

Workshops Reports

Workshop 1 - Information Society

Workshop Chairman: Vice-minister, Dr. Renaldas Gudauskas, Ministry of Public Administration Reforms and Local Authorities of the Republic of Lithuania
Vice-chairman: Vice-rector, Dr. habil., Aleksandras Targamadzė, Kaunas Technological University
Workshop Organiser: BSSSC ad hoc Group on Information Society
Rapporteur: Erling Sorensen, Kommunedata

The Workshop was arranged as a session in an International Conference in Kaunas Technical University, Distance Education Study Centre on Open and Distance Learning. And this session was transmitted as a Video Conference on the Academic Network of Lithuania to Video Studios in 3 other universities in Lithuania.

In this context the workshop had an interesting "real life demonstration" of one of the very important and useful IS-tools, Video Conferencing, and a proof of the potential of this tool in reducing travel time and costs for establishing face to face contact and dialogue between people over long distances.

The workshop also got a very good impression of how much has been achieved in Lithuania in using Distance Education/Video Conferencing in the high-level educational system and of the practical issues to be handled on the technical side to have necessary infrastructure up and running.

Two parallels could be drawn from Distance Education to General Information Society development:

firstly the extensive amount of international cooperation and networking that DE in particular invites to for the further development and exploitation of the methodology (around the Baltic Sea and at a broader European scale)

secondly the extrapolations that can be drawn from DE to the big involvement of citizens seeking further training and education, to Distance work, E-commerce, Life-long learning when and where the needs are.

The contribution of the workshop to this session was presentations of two measures to support and strengthen the IS development as a part or tool of Regional development:

The LOCREGIS II project The Conference on Promotion of The Baltic Information Society.

The LOCREGIS II project The LOCREGIS II is second phase in an EU project financed from Structural funds (LOCREGIS = Local and Regional Information Society).

1st phase of the project was started in 1996, and 2nd phase this year.

From the second project where regions all over Europe are working together the following deliveries will come: a database (inventory) containing descriptions of more than 1200 regional IS projects
a refined bench-marking method for self-evaluation of IS projects based upon a structure of best practice criterions.

The LOCREGIS invites all regions to participate in the evaluation seminar in Eisenstadt, Austria 13-14th April 2000.

The Conference on Promotion of The Baltic Information Society

This conference is arranged in accordance with the clear request from the BSSSC Board that the Baltic Information Society should be promoted as a major opportunity for regional development. One of the main targets of the conference will be to give the Information Society a "Human Face" by focusing on the application and development aspects from a society point of view of the technology and thus giving inspiration and knowledge to town planners on how to integrate IS in the regional planning process as a tool for business and service development. The conference should also invite to a better cooperation between private and public sector in this development process as none of the sectors can or should carry out this development isolated from the other sector. The conference will take place in Helsinki in the beginning of February 2000.

Discussion

After this joint session the BSSSC workshop had only a short time left for discussions of the main topic IS development at the regional level. The Lithuanian vice-minister of public administration reforms and local authorities participated in this discussion and he, together with other participants, expressed the importance that IS development is not only promoted at World level or National Level. Much more attention is needed on ensuring that the development at the regional and the community level will reach the citizen level, the regional and local administration being the public administration level closest to the citizens. The workshop made a contribution to the final Conference Resolution suggesting that the Resolution should also include a strong recommendation to the National Government level to support and enforce the IS development at the regional level.

Workshop 2 - Regional Development

Workshop President: Prof. Robertas Jucevicius, Director of Institute of International Business and Management, Kaunas Technological University
Workshop Chairman: Mr. Harry Ekestam, Senior advisor, Ministry of the Interior, Finland.
Workshop Organiser: Mr. Kristian Primdal, Storstrom County Denmark
Rapporteur: Inge Hyldebrandt

In the workshop on Regional Development Harry Ekestam introduced 6 presentations on Regional Development and 3 presentations on concrete experiences.

Robertas Jucevicius in his opening introduction linked the overall items of the conference to the practical regional development theme in the way that a region should be a perfect place to live and work. This should be based on co-operation and strategic priorities the Information Society within globalisation creating new possibilities and compatibility and the Northern dimension creating compatibility towards USA and Japan enabling all countries to contribute.

Werner Kindsmüller distinguished between region and Region and considered the Baltic Sea region a Region. Kindsmüller argued that the globalisation might result in marginalisation for some regions but not for the Baltic Sea Region. As positive contributions to tying the region together was mentioned raw materials, universities, innovation, telecommunication, cultural inheritance. On the negative side was mentioned a tremendous difference in GNP resulting in the region not being an economic entity.

It was argued that the Region must elaborate a common pan Baltic Sea vision in competition with the rest of the world through co-operation within the Region and that subregions should not pertain old structures but define new ones with their neighbours.

Gösta Oscarsson asked the question if the functional Scandinavian Region could be applied to other countries. Oscarsson presented a number of characteristics of the Scandinavian Region i.e. that the trade among the Scandinavian countries by far exceeds the trade with other countries, that the globalisation results in the Scandinavian cultures moving closer to each other and that the home market is of a major significance. This home-market is based on closeness, mentally as well as physically, common language and culture and it goes 200 years back in time, all leading to a basic trust.

To create a Greater Baltic Sea Region one must realise that it takes time and in order to speed up the process one must create links of learning. BSSSC has a major role in facilitating such links.

In this context, the question of the belonging of northern Poland and northern Germany was raised. The need for a clearer Baltic Dimension was discussed.

