



BALTINFO

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CHAIRMAN OF THE CBSS SHARES HIS VIEWS ON THE WAY AHEAD

Exclusive interview with Mr. Knut Vollebæk, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway

Mr. Minister, Norway has accumulated extensive experience in chairing various international organisations, ranging from the OSCE to the Barents/Euro Arctic Council. This year, it is in the pilot's seat of the CBSS. What new elements, do you think, will the Norwegian Presidency introduce into the management of the co-operation within the framework of the Council?

Taking on the Chairmanship of the CBSS is both an honour and a challenge for Norway. The Baltic Sea region is becoming increasingly important, politically, strategically and economically. This will be a challenging year for the CBSS, as some very important events will take place, like the Prime Ministers' summit, the conference of the Energy Ministers and the meeting of the Ministers of Trade. I hope these meetings will be successful and constructive, bringing our co-operation a step further towards more concrete results. But, whatever we decide within the multilateral framework will have to be implemented at the national level. By doing this, we will be clearly demonstrating that the CBSS is an important actor in the Baltic Sea region. This should be our aim in preparing for the ministerial meetings on trade and energy, and not the least the meeting at Prime Minister level. We have advocated a closer co-operation between the Barents Council and the CBSS. The agendas are to some extent overlapping. We should learn from each other's experience and avoid double work. Therefore, the two working groups on economic co-operation will have a joint meeting this autumn. We are also looking into how the Regional Council in the Barents Region could improve contacts with the BSSSC (Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation). Other areas, such as nuclear safety could also be looked into, as both regional councils are doing important work in the nuclear field. We have already seen that sub-regional co-operation can result in specific projects within the fields of the environment, private sector development, tourism and youth exchanges. We should all encourage such projects. Within the CBSS, we will now explore the Danish proposal of a funding facility for sub-regional co-operation, presented in Palanga. Norway will contribute 2 million Norwegian crowns for this purpose.

The scope of the activities of the CBSS has expanded dramatically since its creation in 1992. Do you personally share the view that some structural reforms might be necessary in order to increase the Council's capacity to co-ordinate and promote co-operation efforts in the region?

The 8th CBSS Ministerial meeting in Palanga confirmed the CBSS as an established instrument for regional co-operation in the process of creating a stable, democratic, prosperous and undivided Europe. Regional co-operation among the countries in the Baltic Sea region is thriving, as evidenced by the ministerial conferences held over the last year in the areas of environment, spatial planning, transport, culture, labour market, youth, trade and industry, small and medium-sized enterprises, energy and children at risk. The regional network is steadily expanding, and co-operation has already started in all these areas. There is, however, a problem that we lack an overview and a full appreciation of all these regional activities. At present, there is no central co-ordinating body. The CBSS is a body made up of the Foreign ministers and most activities take place outside the scope of the Council. In my statement in Palanga, I stressed that it is time to take stock and take a look at the way we organise the work in the CBSS. There is need to look at the present CBSS structure of co-operation to evaluate whether this is the optimal one to handle the multitude of questions dealt with at the regional level. Are our working methods as efficient as they might be? Should there be a closer co-ordination of all the activities in the region, and how can this best be achieved? We should get the maximum results out of our joint efforts. I do not at present have any clear-cut answers as to what adjustments we need to make to ensure the necessary co-ordination and synergies, but I think we might draw on some of the experiences of our Nordic co-operation.

The priorities of the Norwegian Presidency presented at the CBSS Ministerial session in Palanga have been published on the pages of our Newsletter. In which fields do you expect to achieve most tangible results during your Chairmanship?

Stable and reliable energy supplies are of fundamental importance for economic growth and long-term regional stability. The initiative taken by the Norwegian Prime Minister in Riga in January last year, to develop the energy co-operation in the Baltic Sea region towards a sustainable energy supply, was further developed by the Ministers of energy's meeting in Stavanger in December last year. The Ministers agreed to follow up on the co-operation in the fields of gas, electricity, climate and energy efficiency. The next meeting of energy ministers, in Helsinki in October, will establish the framework for more concrete co-operation in these fields. Economic co-operation will remain high on the CBSS' agenda, with sustainable economic development as the overriding

objective. Stable and predictable frameworks must be created to encourage trade and investment. This can be done by establishing stable tax regimes and investment protection agreements. Given that the CBSS works on a consensus basis and that it has no budget of its own, the only way of achieving concrete results is through national implementation of decisions made at the CBSS level.

