

Act Up! Joint actions against human trafficking

INTERVIEW WITH MS NYAMKO SABUNI, MINISTER FOR INTEGRATION AND GENDER EQUALITY, SWEDEN

Civil Security and the Human Dimension



Last year when you spoke at the UN to the Commission on the Status of Women on the follow up of the Beijing four platform regarding financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women you mentioned several different global problems that need to be given further attention. When it comes to trafficking in human beings the Swedish Government has earmarked 213 million SEK in the National Action Plan against Prostitution and Trafficking in Human Beings for Sexual Exploitation to be utilized on 36 different measures to counteract human trafficking. What are the main priorities of the Action Plan and the counter trafficking work in general?

Trafficking for sexual purposes is a serious obstacle to gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights. The Action Plan focuses especially on the protection and support needs of individuals at risk and covers five priority areas: greater protection and support for people at risk, more emphasis on preventive work, higher standards and greater efficiency in the justice system, increased national and international cooperation, and a higher level of knowledge and awareness. Trafficking in human beings is a cross-border



Photo: Povel Flato

Nyamko Sabuni, Minister for Integration and Gender Equality

crime that requires international cooperation between various actors such as governments, civil society and researchers. Within our international cooperation it is important to encourage more states to implement proper legislation or other measures to assist victims in their physical, psychological or social recovery.

Amongst others, the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings with focus on adults and the Working Group on Coopera-

tion on Children at Risk were chosen to receive funds from the Swedish Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings. As you know the TF-THB has agreed on five strategic activities for the years 2009–2010 to enhance the fight against human trafficking in the CBSS Region and the WGCC are working according to their five prioritised areas, where measures against child trafficking is of high priority. What would you like to see develop in these areas of trafficking with which the CBSS works over the next two to three years?

I hope that the CBSS with its counter trafficking work can enable other countries to take part and feel their responsibility in this field. Global and intraregional cooperation are together with coordination very important elements in order to efficiently fight human trafficking. An active and proper coordination of the actors' activities and the establishment of partnerships in anti trafficking are necessary to avoid duplication of activities.

It is furthermore crucial that the topic receives the needed political attention and continued support and that it remains a high political priority for governments. Within the Nordic-Baltic cooperation in the field of gender equality we ministers have agreed that the fight against human trafficking for sexual purposes will henceforth remain a significant area of priority which is also mentioned in our common plan of action for 2009–2010.

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The National Action Plan states that the demand that induces trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation has to be curbed. What actors have received support in this context and what would you like to see these actors initiating?

We strongly believe that activities to curb the demand for sexual services are essential in order to fight the problem of human trafficking for sexual purposes. One of the aims with the law that prohibits the purchase of sexual services in Sweden is to curtail the demand but further actions need to be taken.

In the Swedish National Action Plan are a number of activities aiming at fighting and decreasing the demand such as change of attitudes via the use of information campaigns and education targeting specific groups. These activities need to target and be of the benefit to both girls, women, boys and men. One example of an awareness raising activity in this field is the current exhibition about trafficking in human beings at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm. I had the pleasure of opening this exhibition which is entitled “Trafficking” and runs until the end of

November this year. Another important actor is the Swedish Institute which has been commissioned to inform about the Swedish work in this field to other countries especially via foreign visits to Sweden.

In order to efficiently curtail the demand for sexual purposes it is furthermore critical that there are activities targeting people who want to stop buying sexual services. Another important part is also that the government provides support and alternatives to women and men who want to leave prostitution.

What are the Swedish priorities in regional cooperation against trafficking in human beings, especially in the Baltic Sea Region? What do you believe is of highest importance for the Baltic Sea Region in general?

Individual countries cannot combat trafficking in human being single-handedly. I believe in more international cooperation, not less, and the EU obviously has a central role. The priority for Sweden is to intensify regional cooperation against trafficking in human beings in the Baltic Sea Region in all the different fields, such as encouraging governments in other countries to increase their measures against trafficking in human beings,

TASK FORCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) agreed in September 2008 upon the following five strategic activities for the years 2008–2010:

- Training Seminars on Human Trafficking for Diplomatic and Consular Personnel in the CBSS Region
- Joint project with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on Fostering NGO and Law Enforcement Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking in, from and to the Baltic Sea Region
- Regional Information Campaign against Trafficking in Human Beings
- Improved Data Collection and Support to Research on Human Trafficking in the Region
- Comparative Regional Legal Analysis on Human Trafficking

WORKING GROUP FOR COOPERATION ON CHILDREN AT RISK

The Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk has five priority areas

- The protection of children from all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking
- Unaccompanied and trafficked children
- Street children and children without families
- The rights of children in institutions and in other forms of protection
- Young offenders and self-destructive behaviour of children

strengthening women's shelters that support these, and helping the victims' rehabilitation to society and the labour market so they need not feel compelled to return to prostitution.

The CBSS TF-THB is one of the regional cooperation mechanisms to fight human trafficking with partnership and coordination with other relevant actors as a priority and joint activities are currently being implemented both with the IOM, the UNODC and the WGCC. How would you like to see the regional cooperation in this field develop especially when working alongside other regional actors?

