opening session that welcomed the participants and introduced the challenges of Energy production and use in relation to climate change. At Session two the EU Commission's Action Plan for sustainable energy for the future and trends in production and use of energy and impacts on climate from a regional perspective were presented. Climate change and energy issues from a bottom-up perspective were also on the agenda. At Session three, four parallel workshops focused on different aspects of sustainable energy and presented

best practice examples. Session four was conducted as a panel debate. Session five was devoted to the BSSSC's work on Maritime Policy, Transport and Infrastructure.

The Conference Resolution underlines that BSSSC would like to emphasise the importance of regions' as partners in implementing national and EU energy policies. The renewable energy sources in subregions of the Baltic Sea region provide enormous potential in terms of production of bioenergy and bioelectricity from water, wind and wave power, solar energy and other renewable sources.

Below you will find abstracts from some of the speakers' presentations at the BSSSC Annual Conference. For all presentations, visit [www.bsssc.com](http://www.bsssc.com).

In the opening speech the BSSSC Chairman Mr Arne Ören draw attention to the fact that global warming is already threatening many vital interests of human beings all over the world. Necessary changes will

not come by themselves, and thus have to be tackled politically, also by local and regional political authorities in the Baltic Sea Region.



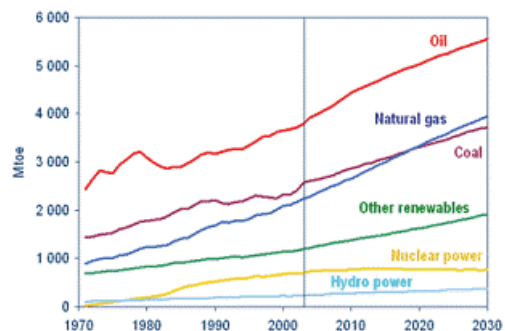
The Finnish Minister of the Environment, Ms Paula Lehtomäki underlined that the EU, Nordic and Baltic Sea countries have a special and visible role to play in promoting climate change goals and finding new avenues in the process. There is no more need to debate whether the phenomenon of climate change is real and whether it will have an impact. Instead, we must urgently take steps to keep greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at tolerable levels.

Mr Gerhard Stahl, Secretary General of the CoR focused on what the regions can do. The regions have possibilities to communicate with the public. They can make climate and energy issues a driving factor in spatial planning, encourage investments in infrastructures for biomass and biofuel filling stations, stimulate investments in heat infrastructures, which connect heat supply with demand. They can also strengthen the modal shift in transport and promote clean technology in public transport through green public procurement and simplify permit procedures for renewable energy projects.



Enhancing the regulation of energy efficiency by local and regional authorities through the creation of expert centres and establishing international partnerships to extend the international coalition against climate change, and transfer energy-saving technology to less developed countries. The regions can link goals for energy efficiency or renewable energy to regional goals such as employment and innovation and use public procurement as a tool to reduce energy use and improve energy efficiency for both goods and services.

Dr. Juha Honkatukia, Research Director, Finnish Government Institute for Economic Research presented the global trends in production and use of energy and impacts on the climate in a regional perspective: World Energy Demand (IEA 2005): IEA: World energy consumption increases by a factor of 1.5 by 2030





The youngest speaker at the conference, Ms Ingeborg Gjørum, Nature and Youth, Norway saw the climate change and energy issues from the bottom-up perspective.



Probability that climate is changing due to human activity is more than 90%. The concentration of GHG in the atmosphere is the highest in 650 000 years. The temperature will rise between 1,1 degrees and 6,4 degrees this century. Actions are needed, and to reach a maximum temperature rise of 2 degrees, global emissions must be reduced by 50 to 80% within 2050. A global peak must be reached within 2010. International co-operation is necessary. The Kyoto Treaty will reduce global warming by 0,1 degrees only. Ms Gjørum underlined that we need a new, global climate treaty.

