

St. Petersburg and the Enlarged EU

EXCLUSIVE BALTINFO INTERVIEW WITH VALENTINA MATVIENKO, GOVERNOR OF ST. PETERSBURG



Valentina Matvienko, Governor of St. Petersburg, appreciates the many partnerships the city enjoys with Baltic Sea subregions and cities.

Photo: Igor Zarembo

Baltinfo: The City of St. Petersburg is the largest metropolis in the Baltic Sea region (BSR), with 4.6 million inhabitants. It owes its uniqueness to its geographical location: it is situated at Russia's edge and has a close proximity to the member states of the European Union. Do you expect the EU enlargement to bring a new impetus to the development of the external relations and economic links of St. Petersburg? To what extent may external relations priorities be adjusted?

Valentina Matvienko: The founder of St. Petersburg, Peter the Great, ingeniously foresaw three centuries ago all the advantages that the city's location could have. Our city offers its partners opportunities for networking with both the central parts of Russia and the new independent states. Our city is a gateway between Europe and Asia.

Without doubt, the EU enlargement brings changes to the relationship between St. Petersburg and the ten new EU members, as well as with all Baltic Sea countries. The Russian Federation will connect with the new "ten" not only via bilateral treaties and agreements, but also through existing legal instruments regarding its relationship with the EU. These are in, particular, the EU – Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (1997), as well as the Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia and the Russian Federation's Medium-term Strategy for developing relations with the European Union (2000–2010).

At the same time, the EU enlargement will impact the socio-economic structure, the development of new industry and service sectors. Outdated and non-competitive sectors will be phased out. One can

expect changes in the market and in the types of raw materials that are required. These changes could trigger a creation of new commodity groups in the trade between St. Petersburg and the new EU members.

St. Petersburg expects that the new "ten" may influence the overall policies of the EU. One such area of influence could be the EU Northern Dimension Policy, which owes its creation to the active involvement of Finland and Sweden in 1997. It is hoped that similar initiatives can be developed.

Baltinfo: In your view, will the interaction between the Baltic Sea states remain an important sphere of cooperation after the EU enlargement, or does it risk losing topicality? What are the common tasks that the neighbours around Baltic Sea should focus their efforts on?

Matvienko: The Government of St. Petersburg finds the cooperation with countries of the Baltic Sea region one of its priorities both for external relations and foreign-economic activities. Main areas could be: economy and trade, the environment, development of the information society and technologies, culture, education and exchange of information and tourism. A priority should also be to establish efficient machinery for promoting joint projects and applying for funding from relevant financial institutions (the European Commission, the Nordic Council of Ministers). The potential of St. Petersburg as a centre of transit traffic and transport thoroughways should be used more actively.

Baltinfo: St. Petersburg has participated in CBSS activities indirectly – through

the CBSS-related subregional organisations such as the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) and the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC). Do you envisage increasing the level of interaction with different organisations and structures in the Baltic Sea region following the changes in the European environment? Is it appropriate to assume that St. Petersburg is ready to become a leader of the Russian North-West regions in the Baltic Sea cooperation?

Matvienko: The Government of St. Petersburg highly appreciates the role of the CBSS as an intergovernmental organisation that provides a platform for taking important political decisions. The CBSS also takes Russia's opinions and interests into account. The EU enlargement would increase the significance of the Council when it comes to taking up topical issues of international cooperation. The existing system of Baltic Sea organisations and subregional structures is being guided by CBSS decisions.

The Government of St. Petersburg is willing to make full use of the potential for cooperation in the BSR, including such organisations as BSSSC, UBC, and the Baltic Sea Metropolises Network. The Baltic Development Forum, the annual meeting of which the delegation of St. Petersburg has been attending, is also one of the vital forums of cooperation. Based on relevant suggestions from St. Petersburg, the Russian delegation to BDF Summits has always put forward proposals for various CBSS activities. The Baltic Sea States subregions are keen on including the City of St. Petersburg as an equal partner in all possible joint initiatives emanating from the largest cities of the Baltic Sea region, despite the fact that St. Petersburg is not a EU city.

The leadership of St. Petersburg among other regions of the Russian North-West in co-operation around the Baltic Sea area is natural. We have a considerable scientific, technical and cultural potential together with a developed transport infrastructure, including one of the most important ports in the Baltic Sea. St. Petersburg is called the second capital in Russia;

one could also label it the core of the Russian North-West.

Baltinfo: The CBSS is keen on promoting and further developing cross-border cooperation (CBC) in the region, especially within the areas adjacent to the new "external" EU border. For this reason CBSS is consolidating its efforts with the Nordic Council of Ministers in order to create a pilot project in this area. How important was the cross-border cooperation with foreign partners, particularly with Finland, for St. Petersburg during recent years, and how successful was it? In which forms and directions should the future CBC take place with the countries of the enlarged EU and EEA countries?

Matvienko: St. Petersburg pays considerable attention to the development of cross-border cooperation. For example, one could mention projects within the scope of activities of the UBC on Information Society, which the City of St. Petersburg has the privilege of chairing. The long-term programmes of cooperation between St. Petersburg and the cities of Tallinn and Narva (Estonia), Vilnius (Lithuania), Helsinki, Turku and Tampere (Finland), are also of major importance. Due to the fact that subregions of the Baltic Sea are adjacent, the EU enlargement will entail a need to improve cross-border and trans-frontier cooperation in the region.

Baltinfo: St. Petersburg is a renowned cultural and educational centre of Russia. Culture and education also rank high on the CBSS agenda. Referring to the St. Petersburg Declaration, adopted at the VI Conference of the Baltic Sea States' Ministers of Culture in St. Petersburg in December 2003, how important would you judge activities of CBSS structures such as the Baltic Sea Monitoring Group on Heritage Cooperation, the Ars Baltica Organising Committee, and the idea of launching a joint Baltic Sea Music Festival? Does the city intend to put forward any of its own initiatives on enhancing cultural cooperation in the region?

Matvienko: The celebrations of the 300th

anniversary of St. Petersburg last year highlighted the city's role as the cultural capital of Russia. Every year the theatres, museums and palaces of our city attract tourists from all over the world. One can compare favourably the education level of the city's inhabitants with the level in most developed European cities. We greatly appreciate the activities of the Baltic Sea Monitoring Group on Heritage Cooperation and the Ars Baltica Organising Committee.