First of all I think that the organizations themselves have a broad knowledge on how cooperation with other actors should

best be developed and maintained. Secondly, I do think that the CBSS has a unique competence which can be of the benefit of other organisations in this region. Raising the awareness about and countering human trafficking needs to be a high priority on the political agenda and if the CBSS can do this with the assistance of other relevant organisations the penetrating power for this topic in the region will increase significantly.

Since the middle of the 1990s the problem of human trafficking has been widely acknowledged as a crime that seriously violates the human rights of its many victims and increasingly more states and organisations are adopting legislation and policies for preventing and combating human trafficking. What

areas do you consider still lag behind and need more focused attention where more effective measures are needed, both on a national as well as on an international/regional level?

A growing number of countries act in order to prevent and combat this horrible crime. We need to bolster this development. Although more countries are ratifying treaties such as the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons or the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings, there are still some areas which are lagging behind. Not all the countries have adopted legislation against human trafficking that includes all forms of exploitation. One of the reasons of human trafficking is that people still lack opportunities and information on how to migrate safely, within or outside their countries borders. In this context, awareness raising and education needs to be strengthened. It can not be stressed enough that the root causes in countries of origin need to be addressed. We need to fight poverty, discrimination and marginalization of groups and of individuals.

Child NGOs are more and more talking about making migration safe for children, considering the fact that children and young people will move and will cross borders in search for work or education opportunities. Do you see a move towards stronger support for the rights of young people on the move? Do you see a role for regional organisations like the CBSS in ensuring that the rights of young people on the move will be respected by the country in which they reside?

The EU enlargement has played a key role in making sure that young people can move freely between different countries with the same rights. Thanks to the EU young people can study, have career, settle and purchase and sell products across Europe. The EU has also ensured the democracy in the entire EU so that the voice of the youth is heard in political processes. Moreover, there is a substantial volunteer cooperation among civil society and youth organisations in Europe. The civil society and organisations such as CBSS has important role to follow and review how the governments implement their policies so that young people's rights are not violated.



Internet a growing arena for the sexual exploitation of children

BY LARS LÖÖF

The Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk (WGCC) and the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) at the 3rd World Congress against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents.

Civil Protection



World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, which took place in Rio de Janeiro from 25 to 28 November, closed being the biggest event ever held on the theme. Its numbers surpassed all previous records: there were 3,500 participants at Riocentro Convention and Exhibition Center, including delegations from 170 different governments, NGOs, governmental authorities, international organisations and 300 adolescents discussing joint actions, best practices and public policy development to fight all forms of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. The congress also enjoyed the participation of President Lula da Silva of Brazil who addressed the audience at the opening session, asking the participants to join together in their efforts to stop hypocrisy: “Parents should be aware that giving sex education at home is as important as giving food and shelter,” he said. The President also emphasized the importance of dealing with this issue in the curriculum of schools. “We have to stop the hypocrisy that prevents sexual exploitation from being properly dealt with and fought against,” the President added, so encouraging and reminding them of their obligation not to let children and young people around the globe down in their ef-

forts to join forces to fight the sexual exploitation of children.

HM Queen Silvia in her opening speech, held in one of her mother tongues Portuguese, emphasised the good added value that the strong cooperation between governments, NGOs and private companies around the world had brought in putting a stronger focus on the issue and so helping to curb the incidence of exploitation..

The government of Brazil hosted the event in Rio de Janeiro in cooperation with UNICEF, ECPAT international and the NGO group for the UN CRC. The event consisted of five thematic sessions, each with prepared background documents and with plenary presentations and discussions. Each theme was then highlighted by around 25 parallel workshops in which concrete programmes, cooperation structures and best practices from all over the world were discussed.

“ We have to stop the hypocrisy that prevents sexual exploitation from being properly dealt with and fought against

In Governmental dialogues the different activities and legislative initiatives taken by governments were discussed. From the member states to the CBSS the Danish Minister of Justice, Brian Mikkelsen and the Swedish Minister of Social Affairs and Health, Göran Hägglund gave presentations. Other member states were represented by the State Secretary and others again by high ranking officials.

The Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk started its work as a

follow-up to the 1st World Congress held in Stockholm in 1996 and presented its preliminary work at the 2nd World Congress in Yokohama in 2001. For this 3rd World Congress the Head of Children’s Unit, Mr Lars Lööf, had the honour of co-authoring the background document “Child Pornography and sexual exploitation of children online”. The document a 100-page report which summarises recent years’ research into how children come to harm when using the new technologies and how adults with a sexual interest in children use ICT, Information and Communication Technologies, to gain physical access to children and to distribute images of children being abused, i.e. child pornography. The background document, whose main author Dr Ethel Quayle gave her presentation in plenary at the first thematic session, is available in English and Russian at the www.childcentre.info website.

WGCC presented its work in four different workshops. So many of the group’s activities over the past years have targeted the sexual exploitation of children from diverse angles and there is considerable international interest from countries around the world in how such regional cooperation can be structured in order to bring together NGOs with governmental agencies, researchers, and indeed with governments themselves, in increasing the level of activity and improving the level of professional cooperation and protection of children at risk.