#### **Youth participation at the Annual Conference in Turku, September 2007**

Over 30 youth participants from Baltic Sea Regions took part in a special preparatory Youth meeting prior to the BSSSC Annual Conference in Turku.

12 September the participants learnt about the threats of climate change, possibilities of using renewable energy sources and familiarised themselves with examples of tackling climate problems developed in Finland. At the next day workshop young

people elaborated on several proposals to decision-makers and called for urgent actions. These proposals and calls were presented during the parallel sessions of the BSSSC Annual Conference:

1. There is no time for long discussion, arguments, and political hesitation – we must act now!
2. All regions must be familiar with all their renewable sources and use them
3. Each region should develop a program of energy use and adaptation to climate change
4. Environmentally friendly behaviour should become trendy. Politicians should set examples in the local communities.
5. Public transport should be cheap and convenient
6. The youth should be provided with education offers on energy and climate in their regions.
7. Public institutions should be a model of energy use (biomass in office cars, solar heating systems in public buildings etc.)
8. Regional politicians should put pressure on their national governments to develop policies in favour of renewable energy use.

#### **Partner Search Forum**

A Partner Search Forum with presentation of the New Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007–2013 and introduction and discussion on project ideas took place 14 September after the conference.

To meet the challenges of Energy and Climate Change the BSSSC Board invited other BSR organisations to establish a Political Co-ordination Group on Energy and Climate issues in the Baltic Sea Region.



BSSSC wants to strengthen the political dialogue in the BSR and identify common policies and actions within the area of Sustainable Energy.



### 3. Transport and Infrastructure

#### High-level Group on Transport for Sustainable Growth in the Baltic Sea Region

A crucial element of economic prosperity and growth in the Baltic Sea Region is the existence and dynamic development of a coherent and intelligent transport system, combined with a well-developed infrastructure. On the initiative of the Baltic Development Forum (BDF) and

BSSSC, the High-level Group on Transport for Sustainable Growth in the Baltic Sea Region was established at the BDF Helsinki Summit 2006. Studies and reports conducted by BDF and BSSSC and the InterBaltic project, initiated by CPMR-BSC served as an important background for establishment of the High-level Group on Transport for Sustainable Growth in the Baltic Sea Region.

The objectives of the High-level Group are:

- To reduce the distances within the Baltic Sea Region, which means to a great extent that we need improved communications in the East-West direction.
- To bring the Baltic Sea Region closer to the Central European market. This is partly an issue regarding the North-South transport routes through Baltica and Feme Belt. Their development has to be encouraged and continued further.
- To strengthen communications between the Baltic Sea Region Metropolises. The Baltic Sea Region calls for closer co-operation and interlinked metropolitan areas to

reach common understanding and visions for the development and growth of the region.

- Strengthen Euro-Asian communication. The trade with China and other “Asian Tigers” is growing rapidly day-by-day. The Baltic Sea Region holds in this view a great potential as a strong market for trade and investments.

The High-level Group is composed of appr. 15 dedicated high-level representatives from the national ministries, large corporations and representatives of Pan Baltic regional organisations. Mr. Uno Aldegren, representing Region Skåne and BSSSC, chairs the group, while the Secretariat of the group is taken care of by BDF.

#### **Proposal for transnational project on multimodal transport strategy**

A work group, consisting of politicians and professionals within BSSSC, presented a “Survey on the transport infrastructure planning in the Baltic Sea Region” in 2006. The work group also presented proposals for further activities. After the closure of the BSSSC Work Group a project idea has been further developed and presented at

several seminars and meetings.