Since 1991 St. Petersburg has regularly hosted the International Theatre Festival "Baltic Home". It seeks to restore and widen the fading cultural links with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were traditionally linked to the cultural space of St. Petersburg. This endeavour could be a tangible contribution to cultural exchanges between the countries concerned. As for the joint Baltic Sea Music Festival, the City of St. Petersburg expresses its readiness to take part in this initiative.

We invite all BSR countries to participate in an international competition to create a design for the Square of Europe in St. Petersburg, which was inaugurated in autumn 2003. The terms and timing of the competition will be announced shortly. All are also invited to take part in the project "Russian Route in Europe", which aims to place special plaques in European cities visited by prominent Russian figures. This project is established in conjunction with the one called "The European Route in St. Petersburg".

Baltinfo: How do you assess the efficiency of the EU Northern Dimension policy towards the Russian North-West, and especially St. Petersburg? Do you see areas where additional partnerships, besides the ND Environmental Partnership and ND Partnership on Public Health and Social Well-being, could be established in the region to promote cooperation with Russia?

Matvienko: We proceed from the point of view that the Finnish initiative on the

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Интервью с Губернатором Санкт - Петербурга, Валентиной Матвиенко, для ежемесячного издания СГБМ "BALTINFO"

Baltinfo: Санкт – Петербург является самым крупным городом Балтийского региона с населением в 4.6 млн. жителей. Уникальность города связана с его географическим расположением: он возведен на краю России, по соседству со странами Евросоюза. Станет ли расширение ЕС новым импульсом для развития международных связей и внешнеэкономических отношений Петербурга? Как в этой связи могут измениться приоритеты внешних сношений города?

Основатель Санкт-Петербурга Петр Великий гениально предугадал три века назад все выгоды, которые сулит столь удачное расположение города. Сегодня наш город открывает своим партнерам возможности контактов как с регионами центральной России, так и со странами СНГ. Наш город – прямые ворота для Европы в Азию.

Вне всякого сомнения, расширение Европейского союза приведет к изменениям в отношениях Санкт-Петербурга не только с десятью новыми членами Евросоюза, но и со всеми странами региона Балтийского моря. В первую очередь, это связано с тем, что Российская Федерация в своих контактах с новыми странами-членами ЕС будет руководствоваться не только двусторонними договорами и соглашениями, но и существующей договорно-правовой базой в отношениях с Европейским Союзом. В частности, Соглашением о партнерстве и сотрудничестве (СПС) 1997 года и «Стратегией развития отношений Российской Федерации и Европейского Союза на среднесрочную перспективу (2000 - 2010)».

Вместе с тем, вступление новых стран в Европейский союз приведет к значительным изменениям в их социально-экономической структуре, развитию новых отраслей промышленности и сферы услуг. Одновременно, под влиянием объективных факторов будет происходить постепенный отход от устаревших и неконкурентоспособных отраслей. Стоит ожидать также изменения в традиционных источниках получения сырьевых ресурсов и рынках сбыта готовой продукции. В силу этих причин, в частности, в товарообороте между Санкт-Петербургом и новыми членами ЕС могут появиться новые товарные группы.

Санкт-Петербург может ожидать, что конкретные приоритеты политики новых стран Евросоюза повлияют на общие направления политики ЕС. В качестве примера можно привести инициативу Северного измерения ЕС, которая была создана в 1997 году под влиянием Финляндии и Швеции. Есть основания надеяться, что подобные инициативы появятся и в будущем.

Baltinfo: Считаете ли Вы, что взаимодействие стран Балтийского региона останется важной сферой сотрудничества после расширения ЕС, или же оно рискует потерять актуальность? На решении каких совместных задач следовало бы сосредоточиться соседями по Балтийскому морю?

Правительство Санкт-Петербурга считает сотрудничество со странами региона Балтийского моря одним из приоритетов своей международной и внешнеэкономической деятельности.

Для создания условий более тесного взаимодействия необходимо решать задачи, прежде всего, в таких областях, как: торговое экономическое сотрудничество; защита окружающей среды; развитие информационного общества и информационных технологий; развитие потенциала Санкт-Петербурга как центра транзитных перевозок и транспортных коридоров; развитие сотрудничества в области культуры, образования, обмена информацией и туризма; создание эффективного механизма продвижения совместных проектов для финансирования соответствующими финансовыми институтами (Европейская Комиссия, Совет Министров Северных стран и др.).

Baltinfo: Санкт – Петербург принимает участие в деятельности СГБМ не напрямую, а косвенным образом – через членство в субрегиональных организациях, как, например, Союз Балтийских городов, Конференция субрегионов государств Балтийского моря. Намерен ли Санкт – Петербург наращивать уровень взаимодействия с другими действующими на Балтике организациями и структурами в условиях нового политического расклада сил в Европе? Можно ли, по-вашему, полагать, что Санкт – Петербург готов занять лидирующую позицию среди регионов российского Северо-запада в осуществлении сотрудничества на Балтике?

Правительство Санкт-Петербурга высоко ценит роль Совета Государств Балтийского моря как межправительственной организации, являющейся важнейшей платформой для принятия значимых политических решений. В связи с расширением ЕС усиливается значение СГБМ по обсуждению актуальных вопросов международного сотрудничества. Сложившаяся система международных организаций, постоянно действующих субрегиональных форумов Балтики опираются на решения СГБМ, что делает Совет важным инструментом регионального сотрудничества, в значительной мере учитывающим мнение и интересы России.

Правительство Санкт-Петербурга намерено использовать все существующие в регионе Балтийского моря резервы сотрудничества, в том числе связанные с деятельностью таких международных организаций, как Союз Балтийских городов, Организация субрегионального сотрудничества регионов Балтийского моря, международная Сеть «Балтийские метрополии» и т.д. Важнейшим инструментом сотрудничества является также Балтийский форум развития, в заседаниях которого ежегодно принимает участие делегация Санкт-Петербурга. Предложения Санкт-Петербурга по направлениям деятельности СГБМ ежегодно включаются в состав предложений Российской делегации. Субрегионы стран Балтийского моря подтверждают важность включения Санкт-Петербурга во все совместные инициативы крупнейших городов региона Балтийского моря в качестве равноправного партнера, несмотря на то, что город расположен на территории государства, не являющегося членом ЕС.