Audris Grybauskas pointed out the need for information and the lack of practical skills within the Baltic countries not least when it comes to determine which programmes can be applied and he stressed the importance of BSSSC in this respect.

Jacek Zaucha stressed the modern interpretation of spatial planning, as a learning process in which various actors modify their decisions under the influence of interaction with other actors. Business is looking for well-planned space, sustainability and productive accessibility. Therefore spatial planning creates development.

VASAB was described as a vision transformed into practical concrete projects and BSSSC was invited to participate in the permanent workshop responsible for elaborating the new vision of VASAB 2010+.

Susanne Scherrer presented lessons learned from the implementation of the INTERREG II C programme for the Baltic Sea Region. She pointed out that the participation of CEE-countries in the programme is much better than its reputation: of all 46 projects approved, 36 have partners from CEE-countries. She also emphasised the bottom-up approach of the programme, as shown by the strong participation of regional and local actors. Jens Peter Sorensen and Harry Tast presented concrete examples of projects financed by the INTERREG II C programme.

Everybody mentioned the drawback of EU-programmes such as the lack of compatibility between Phare/Tacis and Interreg and urged BSSSC to continue its work towards harmonising the programmes.

Workshop 3 - Youth

Chairman: Director Mr. Jan Magnusson, Frederiksborg County, Denmark
Workshop Organiser: Ms. Lene Herdel, Frederiksborg County, Denmark
Rapporteur: Ina Werner, Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth

The Chairman Director Jan Magnussen opened the workshop. He invited the participants to share their views on the topic youth and the introduced programme:

The Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs was established in March 1999. It coordinates the youth activities in the Baltic Sea region on governmental and non-governmental level. Other tasks of the Secretariat are to build up contacts to Baltic Sea organisations like the CBSS, BSSSC, UBC, BSPC and as well as to other European regions like the Barents region. The Secretariat will prepare the Conference on Baltic Sea Youth Co-operation in June 15-18, 2000.

The Study on Funding for Youth Mobility Programmes in the Baltic Sea region is elaborated by the Secretariat in co-operation with BSSSC, the Baltic Youth Forum, the Baltic Youth Office and the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs. At the moment it contains a not finished overview of the funding system on national, European and non-governmental level. It will be extended and be the base of a policy paper which will be presented to politicians in the Baltic Sea region to convince them of the need of a better funding system for youth activities, which includes a higher share of financing.

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The Baltic Youth Assembly is a project of Sydsam, a network, consisting of Associations of Local Authorities, Regional Councils and County Councils in six counties in South Sweden. Participating regions are Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig-Holstein (Germany), Pommerania, Warmio-Mazura (Poland), Klaipeda, Alytus (Lithuania), Kaliningrad and Sydsam. The member regions will select 8 delegates (aged 15-25) for the BYA with different methods. About 60 delegates will meet in September 26-29, 2000 to discuss their self chosen issues and present the results to politicians afterwards. The aim is to give young people the opportunity to influence their future but also to stress the importance of taking responsibility. The Assembly should also support the interest in taking part in local democracy. The BYA is partly financed by Swebaltcop, a co-operation programme in the Baltic Sea region for Eastern and Southern Sweden.
www.bya.nu

The South Sweden Scholarship is an exchange-programme for young people in the Baltic Sea region. Responsible are Sydsam and the Baltic Institute. The purpose is to strengthen long-term co-operation between the Sydsam region and the Baltic region, starting with Kaliningrad. The aim is to integrate 240 pupils into the educational system in Southern Sweden. A network will be established between students and Upper Secondary Schools. The project addresses those who have knowledge in the Swedish language to some extent and who also have studied the Swedish culture for some years.
Ulrika Joelsson,
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BASE is the Baltic Sea Exchange Programme of AIESEC. The aim is to educate the next generation of leaders. They give management, business and engineering students from the East the chance to take part in traineeships including different business courses at the Copenhagen Business School. The consideration is that the growing environmental awareness should play a bigger role in politics especially in the Eastern countries. And a sustainable development is needed. In year 2000 the Danish Ministry of the Environment will finance 50 % of the costs of traineeships for 10 students from Eastern Europe in Denmark. Alexandra Lembke,
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The European Youth School Project has the aim to strengthen the young generations knowledge of Europe. It is a co-operation project of the EU-offices of Baden-Württemberg (Germany), Frederiksborg (Denmark) and South Sweden. In May 1999 two pupils and one teacher from different schools in Germany, Denmark, Romania, Sweden and Hungary travelled to Bruxelles to learn about the European Union, its institutions, its financing possibilities, etc. They also start to develop different projects for their time as EU-ambassadors in their national schools on positive and negative aspects of the EU. In September 2000 the next workshop will take place for the same schools. In addition new schools will be invited.
Jorgen Olsen,
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The Kaunas University of Technology runs Leonardo and Tempus-programmes. Since last October Socrates and Erasmus-programmes are also eligible for Lithuania. 40 students could come this year to Kaunas from abroad and there are also students going to other EU countries. They get a full grant of 500 Euro each month. The University applied also for next year. Lectures are given in English, German, French and Dutch.
Dr. Linas Pouziukynas,
Director for Student Affairs/Aurimas Martisauskas.
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During the discussion about the different projects Anders Engström from the Union of the Baltic Cities asked for response to the idea to involve young people in the structure of UBC. There should be a young contact person in each city with a status to be able to get information and contact to the government of the city. Interested groups already exist in Sweden, Poland, Kaliningrad and Lithuania. Two of them took part in the General Conference in Stockholm this year. In addition they are planning to have an ombudsman at the UBC for young people. They try to get funding from the EU for this project.