In one of the four workshops the chair to the WGCC, Deputy Director Agneta Björklund, together with the Estonian representative, Head of Department Annikki Tikerpuu, presented the WGCC programme on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children. The presentation of this



Photo: UNICEF

ongoing programme that was initiated in 2003 focused on the dynamic and light structure that was set up by initiating a network of so-called National Contact Points to be used in facilitating contacts between professionals in the member states. The workshop made available the CD-ROM containing tools and resources on how to assist children that have been trafficked or that are unaccompanied. The CD-ROM is one result of the two-year training that the WGCC, with support from the European Commission, Save the Children Sweden and the Oak foundation, implemented in 2006 and 2007. The 50 experts that participated in the training come from 10 different

countries and represent governments, NGOs, intergovernmental organisations and governmental agencies. The network is a resource to be used in the further fight against trafficking in children in the Baltic Sea Region. At the Workshop the participants also had the opportunity to discuss the documentation of cases of child trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region published as “The Frail Chain”.

In the workshop on Online sexual exploitation, the Head of Children’s Unit, Mr Lars Lööf, had the opportunity to discuss the developing work conducted in cooperation with the World Childhood Foundation and the Swedish Children’s Welfare Foundation through which sup-

port and protection of children that have been or are at risk of being sexually exploited in Internet contexts are promoted. The network of professionals in the region have, through this work, been able to tap into the world leading expertise in this developing and important field through a number of expert meetings and conferences. The background document “Child Pornography and Sexual Exploitation of Children online” partly focuses on the successful approach through which so many of the region’s child experts become educated and better equipped to know what to do when a child presents itself at their clinic or in their office with experiences of Internet related sexual violence. >>

“ We leave this congress with renewed energy to fight this gross human rights violation that is sexual violence and exploitation of children and adolescents

The Baltic Sea Regional Study on Adolescent Sexuality was the topic of one workshop. The study includes data from almost 20,000 18-year olds from six countries. This study has produced unique and valuable data on the prevalence of experiences of different forms of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and also highlights the important issue of young persons' experiences of, and attitudes to, commercial sex, as sellers and as buyers.

Through the groundbreaking work of the Icelandic Governmental Agency for Child Protection, the Child Friendly investigation was taken to Europe. Mr Bragi Gudbrandsson, the Icelandic member of the WGCC, presented both the WGCC work on enabling the countries in the region to learn from the Icelandic experiences and bringing these services in an adapted form to their own countries and the model itself. The concept of Barnahus, Children's House, is one where a child that has been sexually abused or physically abused will be able to meet with the medical, social, psychological and judicial authorities and experts in one dedicated setting. The idea being that the investigation of such a case should be as rapid as possible and that it should not force the child to repeat its story.

In the closing ceremony of the World Congress, the minister of the Special Secretariat for Human Rights, Mr. Paulo Vannuchi, highlighted the importance of having the meeting held in Brazil and thanked all delegates on behalf of President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva and the First Lady Marisa Letícia, for their participation. “We are honoured to have you in Rio, and we leave this congress with renewed energy to fight this gross human rights violation that is the sexual violence and exploitation of children and adolescents,” said the minister.



Photo: Shehbaz Noorani/UNICEF

The outcome document of the Rio conference: “The Rio de Janeiro Pact to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents” was not final at the end of the conference. Through a unique and, for many participants, confusing exercise, the document remained open for comments and editing until late December. The document however states clearly the need for governments, NGOs and all stakeholders to further the existing international conventions and commitments; the general viewpoint being that the existing conventions, if implemented, would increase the protection of children from sexual exploitation.

The WGCC looks upon its work as hands-on assistance to all member coun-

tries to implement the international conventions, recommendations and agreements. Through the continued translation of how member states may put convention texts into reality on the ground, the group will continue to assist experts, practitioners, social workers and policy makers in implementing good tools, and designing new tools, when this is needed to protect children in the region from the violence and trauma that is inherent in an exploitative experience.

For more resources on the third world conference in different languages:
www.childcentre.info or
www.iiicongressomundial.net

Protecting the rights of children in alternative care

The world of children's institutions is a closed world that most of us never visit. All countries in the region recognise the child's right to a family and that all children should be brought up in their family. Alternative placement of children is always a last resort but, nevertheless, a high number of children in the CBSS region live a part, or all, of their childhood in institutions. Research will tell us that being brought up in an institution is a risk factor for difficulties later in life. Outcomes of alternative care seem disappointing in all countries as young people that leave institutions, to a greater extent than their peers, tend to end up in criminality or face drug and alcohol addiction, and to enter into parenthood at a very early age. The suicide rate among care leavers is also higher, something that tragically tells us something about the isolation and loneliness some young people face as they enter adulthood after growing up in institutional care.

Civil Protection



The Working Group for Children at Risk is addressing the obvious need in all CBSS member states to improve the monitoring and auditing of how children's institutions manage to live up to their responsibilities. Some form of monitoring and auditing is in place in all countries, but very often this is not done in a systematic way and often the experts that do the monitoring do not have time or resources to assess properly how children's rights are respected in the institution. In several countries the emphasis tends to be more on the technical aspects, for example ensuring that ventilation and proper hygienic standards are met. This is important, but the possibility for a child in alternative care to make his or her voice heard, or the access of the child to proper privacy and respect for his or her integrity, are rights that the institution need to address and ensure.