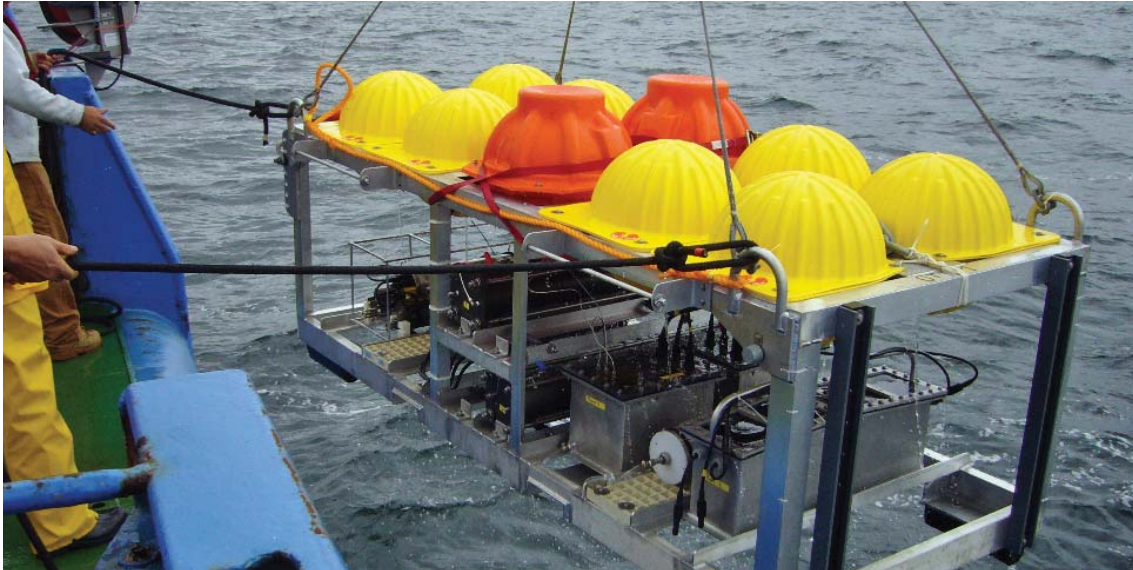
A draft project proposal was presented at the BSSSC Board meeting in September 2007 in Turku. In order to combat existing bottlenecks and constraints towards a development of a coherent and intelligent transport system in the BSR, actions are needed at the transnational level. These actions need to identify transport-related barriers to economic development in the region, to build a common vision and to bridge over the high segmentation of the transport system in the BSR because of the impact of national borders. The intention is to make an application for a Transport Strategy Project for the BSR to the first call of the New Interreg Programme.

## **4. Maritime Policy**

In 2006, at last year’s BSSSC Annual Conference in Kiel the foundations were laid for the development of a common maritime policy for the Baltic Sea Region. The 250 participants of the Kiel Conference formulated a vision:

- To develop the Baltic Sea Region into





Europe's maritime best practice region by 2015.

- To make the Baltic Sea the cleanest and safest sea in Europe by 2015.
- To develop the Baltic Sea Region into a pilot area for the coexistence of competitive economy and sustainable ecosystem protection.

Subsequently the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) and the Southern Baltic Sea Parliamentary Forum supported the Kiel Conference targets in their resolutions, which proves that the BSSSC Conference on Maritime Policy was an important catalyst for a new maritime policy in the Baltic Sea Region.

The next step to be taken was to convince the Council of the Baltic Sea States to coordinate the implementation. At the CBSS Ministerial Meeting in June 2007 in Malmö Minister Uwe Döring as representative of the German Northern Länder and Arne Ören as Chairman of BSSSC proposed to set up a CBSS Task Force for this purpose.

In parallel BSSSC has established a Working Group on Maritime Policy chaired by Land Schleswig-Holstein. The goal is to contribute to turn the Baltic Sea

into a maritime best practice region at the regional level. The Working Group aims to support or initiate the development of ambitious maritime INTERREG projects or to support promising maritime projects in the Baltic Sea Region, e.g. to promote the initiative for the implementation of ship-to-shore electricity supply in the ports of the Baltic Sea Region.

