



Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) was established in 1993, based on the Stavanger declaration, and as a result of the establishment of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) in 1992.

Over the last decades the co-operation between regional actors in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has been growing rapidly and got additional momentum in effect of the EU enlargement. The BSR is a prosperous region where economic growth pushes the overall level of activity. But, it also faces big challenges when it comes to sustainability and the environmental conditions for future development.

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) has since its establishment in 2009 guided the actions of the BSSSC and its regions. The BSSSC has since the very beginning participated as a key stakeholder in the planning and implementation of the strategy. The BSSSC strives to advocate the interests of the regions and promotes its implementation and ownership on all levels of governance. In order to develop a functioning multi-level governance system, focus should be laid on involvement of local and regional actors in the overall design and review of the strategy as well as in priority area co-ordination and projects.

BSSSC encourages involving relevant regional partners from the third countries, in particular the Russian Federation and Norway, in order to tackle challenges in the macro-region effectively. The establishment of a co-operation with Russia as to the objectives of the Action Plan via the Northern Dimension, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the co-operation between the EUSBSR and the Russian development strategy of the Northwestern Federal District should be complemented by practical activities of other actors, especially cities, regions, universities, NGO's and private business partners.

#### **BSSSC's mission is to:**

- use its role as a political network 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 institutions and globally, and
- act 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, and
- promote the implementation of the EUSBSR and advocate the interests of the regions in the planning, evaluation and further development of the strategy, and
- provide expertise, best practice examples and implementation capacity, and
- co-operate closely with the territorial co-operation programmes in the Baltic Sea Region. As far as possible BSSSC will strive to have partner search activities and/or seminars for project generation and dissemination at its annual conferences, board meetings and other events.



## **BSSSC's values are**

To be an open, integrative and non-party political organisation representing the views of the sub-regions

BSSSC shall act as an open, non-party political, network organisation, which will represent the common interests of all regions around the Baltic Sea area.

To be a knowledge based organisation

BSSSC shall act within BSR, where all sub-regions, according to their interests and own economic capacity, shall contribute to a shared knowledge of government and best practice, which will be made available to regional and national authorities, the EU and other decision making bodies.

To be a visible and recognisable organisation

BSSSC shall seek to fulfil its mission through dialogue, position papers, attendance at international fora etc., and shall do this by further improving the approach and working methods both of itself and the sub-regions of the Baltic Sea Region.

To be an organisation which is flexible and receptive to change

BSSSC shall be open to and able to adjust to a constantly changing geo-political and socio-economic environment.

## **Co-operation and partners**

BSSSC shall:

- open the network for other BSR organisations on local and regional level to become “members” (CPMR BSC, B7, UBC). Each of the organisations is offered to appoint a representative to the BSSSC Board.
- work under the umbrella of CBSS and will grant a representative of the CBSS Secretariat an observatory status in the BSSSC Board meetings.
- be a cooperation partner for CBSS, Baltic 21, ARS BALTICA, Helcom, BSPC, BDF and the Baltic Intergroup of the European Parliament.
- co-operate closely with the Committee of Regions (CoR) and its Baltic Intergroup based on the Declaration of Common Interest. BSSSC shall also keep contact to other EU institutions and bodies.
- cooperate closely with the ND Partnerships, be a partner in the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) and an organisational member of the Assembly of European Regions (AER).



- co-ordinate its work and political positions when appropriate with the North Sea Commission (NSC) and the network of the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA).
- initiate and take part in political coordination groups with other BSR organisations and structures to focus on topics of high political interest for the BSR and its sub-regions.
- co-operate closely and constructively with the relevant actors of the EUSBSR .

## **Financing**

BSSSC is an open network organisation with no membership fee. Each region covers its own costs in relation to its active participation in the BSSSC work. The regions/national platforms will contribute to BSSSC through hosting Board meetings and annual conferences on a rotating basis and through active participation.

## **The bodies of BSSSC**

The constituent persons and bodies of BSSSC are as described below and they shall each seek to fulfil the political objectives of the organisation, which are described above, following the principles of credibility, knowledge, visibility and flexibility.

