



Annual Report from the Committee of Senior Officials
The 7th Year of the Council's Activity 1998-1999

Presented at the
Council of the Baltic Sea States
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The Secretariat
Council of the Baltic Sea States
Strömsborg, P.O. Box 2010
SE-103 11 Stockholm
Tel +46 8 440 19 20
Fax +46 8 440 19 44
e-mail: cbss@cbss.st
www.cbss.st

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Annual Report from the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)

COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES
Committee of Senior Officials

8th Ministerial Session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States

Palanga, 14-15 June 1999

Report from the Committee of Senior Officials

The 7th year of the Council's Activity

The CSO has held 7 meetings during the year in 5 different cities: Vilnius, Stockholm, Kaliningrad, Brussels and Reykjavik. The meetings were chaired by Ambassador Dalius Cekuolis of Lithuania. A summary of the main topics addressed at each meeting is in annex I.

The CSO troika has held two meetings. The first was held in Vilnius to co-ordinate the transition from Danish to Lithuanian Chairmanship including the hand-over of the work on the establishment of the Secretariat. The second was held in Stockholm to co-ordinate the transition to Norwegian Chairmanship.

Northern Dimension

The CSO and the working groups have discussed the consequences for the CBSS of the "Northern Dimension for the policies of the European Union". Consideration has been given in the CSO, WGEC and WGDI to the role, which the CBSS can play in formulating and implementing this policy. It has been noted that the European Commission has suggested areas for CBSS activity in the context of the Northern Dimension. No special conclusions have been reached yet and the discussion is to be continued.

Regional and municipal co-operation, cross-border co-operation

The regional and municipal co-operation across the borders is increasingly seen as an engine for promoting regional integration. The CSO has taken note of the growth in cross border co-operation in the framework of Euroregions and similar forms of co-operation.

The CSO has continued the practice of close contacts with the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation and the Union of the Baltic Cities. The two organisations have been granted the status of special participant. Their representatives have participated in several meetings of the CSO.

During the year a number of organisations have approached the CBSS with suggestions to examine what can be done to improve the co-ordination of EU financing instruments

(Interreg, Phare, Tacis). The matter has been thoroughly discussed by WGEC and the CSO. At its meeting in February, the CSO adopted conclusions on the matter, which were communicated by the Chairman of the CBSS to the two EU Commissioners responsible for the EU programmes.

The CSO held a meeting in Kaliningrad in February and took the opportunity to acquaint itself with the situation in this and other Russian regions in the Baltic Sea area.

In this meeting and on other occasions concerns have been expressed about some possible consequences for the regional co-operation of the enlargement of the EU and of the Schengen area. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to prepare a report on visa issues in a regional perspective. Member states have provided information to supplement this report, which was circulated at the meeting in April. Together with the CBSS Commissioner's survey on conditions for travel, it may be used as background material for future discussions. The CSO has noted the intention of the CBSS Commissioner and the Secretariat to seek further clarification from experts concerning the consequences of extending the Schengen regime.

Civil Security

In line with the decision at the Riga meeting of the Heads of government, and the communiqué from the 7th ministerial session more attention has been given to civil security issues. Three conferences on the subject were held during one year: Århus in June 1998, Visby in September 1998 and Palanga in May 1999. These conferences have dealt with a large number of topics for co-operation. Some of these are already subject of institutionalised co-operation while others are new. In October 1998 and April 1999 the CSO discussed the priority of the various issues falling under the heading of civil security. The WGDI was charged with the work on civil security.

Economic co-operation and contacts with business

At its meeting in Brussels, the CSO got a comprehensive briefing on EU policies affecting the Baltic Sea region.

The CSO and WGEC have further strengthened contacts with the business community. For the first time, the CSO held a joint meeting with the Baltic Business Advisory Council in Brussels on 24 March during which the parties clarified their expectations and possibilities for future co-operation. Agreement was reached on a closer dialogue in the future, primarily through WGEC.

The WGEC has conducted a survey on the implementation of the recommendations made by the Second Baltic Business Summit in January 1998. The group has elaborated a set of recommendations concerning administrative barriers to foreign direct investments. These recommendations were approved by the CSO in February. As a further step is planned a conference in Russia dealing with foreign investments in the Baltic Sea area of Russia.

EuroFaculty

The CSO has held three meetings with the new director of the EuroFaculty on the future of the institution and in particular its financial situation, its legal status and the possibility of re-establishing the EuroFaculty in Kaliningrad. The director has submitted a proposal for

establishment in Kaliningrad but financing possibilities remain to be clarified. An *ad hoc* group of legal experts has started the work on the legal status of EuroFaculty. The WGDI has also dealt with the EuroFaculty.

Human rights and democratic institutions

The CBSS Commissioner has on three occasions participated in CSO meetings and informed the CSO about his activities.

Following the conference on commercial sexual exploitation of children in Tallinn in September 1998, children's issues have been discussed in the CSO and WGDI. A ministerial meeting on Children at Risk was held in March 1999.

The CSO meeting in Reykjavik in April was dedicated to a discussion of human rights and democratic institutions in a broad sense.

Third party participation

The CSO drafted a set of "Principles and Guidelines for Third Party Participation in CBSS Activities and Meetings", agreed upon by the Council (ministerial level) by written procedure in February 1999. The guidelines and principles define three different categories of participation in CBSS meetings and activities: guest, observer and special participant. It was decided to invite France, United Kingdom, United States and Ukraine as observers to council meetings. BSSSC and UBC were invited as special participants. The CSO has held meetings with representatives from the four observer states to identify areas of more concrete co-operation.

Other intergovernmental fora for regional co-operation

The Presidency, the CSO and the working groups have maintained and in some cases strengthened the contacts with other regional organisations in particular the Barents/Euro-Arctic Council.

Establishment of the CBSS secretariat

The permanent international Secretariat of the CBSS started its activity in Stockholm on 15 August 1998. The CSO approved the recruitment of staff during the autumn 1998 and the Secretariat was fully staffed (with 7 employees of which one on half time) from 1 January 1999. The budgets for 1998 and 1999 were approved by the CSO. The Director has been regularly reporting to the CSO on the activities of the Secretariat.

Information Strategy

The CSO adopted in June 1998 an information strategy with the purpose of making the CBSS and its objectives better known and to provide access to information produced by CBSS bodies and other actors in the Baltic Sea region. The Chairmanship and the Secretariat have started to implement this strategy. The basis for the information strategy is the CBSS Internet Home page and the newsletter, BALTINFO, edited by the Secretariat. Both have been taken over from the Swedish Prime Minister's Baltic Sea States' Support Group. Both sources of

information have been re-launched. In addition, the Chairmanship and the Secretariat have had a considerable number of contacts with the media.

Planning and Information document

In November 1998, the CSO asked the Secretariat to produce a Planning and Information document. A first draft was presented in March. The work will continue with a view to produce a tool for better planning of CBSS activities taking into account other inter-governmental co-operation in the region.

CBSS structure and working methods

The growth of intergovernmental co-operation among the CBSS member states raises some questions about the relations between the CBSS and the other meetings of ministers.

The meeting of the ministers for energy of the CBSS Member states in Stavanger on 1 December 1998 created a new structure (three working groups and a steering committee). The communiqué stated "We have agreed to meet again at ministerial level in Finland in autumn 1999... It should be our aim at that time to integrate the energy collaboration within the framework of the CBSS".

The Council decided at its 7th session in Nyborg in 1998, that "A decision on the provisions for and the establishment of a regular Baltic 21 secretariat, either connected to the HELCOM or the CBSS Secretariat, will be taken no later than July 1, 2000."