Regional co-operation is also thriving at the non-governmental level. This is a sign of the region's viability, and evidence of the close relationships between our peoples and regions. A lot of very important work is being done. I think this non-governmental sub-regional co-operation will increase, both in volume and in importance, over the years to come. The CBSS and other regional bodies might have their greatest potential in this field of people-to-people contacts. At the core of our efforts should lie the goal of facilitating contacts between people at all levels, between individuals, enterprises, associations, municipalities, counties and national authorities. In Palanga, sub-regional co-operation was a theme covered by a majority of the Ministers in their interventions. I therefore feel I have their backing when I say that we will look very closely into how the CBSS, operating at a governmental level, can co-operate with other actors at the sub-national level.

As the former chair of the Barents/EuroArctic Council, which has a very strong regional component, I would like to look into what lessons the CBSS can learn from its work. Therefore, Norway will invite representatives from the Regional Council of the Barents Council to meet with representatives of the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC) to a meeting to explore possible ways to explore ways to co-operate and exchange experiences.

I would also like to mention EuroFaculty and its financial problems and the need to look for new ways of organising this important CBSS activity. We all agree that it is an academic success. The problem is that so much of the time and energy of the people running the project has to be devoted to securing the necessary financing. I would like to urge our Baltic friends to put a high priority to insuring that funding for the EuroFaculty is provided over their national budgets in the years to come. If not, I fear that donor countries will no longer contribute to this important project.

Judging from the ministerial discussion in Palanga in June, the Northern Dimension for the policies of the EU remains in the focus of interest of governments in the region. What role in the implementation of the ND do you foresee for the CBSS?

The Barents/EuroArctic Council, the Arctic Council and the CBSS together cover the geographical area of the Northern Dimension. The CBSS in Palanga stated its readiness to play an active role in the implementation of the Northern Dimension and to contribute to the development of practical co-operation in key areas: infrastructure, trade and investment, nuclear safety and energy, environment and cross-border co-operation, democracy and the rule of law, education and human resources development, public health and social administration. The Council viewed the Northern Dimension as a useful framework to promote synergies between the many relevant EU instruments and programmes. In this context, the Council noted the need for a better co-ordination of efforts undertaken by the European Union and CBSS states, aimed at working out and implementing concrete projects within the existing legal and budgetary framework.

The Northern Dimension will be high on the political agenda this autumn. The EU and partner countries will meet in Helsinki in November at ministerial level, and the Northern Dimension will also be on the agenda of the European Council meeting in Helsinki in December. I find it significant that our countries have been invited to take part in the planning and implementation of the Northern Dimension. In doing this, the EU has opened up a new perspective for the CBSS and the Barents Council. During the Norwegian Chairmanship, we wish to look into how the CBSS can contribute to implementing the intentions of the Northern Dimension in a practical way. Certainly, the CBSS might act as a co-ordinating body and in the practical implementation of the Northern Dimension.

It has now been made official that the third Baltic Sea summit will take place in Denmark in the first half of the Year 2000. In your opinion, what main topics may be brought on the agenda of this meeting of Heads of Government of CBSS Member States?

I am pleased that we have agreed on holding a summit meeting in Denmark in April next year. During our Chairmanship we will do our utmost to secure that the summit will result in a new and concrete impetus to our co-operation within the Baltic Sea region. The preparations for the summit will be one of our primary tasks in the months to come. The overriding objective is to achieve more concrete results and an efficient organisational structure in order to ensure co-ordination of all activities in the region.

Development of the Baltic Sea Region:
a Concern for all Actors

The latest development in the relationship between CBSS and BSSSC has been very positive. At the ministerial meeting in Palanga this summer, the CBSS expressed support to the BSSSC in several ways. The Foreign Ministers stressed the importance of building stability and promoting people-to-people contacts, cross-border cooperation and Civil Security in the region. Specifically, the CBSS underlines the necessity to facilitate decentralised co-operation, including the development of local and regional self-government.

Mr. Knud Andersen

The Norwegian CBSS Chairmanship has prioritised the strengthening of subregional co-operation in the Baltic Sea area. In particular, two important issues have been raised:

1. Establishment of local-level programmes; and
2. Improvement of co-ordination between existing financial arrangements in the region.