Лидерство Санкт-Петербурга среди остальных регионов Северо-Запада России в осуществлении сотрудничества на Балтике очевидно. Мы обладаем большим научно-техническим и культурным потенциалом, развитой транспортной инфраструктурой, одним из крупнейших портов в Балтийском море.

Санкт-Петербург называют второй столицей России, также его по праву можно назвать центром Северо-Запада России.

Baltinfo: Поощрение и дальнейшее развитие приграничного сотрудничества в регионе, в особенности, в районах, прилегающих к т.н. новой "внешней" границе ЕС,

является одной из приоритетных задач для СГБМ. В этих целях Совет объединяет свои усилия с Советом министров Северных стран с тем, чтобы выработать в этой области пилотный проект. Насколько важным для Санкт – Петербурга оставалось в последние годы приграничное сотрудничество с иностранными партнерами и, в особенности с Финляндией, и насколько оно было успешным? В каких формах и в каком направлении, по-вашему, должно дальше развиваться приграничное сотрудничество со странами "нового" Евросоюза и Европейской экономической зоны? Санкт-Петербург уделяет большое внимание развитию приграничного сотрудничества. В качестве примеров можно привести существующие проекты в рамках деятельности Комиссии по информационному обществу Союза Балтийских городов, председательство в которой принадлежит Санкт-Петербургу. Немаловажную роль также играют многолетние программы сотрудничества Санкт-Петербурга с Таллинном и Нарвой (Эстония), Вильнюсом (Литва), Хельсинки, Турку, Тампере (Финляндия).

Учитывая то обстоятельство, что субрегионы Балтийского моря имеют общие участки границы, то и расширение ЕС потребует совершенствования вопросов приграничного и трансграничного сотрудничества в регионе.

Baltinfo: Санкт – Петербург является широко известным во всем мире культурным и образовательным центром России. Как Вам, наверное, уже известно, в СГБМ вопросам культуры и образования уделяется большое внимание. Принимая во внимание принятую на последней VI встрече Министров культуры СГБМ Санкт-Петербургскую Декларацию (Санкт-Петербург, декабрь 2003 года), насколько, по вашему, является важной деятельность таких структур СГБМ как Наблюдательная группа Балтийского моря по сотрудничеству в области наследия, Оргкомитет Программы "Арз-Балтика"? Как вы также относитесь к идее организации совместного музыкального фестиваля Балтийского моря? Имеются ли у Города намерения предложить какие-либо инициативы по укреплению культурного сотрудничества в регионе? Санкт-Петербург недаром является культурной столицей России. Театры, музеи и дворцы нашего города привлекают туристов со всего мира, что доказало празднование 300-летия Санкт-Петербурга. Уровень образования соперничает с городами наиболее развитых стран Европы. Мы высоко оцениваем деятельность Наблюдательной группы Балтийского моря

по сотрудничеству в области наследия и Оргкомитета Программы «Арз-Балтика».

С 1991 года в Санкт-Петербурге регулярно проводится Международный театральный фестиваль «Балтийский дом». Он возник из стремления восстановить и расширить распавшиеся культурные связи с Латвией, Литвой и Эстонией, традиционно связанными с петербургской культурой. Организаторы фестиваля полагают, что этот проект может способствовать утверждению статуса Санкт-Петербурга как культурной столицы стран Балтии, возникновению новых творческих контактов, положить начало созданию театральной сети стран Балтийского региона, стать реальным вкладом в развитие культурного обмена между этими странами. Мы готовы участвовать и в организации музыкального фестиваля Балтийского моря.

Мы предлагаем всем странам региона Балтийского моря принять участие в международном конкурсе на лучший архитектурное оформление площади Европы в Санкт-Петербурге, торжественно открытой осенью 2003 года. В ближайшее время будут заявлены условия участия в нем и сроки проведения. Также мы предлагаем принять участие в проекте «Русский маршрут в Европе», который предполагает установку памятных табличек в городах Европы, где бывали видные деятели России, по аналогии с проектом «Европейский маршрут в Санкт-Петербурге».

Baltinfo: Как вы оцениваете эффективность политики ЕС Северное Измерение (СИ) в отношении российского Северо-запада, особенно, Санкт – Петербурга? Существуют ли области сотрудничества, в рамках которых можно было бы создать дополнительные Партнерства для развития сотрудничества с Российской стороной, помимо имеющихся Партнерств СИ в области экологии, а также здравоохранения и социального благополучия?

Мы исходим из того, что предложенная Финляндией инициатива "Северное Измерение" будет направлена на развитие европейского сотрудничества в целом и создание условий для интеграции России с Европейским сообществом. По нашему мнению, эта программа будет иметь значение, выходящее за рамки Балтийского региона. Она привлечет дополнительные ресурсы и расширит возможности региона в мировой торговле и экономической кооперации. Поскольку определенный путь в теоретическом осознании уже пройден, мы должны начать предметный, ориентированный на практические действия, диалог.

Россия - единственная в мире страна, где имеются собственные запасы и ядерного топлива, и гидроресурсы, и нефть, и газ. Одним из основных природных ресурсов является наша окружающая среда, и ее сохранение в условиях интенсивной эксплуатации, представляет собой одну из первоочередных задач устойчивого развития региона. Высокий научный и образовательный потенциал Санкт-Петербурга, позволяет внести в «Северное измерение ЕС» достаточно важную составляющую. По нашему мнению, должна быть продолжена реализация высокотехнологичных разработок научно-исследовательских учреждений Санкт-Петербурга и Северо-запада России.

На наш взгляд, необходима постановка вопроса о более комплексном развитии российского Северо-запада в рамках программы. Ставя задачу развития «Северного измерения», Евросоюз должен осознавать, что без масштабных инвестиций в Россию не обойтись. Нам думается, что роль ЕБРР, Европейского инвестиционного банка и Северного инвестиционного банка в институциональных проектах должна, по возможности, усилиться.

Мы надеемся, что СГБМ предоставит новые возможности для продвижения предложенных Санкт-Петербургом, представленных для включения в программу «Северное Измерение».