The CSO has several times had occasion to consider the working methods of the CSO and the working groups. Calls have been made for more efficient working relations. The responsibility of the CSO for co-ordinating the work has been emphasised. It has been noted that the inclusion of new and technically difficult subjects (e.g. civil security) has increased the workload and made it difficult to have relevant experts always present at the meetings.

Annex 1

Contacts with regional bodies and organisations and other institutions

The following have participated in CSO meetings:

Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation, BSSSC

Union of the Baltic Cities, UBC

Euroregion Baltica

Euroregion Nemunas/Niemen

Kaliningrad Oblast Duma

Kaliningrad Oblast Administration

Mayor of Kaliningrad

Mayor of Baltiisk

Pskov Oblast Administration

Baltic Sea Tourism Commission, BTC

Baltic Ports Organisation, BPO

Baltic Development Forum

The Task Force on Organised Crime

VASAB 2010

Baltic Spatial Development Agency

Baltic 21

UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries

Icelandic Coast Guard

Icelandic Ombudsman for Children

The Swedish Agency for Civil Emergency Planning (ÖCB)

Meetings with other states:

France, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States

In addition, the CSO has had one or more meetings with the following institutions forming part of the CBSS Structure:

CBSS Commissioner

EuroFaculty

Baltic Business Advisory Council, BAC

Annex 2

Overview of CSO meetings during the Lithuanian presidency

The CSO held 7 ordinary meetings during the Lithuanian presidency, 1998-99, with the following main topics:

15-16 September in Vilnius:

Presentation of the Lithuanian work programme for the CBSS. The work programme of the Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety. Budget, legal status, staffing and other matters related to the establishment of the Secretariat. Relations with third parties. Activities of the CBSS Commissioner.

20-21 October in Stockholm:

Presentation on the future of EuroFaculty by the new Director, Professor Arild Saether. Work programme of the Working Groups on Economic Co-operation and the Working Group on Assistance to Democratic Institutions. Follow-up to the conference on Civil Security in Visby. Relations with third parties.

24-25 November in Vilnius:

Preparation of a planning and information document. Information strategy of the CBSS. Kaliningrad. Co-ordination of EU financing instruments (Tacis, Phare, Interreg). Relations to third parties.

17-18 February in Kaliningrad:

Presentations by the authorities of Kaliningrad Oblast, Kaliningrad city and Baltiisk city. Presentations by other Russian regions. Sub-regional and municipal co-operation. Euroregions and cross-border co-operation. Conditions of travel and visa issues. Financial statements of the CBSS Commissioner. Conclusions on co-ordination of EU financing instruments (Tacis, Phare, Interreg). Establishment of EuroFaculty in Kaliningrad. Conclusions on foreign investments. Co-operation between Kaliningrad Oblast and members of the CBSS.

23-24 March in Brussels:

EU policies and programmes in the region. Northern Dimension. Sub-regional and municipal co-operation. Joint meeting with the Baltic Business Advisory Council. Decisions on third party participation.

29-30 April in Reykjavik:

Human rights and democratic institutions. Commissioner's survey on freedom of religion and conditions of travel. Rights of the Child. Civil security. EuroFaculty. UNHCR. Meeting with delegations from the United Kingdom and the United States.

18-19 May in Vilnius:

Preparation of the ministerial session. Meeting with delegations from France and Ukraine.

Annual Report of the Working Group on Economic Co-operation

Annual Report
of the Working Group in Economic Co-operation (WGEC)
Council of the Baltic Sea States
July 1998 - June 1999

I. Introduction

The WGEC agreed at its meeting on a work plan based on the main documents of the Riga Summit 1998, Baltic Business Summit 1998, recommendations of Vilnius Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Investments of SME's 1998, different reports and analysis from the business sector and the reports of the previous WGEC working periods.

In preparing an Action plan for a Lithuania's chairmanship it was stressed that a clear distinction should be made between the topics to follow-up and those where action on the national and regional level is needed. The WGEC should concentrate on a small number of subjects in order to achieve some practical results. One of the main parts of its work should be implementation and follow-up of the recommendations of the meetings of the Ministers of Trade and Industry and preparation for a next ministerial meeting.

II. List of meetings

During the work period July 1998 - June 1999 the WGEC had six meetings.

1. Vilnius, September 24-25, 1998. In its first meeting the WGEC discussed an Action Plan for 98/99; developments in border crossing and transit situation, and development of transport systems were discussed (Via Baltica and Transport Corridors).
2. Vilnius, December 7-8, 1998. The meeting was mainly dedicated to administrative Barriers to investment. Other topics dealt with: VASAB (Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea), Northern Dimension.
3. Helsinki, January 21-22, 1999. The WGEC discussed Administrative Barriers to trade and investment, Northern Dimension, co-operation with the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Survey on implementation of recommendations from Baltic Sea Business Summit 98, VASAB Interrelation of Phare, Tacis Interreg II.
4. Brussels, March 23-24, 1999. The WGEC had a joint meeting with CSO and BAC. During the meeting WGEC continued the discussion about Barriers to Trade, Barriers to Investment, Northern Dimension, examined the situation on establishing the SMEs information system, Business incubators and SMEs, Tourism, Future working relations between WGEC, BAC, CSO, Fight against Corruption.

5. Stockholm, April 20-21, 1999. In its 5th meeting the WGEC dealt with the following topics: Barriers to Investment, Anti-corruption network of the OECD, Trade Law Seminar, Tourism, Report of Working Group to CSO, Communiqué for Ministerial meeting in Palanga, Next Years activities of Working Group.

6. Kaunas, May 10-11, 1999. The meeting was dedicated to the creation and adoption of the annual report to CSO and Communiqué for the Ministerial meeting in Palanga, the WGEC also had a comprehensive exchange of view on Barriers to Investment, Tourism, Next years activities of the WGEC. The Secretariat presented first results on the Survey on implementation of recommendations from Baltic Sea Business Summit 98.

All WGEC meetings were chaired by Lithuania.

III. Principle findings and recommendations.

Administrative barriers to investment. The WGEC discussed the matter in a round table discussion. Representatives of the OECD and IBRD and a rapporteur from the Centre for Markets in Transition at Helsinki School of Economics were present. It was agreed that the investment climate in the Baltic countries and Poland was generally favourable but it was felt that even higher levels of investments could be attracted if certain barriers were removed. Specific recommendations to overcome investment barriers were proposed. The analysis of barriers demonstrated that more weight should be given to the group of policy recommendations aimed at overcoming indirect barriers and barriers in transparency and implementation. The recommendations were endorsed by the WGEC and the CSO.

In face of the fact that difficulties with the implementation of investment policy are related to legislative environment, it was proposed to initiate *a Study on norms, institutions and business culture around the Baltic Sea*. Such a study could be carried out as a joint research project by major universities in individual Baltic Sea countries. The WGEC delegations supported this idea. The Centre for Markets in Transition at Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration has drafted a research plan and, with the financing from Finland and Sweden, will start the first stage of the project - a *Feasibility study*. The group is looking for a financial assistance to carry on the *Pilot study* and, later on, an *Extensive study* (estimated time frame: 2001-2002).

As the round table discussion did not focus on the issue of barriers in Russia, we expect to get some practical results from the upcoming CBSS/OECD conference in St. Petersburg on the subject of investment conditions in the Russian regions in the Baltic Sea Area.

Barriers to Trade.

1) Certification. According to business representatives and economic institutions in the region, one of the most frequently mentioned barriers to trade is mandatory certification. The WGEC initiated a certification experts meeting in order to share experience and information about the reform plans. Certification expert meetings took place in Helsinki and proposed some recommendations which were reported to the WGEC. The meeting called for a closer regional co-operation and recommended to establish a network of conformity assessment bodies in the region in order to facilitate trade flow by the means of mutual recognition..