These two issues touch upon a very important and necessary condition for the subregional co-operation, namely, that access to financial sources is crucial for interregional co-operation and people-to-people activities. Furthermore, this access should be made easy for the subregions. Bureaucratic obstacles are not just a cause for irritation for subregional

project co-ordinators. It is often a matter of good initiatives never being carried out due to a problematic and slow administrative praxis. I warmly welcome the priorities of the Norwegian CBSS Chairmanship. In August, I had the opportunity to discuss these priorities with the CBSS Chairman, Mr. Knut Vollebæk in Oslo. The Minister confirmed the pledge to work for a Baltic Sea programme for subregions, based on the idea launched by the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs at the CBSS meeting in Palanga. BSSSC members do need such a programme, since the EU will not prolong the Baltic Small Project Facility (BSPF) in its current form. Financial support for interregional co-operation must now be taken from the national Phare allocations in the 4 applicant countries, and the risk is that the BSPF will be splintered into 4 bilateral national programmes. This is not in the interest of local and regional authorities in the region and will not contribute to further integration. A Nordic programme will therefore be most welcome. Minister Vollebæk also gave his warm support to the idea of the BSSSC using the concept of the Northern Dimension to pull the whole region closer together and to link EU member states to applicant and non-applicant countries. In this connection, the importance of the Russian regions was stressed, also using the Northern Dimension as a tool, which is parallel to the accession process and supporting it. Pre-accession is important to all actors in the region, but the awareness about not cutting off other countries in the accession process is of at least equal importance. This perception is also expressed in the opinion of the EU Committee of the Regions, which clearly states that the Northern Dimension encompasses all countries around the Baltic Sea. At the 7th BSSSC Conference, which will be held in Kaunas, Lithuania on 28-30 October, we will try to include both of these aspects. On the one hand, we will focus on the pre-accession process of the candidate countries, while on the other we will also focus on the Northern Dimension as an opening for co-operation with countries like Russia and Norway, both of which are not striving for EU membership. This would pave the way for co-operation on general, non-EU legislative topics. The BSSSC is currently preparing two reports that will outline how the BSSSC and the subregions may deal with these two political issues in the future. The reports will be presented at the Conference in Kaunas. The efforts to ensure a general Baltic Sea development, for EU member states, candidate countries and non-member states alike, must be based on co-operation between networks and actors. Among these is the Barents/EuroArctic Council, which is combining both the state level and decentralised authorities. I believe that the CBSS, BEAC and BSSSC may learn a great deal from each other and take advantage of each other's strengths. The Chairman of the CBSS proposed a meeting between the organisations in order to discuss questions of common interest and to consider possible ways of inspiration and co-operation. The ultimate goal for all organisations of the Baltic Sea area is - and should be - to contribute to and build a prosperous and peaceful region. A region characterised by co-operation and development to the benefit of the citizens of all the Baltic Sea States, no matter what their national political priorities may be.

Knud Andersen
Chairman of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation

Agreement on Trade Union Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region

In connection with the European Trade Union Congress in Helsinki in July 1999, the trade union organisations in the Nordic Countries, Germany, Poland, the Baltic republics and Russia signed a new agreement affecting 20 million trade union members around the Baltic Sea.

The negotiation process started on the initiative of the German Trade Union Confederation, DGB. DGB was responsible for the initial material and after three joint seminars held in Hamburg, Copenhagen and Stockholm, these efforts have produced an agreement titled "Vision Baltic Sea 2010". The document envisages an impressive development of trade union co-operation in the region. Among other things, meetings of the trade union organisations around the Baltic Sea will be arranged, where concrete trade union and political initiatives concerning the region will be drawn up. Promoting the development of social dialogue and tripartite co-operation is one of the key objectives of regional trade union interaction. The main goal consists in enhancing contacts with the employers' organisations of the Baltic Sea region. The enlargement of the European Union has increased the importance of the Baltic Sea region for the European community. Socio-economic development of the St Petersburg area also contributes to this. The region has economic potential and possibilities for growth, which could have a positive influence on the European Union as a whole. This was emphasised by Mr. Emilio Gabaglio, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation during his press conference following the signing ceremony in Helsinki. During the same press conference, the President of the Norwegian Labour Organisation and of the Council of Nordic Trade Unions, NFS, Mr. Yngve Hågensen underlined the possibilities for this co-operation during the Finnish EU Chairmanship and expressed the hope that Finland would put social partnership and democratic development high on the agenda in the integration process in the Baltic Sea region. The trade union organisations around the Baltic Sea regard well-functioning social security systems and increased democracy in both economy and society as important conditions for positive economic development of the region. Also needed are comprehensive collective agreements, well-developed labour legislation and enhanced co-operation between trade union organisations, the employers and the governments. Baltic Sea trade union co-operation is not a recent phenomenon. Yet, the "Vision Baltic Sea 2010" makes it possible to work more systematically. Languages and cultures, as well as economical and labour market policy conditions are different in countries of the region. This factor is bound to make the work quite difficult, but at the same time, a big challenge for trade union interaction. A Baltic Sea Trade Union Conference, expected to be attended by some 100 participants, is scheduled to take place in Riga on 2-3 November 1999.