The working group agreed on a contribution to the Final Resolution of the 7th BSSSC Conference:

The Conference stressed the importance of international exchange programmes in the Baltic Sea region, especially with a long-term perspective, and the necessity to adjust the funding possibilities to the needs of young people.

Workshop 4 - Institution Building and Human Relations

Workshop organiser: Mr. Bo Kristiansen, Project Consultant, CBSS Commissioner's Secretariat
Workshop Chairman: Mr. Bo Kristiansen
Rapporteur: Mogens Petersen, County of Roskilde

Theme: Working Conditions of Elected Members of Local/Regional Authorities

Introduction

Development of local and regional authorities is an intrinsic part of the building of democratic institutions and nations.

Well-functioning local and regional authorities have great importance for the participation of the population in democratic processes and for the social and political stability of society as a whole.

The existence of local and regional authorities with real responsibilities can provide an administration, which is both effective and close to the citizens.

These values, among others, are laid down in the European Charter of Local Self-government, which all CBSS Member States have ratified, and which to a certain extent serve as a model for the transitional democracies in the Eastern part of the region. A Charter of Regional Self-government is expected being adopted by the Council of Europe within few years.

The aim of the workshop was to create a learning environment with exchange of knowledge, experience and views concerning the present and future of local and regional democracy with a specific focus on the working conditions of elected representatives. Some barriers to better working conditions depend on national legislation, other barriers might be removed by the council members themselves.

Report of the workshop

After a short introduction by the work-shop chairman Mr. Bo Kristiansen of the CBSS Commissioner's office the 20-25 participants, divided in 2-4 persons groups, were asked to discuss a number of issues or dilemmas concerning the functioning of local democracy, of which elected members of local and regional council face every day.

The dilemmas were introduced under the headline: "Local Democracy: Striking the Right Balance" and were the following

Centralised/decentralised competence (the principle of subsidiarity)
Use of networking - think globally, act locally (Northern Dimension)

Use of ICT (Information Society)
Political life/private life

Secrecy/transparency
Contact with the media

Professional politicians/political professionals
Majority/minority
Laymen/experts

The following report will focus on the most penetrating dilemmas of which the workshop enhanced the importance of when considering the obstacles and opportunities which the local and regional democracy are facing in the Baltic Sea Region at present.

Financial means of local and regional authorities

The workshop revealed that many of the local and regional authorities in the Region are in a budgetary squeeze as a result of very scarce financial resources allocated from the central authorities for the fulfilment of governmental goals on the one side, and a weak or non-existing local or regional tax base on the other side. At the same time more and more tasks are transferred from the State to the local and regional level - or new tasks are developing and placed in the tail of a decentralised economy and decision-making process. Occasionally, the allocation of resources was delayed due to budgetary considerations on governmental level. Thus, planning on the long run was difficult.

This situation might lead to a democratic deficit at local and regional level, because the manoeuvrability of the elected representatives will be delimited. In other words: there is no space or room for policy-making. This situation might have the implication that elected members too swiftly leave local politics after a short period or that the next generation of politicians refrains from standing for public office. Further implications might be low turn-out of local elections in the Region (Norway and Estonia as the latest examples), because lack of political influence will create a larger contingent of home sitters.

It was clear to the participants of the workshop that a remark on the financial situation of the municipalities in the Region should be made in the final resolution of the conference.

Workshop 4 - Institution Building and Human Relations - Pt. 2

Use of ICT and networking

The use of ICT might lead to a faster communication in all aspects, e.g. between widespread communities and across the borders. Using ICT for networking it will be possible to spread information on political practise from one part of the Region to another. A high profile on new technologies will attract young and well-educated people to positions as politicians and officers in the public sector. But still, the workshop participants wished to emphasise the importance of person-to-person dialogue and networking as a way to diminish obstacles and barriers between border-regions and for the promoting of trans-border co-operation. The transition to a decentralised economy might have created a more unclear, mixed and ever-changing pattern of policy-making and administrative procedures, which might have made it more difficult to find the right partners in trans-border co-operation projects.

On the other hand the workshop participants expressed a subtle awareness of the use of ICT. The Information Society might create new gaps or diversities between people. Market related diversities in income would be supplemented by diversities in people's skills in using ICT and access to ICT.

Participants from the Russian Region of Kaliningrad and the neighbouring Polish region met at the workshop. Both parties expressed frustration on the difficulties they had in finding the right way through the procedures and bureaucracy on the other side of the border, and finding the right way to the right persons, who had the decision-making competence. The meeting in person at the workshop made it possible to explain some of the procedures and create personal contacts.

It is a fact that the speed of innovation in the field of new technologies is growing higher and higher. Therefore, local and regional authorities, dependent on ICT based administrative systems and wanting to belong to the forefront of the Information Society, envisage huge investments in new technologies every year. This will inevitably have big scale financial implications, which will turn the budgetary squeeze furthermore.

Concerning the spreading of information via the Internet, language problems are one of the main obstacles. Many homepages of the member regions do not have information in English.

The working group made a contribution to the final resolution on the theme Information Society: The Conference "called upon all respective actors to pay attention to the risk of a new social differentiation of the population concerning the use of ICT".