Baltinfo: Опираясь на Ваш богатый опыт дипломатической карьеры, посоветуйте, как, по-вашему, можно использовать СГБМ, как многосторонний международный форум, для того чтобы увеличить вклад в укрепление Балтийского сотрудничества и, в первую очередь, в отношении Северо-Западных российских регионов?

Уникальность Союза Государств Балтийского моря невозможно переоценить. С одной стороны, большинство членов этой межправительственной организации входят в ЕС, кроме России, Норвегии и Исландии, а с другой стороны, учредителем и участником СГБМ, наравне со странами-участниками, является Европейская Комиссия. В условиях интенсивного процесса двустороннего сотрудничества в Балтийском регионе, СГБМ может и должен играть роль эффективного инструмента для решения стоящих перед странами региона Балтийского моря задач.

Представляется, что в новых условиях СГБМ может стать важнейшим инструментом сотрудничества, если проводимые этой организацией встречи министров иностранных дел и глав правительств стран-участниц будут посвящены актуальным вопросам развития регионов.

Streamlining Cooperation Between Public Authorities and Civil Society

EXCLUSIVE BALTINFO INTERVIEW WITH ARNOLD RÜÜTEL, PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA AND PATRON OF THE IV BALTIC SEA NGO FORUM IN PÄRNU 16–17 APRIL

Baltinfo: As Patron of the IV Baltic Sea NGO Forum, how would you characterise the present condition of civil society in the Baltic Sea region? What is the role of civil society – the Third Sector – in national or international affairs in the Baltic Sea region?

President Rüütel: To begin with, I would like to express my thanks to the organisers for having put this commendable idea into practice. I have always highlighted the importance of citizens' associations in society and deemed it necessary that their participation in the decision-making process of a country should be enhanced. It is a power that first emerges in a country at the grassroots level and then grows to reach the international level; a power which has now become an integral part of the true nature of democratic societies.

The Baltic Sea region includes both so-called “old” and “new” democracies – the latter denoting countries where democratic institutions have been re-established during the last fifteen years. It is obvious, for example, that the Nordic Countries can benefit from their long experience in building a civil society. Yet today's globalising world contains developments and challenges that are new to all nations. The first priority for the near future is to streamline cooperation between citizens' associations and the public sector, and to lay solid foundations for this cooperation. It is also necessary to promote social dialogue and to conclude a range of agreements between diverse social partners.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ►



Arnold Rüütel, President of Estonia, believes that time is ripe for the Third Sector – civil society – to become an influential partner in cooperation with the public sector.

ST. PETERSBURG AND THE ENLARGED EU. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

Northern Dimension is aimed both at developing pan-European cooperation in general, and at creating good conditions for a gradual integration of Russia into the European community. In our opinion, the ND programme has significance reaching beyond the BSR. It would attract additional resources and widen the potential of the region in the area of world trade and economic cooperation. This concept needs to be grasped mentally and a dialogue should be initiated.

Russia is the only country in the world that is rich in reserves of nuclear fuel and hydro resources as well as oil and gas. Preservation of the environment is a prerequisite for sustainable development of the region. The high educational level of St. Petersburg's people can contribute significantly to the ND policy. It is necessary to continue the implementation of the high technology projects launched at the

research institutions of St. Petersburg and the Russian North-West.

We assume it is timely to apply a more comprehensive approach within the framework of the ND policy, aimed at developing the whole Russian North-West. In implementing the European Northern Dimension, the EU should be aware that in order to achieve success one must make investments in Russia. We think that the role of the EBRD, EIB and NIB in the regional projects should be increased. We are hopeful that the CBSS becomes instrumental in assisting St. Petersburg in bringing forward new proposals for the implementation of the EU Northern Dimension policy.

Baltinfo: Referring to your solid diplomatic background, how do you think the CBSS with its capacity as a multilateral international forum should be used in or-

der to improve cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, and especially in regard to the Russian North-West regions?

Matvienko: It is difficult to overestimate the uniqueness of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. On the one hand, a majority of its members are in the EU (excluding only Iceland, Norway and Russia); on the other hand, the European Commission is also among the founders and members of the Council. Together with a well-established process of bilateral cooperation in the region, the CBSS could and should assume the role of an effective instrument for joint decisions and actions for the sake of the member-states. Under today's new conditions the CBSS could become such an instrument, if it is able to address the most burning issues of regional development both at the ministerial and heads of government levels.

“Challenges for Baltic Sea Civil Society in a

THE IV BALTIC SEA NGO FORUM, PÄRNU, ESTONIA 16–17 APRIL



Joanna Szewczyk of the Regional Information and Support Centre for NGOs in Gdansk and Krzysztof Olenzki, Councillor at the Polish Embassy to Estonia, received the NGO Forum “Baltic Sea Wave” on behalf of the Polish organisers of the 2005 NGO Forum.

FOCUSING ON COOPERATION and partnership, the forum attracted over 250 representatives of NGOs, public institutions and international organisations. Issues included sustainable development, civil security, social inclusion, local and rural development, human rights, employment and development cooperation. Seven different workshops analysed the possibilities for starting thematic cooperation networks, and concrete preparations were made.

The Baltic Sea NGO Forum process emanates from a Danish NGO initiative and meeting in 2001. The first Baltic Sea NGO Forum was held in Lübeck, Germany (2001), the second in St. Petersburg, Russia (2002) and the third in Turku, Finland (2003). Commenting on the topic, Arnold Rüütel, President of Estonia and patron of the forum, emphasised: “The Baltic Sea is indeed a region with a large potential for development. The forum offers an opportunity to see the future prospects of the Baltic Sea for development and cooperation in the enlarging Europe, and also to share experiences for supporting civil society outside the European Union.”

INTERVIEW WITH ARNOLD RÜÜTEL, PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5.

Baltinfo: With Estonia and nine other countries just joining the EU, their civil societies have also become part of the EU. Could you give some examples of how Estonian civil society can be included as a partner in the EU?

President Rüütel: In Estonia, an exchange of views on civil society has gathered momentum both in state structures and in non-governmental organisations, notably during the last year and a half. Our people take an active interest in the Nordic countries’ experience gained in this field.