2) Trade legislation. The Ministers of Trade and Economy recommended during their meeting in July 1998 to improve trade and investments by supporting an alignment of trade related legislation and its practical implementation among the Baltic Sea States. A seminar on trade legislation named "International Trade in the 2000s" was held on April 19-20 in Stockholm. The seminar topics was a mix between abstract juridical issues and concrete examples of ways to proceed in the trade area and the legislative environment of the Baltic Sea Region. During the seminar the countries answered a brief questionnaire. Sweden will analyse the conclusions and present some proposals.

3) Border crossing. Recognising the importance of the border-crossing situation for trade, the Council invited the Conference of Customs Officials in Gdansk in September 1999 to make concrete decisions in setting up time limit and quality goals for customs clearance and border crossing.

4) Survey on Implementation of the recommendations from the Baltic Sea Business Summit. The WGEC decided in December 1998 to do a survey based on the above recommendations. First results of the survey were presented to the WGEC. The WGEC will follow-up on those issues which seem to need further improvement.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises(SME's). The Ministers of Trade and Industry recommended during their July 1998 meeting that joint information guidelines should be formulated and a web-site, linking different information networks, in order to improve the regional market places should be established. Setting up an Information network is under way. The first meeting on establishing the web-site took place in Vilnius in December 1998 and the next expert meeting will be in Stockholm in June 1999.

Following the Minister's recommendations, a "Baltic Sea Region conference for SME support" took place in Karlskrona in September 1998 with the aim to develop co-operation between development agencies in the region. A follow-up meeting took place in Tallinn in March 1999. It was agreed to continue to develop the network. Finland will organise the next meeting.

The exchange of information on the experience on business incubators recommended by the meeting of Ministers of Trade and Industry is progressing as well. The start-up meeting on business incubators with representatives of the Baltic Sea Region took place in Helsinki, November 18th, 1998. The WGEC took note of the information it had in the report from the meeting. An expert meeting on business incubators is taking place in June in Hamburg. This subject is likely to be on the agenda for the next meeting of ministers for trade and industry and the WGEC asked the German hosts to report on the results of the meeting.

VASAB/Interreg IIC. The representative from VASAB 2010 introduced the topic and elaborated on the difficulties which VASAB is experiencing. The major problem is that it is difficult to co-ordinate the various financing instruments which VASAB relies upon. The main differences between Interreg IIC and Phare/TACIS are related to the objectives of the programmes, eligible area, duration of projects, and the application and selection procedure and the general difficulties of joint financing. The subject of co-ordination of various financing instruments is high on the agenda of the working groups in the Commission but it will take considerable time to come up with results. At the moment the new TACIS program is already undergoing a lengthy discussion process.

The conclusions concerning elimination of the difficulties, which have been encountered in co-ordinating funds from Interreg IIC, PHARE and TACIS, were adopted and forwarded to the CSO.

Northern Dimension. The WGEC had a long and intensive discussion based on a non-paper on the question of which role the CBSS should play in the Northern Dimension. A summary of this discussion was approved by the Group and forwarded to the CSO. It was stressed that the Northern Dimension is an useful framework to promote mutually reinforcing synergies between the many relevant Community instruments applied in the Baltic Sea Region internally in the Union, in the candidate countries and in Russia. The following discussion during the joint CSO/WGEC meeting in Brussels proved that this subject is of growing importance particularly in light of the upcoming ministerial meeting Helsinki in autumn this year. The WGEC will certainly also have to deal with this topic within next year activities.

Development of sustainable tourism in the Baltic Sea region. The importance of tourism in the context of sustainable development in the region is beyond a dispute. The role as an economic factor is widely appreciated and understood. Upon the request of the Baltic Sea Tourism Commission (BTC) for the support of their work on sustainable tourism in the Baltic Sea region we had a discussion on the issue and the BTC submitted to us the program for sustainable tourism in the Baltic Sea Region and explained their goals by elaborating on one of their main projects, i. e. within Agenda 21. It is evident that considerable financial support from national levels is needed. The WGEC notes the request from the BTC to the CBSS to support this concept and the WGEC will elaborate on how to further develop this concept.

Fight against corruption. Based on a proposal made during the meeting in Helsinki, the WGEC had received a paper from Latvia regarding a proposal for a network on fighting

against corruption. After discussions and the OECD report on their Anti-corruption network for countries in transition, the WGEC agreed not to establish its own anti-corruption network but make use out of the existing bodies. The WGEC contacted the working group on democratic institutions and the Task Force on Organised Crime to discuss how/if they can take over the subject.

The Baltic Business Advisory Council. During the year WGEC worked in close contact with the BAC and relations between the WGEC and the BAC has increased. A joint meeting in Brussels proved the value of input from the BAC to our work as one of our most important contact points. The WGEC chairman was invited to participate in the BAC meeting in Stockholm. Now we have a fixed agenda point on the BAC/BCCA reporting to the WGEC about most recent developments and pressing matters. The BAC has had an input and were actively involved in discussions of all relevant issues we took on board. The dialogue by exchanging ideas and proposals should even be more intensified in the future as the institutionalised input from the BAC is a stimulating factor in the area of regional economic co-operation.

Relations with relevant international organisations. In order to achieve best results in economic cooperation and not to duplicate the work done by other fora, the WGEC co-operated with other international organisations. The WGEC invited representatives from the OECD and the IBRD to discuss and share their experience on administrative barriers to investment. The OECD presented its Forum for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (FEED) program, introduced the Anti-corruption Network for Transition Countries.

Co-operation with economic working group of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). The chairman of the WGEC participated at the meeting of the BEAC-WGEC. The chairman BEAC-WGEC reported to the CBSS-WGEC on the establishment and development of the Barents Council and pointed to the structural difference between the Barents and the Baltic Council. However, the working agenda of the two bodies is largely similar, for example on trade and investment barriers, where a 'task force' will come up with proposals for the BEAC.

It was agreed to have a regular exchange on information about the agenda of major projects. To implement practical working relations, the WGEC agreed that the chairman of the CBSS-WGEC shall participate once a year in a meeting of the Barents WGEC and vice versa. Additional invitations are optional.

IV. Follow up of the developments in energy and transport.

Transport systems and transit issues. A progress in the development of transport systems was noted by the EC at the International Transport Conference in Klaipeda. However, further development of the growth of trade both in volume and in value is predicted for the Baltic Sea region. Considerable investments in transport infrastructure and their maintenance are required in order to keep up the pace of predicted growth. Means should be examined for improving relevant transport corridors.

Energy. The first Energy Ministers meeting in Stavanger in December 1998 confirmed the strong commitment to continue co-operation in the energy sector. It welcomed the recommendations of the Baltic Sea Summit in Riga in January 1998 and initiative of the first Baltic Energy Task Force to develop further co-operation on sustainable energy supplies and networking in the Baltic Sea Region. According to the decisions taken at the Stavanger meeting the international conference on investment in energy in the Baltic Sea Region took place in Riga in April 1999, emphasising the momentum of further energy networking. Strengthening of the co-operation between energy authorities, encouraging public and private investments, transition to environmentally sound energy sources, energy efficiency, linking electricity and gas networks are the key factors of the joint work programme. Preparations for a meeting of Ministers for Energy in Helsinki in October 1999 reflects the growing importance of energy supplies for the Baltic Sea region.

V. Suggestions for the future chairmanship

The WGEC started the discussion on the next years activities already during the meeting in Brussels to ensure the continuity of work.