Contact with the media

The importance of a free media at local level was an unchallenged point-of-view among the workshop participants. But it was also very clear, that many local politicians and leading administrative officers had difficulties in handling the media correctly, especially in crisis situations. Further it was stated that positive news, for instance the successful outcome of a political intervention, might often be neglected by the media. The media's focus on the negative angle might cause political frustration and low public esteem. A Finnish participant brought out experience on training courses on better contact with the media. An idea which could be copied in other Regions.

Transparency and openness

Transparency and openness is of utmost importance for the development of democratic institutions at local and regional level. Transparency serves as a safeguard against corruption. The funding of parties and the remuneration of elected members might not in all countries meet the needs. It was proposed that the CBSS Commissioner should undertake a survey on the funding of political activities in the CBSS Member States.

Professional politicians or political professionals

Should politicians leave technicalities to the administration or should they build-up personal qualifications to match the professionals. The primary and ideal role of the politicians would be as the setters of the overall goals of the community. But in everyday political life the way to success is closely knit to rash interventions against bureaucratic dysfunctions and social discrepancies showing dynamic leadership and concern for the community and individuals. The workshop showed a variety of viewpoints on this issue. Therefore no conclusions were reached.

The work of the CBSS Commissioner

Mr Bo Kristiansen presented the work of the CBSS Commissioner on local democracy. But first the Commissioner's mandate and functions were made clear.

The focal point of the Commissioner's work on local democracy is the implementation in the CBSS Member States of the principles laid down in the European Charter on Local Self-Government. Mr Kristiansen illuminated these principles.

Further information on the CBSS Commissioner's work (surveys, news-letters etc) can be obtained from the secretariat:

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The following papers were distributed to the workshop participants:

The CBSS Commissioner: Survey on Working Conditions of Elected Members of Local Authorities in the CBSS Member States (March 1998).
Note on Council of Europe, CLRAE, OECD and UNDP texts and reports on the status and developments of local and regional self-government in the CBSS Member States (1999).
European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985).
The mandate of the CBSS Commissioner in English and Lithuanian.

Workshop 5 - Culture

Workshop Chairman: Prof. habil. dr. Egidijus Aleksandravicius, Vice-Rector of Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania.

Workshop Organiser: Prof. habil. dr. Egidijus Aleksandravicius, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania.

Rapporteur: Doc. dr. Ruta Marcinkeviciene, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania.

It has been agreed upon that the subregional level constitutes a key position in the development of the Northern Dimension. In trying to formulate a regional content to the Northern Dimension concept from the point of view of cultural exchange we have to make several points:

- * it is of paramount importance to revive and to strengthen the local consciousness and identity by way of direct contacts with other regional and local units of EU countries in general and the Northern countries in particular,

- * more intensive and multilateral cooperation with the Northern countries as a certain stage of the pre-accession period is vital for Lithuania, since its historical background and traditional orientation has always been directed towards Vyshegrad countries,

- * a strategic objective regarding regional cooperation for the cultural exchange is to establish a step-by-step development of the network, starting with the immediate local bilateral face-to-face type relations with the partners outside the national borders without any dependence and/or interference of the national hierarchical bodies and structures. Later on groups of successfully working bilateral relations could form a wider network that would involve multilateral cooperation and exchange

- * Specific forms and ways of presentation of national cultures should be varied and flexible in order to include such traditional forms of cooperation as sister towns, culture festivals, city tourism, university network and all possible new ones: agro tourism, presentation of regional and not overall national art, food and traditions, to mention just a few.

- * No matter how important and promising virtual communication might seem, it should be build on and enable direct face-to-face communication of real people and express their real need and priorities. Only down-to-earth and working lines of communication can lessen Euro-scepticism and promote further developments.

The major points of discussion had to do with:

- * a rather vague and fuzzy notion of the Northern dimension that could and should get its specific contents, e.g. co-operation like the already appearing university cooperation in the field of the Baltic or the Baltic sea region studies,

- * the question about the level of cooperation that would be most efficient, i.e. national, regional and municipal levels. A greater prominence has been given to the idea of non-state level of cultural exchange that would be more down to earth, more concrete, bottom-up oriented,

- * the suggestion to make cultural exchange bi-directional, going not only west- or northwards but also towards pre-accession countries. Besides, it should address a larger audience than only theatre- and concert- goers and involve more permanent structures than short time events and festivities.

Workshop 6 - Economic Cooperation and Development

Workshop Chairman: Mr. Kristian Primdal, Director Storstrom Business Development Centre, Storstrom County, Denmark. Chairman BSSSC Working Group II: Economic Development. Workshop Organiser: Mr. Kristian Primdal

Rapporteur: Günther Schultz, Hanse-Office

Workshop No. 6 met Friday afternoon. About 50 participants took part in the workshop and 8 speakers had been invited for interventions.

In his introduction, the chairman drew the attention of the workshop to the changing framework of economic development at the regional and local level. With growing economic connections in Europe, it is no longer sufficient to promote a single company or business. The political concepts of the Northern Dimension and the EU enlargement are just examples for the changing patterns, economic development has to cope with. A sound economic development will only be found by combining the different aspects, which influences economic activities at the regional level. This includes linking different sectors, taking into account regional planning, promote all potentials available in the respective area and broaden the interregional and transnational contacts and cooperation.