### **Maritime Clusters in the Baltic Sea Region**

The Maritime Cluster in Schleswig-Holstein has taken initiative to establish a Network of Maritime Clusters around the Baltic Sea. The initiative has been further developed, and the idea to establish a Maritime Cluster Interreg project has come up. There have been several meetings to discuss the project idea, and how to attract companies to invest in partnership and clusters' co-operation. BSSSC supported the idea of establishing an Interreg project and participated in the early stage of project development between maritime clusters. BSSSC is convinced that the lead role in establishing co-operation and network between the clusters in the regions should be played by the maritime industry and business actors in the BSR.

## 5. Sustainable Development

### Quality of Life and Public Health

*BSSSC becomes a partner in the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)*

NDPHS approved BSSSC's partner status in the organisation in August 2007. NDPHS is a cooperative effort of thirteen governments, the European Commission and eight intergovernmental organisations. The Partnership's mission is to promote sustainable development of the Northern Dimension area by improving peoples' health and social well-being. By getting the BSSSC onboard, the NDPHS will be able to better reach out to the important stakeholder group in the Baltic Sea Region and involve subregions in its efforts, which will complement the already well-established state governments' level within the Partnership.

BSSSC will strive to contribute to a bigger awareness about NDPHS and its activities by information dissemination, contribute to the project implementation within NDPHS by using the capacity of its participating regions, and to the Public Health-related activities with available resources of its network.

### Support to the implementation of the Baltic 21

The BSSSC Work Plan 2006-2008 mentioned two main activities in the field of Sustainable Development, for which, in both case, good progress was achieved:

The new Strategy Guidelines of Baltic 21 attributes high priority to new Lighthouse Projects (LHP), which ensure high project visibility, the participation of as many countries and sectors as possible,

and the broader implementation of existing and new solutions for sustainable development. BSSSC contributed to this strategy by supporting implementation of the Lighthouse Project A.S.A.P. on challenges for administrative structures in rural areas in demographic transition. The LHP was launched in April 2006 under the participation of BSSSC and will be closed by the end of 2007 resulting, *inter alia*, in a Handbook as guidance for sustainable solutions to challenges of demographic change.

Following suggestions and conceptual preparations by BSSSC and UBC, Baltic 21 launched the development of another LHP on integrated sustainable urban-rural development in 2007. UBC declared its preparedness to serve as the lead part for the designated INTERREG IV B Strategic Project, whereas a number of subregions in the Baltic Sea area agreed to co-operate. Presently, BSSSC, UBC and other partners are jointly specifying concept and operational framework for such a project. The main goal is to demonstrate the benefits of approaches for an integrated management of an urban area including its wider surrounding rural neighbourhood on the way to achieving sustainable development. The project development can be considered a good example for a highly constructive and efficient co-operation between BSSSC and UBC.

### Input to the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan

HELCOM has developed a Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) with the aim to combat eutrophication of the Baltic Sea, to ensure environmentally friendly maritime activities, to largely reduce the discharge of hazardous substances and to halt the loss of biodiversity. The BSAP is to be endorsed



at a ministerial meeting in Krakow, 15 November 2007. BSSSC gave an input into the BSAP elaboration, *inter alia*, through the Resolution of its Annual Conference 2007. Especially, BSSSC highlighted the relevance of the Action Plan to the subregions, e.g. in respect to waste water treatment, agricultural practices, land use patterns, coastal zone management and nature conservation. BSSSC encouraged the subregions' commitment to support future implementation process of the BSAP through adequate measures within their competences and possibilities.

## 6. Working Group on Youth Policy

Working Group on Youth Policy (WGYP)



was established in March 2005. It consists of civil servants and youth representatives of the regions around the Baltic Sea. Since 2005 the WG is continuously developing its range and methods of actions. The main task of the group is to tighten co-operation and integrate the resources with the view of making the Baltic Sea Region a good

place of living for the young people. The WGYP had its meetings in November 2006 in Szczecin, in May 2007 in Gdansk and during the Annual Conference in Turku. WGYP members attend youth events and seminars taking active part in discussions and promoting BSSSC and BSSSC's youth policy.