The Council of Europe Recommendation Rec (2005) 5 on the Rights of Children living in Residential Institutions is the basis for the WGCC work in this field. The Recommendation clearly sets out basic rights that must and should be recognised, and specifically seen to, when the state takes over, either for a period or permanently, the role of guardian to the child. When the Recommendation was discussed in the WGCC and in the three different expert meetings and conferences that were organised, it was especially the paragraph on the child's right to integrity



and privacy that caught the experts' attention. This paragraph reads:

"To ensure the respect for these basic principles and fundamental rights of the child, the following specific rights of children living in residential institutions should be recognised: the right to respect for the child's human dignity and physical integrity; in particular, the right to conditions of human and non-degrading treatment and a non-violent upbringing, including the protection against corporal punishment and all forms of abuse;" ...

This specific part of the Recommendation formed the basis for the pilot training on systemic auditing and monitoring that was organised in Bergen late January. In all, 14 monitoring experts from Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were trained via lectures, group work and role-play, over the four day course. The trainers, Mr Eric Backer-Røed and Mr Jarle Landås are experienced trainers of Norwegian experts. Their usual place of work is with the Hordaland County Governor's office in Bergen. All auditing and moni-

toring naturally has its point of departure in the national legislation and as this differs between the countries in the Baltic Sea Region, this training used the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the above mentioned Council of Europe Recommendation as its foundation. Nevertheless, the experts all received a thorough and tough training in which they had to demonstrate their acquired skills through role-plays in which their prepared questions and follow up remarks could be discussed and assessed. At the end of the training all participants agreed that they now carried back with them new tools to put to use when auditing institutions and, through this auditing, assisting in improving the work of institutions, specifically the work on protecting children's rights.

The WGCC will evaluate the pilot training thoroughly in order to assess if this should remain an activity to be pursued further. The Working Group is indebted to the County Governor of Hordaland for allowing the regional cooperation to make use of the Norwegian experts, not to mention the hospitality shown to the entire group while visiting the beautiful city of Bergen.

Preventing and Combating through Training Seminars for Diplomatic and Consular

BY ANNA EKSTEDT AND MARTA BOCIEK



Training seminar delegates pose questions from the floor

Civil Security and the Human Dimension



Back in the Spring of last year in our article *Prevent and Protect: A Regional Response to Human Trafficking* we outlined the potential in continuing our training seminars for diplomatic and consular staff from or based in the Baltic Sea Region and here we are today having launched our new training programme.

With the prolongation of the mandate of the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) with focus on adults until mid 2011 and the financial contribution to the TF-THB from the Swedish Government from its National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for sexual exploitation (see lead article), the Task Force now has a solid basis for long term strategic planning and the implementation of an array of activities to counter human trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region.

One of the five agreed activities that the group will focus on is training and

specifically diplomatic training. This activity will be based around a series of training seminars on human trafficking for diplomatic and consular personnel in the CBSS region. The aim is to provide consular staff with the potential to react, if they have reasons to believe that a person that walks through their door or they in other ways encounter may possibly face a human trafficking situation.

The kick-off took place in Copenhagen on the 24 November 2008. This was the first training seminar out of a scheduled eleven which will be held in Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, Warsaw, Berlin,

Human Trafficking

Personnel in the CBSS Region



Ms Tatiana Jordan, Prevention Expert from the IOM Mission to Moldova

Reykjavik, Oslo, Stockholm, Helsinki and Moscow over the course of 2009-10. Next up will in fact be Tallinn in April 2009. The trainings themselves build on the previous training seminars held in Riga and Stockholm but take a different format. This time the group is working directly with trainers from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission to Moldova. The outcome will

“ If provided with the right tools the consular section at the embassies can act as a first filter against human trafficking

be a methodological handbook which will be developed in cooperation with the IOM and distributed amongst the CBSS embassies. The handbook will provide the embassies with tools to assist victims and potential victims through collaboration with the police, immigration authorities, customs, labour inspectorate, social services and so on.

To supplement the IOM trainer's expertise on each training day there will be national expert teams to give the local expertise which is crucially important for the diplomats working with or in that particular country to be able to carry out their work. In our first training in Denmark the group benefited not only from the presence of the TF-THB group mem-

bers but also national representatives from the embassies of the CBSS Member States and the Observer States. Those delegates participated along with a number of other invited guests who were specifically invited because they represented countries that are relevant in one way or another to the Danish case. They are considered relevant either by being source countries or transit countries from where or through trafficking victims come to Denmark. The training itself was held at the Danish Parliament and totaled 45 participants.

This work is of course immensely important because identification of potential or actual victims of human trafficking still remains one of the biggest obstacles to effectively fight the crime of human trafficking – a crime which seriously violates the human rights of its many victims. Law enforcement agencies and government offices often lack the relevant expertise, experienced personnel and/or the sensitivity to ensure that victims can be identified as such. Due to this, in still far too many cases, potential victims and victims of human trafficking can neither expect to receive pressing needed support to prevent or put an end to an exploita-



tive situation, nor can a successful prosecution with maximum enforcement of the law act to prevent and deter human trafficking in general.

Victims' rights must be at the centre of our actions and broadening of the relevant actors' knowledge on human trafficking will directly assist in the identification and protection of victims of trafficking. In line with this, the Task Force puts a strong emphasis on training diplomatic and consular personnel. If provided with the right tools the consular section at the embassies can act as a first filter against human trafficking when it comes to visa applications. Furthermore, they of course fulfill an important role when assisting in cases of return of identified victims.