To demonstrate this changing framework for economic development and cooperation three interventions of a more general nature tackled EU funding, chamber-of-commerce activities and tourist industry in the area, followed by the outline of a twinning and technical assistance project for SME's between Sweden and Estonia. Three case studies then dealt with the chances and problems for economic development in Gdynia and Kaunas.

Mr. Christian Saublens, Director of the European Association of Development Agencies, a Brussels based NGO, outlined the framework of EU funding-programs, pointed to the catchwords of all EU financial activities partnership, subsidiary, additionally as well as innovation and explained the basic prerequisites which have to be fulfilled to manage successfully an EU funded project.

Mr. Voldemars Gavars, Vice President of the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA), explained the recent tasks and activities of BCCA. He mentioned especially the BCCA project two - two-thousand", the goal of BCCA, to reduce the time for border-crossings in the Baltic Sea area for the trade traffic to two hours at the end of the year 2000. He invited the workshop to attend the next Balt -Paternariat in Riga in the year 2001.

Mr. Thomas Mielke, Director of the Baltic Sea Tourism Association, gave an overview of the stable and steadily increasing tourism in the Baltic Sea area which is attracted by the three features of the region: Nature, culture and history. To foster tourism in the area, he pointed to the need to develop common brands" and cooperative

signs" for the Baltic Sea region, to promote the area as such and to adapt the industry to new trends in tourism.

Mr. Stefan Berry, Project manager of Nutek Stockholm and Mr. Vitali Sergejev, Director of Narva Business Advisory Service Center, Narva Estonia as one of the project-partners, explained the twinning project Support to the Regional development Policy in Estonia through Business Development" between the Swedish National for Technical Assistance and Development and Estonian Ministry of Interior to create and develop an Estonian Regional Development Agency with a mother company and 15 regional centers.

The project was realized in several sub-projects in two phases between 1992 and 1998 and lead from technical assistance to a continuous cooperation at the level of the SME's between Sweden and Estonia. It is a convincing example of a successful twinning project in the field of private-public partnership.

Mr. Maciej Brzeski, Deputy Mayor of Gdynia, reported about the scope of the interregional and transnational cooperation of the city of Gdynia. At the beginning stood the decision of the city government to change Gdynia - (into) a city of European dimension". Step by step, Gdynia became member in various regional and international networks in the Baltic Sea area and beyond. Through these activities Gdynia was able to attract several important international events to the city, which in turn promoted and fostered business and industries directly in Gdynia as well as in the three city-region; Gdynia, Sopot and Gdansk. These activities of Gdynia are not only impressive but also a good example for the pay-off of international activities at the level of a community.

On behalf of Mr. Vytautas Sileikis, the head of the international department of the Kaunas Chamber of Commerce Ms. Lina Kaminskiene gave an overview of the changing pattern of the Lithuanian trade between 1998 and 1999 and the challenging task to build up an Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industries and Craft in Lithuania with its special responsibilities for smaller companies.

In a moving appeal, Mrs. Laima Mogeniene, Director of the Kaunas Regional Association of Small and Medium Sized Business, reminded the workshop on the basic principles of basic human rights. Out of her daily experience, she pointed out that the overall priority and the pressing need for the SME's in Kaunas and Lithuania is their protection against vice, corruption and mismanagement. Since 1995, the situation for individual economic activities and small business has not changed very much due to the same bureaucracy and functionaries and the unchanged traditionally thinking. The very negative experiences of compulsory membership in economic and civil organizations in Soviet times makes it indispensable for a lively economic activity at grass-root-level to leave the freedom of choice for everybody to join a business-organization or not. This intervention demonstrated to the workshop that in spite of many changes in the Lithuanian civil and economic sector, basic principles of marked society still have to be applied.

The interventions in workshop 6 covered various aspects, which stimulates and influences economic development and cooperation. They were intended as examples, as case studies and best practice for economic activities at the regional level. The chairman encouraged the participants to continue an exchange of ideas and experiences in this field and offered the service of the Permanent Working-group on Economic Cooperation of the BSSSC as a forum for such a dialog.

Workshop 7 - Transport

Workshop Chairman: Vice Minister Sakalys, Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communication
Workshop Organiser: Mr. Hannu Siitonen, Traffic and Transport Engineer, Uusimaa Regional Council, Finland
Rapporteur: Vice Minister Sakalys

The introductory material, circulated before the Conference, spoke of the Baltic Sea regions as forming an entity of several tens of millions and a very potential and growing market area. It argued that economic development of the region will require the development of transport infrastructures and establishment of new connections with European-wide networks a transport network integrated to the European networks. Road and railway connections linking the European community and the candidate countries in northern Europe as well as Russia, will require the further development of transport infrastructure and border crossing facilities.

The agenda of the Transport Workshop had three themes:
Pre-accession
Northern Dimension
Information Society

These were addressed in a transport Policy context of
Turning existing modes of transport into a well-functioning whole
Raising the competitiveness of the railways
Utilising technological systems
The workshop heard three presentations as follows:

Mrs. Rita Piirainen, Chief Engineer, Ministry of Transport & Communications of Finland in her paper Transport and the Northern Dimension, described the scope of the EU Common transport Policy, the Trans European Networks and their development into the Transport Corridors through the Pan-European Conferences; the TINA(Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment) process and how these developments impact on the Northern Dimension.