The following points for the next year's activities were proposed:

- A follow up on the Survey on business recommendations,
- An investigation on possible co-operation with the BEAC in specific areas,
- To ensure progress with the Hirvensalo report on barriers to investment.
- To investigate on the establishment of an 'IT-network'
- The '2h 2000' proposal by the BAC

- 'Barriers to financing' as suggested by the BAC
- The preparation for the ministerial meeting in Bergen
- Northern Dimension and the role of the CBSS

Norway proposed its draft working plan for the next year at the meeting in Kaunas May 1999. The WGEC will finally agree on the working plan at the next meeting in Oslo in mid September and then forward it to the CSO.

Discussed and adopted by the WGEC meeting on 11 May 1999.

N. Zambaité, Chairman of the WGEC

Annual Report of the Working Group on Democratic Institutions

COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES
WGDI

12 May 1999

DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Report of the CBSS Working Group on Assistance to Democratic Institutions

I Introduction

Institutional arrangements

Ever since the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) was established, the Working Group on Assistance to Democratic Institutions (WGDI) has operated as one of the three working groups under its auspices. According to its mandate, the WGDI has to study and report on obstacles to democratic institutions develop democratic institutions in the Member States in transition and make recommendations in this respect engage in information sharing in the area, enhance people-to-people contacts and the role of local self-government, and study the feasibility of establishing a forum for legal co-operation between the members of the CBSS with the task of developing a legal system and refining the law in the region.

As can be seen, the Working Group has a broad and comprehensive mandate. This provides a lot of versatility in tackling the needs for assistance to democratic institutions in countries of the Baltic sea region. All Member States of the CBSS, as well as the European Commission, have participated in the activities of the Working Group. At first, there was no standing chair in the WGDI, it was chaired by a representative of the state where the Group held its meeting. In 1994 and 1995 the chair was held by Sweden. Since then, the chair has been held, for one year at a time, by Poland, Denmark, Latvia and, at present, Finland.

There is no doubt that the most important duty of the Working Group has been the drafting work which led to the establishment of the post of the CBSS Commissioner and to the opening of his activities on 1 October 1994. After this achievement, the Working Group has dedicated itself to quite practical work: It has planned and organised seminars and training sessions on democratic institutions and human rights, evaluated the results, arranged study visits and promoted closer contacts with non-governmental organisations. The Working Group has also developed co-operation with the CBSS Commissioner.

During the last three chairmanships, the scope of activity of the Working Group has expanded to areas other than democratic institutions and human rights (e.g. Civil Security and educational activities in the region). This expansion has taken place primarily because, so far, the Council has not deemed it appropriate to establish new Working Groups.

The CBSS Commissioner

The establishment of the post of the CBSS Commissioner and his office in Copenhagen laid the groundwork for a completely new approach to the development of democracy and human rights in CBSS Member States. The first three-year term of the CBSS Commissioner commenced on 1 October 1994. In 1997, he was reappointed for a term ending on 1 October 2000.

The Commissioner has a comprehensive mandate, giving him quite a free hand in the promotion of the democratic development and human rights in the region. Indeed, the Commissioner has enhanced the democratic development of the Baltic sea region by maintaining dialogue with non-governmental organisations, carrying out visits to the Member States, as well as through day-to-day contacts and by compiling numerous reports on the status in the Member States and by issuing recommendations on the basis of the reports. For instance, he has touched upon the Ombudsman system, children's rights, non-nationals' rights and the human rights of military personnel.

Relation to other international organisations

Since the establishment of the CBSS, the international co-operation on democratic institutions and human rights in Europe has undergone changes and adopted or about to adopt new forms. Naturally, such changes have an effect on the CBSS and its work for the development of democratic institutions and human rights.

Firstly, all Member States of the CBSS have become members also of the Council of Europe, whose human rights monitoring mechanism has been altered by the establishment, on 1 November 1998, of a permanent and full-time European Court of Human Rights. In addition, the creation of a new human rights organ, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, is pending in that organisation. The idea is that the Human Rights Commissioner would be a non-judicial institution which would complement the activities of the European Court of Human Rights in a flexible manner.

Secondly, the "human dimension" of human rights, democracy and rule of law is a consistent factor also in the work of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In the context of OSCE, human rights are treated as a part of other political activity. The organisation has its own institutions to carry out its duties. For instance, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) operates in Warsaw. In addition, there is the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, whose duty it is to pre-empt conflicts arising from violations of minority rights by taking up the issue at the earliest possible moment. In December 1997, the organisation appointed its first ever Representative on Freedom of the Media, whose duty it is to monitor the realisation of the freedoms of speech and the media.

Thirdly, human rights have an important position in the work of the European Union. The EU adopts positions and decides on measures arising from human rights violations regularly and promptly. The significance of the EU in the Baltic Sea Region has increased as a result of the accession of Finland and Sweden to the Union as from the beginning of 1995. The EU has also developed its own fundamental rights dimension by the Treaty of Amsterdam signed on 2 October 1997. In addition, the enlargement process is under way also with four other member states of the CBSS. The concept of the "Northern Dimension" has also been brought up in the discussions in this field.

The governing principle in the work of the CBSS on assistance to democratic institutions and development of human rights is a sensible division of tasks with other international organisations. This principle has been spelled out in the mandate of the CBSS Commissioner: the Commissioner is expected to co-operate with the international organisations active in the same fields, so as to avoid redundancy. Of course, such a division of tasks may be difficult to lay down at a general level. Regardless of this problem, some points are put forward in the following.

In all, one of the most significant area of activity of the CBSS is assistance to democratic institutions and promotion of the rule of law. Human rights and, as a part thereof, the status of national minorities, are linked to this main area of activity. The Council does not attempt to regulate human rights, but to promote the realisation thereof. One of the methods to achieve this is the support provided to non-governmental organisations. The CBSS Commissioner deals with more and more complaints from private individuals nowadays. This is partly because of the insufficient national remedies in the Member States. Therefore, the developing of national mechanisms, such as national ombudsmen, is an important objective in the field of assistance to democratic institutions and promotion of the rule of law.

The lines drawn above are indicative at best. Therefore, the natural next step is to examine the current issues in the CBSS at the turn of the Millennium.

II Agenda for development

The groundwork for an agenda for development and for the prioritisation of the issues was laid down in Copenhagen on 13–14 February 1998, during the Round Table on Democracy and Human Rights in the Baltic Sea Region, arranged by the CBSS Commissioner in co-operation with the Latvian chair of the CBSS Working Group on Assistance to Democratic Institutions. Some 50 representatives from governments and parliaments of CBSS Member States participated in the discussions. The result was the following Agenda on Democracy and Human Rights for the Baltic Sea Region, comprising 14 points:

Democratic Institutions

1. National Ombudsman institutions. Strengthening the ombudsman institutions and promoting co-operation and meetings between such institutions in the Baltic sea region. Encouraging the establishment of ombudsmen for children and other vulnerable groups of society.