In light of this the TF-THB have identified several tick-points that the group and the trainers would check through during the one day training sessions (see fact box).

With these in mind, once the welcome address had been given by the former Chair of the TF-THB, Ms. Anne Katrine Tholstrup Bertelsen, where she presented



The former Chair of the TF-THB, Ms Anne Katrine Tholstrup Bertelsen opened the training

the counter trafficking work of the CBSS TF-THB and the aim of the training to the participants – the floor was handed over to Ms. Tatiana Jardan, Prevention Expert from the IOM Mission Moldova to give the participants a general overview.

Ms. Jardan gave the participants not only a general overview on the topic of human trafficking but also the IOM approach to the topic. She introduced the

participants to the definitions on human trafficking, the current trends in human trafficking (including observations of increased combinations and multiple forms of exploitation where for example, victims are forced to clean or wait tables in a bar during the day and prostitute themselves at night) and descriptions of the existing legal frameworks to counteract this crime.

In the following session Ms. Ann Maskel from the Danish National Anti-Trafficking Centre spoke about how victims are identified in Denmark. She gave a short briefing on recent trends on human trafficking in Denmark, the difficulties of identification and provided the participants with some examples on how the Danish National Anti-Trafficking Centre assists trafficked persons with the help necessary.

After a more general introduction to the topic and the Danish context Ms. Stella Rotaru, Repatriation Expert from the IOM Mission to Moldova, gave a presentation on the role of Diplomatic and Consular Personnel in the identification,



Our training will provide the participants with:

1. Basic information regarding flows of human trafficking to and within the CBSS Region
2. Understanding of the nature of human trafficking as well as knowledge of international and national law
3. Specific instructions regarding victims of trafficking to increase comprehension of their vulnerable situation and to enhance the support provided to them
4. Knowledge on how to handle suspicious and actual cases of human trafficking within the embassies and with cooperating authorities in line with international human rights standards
5. An opportunity for exchange of experiences and best practices with other professionals and the establishment of relevant contact points
6. A clear understanding of the role of diplomatic and consular staff in identifying, assisting and safely repatriating victims of human trafficking

“ Sensitivity, sensibility and the practice of doing no harm are the key words when interviewing real and presumed victims of trafficking

repatriation and assistance to victims. She stressed that sensitivity, sensibility and the practice of doing no harm are the key words when interviewing real and presumed victims of trafficking. Furthermore, Ms. Rotaru underlined that Diplomatic and Consular Personnel need to make sure that victims are referred for

assistance to the services available and that cooperation is established directly with law enforcement for the purpose of prosecution of delinquents.

The law enforcement perspective was given by Mr. Jorgen Skov Isalin, Deputy Chief Superintendent, from the Danish National Police. He gave the participants an overview on the Danish Police strategies to combat human trafficking. He informed that the Danish police have intensified their work against trafficking in human beings during 2008. The intensification is based on several elements and includes a stronger focus on the backers of prostitution, increased control and more careful treatment of victims and witnesses.

Mr. Skov Isalin stressed that these efforts are carried out by the National Police and the police districts in cooperation with other authorities and organisations.

The Seminar was concluded with a presentation by Mr. Casper Schmidt from the Danish Red Cross, who spoke about Children and Young People Trafficked to Denmark and the importance of always bearing in mind the child perspective in all anti-trafficking policies as well as when assisting victims of trafficking who are minors.

Feedback from the participants in Copenhagen will feed into the design of the forthcoming Training Seminars in the region to ensure that the training meets the needs of the consular staff and equips them with the tools necessary to better identify potential victims of human trafficking. With the experience gained from the first Training Seminar in this series the TF-THB is looking forward to the upcoming Trainings in 2009 and 2010 and hopes that this series of training enables those who come into contact with persons whom they fear may be in a situation in which others exploit them for profit or gain to know how to react and take the relevant measures. See you in Tallinn!

Joint Project Signing

TASK FORCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS (TF-THB)
– UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

We are very happy to announce that the Joint TF-THB – UNODC Project on Fostering NGO and Law Enforcement Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking in, from and to the Baltic Sea Region was signed in the beginning of this month and will start in the middle of March.

Our project aims at strengthening cooperation between different governmental institutions and nongovernmental actors within and between the CBSS Member States.

The main objective of the project is to assess the current models for assistance and protection to victims of human trafficking and especially how civil society and state actors cooperate in providing these services to victims. Hence, the project explores the current national referral models and if and in what way they can be enhanced.

By collecting and analysing data and conducting study visits to all CBSS Member States – a consultant will deliver country assessments of the existing cooperation mechanisms between state actors,

in particular law enforcement agencies and NGOs in each country.

The project will be concluded with a regional conference bringing together relevant actors from civil society, state actors from criminal justice response institutions as well as social welfare institutions and international organisations operating in the region. The conclusion from the country assessments and a report with recommendations on how to improve the cooperation models will be presented at this conference.

The aim is that a possible joint Regional Cooperation Model in this field will be explored in a second phase of this project. Through this project we hope that an environment that adequately assists and protects victims of human trafficking will be created and that ultimately the numbers of trafficked victims could be reduced.

Baltic Sea Task Force on Organized Crime – changing with time

In order to provide the people living in the Baltic Sea Region with a standard of life offering the highest levels of safety and security, the Governments of the involved States have agreed upon creating a Task Force to coordinate relevant activities.