Mrs. Piirainen emphasised that Member States of the EU have come to realise that their present infrastructure is not good enough to meet the increase in transport demand being stimulated by the internal market; failure to improve will be a serious handicap on the competitiveness of the European Union in the World Market. By improving accessibility, bringing peripheral regions closer to the EU core areas and narrowing gaps in provision, investment in transport infrastructure can improve the competitive position of Regions. This is particularly true where there has been complementary investment, which can release new opportunities for

economic development and social progress. Despite the priority that has been attached to transport, significant gaps in the system remain and there are important differences in accessibility between cities and regions.

The Pan-European Transport Corridor Areas (PETRA's) are a response by the EU to the need to include the transport infrastructure of the CEE states in their Transport Development planning, with the intention also of forming the multi-modal transport networks for the four PETRA's concerned; Barents Euro Arctic Transport; Black Sea Basin; Adriatic and Ionian Seas; and the Mediterranean Basin.

In regard to the Northern Dimension, Mrs. Piirainen also emphasised the importance of securing the North-South and East-West transport links for the entire area and also the need to support the adaptation of the Russian transport system to the EU transport system, in order to promote the development towards a European transport system.

Professor Paulauskas of Klaipeda University, in his paper Baltic Ports role in Transcontinental Transportation demonstrated the importance of getting our infrastructures properly developed to generate economic growth through greater efficiency and lower costs. Professor Paulauskas emphasised that transport, as part of the production chain, plays a key role in optimising production costs. East Baltic ports are gearing up to receive vessels involved in transcontinental transportation between the Americas, Southern Asia and central and eastern Europe. Major projects are under way in all the main East Baltic ports Klaipeda, Ventspils, Tallinn, Riga, Liepaja etc. For example, renovation of existing quay walls and the construction of new ones are part of the master plan in Klaipeda port. In 1997, 525 m of quay walls were renovated at the steel terminal with further scope to deepen existing berths to 14 metres. There are also plans to renovate a further 411 metres of quay wall and to build about 2000 metres of quay wall with depths of up to 12 metres.

In tandem with port development, new transport technologies are emerging, such as multimodal transport and multimodal operators. This process not only involves transport firms like ocean, rail and road carriers, but also port terminals and port operators. Efficient operation requires a correct operating strategy between multimodal operators and local transport organisations. There are a number of ways to create bespoke multimodal operators. Consequently, carriers and port authorities look in depth at every possible way. In the future the lone efforts of ports and carriers, if uncoordinated, will be insufficient to cope with the new conditions and the small players will be the hardest hit. Market forces dictate that operators will always look for high-quality facilities and base their decision to relocate on new transport routes and on securing long term guarantees.

Workshop 7 - Transport Pt. 2

The environmental and economic advantages of transcontinental transportation between central and eastern Europe and the Americas, southern Asia and other countries without too many additional loading operations and additional transportation, via special train systems etc. should avoid heavier traffic on roads and decrease air pollution overall and improve safety and decrease transport costs.

Dr. A. Sakalys, Viceminister, Ministry of Transport and Communications of Lithuania, in his paper, Lithuanian Transport Infrastructure and Transit Issues examined Lithuania's participation in the definition of the Transport Corridors related to the TENS/TINA processes. For Lithuania, integration of the whole transport system is very important and they are doing their utmost to ensure a contribution that supports the development of high quality, intelligent transport systems.

Lithuania takes an active part in the extension of the Pan-European Transport Network (TEN-Tr), with the aim of gradually bringing her transport infrastructure up to EU technical levels, as well as forming an effective, environmentally friendly, and safe transport system. They emphasise interoperability and intelligent use of transport networks, to contribute to the pan-European transport network strategy. With IFI resources and local funds many projects of International and National economic importance are being implemented in Lithuania. Particular attention is devoted to the TINA program, which will enable gradual approximation of Lithuanian transport infrastructure to the technical standards of the EU Member-States and will demonstrate the ability of the country to become an effective member of the EU. Lithuania plans to implement the TINA program by supplementing the international corridors with an infrastructural network connecting inland, short-sea shipping lines and main sea and air transport links of regional importance.

Lithuania recognises the special contribution that countries in the Baltic sea region can make towards realising the EC's ambitions with regard to the railway sector: she is taking a number of actions in the areas of:

Railway Restructuring.

Development of a European gauge connection between the Polish border and Kaunas, (Lithuania's second City) where a high quality transport hub, with the most modern telematics concepts, to interface between broad gauge of Corridor IXB, the 'European standard' gauge and road transport will be located. Promotion of a Rapid Rail Freight Area on Corridor IX (middle section) Dr. Sakalys emphasised that efficient, regional level and multi-country, co-ordination of activities is essential, to implement projects of international importance effectively. Thus, groupings of countries with shared interests, such as the BSSSC, are essential for the successful development of transport infrastructure. The "Via Baltica" road highway project is a good example of regional co-operation to achieve progress in Corridor development; Lithuania is in the course of completing her commitments in this important endeavor. All the activities have been performed in accordance with the defined schedule and it is anticipated to finalize them in due time.

Both Mrs. Piirainen and Dr. Sakalys discussed the international TINA program and its importance for the development of the Northern Region. It was hoped to achieve real infrastructure improvements, harmonization of development and a regional implementation of TINA conclusions. Efficient co-ordination of activities with the other countries, at the regional level, is essential to effectively implement projects of international importance. Here they stressed that the regional character of the TINA process provides a very important base for effective action. Lithuania and the other Baltic states, as well as Poland, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Germany

comprise the TINA Baltic sea region sub-group. Acting together these Countries have an opportunity to maximize the impact of Transport on the Region's development.