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Integrating the Baltic Sea Region and the European Union

The Baltic Sea region faces a tremendous challenge from the enlargement of the European Union. New applicants, like Poland and the three Baltic countries, are at present preparing for their EU membership, going through a significant change of their national regulations, a thorough investigation into budgets and political considerations among politicians and the population about the prospects. Other countries also prepare for the new situation, which bring a promise of economic progress for the whole region in the beginning of the next millennium. This development is a challenge for the Baltic Sea ports, as well. The ports are presently well-prepared for the new demands in trade and transport, but still, necessary improvements are being made in order to bring the performance of the Baltic transport chain to the level of its potential. To keep this difficult process on the right track, it is necessary to

have a continuous exchange of views, ideas and information among decision-makers within the region. That is why the Baltic Ports Organisation (BPO) has arranged a high level conference on: "Integrating the Baltic Region and the European Union - prospects, obstacles and perspectives", which will take on the island of Bornholm, Denmark, on 7-8 October 1999. We will have the pleasure to hear high-level speakers from the CBSS, the Non-Members Division of the OECD, the European Commission, national authorities. Politicians and researchers, not to forget representatives of the shipping industry itself, will present their views on the perspectives for the Baltic Sea region, the EU enlargement process, social and economic development. The Baltic Sea is quite often regarded as a big lake with access to other parts of Europe and to the deep sea through the Danish Straits and the inland waterways. There are excellent possibilities for further development of short sea shipping - one of the most environmentally friendly modes of transport. At present, more than 350 million tonnes of goods and 75 million passengers are carried by sea in the region. This includes more than 2 million containers and 3 million trailers, carried by vessels across the Baltic Sea. Ships' gross tonnage reaches 1 bln. tonnes. Baltic Ports Organisation, the trade organisation for 59 sea ports located in the Baltic Sea region, has been in business for almost a decade. All large and medium-sized ports around the Baltic Sea are members of BPO, which was established upon the initiative of the ports of Copenhagen, Rostock and Tallinn at the end of 1990. Ports from all countries around the Baltic Sea are represented in the Board. Three Committees - on Communication, Environment and Education & Training - have been established to carry out the work of the organisation. In the first years, BPO served as an important forum for exchanging views and experience among ports in the region. It still does, but the organisation has over the years become the political mouthpiece for Baltic Sea ports on various common issues. BPO enjoys an observer status in the Helsinki Commission - the only intergovernmental regulation-making institution in the region. We also participate in the political process of other important regional bodies, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States and joint bodies of co-operation between the European Commission and the governments around the Baltic Sea. I expect the conference to bring the ports and shipping business closer to national administrations and international organisations. With 40 million inhabitants in the near range alone, the region holds a large market potential, in the light of which the conference shall highlight the possibilities for the Baltic region in European and global economy. A mutual understanding of the mechanism of the relationship between economic growth, transport demand and sustainable development shall keep the region on track. We all wish the Baltic Sea to become a pleasant place to live by - now and for the generations to come.

*Henning Hummelose
Chairman of the Baltic Ports Organisation*

For further information regarding the registration at the conference and its programme, please contact The BPO Secretariat, Nordre Toldbod 7, P.O. Box 2083, 1013 Copenhagen, Denmark, ATT. Ms. Anette Sonderup, Phone +45 33 47 99 99, Fax +45 33 47 99 33

Third Baltic Sea Customs Conference

On 9 and 10 September 1999, senior representatives of the customs administrations of CBSS Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation and the European Commission) met in Gdansk, Poland for the Third Baltic Sea Customs Conference. The World Customs Organisation, the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association, the Baltic Sea Task-Force on Combating Organised Crime and Eurocustoms were also represented.