Civil Security



The Task Force on Organized Crime in the Baltic Sea Region was created back in 1996 and its Operative Committee to plan and coordinate operational activities was set up in 1998. While formally being subordinated directly to the Heads of Government, the Task Force is a firm and celebrated member of the extended CBSS family. All participating countries are being represented from competent authori-



ties engaged in fighting organized crime and prosecuting the offenders concerned.

Dozens of joint operations have been conducted successfully and joint investigation or analysis teams have been set up to achieve our aims. A high level of commitment has been shown by the participating countries while sharing the Chairmanship between Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Estonia throughout the years during which the Task Force has existed.

The world as a whole, and the Baltic Sea Region itself, have changed since this form of cooperation was started.

These days the Task Force is being directed more towards responsible use of the already existing means of cross-border cooperation, such as Europol. Special attention is given to relations and cooperation with our partners in the Russian Federation. The Task Force is continuing the planning and coordination of concrete joint operations against organized crime networks – the trade in illegal firearms, tax frauds, money laundering, drug trafficking etc. One of the challenges is to be able to make use of the best and most up-to-date technology and information available from different sources. Another goal is to achieve better cooperation, both nationally and internationally, throughout the whole chain of intelligence gathering and investigation, right through to prosecution.

EuroFaculty project in Pskov launched

On 30 January 2009, after several years of preparations, the official opening of the CBSS EuroFaculty project in the Russian city of Pskov was celebrated in the presence of the Governor of the Pskov Region and a large number of officials, teachers and students from Pskov as well as foreign guests.

Education



The project, which will run from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2011, aims at upgrading university education in Business Economics at two institutions of higher education, the Pskov State Poly-

technic Institute and the Pskov Volny Institute. This will be done, inter alia, by curriculum development and through new teaching and examination methods, as well as language training, all aimed at bringing the economics studies at these two institutions into line with the requirements of the Bologna process to create a European Higher Education Area.

The EuroFaculty Pskov project has been financed to date by voluntary contributions from all the 11 CBSS Member States and three external partners: the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the United Kingdom.

Additional information on this new project will be given in the next issue of *Balticness*.





“ The need for regional co-operation is obvious. Even if much has been done, closer coordination and planning of cooperation projects in the field of nuclear and radiation safety is continuously needed

Nuclear issues

Part of the CBSS reform, which culminated in the Summit of the Heads of Government of the CBSS countries in June 2008, is the idea that all the existing working structures should be transformed into expert groups, emphasizing the concrete and operational nature of cooperation between professionals rather than networking between generalists. This is also why the Working Group of Nuclear and Radiation Safety was invited to revise its Terms of Reference and name accordingly. In this case, however, the task was fairly easy.

Civil Protection



The now Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety is undoubtedly one of the most celebrated achievements of the CBSS, as the Chairman of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials Ambassador Karsten Petersen mentioned when he welcomed the Chairman of EGNRS, Mr Finn Ugletveit from the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority, to present the Group's current and planned activities in the Committee meeting in Brussels at the end of January 2009. This particular Group has, from the outset, worked in the way that the CBSS reform now suggests, focusing on very concrete items and representing the nuclear and radiation safety authorities of all the CBSS countries and the European Commission.

The need for regional cooperation is obvious. The Baltic Sea Region includes a

number of locations at which nuclear power plants currently exist, and while some countries do not have any nuclear power and some have decided to shutdown their nuclear power plants, others are building new reactors. Beside nuclear power plants, nuclear and radiological material is used in several other applications, for industrial, medical, scientific and military purposes. In this context, nuclear and radiation safety, both civil and military, has been widely identified as a permanent challenge for the region. The issues of environmental radiation and new emergency response scenarios like radiological terrorism are additional challenges within this field. Even if much has been done, closer coordination and planning of cooperation projects in the field of nuclear and radiation safety is continuously needed.

The Group was originally established in 1992, almost immediately following the establishment of the CBSS itself. The possibility for this kind of cooperation arose after major political changes in the

region, the major topics to begin with being just networking, information exchange, identification of pressing problems in the region, and the coordination of actions. However, Mr Ugletveit, who is a veteran of the Group, noted that significant changes have been seen within the region since then, and the focus of the Group has been adjusted accordingly.

The group continuously identifies actions to be taken in order to efficiently enhance nuclear and radiation safety in the individual states and for the region collectively, also monitoring ongoing national and international activities. The most tangible success story of the Group is the CBSS Agreement on the Exchange of Radiation Monitoring Data from 2001, allowing and obliging all the member states to share the data, virtually in real time, through a common internet-based system. In 2006 this agreement was extended to include airborne measurements by the Joint Declaration on the Exchange of Air Radiation Monitoring Data, which has technically been implemented since 2008.

The Group in its full composition meets formally twice a year, but has developed a network that also functions in between the meetings as a practical channel for information and cooperation. In these meetings all possible joint issues are discussed and information is shared. Currently on the table is, for instance, the issue of regional agreement on assistance in case of emergency. The Group has already been studying for some time the necessity for, and the form of, this kind of regional agreement. At the same time, to avoid duplication, the Group has monitored international developments on these issues, most notably within the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the European Union.