In the ensuing discussion, the workshop Participants stressed the key importance of Transport chains as a factor in multimodal transport, and the related urgency of aligning their actions as closely as possible with the main features of the Common Transport Policy, particularly in those areas of current priority. The participants also stressed the importance of giving priority to infrastructure that is non-competing between countries; such infrastructure includes - railway and road interconnections between the Baltic Sea countries and the EU; intelligent technologies and border crossing locations; where use is interdependent and in no way competitive.

The Workshop Participants also focussed on current initiatives that are directly or indirectly relevant to the Baltic Sea region. Their emphasis was to develop approaches with the potential to make a real contribution add value rather than looking for new directions which might be difficult to promote. It was also felt that common approaches would also be of great benefit to the Commission (DGXVI), who have a direct concern for projects that have common interest in the context of the Northern Dimension. Thus they hoped to assist the enlargement process and consider ways in which to support one another in ISPA preparation, through, for example the use of funds for linked projects.

The discussants connected these concepts with Policy related actions that are being taken in the Baltic Sea area, particularly in regard to the development of railway networks. The technical discussion about achieving greater efficiency and lower costs led to an emphasis on the importance of creating a network of Logistic centers, which would also maximize the potential of the Regions infrastructure. The great importance of such a network as a generator of competitive economic advantage was agreed.

In regard to the Baltic Sea region the Workshop recognised that it combines important North-South and East West directions. These East west directions also constitute a network with the Baltic Ports forming one side of the two-way flows, via the Baltic Sea. This led to a concluding focus on the importance of common actions to achieve the development of our Railway resource.

There was considerable support for a common approach to the development of the Rail Sector, particularly in areas where technologies are broadly similar and where there is real scope to achieve change. In this context the idea of a Rapid Rail Transit Area on the middle section of Corridor IX was recognised as a potentially important generator of growth in Baltic Port and Sea trade. The Workshop participants stressed that this is an area where regional groupings, such as BSSC can lead the achievement of Common Transport Policy objectives.

The Baltic Sea countries can make a significant contribution towards achieving the railway objectives of EU Transport Policy. The comparison with the Via Baltica highway project was noted as a good example of regional co-operation to achieve progress in transport infrastructure development. The workshop recognised that it would be reasonable to follow this example in pursuing co-operation in railway and logistic centres network development where participation of regional and local communities is of high importance.

Workshop 8 - Co-operation Oriented Towards

Workshop Chairman: Mr. Arturas Kazlauskas, Deputy General Director, European Committee under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

Workshop Organiser: European Committee under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

Rapporteur: Dangis Verseckas, Deputy Head of Integration Strategy Planning Unit & Desk officer for Political Criteria, European Committee under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

1. On 13 October 1999, the European Commission submitted its regular report to the European Council on progress made by each of the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe in preparations for membership. This report consists of the Composite Paper, in which the progress towards accession by each of the candidate countries is estimated in a comparative context, and proposals for opening negotiations are set out, as well as the Regular Reports. The European Commission proposed to consider Turkey as a candidate country.

Three aspects were singled out from the proposals of the European Commission. First of all, it considered that negotiations should be opened in 2000 with all candidate countries, which meet the political criteria for membership and have proved to be ready to take the necessary measures to comply with the economic criteria, i.e. Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. Nevertheless, the European Commission proposed to open the negotiations with the latter two countries only after meeting certain conditions. The Bulgarian authorities have to make a decision by before the end of 1999 on acceptable closure dates for units 1-4 in the Kozloduy nuclear power plant, and Romania has to meet some other political and economical conditions.

Secondly, the Commission is of the opinion that the opening of the negotiations should be determined on the basis of the principle of differentiation, in particular to take account of the fact that some candidates are not immediately in a position to meet the Copenhagen criteria in the medium term. The number of negotiation chapters will vary according to the state of preparation of each individual candidate. A general policy of the Commission on transition periods was also defined. For the areas linked to the extension of the Single Market any transition periods should be few and short. For those areas of the *acquis* where considerable adaptations are necessary and which require substantial effort, including important financial outlays (in areas such as environment, energy, infrastructure), transition arrangements could be spread over a definite period of time.

At last, the third proposal is related to the target dates, which were previously proposed to be set for accession of individual candidate countries in Helsinki. Instead of them, the Commission recommended to the European Council in Helsinki to commit itself to be able to decide from 2002 on the accession of candidates that fulfil all necessary criteria.

2. In the field of free movement of goods Lithuania has made progress. Lithuania has made progress as regards conformity assessment but further efforts are required in the field of standardisation and market surveillance.

As regards specific New Approach directives, limited progress in transposition has been made during the past year. Progress in aligning the legislation in sectors covered by the Old Approach has been made in the area of foodstuffs, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and footwear.

Efforts are also needed to speed up the establishment of a Quality System Certification Body and to privatise its management. The Government has set up a working group, which will define powers and functions of the Inspectorates and other institutions involved. It is envisaged that the Government of Lithuania will approve statutes of the National Council and the Inspectorates.

Compared to the 1998 Regular Report, the Commission's evaluation in the sector of free movement of goods has improved. Lithuania has generally made progress in meeting the short-term priorities of the Accession Partnership in the area of Internal Market. Progress has been made in terms of transposition concerning public procurement. Lithuania has made progress as regards conformity assessment but further efforts are required in the field of standardisation. In the Composite Paper, Lithuania's progress in the field of free movement of goods was estimated as good.