2. Complaints handling bodies. In view of the often slow and costly process of bringing complaints against the police before a court of law, it is considered important that the population has quick and adequate access to filing such complaints and a possibility to obtain redress by an independent organ in case of alleged police abuse.
3. Local democracy. For the purpose of strengthening local democracy and providing clear and adequate information to the citizenry, it may be considered to establish citizens' offices on a local or municipal level as an easy and cheap means of meeting the needs of the population for information.
4. Non-governmental organisations. Creating forms of co-operation and interaction between the state and civil society with the purpose of utilising the resources and expertise of non-governmental organisations and to promote conditions for their establishment.
5. Parliamentary co-operation. Considering ways and means of strengthening the work and structures of the Baltic sea Parliamentary Conferences and to encourage parliamentarians to take an active part in providing solutions to the problems of our region.
6. Open democracy. Considering limitations to the use of presidential decrees from the point of view of strengthening an open democracy.
7. Human rights awareness. Arranging seminars on law-making in order to improve the transparency of legislation and human rights. Arranging seminars for parliamentarians in human rights and legislative practices and to familiarise the national legal system with international law and structures for human rights protection. Considering the need for enhancing human rights awareness at the governmental level; appointment of a minister for human rights may increase such awareness in the process of preparing legislation, provided that the minister is equipped with sufficient authority. The appointment of a minister for nationalities/minorities could be of importance in a similar way. Other structures for raising awareness and providing suitable fora for minority issues could be the Advisory Councils.
8. International human rights protection. Considering that the establishment of a Commissioner on Human Rights in the Council of Europe could be of importance in order to alleviate the burden in member states of preparing costly and lengthy procedures before the European Court of Human Rights without in any way infringing upon the competence of this organ.

Issues of Human Rights

1. Protection of persons belonging to minorities. Further implementation of the objectives under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for National Minorities to strengthen and secure the protection by establishing the concept of minorities according to objective criteria. To promote fair national procedures – including access to the judiciary – in determining the question whether a certain group should be considered a national minority.
2. Citizenship. Encouraging a common approach within the CBSS to the preconditions (including the necessary time of residence) of obtaining citizenship. Investigating the legal consequences of obtaining citizenship, compared with the legal rights and duties for resident non-citizens of different categories.
3. Criminal justice. Further improvement of the regimes of all kind of closed institutions for people deprived of their liberty with special attention paid to institutions for prisoners, persons accused of crimes and asylum seekers.

4. Military spokesmen. Encouraging the Member States to introduce general procedures for military spokesmen as focal points for the conscripts' common articulation and communication points regarding their conditions in the armed forces and/or the extension of ombudsmen or other independent complaints-handling bodies to meet these needs.
5. Voting rights for non-citizens. Making efforts to widen popular participation in political life at the local level, including the right to vote in local elections and to membership of political parties.
6. Abolition of death penalty. Compile existing scientific material, arranging seminars, etc. about general preventive effect, or the lack of such effect, of capital punishment.

Agenda of the Working Group on Assistance to Democratic Institutions during the Finnish Chairmanship 1998-1999

The above agenda laid down in Copenhagen in 1998 forms the most important starting point for the activities of the WGDI during the Finnish chairmanship in 1998–99. During that period, it was the objective of the Working Group to:

1. carry on with the examination of the inherited matters and to see to their monitoring;
2. concentrate especially on issues relating to democratic institutions and to disseminate information thereon;
3. promote dissemination of information on the European Union activities;
4. start with the drawing up of a long-term plan for the promotion of democratic institutions in the Baltic sea region;
5. maintain close contact with the CBSS Commissioner; and
6. familiarise itself with the special characteristics of the Finnish system.

The following eight subject areas have been discussed in the meetings, mini seminars, round tables and study visits during the Finnish chairmanship: (1) the Constitution, the Parliament and legislative drafting, (2) fundamental rights and human rights, (3) electoral and participation rights, (4) administration and self-government, (5) non-governmental organisations, (6) co-operation on Civil Security issues, (7) children's issues, including sexual exploitation of children and children's ombudsmen, and (8) the EuroFaculty. Such broad themes are no doubt what the work of the Group must concentrate on, although Civil Security issues and EuroFaculty are not really human rights or democracy issues in their strict sense.

1. The Constitution, the Parliament and legislative drafting

The Constitution was an important theme of the Finnish chairmanship. The issue is a topical one, as on 12 February 1999 the Finnish Parliament adopted a new Constitution of Finland, intended to enter into force on 1 March 2000. Even though the subject-matter of the examination is the Constitution of a single country, it no doubt has also more general application – the Constitution being the most important legal measure in any state, reflecting its central values and particular legal culture. The theme should be developed within the CBSS. The Finnish Constitution will be publicised as effectively as possible. It will be made available, not only in Finnish and Swedish, but also in English, French, German and Russian.

The solutions found in the drafting of this Constitution may well be useful when CBSS Member States have to consider amendments to their own constitutions owing e.g. to their accession to the European Union.

The most important state institution is a democratically elected Parliament. Accordingly, the 200-member Parliament of Finland and its operations were looked into during the Finnish chairmanship. The Working Group has already earlier studied the Parliaments of Estonia, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland. The working procedures of the Parliaments of the Member States of the Council are hugely variable, the main differences being in the drafting and enactment procedures. In 1995, a two-day seminar on law drafting was arranged in Finland. The objective this time is to develop on the theme, with considerably more ambitious aims. The CBSS Commissioner, supported by the WGDI, will be launching a project in 1999 under the heading, Programme for the Strengthening of Democratic Processes in the Baltic Sea Region with Particular Emphasis on Quality Legislation. The programme will be carried through a series of seminars in the Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Russia) with the primary participation being from the national Parliaments; the emphasis will be on combining general issues with existing legislation and parliamentary procedures in the countries in question. The WGDI will provide the Commissioner with organisational and information assistance in carrying out the programme and act as a partner to the Commissioner in applying for funds for the programme.

Within the outline programme of the seminar, four main themes will be addressed:

- Strengthening the quality of legislation and the capacity of Parliaments to deal with complicated legislative issues and legal reforms.
- Enhancing human rights knowledge among parliamentarians.
- Increasing the capacity of national Parliaments to handle legislation related to EU membership.
- Strengthening the legal protection of citizens.

2. Fundamental Rights and Human Rights

Another broad category of interest is formed by issues of fundamental rights and human rights; during the Finnish chairmanship these were discussed in a mini seminar, whose aim was to make an excursion into certain rights from the point of view of the basic rights reform enacted in Finland in 1995. More specifically, the following issues were discussed: realisation of fundamental rights from the citizens' viewpoint, access to information and right of assembly. It may be necessary to continue the discussion on fundamental rights. A good basis for such continuation could perhaps be provided by the follow-up seminar on the Finnish basic rights reform, to be arranged in the autumn of 1999. In addition, economic, social and cultural rights could form a new theme of interest for the future.

Fundamental rights and human rights cannot be considered in isolation from the monitoring of their realisation. This is essentially a task for the national ombudsmen. The Finnish chairmanship has provided an insight into the institutions of ombudsman and chancellor of

justice in Finland; the tasks of the two overlap to a certain extent. In particular, both are charged with the monitoring of the realisation of fundamental rights and human rights. We should carry on with this theme also in the future. In addition, we should follow closely the development of the special ombudsmen (such as the children's ombudsman) in the Member States.

Most of the reports initiated, prepared and issued by the CBSS Commissioner touch upon fundamental rights and human rights. The reporting method, which has provided an insight into the human rights situation in Member States, has proved to be both practical and effective. It should therefore be maintained. The WGDI has continued with the existing tradition of including selected surveys of the Commissioner as separate topics on the Group agenda. This should be done on a regular basis and follow a certain logic, which should be co-ordinated with the Commissioner. By these discussions, the WGDI aims to assist the Commissioner in monitoring the realisation of his recommendations on a general level.

3. Electoral and participation rights

The electoral and participation rights of the citizens were the theme of one mini seminar during the Finnish chairmanship. This theme, vital to the functioning of democratic institutions, covers two main issues: elections and referenda. An election is the single most important manifestation of representative democracy. It is, however, rife with difficult issues: who has the vote? how to persuade the citizens to use their right to vote? how to ensure the security of elections? and how best to implement fair proportional representation?