The Group has also been active in the field of emergency exercises and training. The feasibility of, and the need for, common actions have been considered in order to strengthen the emergency preparedness cooperation in case of radiological or nuclear accidents. The Group itself organizes regular communications exercises without in-advance notification in order to test the preparedness and functioning of the communication systems.

In 2007, the Group decided to start organizing annual Topical Days. The first Topical Day in spring 2008, organized by the Danish Emergency Management Agency, was focusing on malevolent acts involving radioactive material, in particular so-called "dirty bombs". In 2009, a

Topical Day on environmental monitoring will be organized by the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority.

Another interesting cross-sectoral and multinational project is assisting the IAEA and the Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority to bring together the region's nuclear and radiation safety authorities, police, customs, and border guards, to look at the practical challenges of the threat of illicit trafficking in radiological material. The IAEA hopes to use the region as a pilot in the successful combating of this threat, so providing a model for other European sub-regions.

The Chairman of the Group, Mr Ugletveit, looks positively at the future of the Group. It covers a region and issues

not covered in other forums and, while avoiding duplication, it can in many cases do what is necessary better, more quickly and less bureaucratically than would be possible in a larger constellation. It has a wide mandate with strong political support, which is essential for the success of such work.

The CBSS Observer States have also noticed this, and their nuclear and radiation safety authorities participate in many cases very actively in the practical work of the Group, in order to make their own contribution and to draw lessons from the Group's work for their own country and region. Belarus, too, which is neither a CBSS Member State nor an Observer State, often attends the EGNRS meetings.

New colleague

Ms Canan Yasar (Sweden) joined the CBSS Secretariat in February 2009 for a short term employment contract as the CBSS Secretariat's Communications Assistant, where she will assist the Press and Communications Officer with various assignments, mainly focusing on a new CBSS website. She received her diploma in June 2007 at the School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University. Canan spent her last semester in the USA as an exchange student studying at Roy H. Park School of Communications at Ithaca College, where she mainly focused on Public Relations, Brand Design and Communication Strategy. Canan has a broad base of communication experience including work in Istanbul as a graphic designer and at MTV Networks in Stockholm. Her last position was as Communications Officer for the Swedish Armed Forces.

New internship faces

Mr Sébastien Gobert (France) joined the Secretariat at the beginning of March for a four month internship where he will assist with the production of communication materials amongst other tasks. He studies European studies from the Institute of Political Sciences of Lille. Sébastien spent the academic year 2006–07 studying at the University of Latvia in Riga, where he gained an interest in Baltic studies. His Master thesis covered the issues of multiculturalism and society integration policies in Estonia and Latvia. For his final year of studies, he spent the fall semester of 2008 at the University of Wrocław, Poland, through an exchange program dealing with regional cooperation and European integration.

Ms Ira Vlassova (Russia / Israel) joined the CBSS Secretariat in January 2009 for a six-month internship assisting the Children at Risk Unit and the work of the Senior Advisor of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings. She holds a BA in International relations and English literature from Jerusalem Hebrew University and a Master degree in East-European Studies from the Free University of Berlin. Currently she is completing her second Master's at Lund University. She has a genuine interest in the problem of Trafficking in Human Beings in the region. As part of her experience in the field, she has participated in a number of projects related to the subject, such as interviewing the victims of trafficking in Israel.

Ms Agnieszka Wiczorek (Poland) joined the CBSS Secretariat in January 2009 for a six-month internship, where she will assist the Baltic 21 Unit of the Secretariat. Agnieszka is a graduate of Warsaw University of Life Science, the Interdisciplinary Department of Environmental Protection. The Master Programme she completed was on Restoration and Management of Environment. In her thesis she focused on the influence of transport infrastructure development on the environment and its limitation. During the autumn of 2007 Agnieszka spent one semester at Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan in Stockholm, as an exchange student, attending courses on sustainable development, and spatial planning.



The challenges for Civil Protection cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

Our information about the world is largely shaped by different kinds of disasters and accidents. We hear about natural catastrophes such as tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes, forest fires or floods. Or we learn about technological emergencies, say an electricity blackout, a fire in a chemical factory or an oil spill from a tanker. We are told to be prepared for terrorist attacks in public spaces, potentially with radiological, chemical or biological substances. Our routines may be changed because of the threat of bird-flu. In addition, we are aware that all kinds of everyday accidents and emergencies are constantly happening around us.

Civil Protection



This is the world of civil protection. More formally, the concept as used by the European Union refers to the protection of people, the environment and property in the event of man-made, technological and natural risks or emergencies.

The CBSS has traditionally been active in this field. Annually, the Directors-General on national civil protection and rescue services authorities of the Baltic Sea Region meet together to discuss the common challenges. A wider and more project-based cooperation was carried out in 2003-2007 within the framework of Eurobaltic civil protection projects and the Interreg IIIB framework. Currently several new project ideas are being discussed.

At the end of January 2009, the national experts on civil protection in the Baltic Sea Region gathered to prepare the

annual Directors-General meeting that will take place at the end of March 2009 in Copenhagen, organised by the Presidency country Denmark and, in particular, the Danish Emergency Management Agency. The issues that were identified as being worthwhile putting on the agenda of the forthcoming high-level meeting include the following:

- *The impact of the forthcoming EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region on the civil protection cooperation in the region.* Most notably the issue of enhancing preparedness and response in the case of major storms has been mentioned in the Strategy's tentative list of actions.
- *Improving civil emergency preparedness planning.* The idea is to compare the national experiences and to move towards a more holistic approach. The possibility of establishing a Baltic Sea Region network of crisis management experts should be considered.