### Youth participation in decision-making processes

Youth network of the WGYP discusses and makes decisions on WGYP priorities, work plan, activities and initiatives together with the civil servants - members of the WGYP. Since the Annual Conference in Szczecin in 2005 youth representatives in the BSSSC Board held two observer places. At the Board meeting in Turku it was decided to change the status of the youth representatives in the Board into a

full board membership.

### Youth events

In November 2006 the WGYP met in Szczecin for three days for active discussions concerning the youth policy in the Baltic Sea Region. Youth representatives and Youth co-ordinators from Norway,

Sweden, Germany, Latvia and Poland took part in this meeting. The participants got acquainted with the BSSSC youth policy and the issues of Youth mobility in Europe. The preparation for the BSSSC Annual Conference in Turku, Finland was discussed as well.

In March 2007 the conference Youth for Youth took place in Lillehammer. Over 60 youngsters from the Baltic Sea Region spent five days discussing various aspects of the young people's life in the BSR. At the conference the following presentations were delivered: "Perspective from the Past", describing different possible models of economic and social development, "Advantages and disadvantages of being young today in different regions/countries of the BSR". Besides, discussions on the role of young people in contemporary



society, simulation game on decision-making process in the European Council were concluded. Working Group on Youth Policy had its meeting at this conference as well.

Civil Security with focus on the issue of Trafficking in Human Beings is one of the key priorities of the BSSSC Work Plan 2006-2008. The youth representatives and youth workers from Germany, Norway, Sweden, Poland and Russia discussed this issue and possibilities of combating trafficking at the meeting organised by Pomorskie



Woivodeship 10-12 May. The participants stressed that trafficking destroys lives of many people, especially young women. They believe that a closer regional co-operation can contribute to tackling the problem. Even though the laws on this criminal phenomena and trafficking-related crimes are different in various countries of the Baltic Sea Region, people in all BSR countries share common values. Youth representatives from Norway presented the Report from Eastern Norway County Network, Youth Conference "Efforts against Trafficking in Human Beings", which was also delivered at the Seminar for BSSSC Board members in Kaunas 3-4 March. The youth representatives proposed many ideas of actions that can be taken by youth – such as information campaigns in schools, seminars, etc. The group members decided to continue the discussion, elaborate on the topic and launch an interregional action.

### **Support from the Youth in Action Programme**

The youth participation in the BSSSC structures and activities is supported by the funds of the Youth in Action Programme. The Conference in Turku was the first event supported by the project "Integrated Youth Policy for better living conditions of the young people in the Baltic Sea Region". The Youth Democracy Projects has been approved by the Norwegian National

Youth Program Agency, which resulted in 25 000 Euro grant to the BSSSC Youth work. Thanks to this support BSSSC will further develop participation of young people in the BSSSC activities and act as a platform for youth co-operation. The project will give young participants possibility to actively use their voice at political meetings and seminars and BSSSC events. The project will establish a network of youth representatives, civil servants and youth workers from all the 10 countries in the BSR. The youth network is open for all the youth around the BSR, where many of the representatives are from the Regional Youth councils. The youngsters will have their own work group meetings, but they shall also take part in the BSSSC annual conferences. Representatives of the youth will participate in the BSSSC Board and report from the Work Group on Youth Policy (WGYP) in the Board meetings. .

## 7. Co-operation with BSR Organisations

One of the key objectives for BSSSC is to promote the interest of BSR in close co-operation with other organisations and structures. The need for sustainable development, new European policies, further European integration and the consequences of globalisation require new approaches to co-operation and partnership. BSSSC has ongoing co-operation with other BSR organisations, Committee of the Regions (CoR) and Assembly of European Regions (AER).