As an institution, a referendum is fundamentally different from an election. Direct democracy is treated differently in different Member States. In many of them, a referendum has been the national measure of choice when issues of high political significance are to be decided. One such issue is e.g. accession to the European Union and to the fundamental instruments drawn up in that context. – At the municipal level, a referendum provides a channel for the members of the municipality to participate in the decision-making. Its use has varied between the Member States.

Taken as a whole, electoral and participation rights form an important and difficult sector from the point of view of democratic institutions. The pertinent questions should be further examined among the Baltic Sea States. As also the OSCE has stressed the importance of elections, and especially electoral monitoring, in its work, the CBSS could perhaps concentrate on the evaluation of the referendum as an institution. After all, the issue will inevitably arise in a number of Member States as they prepare for accession to the EU.

4. Administration and self-government

Good and effective administration is imperative for the functioning of democratic institutions. The Council has already touched upon issues of local self-government. For instance, a seminar on this topic was arranged in Sweden. During the Finnish chairmanship, a round table was held on the topic of good administration and efficiency in administration. The discussions covered the pertinent general principles and the specific issue of privatisation. Of course, this

initial excursion into the topic was anything but definitive. Accordingly, the objective is that matters of administration should be further discussed in a seminar to be arranged in co-operation with the University of Helsinki in January 2000. The programme of the seminar will be drawn up in the spring of 1999, with the aim of taking into account the wishes of all Member States.

Local self-government is a cornerstone of democratic institutions in the Member States. To monitor the realisation of the local self-government will no doubt be an important task also in the future. For instance, the status of the members of the municipality (their rights and obligations) could be the subject-matter for fruitful study. The CBSS Commissioner has completed several surveys which are of importance in this respect: "Rights of Non-Citizens Residing Legally in the Member States of the CBSS, Part I, Voting Rights and the Right to Stand for Public Office" in February 1996; "Rights of Non-Citizens Residing Legally in the Member States of the CBSS, Part II, Right of Association, Access to Civil Service and to other Special Posts or Work" in March 1998 and "The Working Conditions of Elected Members of Local Authorities in the CBSS Member States" in February 1998. Co-operation within the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) and the Baltic Sea States' Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC) is also worth mentioning in this context.

5. Enhancement of the status of non-governmental organisations

Non-governmental organisations have held an important place in the activities of the Council. In 1995, the WGDI drew up a list of institutions and non-governmental organisations in the Member States, which are active in the field of democratic institution-building. In addition, a seminar on the status of NGOs was arranged in Tallinn. More recently, during the Finnish chairmanship, fundamental rights were discussed from the point of view of non-governmental organisations. Also the CBSS Commissioner has maintained close contacts with NGOs in the context of his official visits to the Member States.

Contacts with non-governmental organisations will also in the future be maintained in the activity of the CBSS. This aspect will be present e.g., in the programme on law drafting procedure referred to above.

6. Co-operation on Civil Security issues

The WGDI has continued to act as a co-ordinating forum for Civil Security co-operation in the Baltic sea region. Two conferences dealing with this issue were organised in Århus, Denmark and in Visby, Sweden in June and September 1998 respectively. A third one was convened in Palanga, Lithuania on 11-13 May 1999. The Århus Conference underlined that extension of existing co-operation agreements between countries of the region to cover all CBSS Member States was a good means to build up joint structures and develop equipment in the fields of early warning systems and search-and-rescue (SAR) operations. Sweden will update the comprehensive list on bilateral and multilateral agreements in the field of Civil Security in the Baltic sea region. A workshop on Civil Security and Crisis Management in the region was held in Stockholm on 18-19 March 1999, organised by Sweden in co-operation

with the CBSS Secretariat. Norway will organise a workshop on preparations for the year 2000 transition in the Baltic sea region on 1-3 June 1999.

7. Children's issues, including sexual exploitation of children and children's ombudsman

Co-operation in the region on children's issues has continued. Sweden, Norway and Estonia organised a conference in Tallinn on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in September 1998. Denmark is contributing by organising seminars on multi-disciplinary co-operation at the local level. The first seminar was held in Riga in October 1998. The next seminar will be held in Vilnius in June 1999. The Swedish Special Group for Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region has also continued its work as a focal point for regional co-operation.

Children's issues were widely discussed during the WGDI meeting on 30 November 1998. The Group welcomed the CBSS Commissioner's proposal to widen the scope of activity on children's issues, including the creation of adequate monitoring/interest promoting mechanisms in the Member States. The WGDI welcomed efforts by Member States to follow up on the Tallinn Conference as well as the plan of the Swedish ombudsman for Children to organise a seminar on children's issues in September 1999.

A ministerial meeting "Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region" was held in Stockholm on 17 March 1999 as a follow-up event to the Tallinn Conference. Several ideas were mentioned by the ministers. The most immediate was the creation of an IT-network for regional co-operation about children at risk. During its meeting in Reykjavik on 29-30 May 1999, the CSO took note of the results of the ministerial meeting and asked the WGDI to examine how it can contribute to the follow-up work. Norway confirmed that the upcoming CBSS Presidency would follow up on the ministerial meeting. The CSO supported the idea of setting up a IT-network concerning children at risk and appreciated the initiative of Sweden and Norway to co-ordinate the work.

8. EuroFaculty

The WGDI has discussed issues relating to the EuroFaculty in its meetings on 25 January and 15 March 1999. The uncertainty of funding, legal status of the EF and the extension of the EF to the Kaliningrad State University were particularly taken up. The WGDI analysed the past attempts to solve the problem of the legal status of the EF on the basis of the report of the CBSS Secretariat and decided to set up an ad hoc group of legal experts to look into ways of solving the problem. The expert group will report its findings to the WGDI, which will in turn submit its recommendations to the CSO. The expert group should finalise its work swiftly. The proposal to establish an EF centre in Kaliningrad received a positive response from the WGDI.

The EuroFaculty was insolvent and needed an extraordinary cash injection to be able to continue. Cuts were made in the budget for 1999/2000 and thereby in the programmes. The situation was believed to be caused by various reasons, i.e. strict and varied kinds of donor conditions, short-term commitments by donors and the administrative procedures used in the national Phare programs. The delegations agreed that the project was an academic success and

should therefore continue. They reaffirmed the political commitment to the project, which had been expressed by Foreign Ministers on several occasions.

III Outlook for the future

The promotion of respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights is an important task of the Council of the Baltic Sea States at the onset of the new millennium. The institutions of the CBSS are not alone responsible for this task in the Baltic Sea Region, but they work in co-operation with other international organisations to achieve this goal, while still avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort. Naturally, activity in promotion of these important values will also be conducive towards peace and stability in the region.

In the Baltic sea region, the activity for the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights is largely practical, everyday work. The main point is making these values known to the public. In part, the point is also to improve the trust of the people in judicial institutions and to persuade them to use their political and participation rights. A major challenge for the future is the safeguarding of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the rights of the especially vulnerable groups (such as children). The CBSS must make every effort to promote the abolition of capital punishment.

Scope of future activities:

The agenda of the WGDI has widened considerably over the past years and the workload has become rather demanding. In the years ahead, the Working Group should focus on a few relevant issues of democratic institutions and on the broader issues already taken on its agenda. Examples of relevant issues are **good and efficient administration, Civil Security, EuroFaculty, Children's issues, co-operation with the CBSS Commissioner**, as well as **local self-government in the region**.

Co-operation with the CBSS Commissioner on relevant issues of democratic institutions is needed to facilitate the implementation of his recommendations and to enlarge the process towards good law-making and good administration.