We have launched a process of national agreement in which our public sector,

business sector and the Third Sector – including 50 organisations from across Estonia – have been involved. We try to shape our priorities concerning both Estonia and the European Union through a Forum of National Agreement and, in this manner, to be an equal cooperation partner. Estonia can definitely offer other countries of the European Union the lessons and experience that we have gained during the transition from a totalitarian system to a civil society while carrying out a wide range of reforms.

Baltinfo: In Germany and the Nordic countries there is an established tradition

of state financing for NGOs. Estonia and other Baltic Sea states have no such tradition. What, in your view, should guide these governments when deciding on cooperation with civil society?

President Rüütel: During 50 years of occupation, true civic initiative was banned and this form of cooperative movement, which in Estonia had made great strides before World War II, was eliminated. It is understandable that the restoration has taken time. In order to make society develop in collaboration with all stakeholders – both our public, private and third sectors have needed time for renewed growth.

Changing Europe”



According to Anneli Uus, Project Manager of the IV Baltic Sea NGO Forum, the event stimulated numerous partnerships across sectors and borders.

As noted by Kristiina Ojuland, Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in her welcome to the forum, the list of speakers was quite impressive. It included Giampiero Alhadeff, Director of Solidar and Chair of the Civil Society Contact Group of the Convention on the Future of Europe; Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel, President of the Eu-

ropean Women's Lobby, and Hannes Lorenzen, Adviser to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development at the European Parliament. Outi Ojala, a Finnish MP and representative of from the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, made a progress report on the survey on NGO legislation in the countries in the Baltic Sea Region. The speeches and presentations of the forum can be found at www.ngonet.ee/forum.

The NGO forum is hosted annually by NGOs of the country that holds the rotating CBSS Presidency. Organising a large-scale international event such as the Baltic Sea NGO Forum was an honour for Estonia, and was also felt as a duty by the contributing Estonian NGOs. However, the organising committee would have appreciated more explicit and tangible support from the Estonian government in organising such a big and important event.

On 1 July 2004, Poland will take on the CBSS Presidency, and it is expected that a group of Polish NGOs will organise the 2005 forum in Poland. It is important that the Polish organising committee receives early and sufficient support from the public sector, including embassies and

international institutions. The NGO Forum is not held merely in the interests of civil society. The cooperation process and event itself should be seen as equally important for governments.

A strong civil society that cooperates closely with authorities at all levels, and with the private sector, is key to further democratic development in the Baltic Sea region. Challenges posed by globalisation are new to all nations. The EU enlargement increases the need for effective cooperation on a regional level. With the financial impetus given through EU membership, NGOs in the region can use the forum process to develop partnerships that are required to obtain EU funding.

Participants at the Pärnu forum gave positive feedback, and the organisers can be proud of the outcome. A final document containing recommendations from each workshop will be sent to the CBSS Presidency.

*Anneli Uus
Project Manager of the IV
Baltic Sea NGO Forum*

Both the state authorities and non-governmental organisations need to change their way of thinking in order to cooperate effectively. The bottom line is that one must see one's counterpart as an equal partner, and only then is it possible to discuss in detail if and how available funds could be redistributed.

An important landmark was the endorsement of a development concept for Estonian civil society by the Riigikogu (parliament) in December 2002, after which a joint committee of ministries and NGOs was set up. The Riigikogu has also established a relevant group tasked to participate in preparing a report on the development of civil society, hear representatives of the joint committee working with the government, conduct parliamen-

tary supervision, and discuss as a roundtable the Riigikogu's draft bills concerning civil society and NGOs in general.

From other developments under way, I would once again mention the Forum of Estonian National Agreement, within the framework of which topical issues are discussed and new ideas offered. But in addition, however, it is only natural that many forms of civic initiative and public discussion on a wide range of different topics should exist in Estonia. These developments, which in the future will definitely continue to deepen and gain more ground, are most welcome.

Baltinfo: Using the momentum of the Estonian CBSS Presidency and the NGO Forum in Pärnu, do you see a specific role

for Estonia today in supporting further development of civil society in the Baltic Sea region?

President Rüütel: The initiative to re-establish a broad-based dialogue in order to identify common interests of the people, and to enhance trust and responsibility, has received increasing support from entrepreneurs, employers and the Third Sector alike. So far, 50 organisations have acceded to the National Agreement. They encompass hundreds of thousands of people from all over Estonia. This is proof of the interest in, and the need for, this kind of cooperation. It is true that we are only at the start of the long path that lies ahead. Yet we have experience in this field already, which we could share with others.

MAY 2004

24–25 Oslo, Norway
Task Force on Organised Crime (TF-OC), meeting

26–28 Saariselkä, Finland
Eurobaltic Civil Protection Project: Seminar
Towards 112 Cross-Border Cooperation

27–28 Reykjavik, Iceland
Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) meeting in
Special Session

JUNE 2004

2–5 Palanga, Lithuania
Task Force on Communicable Disease Control –
6th Nordic-Baltic Congress on Infectious Diseases.

3–4 Schwerin, Germany
CPMR-Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly

10–11 Greifswald, Germany
Agenda PhD 2010 – the Challenge of Common
Post-Graduate (PhD)-Training in the Baltic Sea Area

14–15 Copenhagen, Denmark
2nd Meeting of the CBSS Ministers of Justice and
Interior

14–15 Berlin, Germany
Group of Senior Energy Officials (BASREC-
GSEO), meeting

14–15 Copenhagen, Denmark
Working Group on Youth Affairs (WGYA), meeting

15–16 Warsaw, Poland
Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)
Secretary level meeting

18–19 Turku, Finland
Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association
(BCCA) annual meeting

20 Laulasmaa, Estonia
Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) meeting in
Special Session

21 Laulasmaa, Estonia
5th Baltic Sea States Summit

21 Laulasmaa, Estonia
CBSS Minister's Deputies meeting

30 June–1 July Gothenburg, Sweden
Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)
Standing Committee meeting

Balticsea.net

Your Gateway to the Baltic Sea Region

We are pleased to announce that www.balticsea.net was launched on 16 April, during the IV Baltic Sea NGO Forum. This new portal provides a single point of entry with easy access to all major Baltic Sea regional organisations. Visit us for up-to-date, accurate information on events, news and contact persons.

Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region: Challenges for Baltic 21

THE BALTIC 21 STEERING BODY, the Senior Officials Group (SOG) will submit the new Baltic 21 strategy to the Prime Ministers for their endorsement at the Summit in Estonia on 21 June. According to the Baltic 21 main document, adopted by the CBSS in 1998, “The Prime Ministers of the Baltic Sea Region should receive a progress report, including a review of the progress of fulfilling the set-up goals, approximately every 5th year and for decision on any additional action needed...”. This work, “to obtain sector-overarching guidance and a new mandate for the future work of Baltic 21”, was also supported by the Environment Ministers of the Baltic Sea States in the Declaration on Environment and Sustainable Development (Luleå, 2003).

Towards Sustainable development
The Baltic 21 report “Towards Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region” delivers comprehensive information

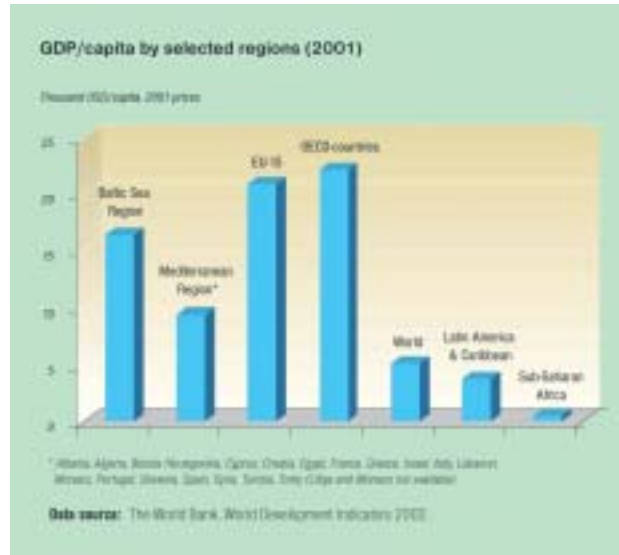
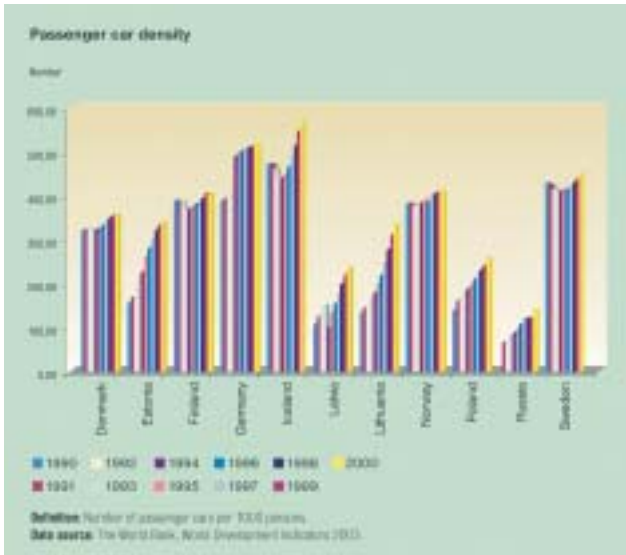
about the region’s progress towards sustainable development and challenges that remain. Although the Baltic Sea region as a whole performs well with its economic indicators, a wide but narrowing gap remains between the older and newer market economies. Gaps in life expectancy between older and newer market economies are narrowing as well. Significant challenges remain in all sectors; one example is controlling CO₂ emissions, with rapid increases in automobile density apparently offsetting gains in energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption.

Regional Identity

To build a strong regional identity in the enlarged Europe, Baltic 21 proposes that the nations of the Baltic Sea region realise a vision of the region as an “Eco-Region” – where “Eco” stands for both “Economy” and “Ecology”, and where the social dimension is strongly integrated. Baltic 21 can be instrumental in implementing



Børge Brende, Norwegian Minister of the Environment, chaired the Commission on Sustainable Development’s 12th Session in New York on 14-30 April. To his right is Marek Maciejowski, Head of the Baltic 21 Unit at the CBSS Secretariat.



this vision through its multi-stakeholder cooperation.

New Strategy

The new strategy has four parts, all aiming to support the Eco region concept. Firstly, Baltic 21 seeks to establish a closer relation to the CBSS. The role of Baltic 21 would be to promote integration of sustainable development into regional policy making in CBSS structures and working bodies. It can also review regional trends and policies impacting the sustainability of the region and suggest topics for regional discussions, joint action, or interaction with other bodies whose policies affect the region.

Secondly, the Baltic 21 Sectors and Spatial Planning stakeholders should strengthen their involvement in cross-sectoral work. Sectors and Spatial Planning should also continue to bring added value to regional efforts for sustainable development, with an emphasis on solving regional problems through cross-sectoral cooperation. The Baltic 21 SOG will use its multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral character as a forum for fostering sustainability issues.

Thirdly, Baltic 21 will focus more on demonstrating how sustainable development can be implemented in practice. A selected set of “Lighthouse Projects” should be initiated. The projects would be designed to ensure high visibility and engaging as many participating countries and sectors as possible in proving the added value of sustainable development. These projects should combine top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Fourthly, to achieve the above, Baltic 21 needs to create synergies among the existing national and other funding sources at the regional level to support the Lighthouse Projects and other sustainable development initiatives.

Baltic 21 is ready to make the process more effective, more efficient and better linked to other important regional initiatives.