BSSSC has taken part in several meetings, conferences, and debates with other organisations during the last year. Some examples are AER Bureau meetings, where

BSSSC has contributed with information on BSR co-operation and activities of BSSSC, meetings with the European Baltic Intergroup of the European Parliament and several meetings with other Baltic Sea organisations. The Baltic Sea organisations that are strategic partners of CBSS have had two co-ordination meetings this year, in Kalmar and Bornholm with B7 (Baltic Islands Network), BSPC (Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference), CBSS (Council of the Baltic Sea States), CPMR-BSC (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions – Baltic Sea Commission), UBC (Union of the Baltic Cities), BDF (Baltic Development Forum) and Baltic Assembly.

## 8. Co-operation with Committee of the Regions (CoR)

13 February 2007 Chairman Arne Ören, BSSSC and Secretary General Gerhard Stahl, CoR signed a Declaration of Common Interest. For the first time BSSSC established an official relationship with a EU institution.

Co-operation with Committee of the Regions invites BSSSC to take part in and support the activities of the CoR. It also gives BSSSC an opportunity to be updated on the EU engagement in the Baltic Sea Region in a much better way. The CoR, on the other hand, is committed to engagement together with BSSSC in the Baltic Sea area in the fields of common interests. Secretary General Mr Gerhard Stahl has accepted an invitation to be a co-organiser of the BSSSC Annual Conference 2008 in Kaunas, Lithuania.





## 9. BSSSC Brussels Antenna



Since the shift of the Chairmanship from region Skåne, Sweden to Eastern Norway County Network, Norway Günther Schulz, former director of the Hansa Office in Brussels, has acted as Brussels Antenna for BSSSC. BSSSC Brussels Antenna is located in the Oslo Region EU Office. Mr Schulz is BSSSC's contact to the EU institutions.

Since the opening of BSSSC Brussels Antenna in November 2006, its work have been concentrated on promoting BSSSC amongst the actors and stakeholders of the Baltic Sea Region at the European level in Brussels. BSSSC Chairman Arne Ören officially opened the Antenna with a reception 13 February 2007. The Antenna has been instrumental for the signing of Declaration of Common Interest between BSSSC and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and participation of BSSSC at the CoR Plenary sessions and at the Structured Dialog with CoR-Commissioner Spidla on "Flexicurity" in September 2007. The Antenna has contributed to the initiative of creating "Baltic Regional Intergroup" in the CoR and has prepared the visits of BSSSC Chairman and Secretariat to the EU institutions in Brussels. The Antenna

has continued the contacts with the Baltic Intergroup of the European Parliament and organised the visit of BSSSC Chairman to the European Parliament in Strasbourg 25 September 2007. Mr Schulz represented BSSSC at the meeting of the Northern Dimension Steering Group and promoted a special "regional dimension" within the Northern Dimension Policy Framework. The Antenna has supported the secretariat in organising BSSSC events and WGs' activities and participated at the Board meetings and the Annual Conference. In May 2007 the Antenna represented BSSSC at the Maritime Conference in Bremen held under the German EU Presidency.

## 10. Board Meetings and Other Events

### Board meetings

During the period from the Annual Conference 2006 in Kiel, Germany to the Annual Conference in Turku, Finland (September 2006 – September 2007) the Baltic Sea State Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) has held four Board meetings. The meetings were held in Brussels (Belgium), Kaunas (Lithuania), Gardermoen (Norway) and Turku (Finland). BSSSC's work has been conducted according to the adopted BSSSC Work Plan 2006-2008.

**9-10 November 2006, Brussels:** Conference "Baltic Sea Region – Perspectives, innovation, mobility and integration". BSSSC Board Meeting: The BSSSC Work Plan 2006-2008 was introduced by the Chair and adopted by the Board. BSSSC key policy areas 2006-2008 were determined: Transport and Infrastructure, Maritime Policy, Sustainable Development and Civil Security.

**8-9 March 2007, Kaunas:** Seminar on Trafficking in Human Beings. As a result of the seminar the Youth Working Group included Trafficking in their work.

