

## **The 3<sup>rd</sup> BSSSC annual conference -Västeras (Sweden), 8-9 November 1995**

### **Resolution**

The representatives from the subregions of the Baltic Sea states Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden met on the occasion of the third Conference on Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation in Västeras, Sweden from 8 to 9 November 1995. The Conference welcomed guests from the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Committee of Senior Officials and the Working Group on Economics of the CBSS, the European Commission, the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association, the Union of the Baltic Cities, the Nordic Council and the Helsinki Commission.

### **I.**

The representatives appreciated the efforts made by the CBSS, the Conference of the Members of Parliament of the Baltic Sea states, the Conference of Ministers and the Committee of Spatial Development to strengthen progress and stability in the Baltic Sea region, supporting security and reforms by promoting democratic procedures and legal principles in all societies. This is aimed at achieving a sustainable development in the fields of economy, spatial policy, society and culture, at making sure that the region is involved in the European integration process and at improving the environmental conditions in the region. They took note of the conclusions of the Baltic Sea Customs Conference, of the Conference of the Ministers of Economic Affairs, the Ministers of Cultural Affairs and the Nordic Ministers of Environment as a continuing process fostering the coherence in the region. They appreciated the substantial work of the Helsinki Commission, the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association, the Union of the Baltic Cities and numerous NGOs. They consider the membership of Finland and Sweden in the European Union, the partnership and co-operation agreement between the Russian Federation and the EU, the Norwegian membership in the EEA, Latvia's application for membership in the EU as well as the pre-accession strategies of Estonia, Lithuania and Poland as a political development having a major impact on the Baltic co-operative framework. They appreciated the new policy of the European Union concerning the Baltic Sea region including the approval of the Orientations for a Union Approach towards the Baltic Sea region by the Council of the European Union on 29 May 1995, the decision of the European Union, underlined by the European Council in Cannes on 26 and 27 June 1995 to contribute to political stability and welfare

in the Baltic Sea region. They took note of the establishment of Phare Cross Border Co-operation and the special financing facility Baltic Co-operation Fund as well as the new Community initiative INTERREG IIC to foster transnational co-operation in Europe in general and in the Baltic Sea region in particular.

## **II.**

The representatives of the subregions realize the new challenges for the region. However, the growing number of organizations and initiatives in the region not only demonstrates the lively co-operation around the Baltic Sea but also the risk to lose momentum. Thus, a new approach to coordinate and consolidate the Baltic Sea co-operation seems to be the next task. They stress that the co-operation between local and regional authorities is vital and decisively contributes to democracy, welfare, stability and progress in the region. Local and regional authorities are in a key position providing infrastructure and sites for enterprises as well as basic services to the citizens in a market economy. They play an important role in the environmental development and in other important sectors of society.

## **III.**

They recognized that the meeting of the heads of government in Visby in May 1996 is an important initiative to promote and to intensify the co-operation in the Baltic Sea region. They suggest that this meeting and the CBSS should better coordinate the work of the Baltic Sea organizations, which could contribute to the definition of political priorities and to the implementation of such objectives in the region. The representatives of the subregions consider a permanent Secretariat for the CBSS as a helpful instrument which should be available as a forum and an office for all major organizations in the region, especially for this Conference. The Conference asks the governments to call upon their regional authorities to support their subregional co-operation. They suggest that the institutions of the European Union should consider that the promotion of the co-operation and of the networks of local and regional authorities should have priority. The local and regional authorities play a crucial role in the administration and implementation of the Union's Baltic Sea programs. Their representatives should be involved when such policies and programs are determined. Since the financing of the programs is intended to support the approach of the "people-to-people" contacts, the implementation procedures have to be based on clear criteria and lean management. In order to improve the possibilities offered by the two new financing instruments of the European Commission (Baltic Cooperation Fund and INTERREG IIC) the representatives of the subregions strongly recommend to combine these two programs. The Conference asks the EU and the governments to strengthen the

coherence and the transparency of the various activities of the EU and those on the national level as well as on the subregional level. The Conference asks the EU and the governments to support developing instruments to facilitate interregional co-operation in the Baltic Sea region. The Conference accepted the invitation from the Governor of Vaasa, Finland, to organize the Conference in 1996. The Conference appreciated the offer by the Governor of Gdansk, Poland, to organize the Conference in 1997.

#### **IV.**

In order to consolidate its proceedings the representatives agree on a structure of the Conference on Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation as formulated in the Terms of Reference. They agree on the following projects and suggestions of the working groups.