3. As regards free movement of persons, some progress can be reported in the area of mutual recognition of professional qualifications. The adoption of a Government Decree in August 1998 concerning regulations on recognition of foreign qualifications was an important step, since it created conditions to ensure the enforcement of the principles of the free movement of students.

4. Since mid-1998, important progress in fine-tuning the transposition of different banking directives has been accomplished. In the securities market sector, the Lithuanian national legislation is up to the standards of the *acquis*.

5. In the field of free movement of capital Lithuania has already made good progress.

6. In the field of competition, Lithuania has met the short-term priority of the Accession Partnership with the adoption of the new competition law.

7. The Lithuanian taxation regime is not yet in line with the *acquis*. Both the systems of indirect taxation and excise duties need to be substantially reformed. In particular, the VAT exemptions that are not in line with the *acquis* need to be removed and the excise tax warehouse system needs to be developed.

8. Some progress has been made in improving the overall industrial organisation and efficiency, including in the challenge to close non-viable enterprises. However these efforts should be strengthened. In particular it is important that the government puts more emphasis on the future economic viability criterion when stimulating business activities. In this respect, an important dimension of the industrial policy is the control of state aid.

9. On 5 October, the Seimas adopted a new energy strategy, which sets out legislative and restructuring plans for the sector. This decision is a major sign of Lithuania's European integration efforts as well as a very important precedent for the safe use of nuclear energy in Central and Eastern Europe.

10. Co-operation between the Baltic Sea states is still insufficient, and the European integration efforts are the main means, which provide for liberalisation, harmonisation and application of the principles of mutual recognition.

11. The conformity assessment protocol, concerning which the negotiations between the EU and Lithuania will start in 2000, is an especially important factor of international co-operation.

12. The workshop expresses concern regarding bringing anti-dumping actions against Lithuanian enterprises. Such cases rouse negative spirits among the Lithuanian enterprises, and directly stand in the way of co-operation among the countries. We have a hope that the policy of the new EC, led by Romano Prodi, will be more transparent.

13. Having analysed the Draft Resolution of the 7th Conference on Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation, we approve it, especially emphasising calling upon the European Union to enter into concrete negotiations on EU membership with Latvia and Lithuania, as well as to further implement the Common Strategy on Russia.

Workshop 9 Nature Protection and Environment

Workshop Chairman: Mr. Arne Oren, Chairman of the BSSSC Working Group on Nature Protection and Environment

Workshop Organiser: BSSSC Working Group on Nature Protection and Environment

Rapporteur: Terje Pettersen, Ostfold County Council, Norway

The Workshop dealt with the following subjects:

Current status and strategies for Nature Protection and Environment in Lithuania.

On behalf of Mr. Danys Lygis, Minister of Environment in Lithuania, representatives of the Kaunas County Administration presented this subject pointing out strategies on Agenda 21 and Baltic Agenda 21 as prioritised issues ahead. At the national level a Council was being set up in order to facilitate implementation of Agenda 21. Active Lithuanian participation in the Northern Dimension regarding co-operation with Russia in the field of environment was emphasised.

Sustainable management of land with example of forestry in the Baltic Sea Region.

Ms. Marja Gustavsson, The National Forestry Board in Sweden, presented the role of forestry in Sweden and

Finland and the potential role of forestry in the Baltic Countries. An exhibition on sustainable management of forestry in Scandinavia and the Baltic States was introduced. The exhibition was situated in the lobby outside the main Conference Hall.

Ms. Vilma Kriveliene, Advisor to the Lithuanian Minister of Agriculture, gave a review of the status of the Land Reform, Land Use and Forestry Sector Development in Lithuania. The project on "Afforestation of Abandoned Agricultural land" was presented.

Failures and good examples for Nature Protection and Environment as a result of land use in the Baltic Sea Region.

Mr. Guldbrand Skjönberg, Nacka municipality in Sweden, introduced the subject with different examples on sustainable / unsustainable practice and behaviour. From the presentation it was clear, that the Baltic States, Russia and Poland may have environmental problems related to urban and industrial development. However there are many examples on failures and serious impact on the environment as a result of land use and peoples behaviour in the Scandinavian Countries and Germany. As examples were mentioned, that use of natural resources, energy, production of waste and emission of a number of air pollutants per capita is very high in the latter countries relative to the eastern states. Further more intensive farming in Sweden, Denmark and Germany causes contamination and environmental problems for the groundwater and the water environment due to leakage of nutrients and pesticides, loss of wetland areas, etc.

Mr. Bjarne Rasmussen, Storstrom County in Denmark, conducted a brainstorm session on how to avoid failures and how to promote good strategies for Nature Protection and Environment in the Baltic Sea Region in the future. Technical and organisational issues as well as the need for and awareness raising and education were discussed. The output will be followed up in the future work of BSSSC WG 3 on Nature Protection and Environment.

The Workshop finally agreed on the following Proposal for amendment on Draft Resolution, chapter IV:

- * stressed the need to improve environmental standards and natural resource management in the Baltic Region and to direct development towards sustainability. For the acceding countries and Russia there is also an utmost need to strengthen the capacity of the environmental administration including for subregions. Further networking and project-co-operation among subregions will contribute in this respect. BSSSC will use its influence to allocate external funds, including from the EU, for this purpose.
- * appreciates the increasing importance addressed to the subregional level on environmental capacity building within the accession process. BSSSC sees its important role to contribute to these activities.