### The Conference

The New Chairperson is announced at the conference.

Furthermore, the conference is the main forum for the organisation, where common ideas and interests are shared. The Conference shall be held annually, in autumn, at the invitation of the host region. The host region shall be designated on a rotating basis, to be determined annually at the Conference. The conference will mainly convene regional representatives but is also open to local authorities, state government representatives, EU-institutions, NGOs and other organisations.

In order not to exclude regions from the possibility of hosting the annual conferences a participation fee is introduced. The level of the fee will be decided by the Board as a part of the preparation for the conference.

### The Board

The Board constitutes the decision making body of BSSSC and consists of two members from each country (national platform) holding a regional political mandate, two members elected by the Youth Network and one member appointed by each of the organisations CPMR BSC, UBC and B7. The Board meets on a regular basis and is responsible for ensuring the ongoing work of the organisation and its political objectives. The board members are supported in their work by civil servants that form a resource network.



At the beginning of a new chairmanship the Board decides on the priorities and political activities of the BSSSC. The work plan will be based on the priorities expressed by the national platforms as well as take into account the political issues on the agenda in the BSR and in Europe. The work plan defines the work for the secretariat supporting the political priorities. The priorities shall also be reflected in the programme of the annual conferences.

The BSSSC Board meetings shall be designed as a good combination of discussion/dialog on relevant and current political issues, reporting on activities and initiatives and updated information. Political discussions and decisions shall be facilitated e.g. by policy/discussion papers, interventions and/or presentations from invited speakers.

### The national platforms

The Board members are responsible for ensuring that, in their respective countries, there shall be set up national platforms, which will act as fora for the regional and local governments in these countries in respect of their participation in the BSSSC network. This will help to ensure that the opinions expressed by the Board members are based on a broad consensus and integrated into the daily work of the sub-regions.

The national platforms shall ensure co-ordination between the different interests of the sub-regions given their different national preconditions and the common political opinions of BSSSC, thereby allowing individual sub-regions to have impact on the political priorities and activities of BSSSC.

The Board members shall have close contact with and ensure effective co-operation with their respective national platforms, which shall convene in connection with the conferences.

### The Chairperson

The Chairperson and his/her secretariat is an important driving force in the BSSSC network and play a key role. The Chairperson of BSSSC is elected for a period of two years by the Board, and he or she represents the organization. The chairmanship can be prolonged by decision of the Board.

The Chairperson is responsible for promoting BSSSC towards important decision-makers such as the European Union, CBSS and others, either personally or by asking other BSSSC Board members to fulfil this task.

The Chairperson can ask other members of the Board to act as a spokesperson on behalf of BSSSC.

### The secretariat

The secretariat follows the Chairperson on a rotating basis. The secretariat supports the Chairperson and the Board and is responsible for the daily administration of the organisation.



The secretariat works in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Board. The secretariat prepares the Board meetings, publishes the BSSSC Newsletter and keeps the BSSSC website updated.

BSSSC has a Brussels Antenna, which shall act as a contact point in Brussels and as a collector of and distributor of information in relation to the EU institutions/policies.

All costs in relation to the Chairpersonship, the performance of his or her duties as Chairperson of BSSSC and the operation of the secretariat and the Brussels Antenna lies with the Chairperson.

#### Ad hoc working groups and rapporteurs

The Board can set up ad hoc working groups. Such groups shall work within the policy areas and priorities of BSSSC on a demand driven basis, to be determined by the Board. Possible work to be undertaken by the ad hoc working groups could relate to issues raised by the EU Commission.

Each ad hoc working group shall be chaired by a member of the Board and have a written assignment decided upon by the Board. The working groups shall develop a work plan to be presented to the Board and report to the Board at the Board meetings. The Board may also appoint rapporteurs for specific policy areas.

#### Youth Network

BSSSC shall have a Youth Network consisting of at least one representative from each of the BSR countries. The Youth Network shall convene at least twice a year – one of them being in connection with the annual conference. The Youth Network shall elect two members to the Board for a two year period at the time. The Youth Network can take part in all the work of the BSSSC.