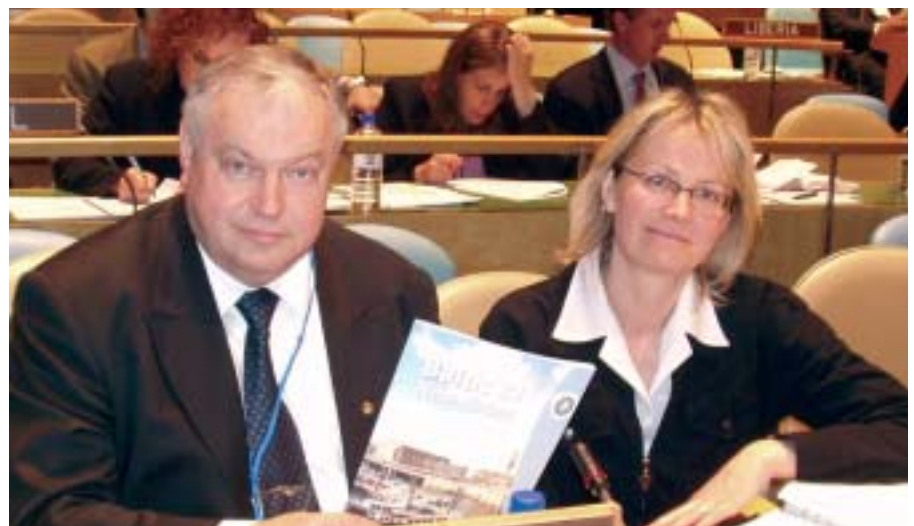
A common vision

All Baltic 21 members agree that the goals and visions laid down in the Nyborg Declaration of June 1998 are still valid for the region and in harmony with the principles of the Rio and Johannesburg summits. Streamlining of Baltic 21 activities is necessary to keep sustainable development on the political agenda and to show tangible results. The main challenge for design of a

new policy and strategy is to find the best focus for the Baltic 21 process. Baltic 21 needs to exploit more effectively its uniqueness as an organisation providing an equal footing for both intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations

*Valdis Bisters
Chairman of the Baltic 21
Senior Officials Group
Ministry of the Environment, Latvia
E-mail: valdis.bisters@vidm.gov.lv*

Baltic 21 is proud to announce its new website that has been designed to be your comprehensive, yet user-friendly gateway to the Baltic Sea region’s work for sustainable development. You are welcome to visit us at www.baltic21.org!



Villu Reiljan, Estonian Minister of the Environment, at the Commission on Sustainable Development’s 12th Session. To his right: Ülle Vaht, Head of the Baltic 21 Senior Officials Group delegation from Estonia.

EuroFaculty Kaliningrad: Pilot for Higher Education Reform in Russia

Baltinfo: EuroFaculty Kaliningrad (EF-K) is one of the most successful initiatives launched by the CBSS in recent years. What lessons have been learned from the activities during the first phase of the project and what are the main achievements?

Vera Zabolkina: Now that the first phase of the project has been successfully completed, I would like to thank most cordially the CBSS for the initiative to launch the EuroFaculty project at Kaliningrad State University (KSU). Our special thanks go to the donor countries: Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Germany.

The main objective of the first phase was to thoroughly update the core curriculum in law and economics at KSU with the aim to bringing the degree courses in these two areas in line with international standards. Modernisation of current curricula in law and economics has been carried out and several new courses have been developed. The Faculty of Law has introduced such new courses as Human Rights Protection in the European Court on Human Rights, International Company Law, an Internet course on the International Protection of Human Rights, European law, the UN Convention on International Sale of Goods, the Law of International Trade (WTO and EU) and Marine Law. The Department of International and European Law has been established at the Faculty of Law. The Faculty of Economics has also introduced several new courses: Multimedia Technologies in Marketing, Capital Budgeting, Investment Management, and Financial Management.

The Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation has approved all the changes in the modernised curricula. But it is not changes per se that we are after - we are trying to cultivate the European view and to introduce a European dimension into the curriculum of our university. KSU is actively involved in the Bologna Process, which presupposes increased stu-

dent mobility. A revolutionary move made within the project has been the decrease in the number of lecture hours from 40 down to 25 hours per week during the first years of training and down to 20 hours per week during the senior training. This has increased the amount of time for students to work independently.

Additional language training for KSU staff has been offered to ensure the necessary preconditions for smooth communication with donor country colleagues and to ensure the attainment of the project objectives. KSU students and teachers have been provided with enhanced access to books, journals, other forms of communicating research results and other academic materials. A Learning Centre has been set up at the Faculty of Economics. It includes the reading hall, computer labs, and a room for independent work by students.

These figures illustrate EuroFaculty activities:

- 20 teachers, 20 PhD students and more than 25 undergraduate students have participated in training programmes abroad;
- modernisation of technical facilities cost more than 100,000 Euro;
- enhancement of the library collection amounted to more than 48,000 Euro;
- six methodology seminars and four international conferences have been conducted;
- a printing and publishing centre has been established at the Faculty of Law.

All the students, teachers and administrative staff involved in the project have benefited from the experience of cross-cultural communication. The major lessons we have learned are tolerance vis-à-vis other cultures, cross-cultural communication and management skills. In this connection let me remind you of Dostoevsky's famous saying that a real Russian is open to all other cultures. We should im-



Vera Zabolkina, Vice-rector of Kaliningrad State University, hopes to see a many more EuroFaculty projects develop in the Baltic Sea region, including Russia.

plement this idea at KSU despite the fact that for a long time Russia has been suffering from xenophobia.

Baltinfo: In December 2003, the Committee of Senior Officials of the CBSS decided to prolong the project until 2007. What are the main objectives for the second phase?

Zabolkina: As was discussed at the Expert Meeting on 28 April at KSU, our main goal is to include EF-K in mainstream international cooperation in Europe and in mainstream education and training in Russia. We are also focusing on sustainability, network building and cooperation. We hope to achieve these results through further curriculum development at the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics, implementation of the European Credit Transfer System, introduction of the two-level system (Bachelor and Master), introduction of the joint-degree European standard certificate or establishment of a "Double Diploma" sys-

The Northern Dimension in an Enlarged Europe

A NORDIC COUNCIL THEME MEETING IN HELSINKI 14–15 APRIL 2004

tem, increasing the number of optional courses and increasing research-based teaching (to provide assistance to PhD students).

Baltinfo: Sustainability of the project after 2007 is the responsibility of the Russian authorities. What kind of practical steps towards lasting sustainability will be taken at KSU during the second phase?

Zabotkina: The university is planning to create a centre of legal technologies and comparative jurisprudence, which will be implementing the Bologna process within the framework of the EuroFaculty project. The Quality Assurance Centre has already started its work: two staff members are employed to audit the quality of teaching at the Faculties of Law and Economics. We are also working on the establishment of a special chair for foreign languages covering both faculties with a view to reforming foreign-language teaching.

Baltinfo: It can be assumed that the present international donors will gradually decrease their contributions after the second phase. What are your feelings regarding alternative financial support?