A series of recommendations have been adopted by the Conference, on the basis of discussions held in three working parties, which dealt respectively with integrity, trade management and enforcement. The following are the key decisions agreed upon by the participants and included in the Final Declaration:

- o The clearance time for border crossings shall be kept under 2 hours.
- o Where necessary, Members of the Council of Baltic Sea States shall take action to fulfil the requirements of a maximum time for customs clearance. The results will be discussed during a joint seminar to be organised by the Baltic Sea countries and the Baltic Sea Chamber of Commerce Association (BCCA) and shall be reported to the next Baltic Sea Customs Conference.
- o A small ad-hoc working group shall be established under the umbrella of the permanent Working Group on Procedures, with the aim of working out a common standard for providing Baltic Sea business operators with information regarding the most important formalities and documents needed at border crossings.
- o In order to improve and facilitate the flow of information, an Internet solution shall be developed, with links to the Home page for each national customs authority. A Home page for the Baltic Sea Customs Conference shall be created and linked to the Website of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.
- o The contents of the Customs Information Brochure shall be published on the Home page of the Baltic Sea Customs Conference. In order to ensure a regular update of the information included in the Customs information brochure, a contact person shall be appointed in each Baltic Sea country.
- o A seminar shall be organised in the year 2000, by the Baltic Sea Customs Administrations and the Baltic Sea Chamber of Commerce Association with the objective of promoting a close dialogue between the business community and the customs authorities in the Baltic Sea region.
- o The customs administrations shall conclude bilateral agreements covering the scope of information exchange between local and regional customs offices, in order to achieve a higher level of effectiveness and efficiency in combating cross-border fraud.
- o The Customs conference shall seek a more active involvement in international law enforcement fora, particularly the Baltic Sea Task-Force on combating organised crime.
- o A standard Customs Official's Code of Ethics shall be elaborated, establishing rules of ethical behaviour. It shall be made available immediately on recruitment of new staff, which will be trained on this subject within three months upon recruitment :
- o A "hot line" shall be established as a means for the public and the customs officials themselves to provide information on alleged cases of misconduct of customs officials. This information shall be handled confidentially by a separate internal audit or investigation unit.

Next Steps

The Conference decided to establish two Permanent Working Parties - on Enforcement (Chair: Norway) and on Procedures (Chair: Sweden), which were assigned the task of carrying on the work of the 3rd Baltic Sea Customs Conference until its next meeting. Poland volunteered to organise a seminar on Customs' integrity in the year 2000. Finland will host a joint seminar on the promotion of the dialogue with Trade operators the same year. The next Baltic Sea Customs Conference will be held in Lithuania in 2001.

The text of the Final Declaration of the 3rd Baltic Sea Customs Conference can be downloaded from the Website of the CBSS, www.baltinfo.org

PARLIAMENTARIANS' CORNER
Formalising structures of Baltic Sea
Parliamentary Co-operation

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) shall work to strengthen co-operation between national and regional parliaments in the Baltic Sea region. It shall initiate and pursue political activities in the region and thereby give them additional democratic legitimacy and parliamentary authority. The BSPC aims to be the parliamentary dimension of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

This is stated in the new Rules and Procedures governing Baltic Sea Parliamentary Co-operation, adopted at the 8th BSPC Conference in Mariehamn, Åland, on 7-8 September 1999.

The new set of rules formalises the Parliamentary Co-operation and outlines the work of its Standing Committee. The new Rules state that proposals and recommendations adopted at the annual conferences should be addressed to the CBSS, to governments and parliaments on both national and regional levels, as well as to supranational bodies and international organisations, as appropriate. The Rules and Procedures also entrust the BSPC Standing Committee with the responsibility to follow up on the implementation of the final resolutions approved by preceding conferences - in addition to the task of organising the annual conference in co-operation with the host parliament. The Standing Committee will also enjoy the power to set up ad hoc working groups.

The importance of the parliamentary dimension of the Baltic Sea Co-operation was stressed by the Chairman of the CBSS, Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, in his address to the conference in Mariehamn. Mr. Vollebæk also called for closer co-operation between the parliamentary assemblies and governmental institutions in the region. The next annual Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference will be held in Malmö, Sweden in the year 2000.