The children's issues are a human rights concern already by definition. The WGDI should support the proceedings towards a closer exchange of experiences between persons on various levels responsible for children's issues. The already initiated work on children's ombudsmen is of importance and therefore should continue. The WGDI should also consider how to widen the scope of children's issues and support the development towards a safe childhood. In this respect, the CBSS Commissioner's survey concerning violence in media is particularly relevant. The WGDI should look into ways of ensuring co-ordination of future co-operation on children's issues.

The future work on Civil Security will also need a co-ordinator. Several project proposals and recommendations have been made in order to develop and enhance the regional co-operation in this field. The various specific areas within the scope of Civil Security need to be handled

by experts, reporting to the WGDI. There is a great need to sum up the work already carried out in this area.

The future work on EuroFaculty will be directed towards strengthening of the efficient functioning of EuroFaculty in all possible ways. The ad hoc legal expert group should proceed with all due speed to find a solution. The re-establishment of an EF centre in Kaliningrad should be a priority.

Forms of work:

Besides limiting the agenda, it is also most important to secure adequate expertise in the meetings of the Group. The Member States have not always been able to supplement their delegations with experts when needed. Therefore, the CBSS should try to look into ways of supporting financially the participation of experts from the Member States.

For all subjects, there is a technical level and a policy level. The technical level should be dealt with by experts - in separate seminars and workshops - and reported to the WGDI. Involvement of experts in multilateral co-operation is needed in order to exchange experiences and achieve results. The policy level should be dealt with by the WGDI. The role of the WGDI vis-à-vis expert work is threefold;

- supervise and direct the work of experts
- assist the expert work by way of disseminating information, recruiting the right experts, etc.
- draw policy conclusions from the expert work and forward them to the CSO.

The development of democracy and human rights is a task for the long run. The Working Group on Assistance to Democratic Institutions can be an important tool in the promotion of this development and in the integration process.

Annual Report of the Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety

Council of the Baltic Sea States	Raimo Mustonen
Chairman of the Working Group	Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK)
Nuclear and Radiation Safety	tel +358 9 7598 8492
	fax +358 9 7598 8498

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28 April 1999

Chairman's report to the Committee of Senior Officials

1. Summary

In 1998, the WG concentrated on development of system for regular exchange of radiological environmental data between the Member States, and on improving its own working procedures. The new secretariat of the CBSS gave a remarkable support to the WG. Technical arrangements of the data exchange system and preparation of the multilateral agreement of the system are going on. The WG listed the issues to be taken into the Action Plan of WG for the few next years.

2. Working procedures of the WG

During the Lithuanian chairmanship of the CBSS the Working Group for Nuclear and Radiation Safety further developed its own working procedures. Establishment of the CBSS Secretariat and nominating the contact person in the Secretariat (Senior Adviser Axel Krohn) to help and support the WG was welcomed. This arrangement is believed, from its own part, to strengthen the work of WG by providing secretarial services and improving communication between the WG and other acting bodies of the CBSS.

WG is going to concentrate to fewer topics in its action plan. The potential topics were discussed in the WG meeting in Vilnius in February 1999. The action plan will be formulated in the next meeting in September.

It was already earlier decided to circulate the chairmanship of WG in three years periods.

It was welcomed that the Russian Federation has participated in the work of WG during the Lithuanian presidency of the CBSS.

3. Activities during the last year

The WG continued the work for building the system for regular exchange of radiation monitoring data between the Member States. All Member States gave principal approval for the system in 1998. It was noted that the establishment of the system will necessitate an agreement of the Member States, and discussion on what level the agreement should be signed is going on. Some MS would like having the agreement on governmental level, some prefer the authority level. Technical arrangements of the system are, however, going on.

The WG received information about recent activities in the MSs. Updating the radiation and nuclear safety legislation is going on in several countries. All MSs have implemented or are implementing the changes in their radiation protection regulations to achieve compliance with the new Euratom Directive on radiation protection. Also the countries being candidates for new MSs of the EU are revising their legislation according the new directive.

Information about the new German government's nuclear policy and the present situation on 'consensus talks' among the government and industry in Germany was received. The Russian Federation informed about the plans to build new nuclear power plants and to dismantle older reactors.

The WG welcomed the progress in restoration of the radioactive waste depository at Sillamäe in Estonia.

4. Preparation of Action Plan of the WG

Topics to be taken into the action plan of WG were discussed in February in Vilnius. Delegates presented their priorities for different topics and selection of topics will be done in the next meeting in Oslo. At present the following issues are under consideration:

- Regional agreement on regular exchange of radiation monitoring data
- Regional agreement on early notification and information exchange
- Regional agreement on assistance in nuclear emergencies
- Radiation pollution of the Baltic Sea
- Problem of illicit trafficking
- Exchange of information of NPP in operation and to be decommissioned
- Transport of nuclear materials in the Baltic region
- Northern Dimension and CBSS/WGNS

The next meeting of the WG will be held in Oslo, August 31st to September 1st, 1999.

Annual Report of the CBSS Secretariat

Annual Report for 1998/99 from the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States

- **Establishment and start of operations**

The Permanent International Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (hereafter the Secretariat) started its work on 15 August 1998, in accordance with the mandate Doc. No. DK-98/73 of 29 January 1998.

The Swedish Government has made excellent premises available at Strömsborg, in central Stockholm. The premises include furniture and IT-equipment. The Secretariat is grateful for the support of the Swedish government in practical matters during the establishment phase, for instance the technical help and advice in various practical issues related to the functioning of the Secretariat. Following a demand by Germany, a wall was erected, separating the Secretariat and other offices in the same building. The cost was born by the Swedish government.

The Secretariat has worked very closely with and under the direction of the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the CBSS. It has provided assistance to the chairmanship in accordance with the mandate and the more detailed description of the tasks, which was presented to the CSO in September 1998.

- **Information strategy, Baltinfo and Internet Home page**

The Secretariat is editing a newsletter, BALTINFO, approximately every month, with a circulation rising from some 300 to more than 1.200 subscribers. The number of pages has increased from 2 to 6/8. The Secretariat would like to thank all the contributors for their articles and other inputs.

The revised and updated Website (www.baltinfo.org) of the CBSS was launched in April 1999. The Secretariat will continuously update the Website and hope that it will be of great use for the CSO members as well as other parties interested in the Baltic sea region.

The Secretariat marked the 7th anniversary of the CBSS with a meeting in the Secretariat with the participation of a number of embassies in Stockholm, as well as officials from Swedish ministries and state agencies dealing with Baltic sea co-operation. The Chairman of the CSO made a speech at the occasion.

Members of the staff have given a number of presentations at regional conferences and meetings (see annex 1).

In January 1999, the Secretariat organised a meeting for other secretariats for intergovernmental co-operation in the Region.

- **Archives**

Since the start of the Secretariat, a modern archive system has been put in place. The Secretariat is also trying, with the help of the CBSS members, to collect documents related to the work of the CBSS from its creation in 1992. This archive is crucial since the Secretariat has a role as information focal point.

- **Meetings at the Secretariat**

During the last 10 months, the Secretariat has hosted various meetings, conferences and seminars for foreign visitors and organisations.

- **Host Party Agreement**

The Host Party Agreement between the Secretariat and the Swedish Government was signed on 23 November 1998. It came into force on 1 January 1999 after approval by the Swedish Parliament.

In accordance with the Host Party Agreement, the Secretariat is reclaiming VAT for purchased office-related goods in accordance with Swedish law. In addition, the Secretariat is reimbursed by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the income tax paid by the Swedish staff members of the Secretariat.