#### **Workshop I - Planning and Visions; Environmental General considerations the planning conditions.**

There are significant economic differences between the countries in the region. Dynamic developments are taking place which can turn the region into an area of sustained and relatively rapid growth. In this context it is essential that environmental considerations be given their proper place. The Baltic Sea region will increasingly be integrated in the broader European co-operation. Cooperation on the intergovernmental level The overall approach of VASAB was generally endorsed and several positive comments were made on the ongoing priority actions. It is essential to establish a well functioning dialogue between VASAB and the subregional level. The difficulty of organizing such exchanges was recognized: in this context VASAB was encouraged to publish a newsletter. VASAB and HELCOM were encouraged to intensify their co-operation in order to ensure that environmental concerns are integrated in a planning process designed to achieve a sustainable development. The particular roles of maritime transport, tourism and education were highlighted. Co-operation in the context of the European Union. The close link between VASAB and Europa 2000+ was underlined. The proposed establishment of the Baltic Co-operation Fund and INTERREG IIC was welcomed and the EU Commission was encouraged to elaborate manuals and other information material to facilitate the formulation of project proposals. It was suggested that the Commission of the EU be invited to the next BSSSC Conference to provide the information on future developments with regard to cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. The regions and subregions should develop their own contacts with the institutions of the European Union. Co-operation on the regional and subregional levels. There is a strong feeling that such co-operation should be intensified against the general background of VASAB; concrete examples of co-operative arrangements were presented. This co-operation should take place

on all levels and be facilitated by an efficient exchange of information. It is important to involve the private sector; enterprises of all sizes, Chambers of commerce, NGOs etc; all have major roles to play in the Baltic Sea development.

### **Workshop II – Transport facilities in the BSR**

Transport -Facilities for treating oil, solid waste and waste-water need to be made readily available in the Baltic ports.

The tariff system for using these facilities needs to be designed so that fees are set at a level which ensures that these facilities will actually be used. It must be avoided that cheap facilities be used for importing toxic waste. The Conference supports the efforts of the Baltic countries to reconstruct railways according to European standards. Facilities for simple, rapid reloading to other modes of traffic need to be developed in the Baltic ports. The need for feeder routes to ports, not least by rail, must be borne in mind when planning infrastructure on shore. The subregions concerned should take initiatives for developing inland waterway transportation networks and integrate these via the Baltic Sea. The Mikkelin delegation takes the responsibility for developing and project along these lines. The Conference urges the ministers of transport to give high priority to north-south road and railway connections in the Baltic Sea region and to consider this issue on the Visby summit. The subregions will promote international and local air traffic by restoring and using former military airfields for civil traffic. The Polish delegation undertakes to develop the idea of the network of marinas along the Baltic Sea coastline. The Conference welcomes the initiative taken by the Union of the Baltic Cities to improve public transport in some Lithuanian cities. The Schleswig-Holstein delegation in co-operation with the Union of the Baltic Cities takes the responsibility for developing new projects in other Baltic countries.

### **Workshop III/1- Trade and Industry**

1. Among ongoing projects the workshop recommended:

- The BCCA-project to develop an open data-bank-network for small and medium-sized companies.
- Meeting places for entrepreneurs. The workshop expressed support for the Balt-Partenariat and possible sectoral fairs or conferences.
- The realization of a Baltic Sea study on long-term perspectives and sustainable economic development (BCCA).
- The establishment of a Baltic Sea Directory based on Internet (electronic mailing list, world wide web) in order to improve the flow of information and communication in the area.

- In the case of a pilot project in Kaunas (which, as the workshop believes, is not a singular experience) to favor the use of local suppliers and products, combined with training and to improve co-operation by appropriate trade fairs.
- Close follow up to the Baltic Tourism Corporation endeavor to promote tourism in the Baltic Sea area (especially in the United States and Japan).

2. In so far as the infrastructure is concerned, the workshop urges the competent ministers of the Baltic Sea governments to harmonize their policies in the fields of transport, energy and telecommunication.

3. Particular attention should be paid to the removal of obstacles for trade and industry arising from insufficiencies in the banking systems. Reliable legal systems are indispensable as well.

4. Moreover the workshop asked the competent authorities to remove technical barriers to cross border trade.

5. Fighting crime is also important in this context.

6. The workshop agreed to ask the Visby conference of heads of governments in May 1996 to establish a framework of reference for policies in the Baltic Sea region, in order to facilitate the subregional co-operation. The creation of a secretariat was strongly recommended.

7. It appeared indispensable to the workshop to respect public opinion by full information and argumentation about policies envisaged.

8. The workshop approved for a future conference to discuss the relation of public and private broadcasting in the Baltic Sea area.

### **Workshop III/2 - Environmental Education**

To support the well initiated co-operation between the environmental education networks in the Baltic subregions (such as the BEENET). Vocational training To promote existing bilateral systems, including the German Dual System, and to adjust them for the Baltic Sea region (for example the formal co-operation between Denmark and Germany concerning vocational training). This has to be organized, promoted and developed by the BCCA (in the beginning between two countries to be

widened later). Foundation for education To set up a foundation within BSSSC for support of exchange of secondary scholars and young people (“Youth for Europe”). For teachers a similar facility should be arranged. Language While recognizing and accepting the important role of the English language the BSSSC encourages the member states and subregions to enhance and promote studies and competence in the Baltic Sea region languages. Supporting educational initiatives In order to coordinate, if possible, give a proper number , and support the activities at the Baltic Sea initiatives. Take care of and develop cultural and trading competences of these initiatives, especially as links between education and working places.