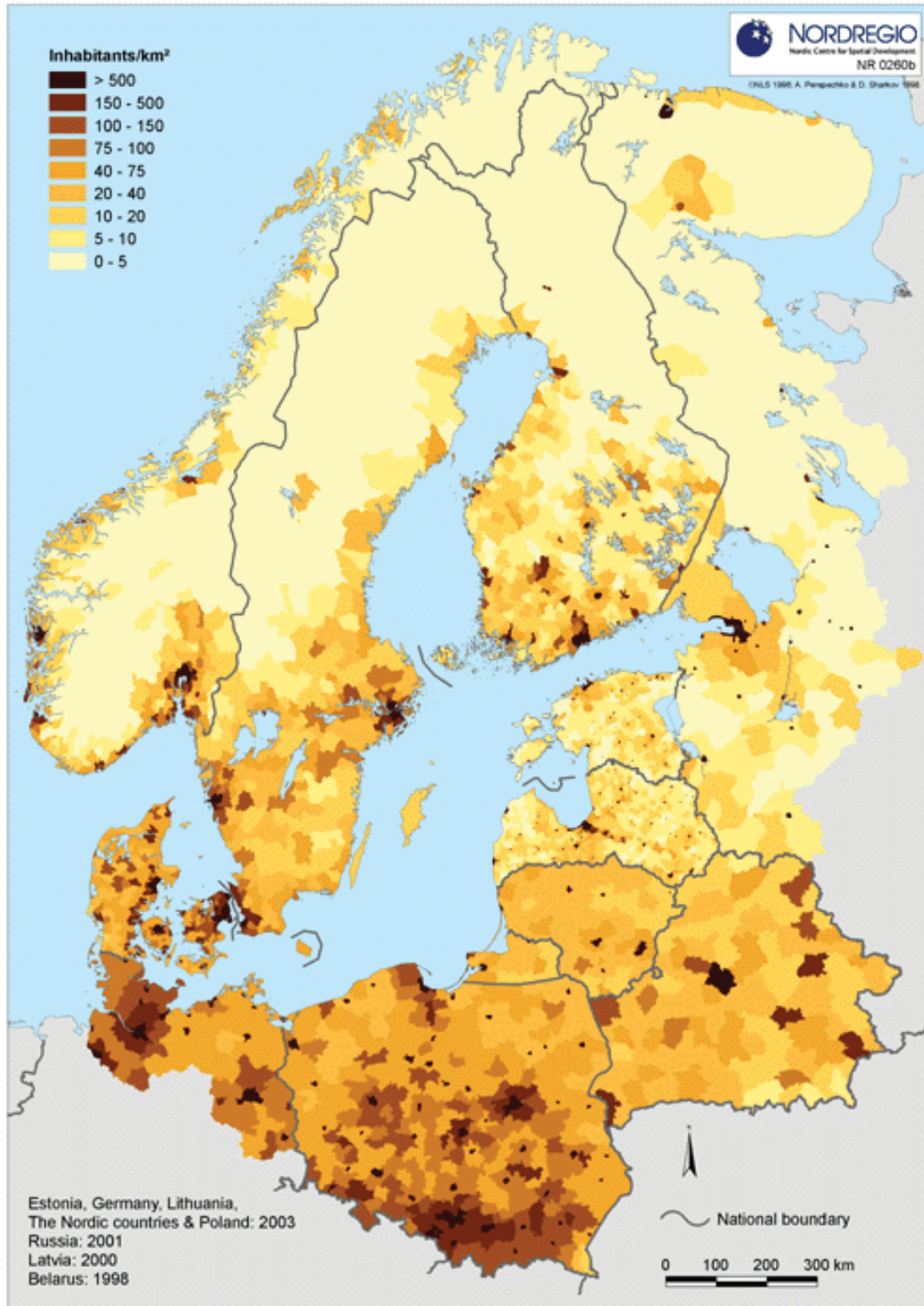
**3-4 May 2007, Gardermoen:** Seminar on Public Health. The Board discussed establishment of a Working Group on Public Health. The Board also agreed to apply for a partner status in NDPHS.