Zabotkina: We hope to receive more financial support from observer countries (the UK, the Netherlands, Italy and France) and we expect more support from the Russian government.

Baltinfo: What is your opinion regarding the proposal to extend the EuroFaculty project to other universities in the region?

Zabotkina: We would be extremely pleased to see an extension of the EuroFaculty project to other universities in the region. It could set off a network and a consortium of Russian universities involved in EuroFaculty projects.

Non progredi est regredi – we are trying to keep abreast of tomorrow's world.

SOME 300 PARLIAMENTARIANS from the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) and the European Parliament, as well as governmental representatives and representatives of international organisations gathered to discuss issues of the second Northern Dimension Action Plan. Coordination of work between the different regional organisations and strengthening the role and support of parliamentarians for the Northern Dimension (ND) were the two main themes. Several speakers called for a specific budget line for the ND.

Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament, called the ND the laboratory for EU-Russia relations, as illustrated by the ND Environmental Programme (NDEP) actions. He emphasised the importance of keeping parliamentarians involved in the ND work and maintained that the European Parliament is committed to the ND and its actions. Paavo Lipponen, Speaker of the Finnish Parliament, noted that the St. Petersburg wastewater treatment plant was a very good example of the importance of the ND. He believed in future partnerships in areas such as logistics, where sea traffic safety and motorways are important factors and where the interests of the EU and Russia coincide.

Valentina Pivnenko, a Russian MP, pointed out the importance of regional organisations, especially CBSS, in supplementing the work of the ND, including the NDEP. She noted that enlargement of the EU paves the way for closer cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension action plan. Ms. Pivnenko called for greater attention to transport issues and joint electricity supply projects as well as closer cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises and organisations at the grassroots level.

In a special session on the Partnership in Public Health and Social Well being participants called for a mechanism that

would coordinate the actions. For the Partnership to function it will be necessary to finance a small secretariat and coordination tools such as a database and a website. Reference was made to the CBSS as a regional actor in the health field since 2000, when the Task Force on Communicable Diseases Control was set up.

In the session on Trafficking in Human Beings in an Enlarged EU, Michael Boolsen, Assistant National Commissioner TF on Organised Crime, addressed the session with a BSR perspective. The main cause of this crime phenomenon in the BSR is social deprivation. Law enforcement action and social welfare programmes should go hand in hand when trying to fight trafficking in human beings. Outi Ojala, Head of the Finnish Delegation to the Nordic Council, highlighted the extent of this problem; the number of foreign prostitutes in Finland alone is 10,000-15,000 and nearly all prostitution is organised. Anita Johansson, a Swedish MP, stressed the importance of dealing with this huge problem.

In her concluding words Outi Ojala stressed the need of parliamentarians to co-operate in the ND region and give input to the ND. In the Baltic Sea region the CBSS has the largest number of member states, and also has the European Commission as a member. The CBSS has been very active in the consulting and drafting phase of the first and second NDAPs. In relation to the CBSS there is also a parliamentary dimension, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC). Stressing the need to avoid duplication, Ms. Ojala suggested that one of the already existing organisations should be developed into a parliamentary ND forum. The Nordic Council plans to hold its next theme meeting in 2006.

Further Information, Nordic Council:
<http://www.norden.org/tema2004/uk/>

After the Enlargement

Inevitably, the issue occupying our minds in the CBSS during the last year or so has been the EU enlargement. The question has not been whether the enlargement has any effect on our regional organisation, but rather in which way we need to rethink our mission in the Baltic Sea region.

The Tallinn Declaration from the Meeting of the CBSS Ministers of Economy and Trade gives a partial reply to the question. The importance of the matter was highlighted through the decision of the ministers to convene again as early as the second half of this year to reflect on the first experiences of the new situation regarding economic cooperation.

Another important view is included in this number of Baltinfo in the form of an interview with the Governor of St. Petersburg, Ms Valentina Matvienko. Governor Matvienko finds that the enlargement gives fresh impetus to the development of new industry and service sectors, while phasing out outdated and non-competitive sectors. On the Northern Dimension concept Ms Matvienko maintains that its aim is to develop pan-European cooperation in general, and to create conditions for a gradual integration of Russia into the European community in particular: “..the ND programme has significance reaching beyond the BSR. It would attract additional resources and widen the potential of the region in the area of world trade and economic cooperation. This concept needs to be mentally grasped, and a dialogue should be initiated.”

On the role of the CBSS Ms Matvienko refers to the fact that the exist-

ing system of Baltic Sea organisations and subregional structures is guided by CBSS decisions. Accordingly she believes that the enlargement “would increase the significance of the Council when it comes to taking up topical issues of international cooperation”. Furthermore, in her opinion the CBSS could become an effective instrument for joint decisions and actions, “if it is able to address the most burning issues of regional development both at the ministerial and heads of government levels”.

The ultimate authoritative position regarding future cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and the role of the CBSS will be formulated, of course, at the BSS Heads of Government Summit in Laulusmaa on 21 June 2004. It is an undisputed fact that the Baltic Sea region is the most dynamic region in Europe, and in many ways a model of social and economic development. It is to be expected that, based on the favourable point of departure and performance of the BSR, the heads of government will continue to provide wise guidance for the future work of the CBSS.

At the IV Baltic Sea NGO Forum on 16–17 April in Pärnu more than 250 members of civil society and public authorities plunged into debates on the most pressing issues in our region. Apart from the plenary session, seven thematic workshops laid the groundwork for concrete project cooperation. The Estonian organisers deserve heartfelt thanks for their professional grip on the preparations and the event itself. They can proudly pass the relay baton on to their Polish colleagues. The NGO network in the region and the Polish organis-



Hannu Halinen

ing committee will need solid backing from the CBSS and other partners to enable it to hold a similarly important event in 2005. Since the forums began in 2000, the endeavour has proved to be a worthwhile exercise that unites various sectors of society. Networks that emanate would be part of the “CBSS family” and be well placed to work closer with the numerous CBSS intergovernmental bodies, groups and partners.

It is worth noting that this year’s forum had no language interpretation, meaning that both speakers and participants had to use their English skills. This – while leading to substantial savings – did not seem to be a problem. I believe the use of a lingua franca fosters contact and facilitates follow-up of the forum across borders; and English is, of course, the CBSS working language.



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