Britt-Marie Forslund
Secretariat of the Nordic Council, Copenhagen

Baltic Co-operation Speeds On

The new formal structures for the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference have given politicians an improved tool with which to monitor the governments' compliance with their resolutions.

Visions and declarations of intent are no longer the driving force behind Baltic Sea parliamentary co-operation. At the eighth Baltic Sea Conference in Mariehamn in the Åland islands, parliamentarians gave themselves the task of initiating, and not least following-up and monitoring, political activities in the Baltic Sea region. The permanent Standing Committee, which represents parliamentarians between conferences, has been charged with making sure that resolutions are implemented in the individual countries.

"I think we have achieved good results in recent years," says BSPC Standing Committee Chairman Mr. Svend Erik Hovmand, MP (Liberal) of Denmark. Mr. Hovmand also stressed that strengthening the Northern Dimension for the policies of the European Union was another important task. "That means involving Russia and thus strengthening peace in this important part of the world," he added.

Environment in Focus

"I live on the Western edge of the Baltic Sea region, and in Denmark we are dependent on what happens at the other end of the Baltic. Luckily, we have seen a much greater and broader involvement in environmental issues in Poland, Russia and the three Baltic countries," says Mr. Hovmand.

Other areas which have attracted considerable attention, and in which there has been progress, are co-operation in the battle against crime, unemployment and welfare issues. "The resolution that we have passed today clearly shows this. I see it as a very important point for the countries around the Baltic Sea, that so many nations are able to agree on so many common tasks. My own feeling is that the environmental passages of the resolution are the most important," the Chairman of the Standing Committee points out.

He went on to say that all Baltic Sea countries were highly sensitive to environmental pollution.

"We have now recommended to parliamentarians in the 10 member countries that they carry through the resolution that has been sent to national governments and the Baltic Council, and monitor their compliance. We have also asked MPs to keep an eye on their own governments to make sure that they follow up on resolutions".

From Visions to Realpolitik

Mr. Kalevi Sorsa, Finland's former Prime minister and Speaker of Eduskunta (parliament) said in his closing speech that the co-operation had changed a lot since its inception in 1990.

"Initially, we were all extremely enthusiastic and had so many great visions. We experienced the beginning of a new era of European co-operation," said Mr. Sorsa.

"Now, there are fewer feelings and more pragmatism in the assembly. Have we lost the spark? I don't believe so. But from castles in the air and great expectations, we have entered the process of detailed and concrete solutions. Our progress is measured in the toil of a hard day's work. At the end of the day, it is only the concrete results that count".

Sissel Klíngenberg
Copenhagen

CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

adopted by the 8th Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region, according to the Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Conference Mariehamn, 8th September 1999

Members of the Parliaments of Åland, Bremen, Denmark, Estonia, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Hamburg, Iceland, Kaliningrad, Karelia, Latvia, Lithuania, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, St Petersburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Sweden as well as the Baltic Assembly, the Council of Europe, the Nordic Council and the OSCE, met in Mariehamn on the Åland Islands on 7-8 September 1999 to discuss the social dimension of the EU enlargement, as well as sustainable development and its environmental aspects specially for the Baltic Sea and to continue to develop the existing co-operation between representative institutions of the Baltic Sea Region.