**13-14 September 2007, Turku:** BSSSC Annual Conference - Sustainable Energy. At the Board Meeting The Board discussed the future of BSSSC and followed-up the Work Plan 2006-2008.

**In 2006-2007 BSSSC was represented at the following events:**

- 18-22 October 2006 – AER Board Meeting in Samara, Russia
- 30-31 October 2006 – Baltic Develop Forum Summit in Helsinki, Finland
- 8 November 2006 – Meeting of the Baltic Sea organisations, Kalmar, Sweden
- 16 November 2006 – Meeting on BSR Maritime Clusters, Turku, Finland
- 20-21 November 2006 – Conference on Maritime Policy, Stavanger, Norway
- 21 November 2006 – Annual Conference of B7 in Åland, Finland
- 23-25 November 2006 – Meeting of the Youth Policy WG in Szczecin, Poland
- 19 January 2007 – Meeting with CBSS', NDPHS' and Baltic 21's secretariats in Stockholm, Sweden
- 1 February 2007 – Meeting with Helcom in Helsinki, Finland.
- 12-13 February 2007 – Opening of Brussels Antenna and meetings with the CoR and EU Commission, Brussels, Belgium
- 11-13 March 2007 – Conference on Reducing Alcohol Problems in the BSR, Riga, Latvia
- 14 March 2007 – Meeting of Maritime Clusters' representatives, Hamburg, Germany
- 21-23 March 2007 – Baltic Sea Days, St. Petersburg, Russia
- 16-17 April 2007 – Meeting of the Baltic Sea organisations, Bornholm, Denmark
- 2-4 May 2007 – Maritime Conference, Bremen, Germany
- 7-8 May 2007 – AER Bureau meeting, Hamar, Norway
- 20-21 May 2007 – The 5<sup>th</sup> South Baltic Sea Parliamentary Forum, Gdynia, Poland
- 12-13 June 2007 – CBSS Ministerial Meeting, Malmö, Sweden
- 13-14 June – Baltic 21 Bioenergy Project in Stockholm, Sweden
- 14-15 June 2007 – CPMR-BSC General Assembly, Bodö, Norway
- 3-4 July 2007 – Board Meeting of CLARE, Tromsø, Norway
- 26-28 August 2007 – BSPC, Berlin, Germany
- 6-7 September 2007 – AER Bureau Meeting, Istanbul, Turkey
- 11-12 September 2007 – Baltic 21, Bioenergy meeting, Turku, Finland





Lay-out and print: AFK Graphic Center  
Photo: Tone Stenberg, Christian Andersson, SkySails, IFM-GEOMAR, BSSC



BALTIC SEA STATES SUBREGIONAL CO-OPERATION

## **BSSSC**

The Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) is a political network for decentralised authorities (subregions) in the 10 Baltic Sea states. The network was founded in Stavanger, Norway in 1993. The main organisation bodies are the Chairperson (who is chosen by the Board on a rotational basis for a two year period), the Board consisting of two representatives of each country, the Secretariat that follows the Chairperson, Ad hoc Work Groups and Rapporteurs. The main BSSSC event is the Annual Conference held each year in September.

BSSSC's work shall focus on:

- Acting as a Pan Baltic organisation open to all regions around the entire Baltic Sea area, bringing added value to regional co-operation on every side of the Baltic Sea.
- Using its image as a political organisation and a regional partner to CBSS to promote and advocate the interests of the regions of the Baltic Sea area to decision makers, such as national governments, the EU and globally.
- Providing expertise, best practice examples and implementation capacity.



### **BSSSC Secretariat**

c/o Eastern Norway County Network  
Oppland fylkeskommune  
Serviceboks  
N-2626 Lillehammer

Phone: +47 61 28 92 70

Fax: +47 61 28 94 91

E-mail: [bsssc@bsssc.com](mailto:bsssc@bsssc.com)

[www.bsssc.com](http://www.bsssc.com)



**BALTIC SEA STATES SUBREGIONAL CO-OPERATION**