- **Accounting and budget**

The Budget for the Secretariat was adopted by the CSO at its meeting in St. Petersburg on 26-27 March 1998, with a total spending of 1.479.000 DEM for the first year of operation (document no. DK-98/99). Based on this budget and taking into account the late start of the Secretariat, the CSO approved on 21 October 1998 a revised budget totalling 600.000 DEM.

The Financial Accounts for 1998 were finalised in February and audited by the Swedish State Auditor Office in April 1999. The 1998 Financial Statement was circulated among the members of the CSO during its meeting in Reykjavik on 29 April 1999.

The Secretariat received advice from the Swedish National Financial Management Authority on setting up the accounting system in accordance with regulations applicable in Sweden, as required by the mandate. Daily accounting is performed by an accounting company, Bratt & Partners.

On advice from another international organisation established in Stockholm, the Secretariat has opened a bank account in Handelsbanken. The Secretariat has accounts in DEM and SEK.

The budget and accounting year follows the calendar year.

- **Financial contributions**

The Member states of the CBSS contribute to the Secretariat's budget in accordance with the following key: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden with 12 % of the annual budget and Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania with 4 % of the annual budget.

All Member states have paid their contributions for 1998. However, due to the differences between the Member states' national budgetary systems and for other reasons, some

contributions for 1998 arrived rather late during 1998 and during 1999. Considering the start-up costs related to investments to upgrade IT as well as other initial costs, the late arrival of some contributions created liquidity problems towards the end of 1998. This created delays for some investments and some regular expenditures, which by now have been corrected. The Secretariat believes that the same problem will not occur during the 1999 financial year due to the awareness of the Member states and the established routine.

- **Staff**

By 1 January 1999, all 7 staff members of the Secretariat were employed and located in Stockholm. Director Jacek Starosciak and Senior Advisor Lars Gronbjerg started their duties on 15 August 1998; Secretary Claire Nyström started her duties on 1 September 1998; Senior Advisor Serguei Sokolov started his duties on 20 October 1998, Senior Advisor Vibeke Holm (half-time) started her duties on 1 November 1998; Chief of Staff Anna Nylander started her duties on 16 November 1998; Senior Advisor Axel Krohn started his duties on 1 January 1999.

To the extent possible, the Secretariat administers staff matters in accordance with the guidelines of the secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Following the examination of a number of possibilities, the Secretariat has signed health and accident insurance for its staff with a Swedish insurance company, Skandia.

Attachment 1

List of conferences and meetings in which members of the Secretariat have participated, with note of presentations given where appropriate.

September 1998

3-4 Tallinn Conference on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Director of the Secretariat

7-8 Lübeck 7th Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea

Area. Director of the Secretariat

October 1998

1-2 Klaipeda Conference on Transfrontier co-operation around the Baltic Sea:

Realities and Perspectives. Senior Advisor Lars Gronbjerg,
presentation on "The cost of drawing borders in post-Soviet
space"

13-14 Stockholm Conference " Subregional Cooperation - An Instrument for
Modern Security Building". Director of the Secretariat

22-23 Roskilde BSSSC Annual Conference. Director of the Secretariat

December 1998

4 Stockholm Meeting of the Task Force on Organised Crime. Senior Advisor
Serguei Sokolov

8 Stockholm The Child Forum Conference, Senior Advisor Vibeke Holm

January 1999

27 Stockholm Meeting of Secretariats established to support Baltic Sea co-
operation. Participants: Office of the CBSS Commissioner,
Union of the Baltic Cities, Nordic Council, Nordic Council of
Ministers, BSSSC, Helsinki Commission, Barents Euro-Arctic
Council, VASAB, Baltic Assembly, Task Force on Combating
Organised Crime, Baltic 21.

February 1999

23-25 Riga Visit to the EuroFaculty Directorate in Riga. Senior Advisor
Vibeke Holm

March 1999

1 Copenhagen Conference "Human rights and conflict resolutions: An agenda for the 21st Century". Senior Advisor Lars Grönbjerg.

6-7 Pori Executive Board meeting of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Senior Advisor Serguei Sokolov. Presentation on "Current activities of CBSS and the potential of CBSS-UBC co-operation"

9 Stockholm Troika Meeting at the Secretariat and briefing for invited guests

10 Stockholm Executive Committee of EuroFaculty at the Secretariat

11-12 Pskov Conference "Risk and Challenges of the North-West of Russia

in the Context of the Baltic Sea Area. Questions of Regional Identity". Senior Advisor Lars Grönbjerg. Presentation on "Approaches to Baltic Co-operation"

17 Stockholm Ministerial Meeting on Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region.

Speech by the Director of the Secretariat. Senior Advisor Vibeke Holm

18-19 Stockholm Workshop on "Civil Security and Crisis Management in the Baltic Sea Region" at the Secretariat. Senior Advisor Serguei Sokolov.

21-22 Kaliningrad Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region. Senior Advisor Serguei Sokolov. Presentation on "Current activities of CBSS and the potential of CBSS-PCCBSR co-operation"

24-25 Svetlogorsk Conference on "Transfrontier Co-operation in the Baltic Region

at the Turn of the Century: Issues and Prospects". Senior Advisor Serguei Sokolov. Presentation "Freedom of Travel Whilst Fighting Abuse".

April 1999

9 Riga Seminar on Regional Energy Co-operation in the Baltic Sea area and the Role of Trans-European Energy Networks. Senior Advisor Axel Krohn.

14 Stockholm Meeting in the Working Group on the establishment of an IT-Network concerning Children at Risk in the Baltic Sea Region. Senior Advisor Vibeke Holm

27 Stockholm Meeting with the Steering Committee of the Energy Co-operation at the Secretariat

May 1999

16-17 Copenhagen Baltic Development Forum. Director of the Secretariat

17 Copenhagen Royal Danish Defense College. Director of the Secretariat.

Presentation "The Role of the CBSS in the Baltic Sea Security Policy"

18 Copenhagen Royal Danish Defense College. Senior Advisor Axel Krohn.

Presentation: "Problems and Views – A view from Germany"

11-13 Palanga Conference "State Border and Civil Security". Senior Advisor Serguei Sokolov. Presentation "CBSS and Civil Security"

21-22 Kaunas Conference on Investments in the Baltic Sea Region. Presentation by Senior Advisor Lars Gronbjerg on economic co-operation in the Baltic Sea region

25 Hamburg German Armed Forces' General Staff Academy, Presentation by Senior Advisor Axel Krohn on "Baltic Sea Region: A Security Regime in the Making"

June 1999

1-3 Jaeren Workshop on the Year 2000 Transition in the Baltic Sea Region. Senior Advisor Serguei Sokolov. Presentation on "CBSS and Civil Security".

In order to prepare CSO meetings the Secretariat has twice made preparatory visits to Kaliningrad and twice to Brussels.

Attachment 2

Some working papers prepared by the Secretariat:

Northern Dimension – Which role for the CBSS? (Doc. No. LT-WGEC-99/23). Calendar and organisational points for work on the Northern Dimension

Report on the legal status of the EuroFaculty

Survey on the implementation of the recommendations from the Second Baltic Business Summit

Draft Planning and Information Document (Doc. No. CSO-02/99-05)

Report on visa requirements in the Baltic Sea Region (Doc. No. CSO-03/99-04)

Booklet with papers on "Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area with Special Regard to Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation and other Russian Regions. (Doc. No. CSO-04/99-02, May 1999)

Civil Security: Progress since Visby – aide memoire

CBSS Structure and working methods – a discussion paper

Co-operation between the WGDI and the CBSS Commissioner: Supporting the implementation of the Commissioner's recommendations.