The participants of the Conference

noting

- (1) the outcome of the 8th Ministerial Session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) in Palanga in June 1999,
 - (2) the Council of Europe's resolution of nuclear waste (no 1157),
 - (3) the Baltic 21, adopted at the 7th Ministerial Session of the CBSS, Nyborg, June 1998,
 - (4) the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed by the member states of the European Union in June 1997 and entered into force in May 1999,
 - (5) the conclusions of the European Council, approving (in Vienna in December 1998), the Northern Dimension report, (in Berlin in March 1999) the Agenda 2000 and (in Cologne in June 1999) the Common Strategy on Russia,
 - (6) the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work and its follow-up in June 1998,
- call on the CBSS and Governments of the participating countries, as appropriate
- (7) to increase the co-ordination of the work concerning the Baltic Sea co-operation, taking into account the different ministerial fora,
 - (8) to report to the Parliamentary Conference concerning measures undertaken in the Baltic Sea Region to reduce the emission of climate gases, using the flexible mechanism introduced in the Kyoto Protocol for actors in one country to participate in cost-effective implementation in another country, so-called joint implementation, and to consider the possibility of establishing a pilot project for this purpose,
 - (9) to meet the constant challenge of achieving a sustainable development, by continuing the implementation process of the Baltic Agenda 21, by improving especially the co-operation with industry and by information activities concerning sustainable development and how to be a sustainable consumer, comprising at the same time environmental and socio-economic aspects,
 - (10) to reduce point source pollution in the Baltic Sea according to the 50 % reduction target, including the so-called "hot spots" by all possible administrative measures,
 - (11) to take measures aiming at energy-saving and to encourage the governments to set up a common goal for increased energy efficiency, to phase out nuclear power as soon as possible and to make plans for terminal storage of nuclear waste,
 - (12) to take measures designed to make greater use of renewable energy sources,
 - (13) to provide the necessary conditions for the establishment of a common electricity market around the Baltic Sea by using harmonisation and realisation of environmental and trading rules and regulations in order to avoid environmental dumping, and by creating a framework where environmental investments, such as rehabilitation of existing thermal power plants and the use of combined heat and power (CHP), can be financed on market terms,
 - (14) to provide the necessary conditions for the establishment of a common market for natural gas around the Baltic Sea, as stated by the Ministers of Energy of the CBSS in the Stavanger Communiqué of 1st December 1998, bearing in mind the interest of the European Union concerning such a market,
 - (15) to set up a common goal for the reduction of the extensive emission of nitrogen from the traffic around and on the Baltic Sea and, when making infrastructural investments in the field of transportation, in each single case choose the alternative that causes the smallest stress upon the environment, which may imply a general shift from road transport to sea and train transport,
 - (16) to make time schedule for how and in which order the outlets that are mentioned in the HELCOM "hot spot" list should be taken care of, if appropriate, with common financing. The results of the Baltic Sea 2008 project should here be made use of,
 - (17) to make the outlets of the settlements more effective in order to reach the recommendations that are established. The principle of recycling of waste should be respected,
 - (18) to make a plan of information to agriculture, silviculture and fishing about climate, new methods for cultivation, new technology and new methods of work which can be more effective. In this way, the leakage of nitrogen and phosphorus can be reduced at a minimum cost,
 - (19) to maintain a policy, stressing employment, lifelong learning, and social justice and to improve welfare and living conditions,
 - (20) to develop and strengthen the tripartite co-operation between governments, employers and their organisations and employees and the trade unions, in accordance with the standards set up by the European Union and based on respect for the ILO's core labour standards,
 - (21) to define in co-operation with the EU the role of regional organisations and regional co-operation in the context of the Northern Dimension,
 - (22) to support and implement the initiative of the Finnish presidency to set up a concrete action programme as a follow up to the Northern Dimension strategy paper
 - (23) to develop and implement a programme on raising environmental awareness of the general public and environmental education at all levels (kindergarten, primary schools, high schools, universities, vocational training)
 - (24) to help the EU applicant countries to undertake the necessary efforts especially for the environmental legislation to take over the *acquis communautaire*,
 - (25) to assist the EU applicant countries in harmonising their policies with EU policy, especially in the fields of health and safety at work, equal opportunities for of men and women, social dialogue and labour law,
 - (26) to increasingly integrate the principle of sustainable development into the policies of the EU and all European countries,
 - (27) to encourage institution building in the social sector with the aid of the PHARE and TACIS funds in close co-operation with local and regional authorities and NGOs,

have decided

- (28) to adopt the new Rules of Procedure for the Parliamentary Conference and the Standing Committee. The rules will enter into force following the 8th Parliamentary Conference in Mariehamn;
- (29) to ask the CBSS to continue to report to the parliamentary conference about its activities;
- (30) to request Baltic Agenda 21 and HELCOM together with the CBSS to further develop strategies in the environmental fields;

(31) to encourage the CBSS to make use of appropriate institutions in order to improve the information on the environmental situation;

(32) to accept with gratitude the invitation of the Parliament of Sweden to hold the 9th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference on the 4th to 5th September 2000 in Malmö.

Edited and published by the CBSS Secretariat • Jacek Starosciak, Director • Serguei O. Sokolov, Senior Advisor

Useful CBSS addresses

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