- *Eurobaltic Risk Reduction in City Areas (ERRICA) project.* This is a new large-scale strategic project in the course of preparation for the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2nd call. The lead partner is the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. ERRICA focuses on critical infrastructures and selected individual disasters and focus areas, from the perspective of prevention, preparedness and response.
- *An assessment of the different civil protection cooperation agreements.* There are several bilateral, trilateral and multilateral arrangements in the field of civil protection in the Baltic Sea Region. However, no-one seems to have a holistic, updated picture of the situation. A discussion about the cooperation arrangements is therefore needed.
- *Coordinating civil protection education in the Baltic Sea region.* Currently, there is a lot of variation between the countries as to the duration, degrees to be achieved, forms of education, items and language. One step towards better coordination and harmonization would be to establish an English-language study module to be implemented jointly.

Safety doesn't happen by accident – how can the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region contribute?

COMPILED BY CHRISTER PURSIAINEN



Mr Alexander Stubb, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Finland

One of the four objectives of the forthcoming EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is to make the Baltic Sea Region a safer and more secure place. This is a challenging task, not least from the point of view of definition. Indeed, a European Commission officer presenting the tentative action plan in the Stakeholder conference in Rostock-Warnemünde on 6 February 2009 started by admitting that he had consulted dictionaries to figure out the difference between “safety” and “security” – a semantic distinction that does not exist in most Baltic Sea region languages. However, it is clear that we are speaking about issues that in the CBSS vocabulary fall under “civil security”, one of the long-term priority areas of the CBSS.

Civil Security



Indeed, the “CBSS family” includes several civil security structures. It was therefore no wonder that the Commission invited the CBSS Secretariat to participate in co-organising the Roundtable on Safety and Security, making use of these existing networks. The Roundtable was host-

ed by Helsinki City and it took place on 9 December 2008.

The event gathered together more than 200 participants, and the plenary session featured such high-level keynote speakers as Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, Director José Palma Andrés, DG Regional Policy, European Commission, and Minister for Migration and European Affairs of Finland, Ms Astrid Thors.

However, the spirit of a true roundtable was found in the parallel workshops.





Ms Astrid Thors, Minister of Migration and European Affairs, Finland

Taken together, these workshops draw quite a comprehensive picture of the current civil security challenges in the region.

Combating organised crime

Organised crime has many faces. Mr Gil Arias, Deputy Executive Director of FRONTEX, the EU's border control agency, started with the theme of illegal immigration. He noted that with the exception of southern Poland's border with Ukraine, the record of illegal immigration from third countries to the Baltic Sea Region is very low in an EU comparison. Yet the pressure is increasing, and FRONTEX cooperates in the Baltic Sea region closely with the CBSS-related Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC) to face this challenge.

Mr Erkki Härmäläinen, Deputy Police Chief of Helsinki Police Department, reviewed the police cooperation in the region, noting that there are already many forms of bilateral law enforcement cooperation, while the main multilateral forums are the Nordic Police and Customs Cooperation and Baltic Sea Task Force Organised Crime. Nordic cooperation in this field is well-established and the European level cooperation works well, but the Task Force's strength is that it also includes Russia.

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most acute and increasing problems of the region. Mr Menno Hagemeyer from Europol encouraged the region to

make use of the European platform to solve regional problems. Ms Anna Ekstedt, Senior Adviser at the CBSS Secretariat, discussed the social dimension of trafficking, representing the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings. This body, working in close cooperation with relevant United Nations structures, organises, among other things, training

for diplomatic and consular personnel in the region.

Corruption, it has been said, is like a ball of snow, once it is set a rolling it must increase. Prevention, therefore, is the most efficient weapon to combat this particular crime. Ms Anitra Jankevica, Senior Adviser at the CBSS Secretariat, presented some of the conclusions of the study "Corruption prevention in public administration in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region", prepared on behalf of the CBSS Working Group on Democratic Institutions. In order to enhance national prevention strategies, the study identifies a set of measures and best practices which are used by public agencies in various CBSS member countries.

In general the discussion emphasised that the combination of regional level threat analyses, non-law enforcement preventive measures, common law enforcement actions and interventions, as well as coordinated cooperation between all the stakeholders is the key to a successful fight against organised crime.

Learning to manage crises

The second workshop asked how to better prepare for and manage the various

What is the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region?

The European Commission is preparing an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region at the request of the European Council. The aim of the Strategy will be to coordinate the efforts of various actors in the Region (Member States, regions, financing institutions, the EU, pan-Baltic organisations, non-governmental bodies etc.) so that by working together they would promote a more balanced development of the Region.

The Strategy will aim at four main objectives:

1. to improve the environmental state of the Baltic Sea Region and especially of the Sea;
2. to make the Baltic Sea Region a more prosperous place by supporting balanced economic development across the Region;
3. to make the Baltic Sea Region a more accessible and attractive place both for its inhabitants, for a competent labour force and for tourists;
4. to make the Baltic Sea Region a safer and more secure place.

The Commission services, with Directorate General Regional Policy leading the work, will present the Strategy to the European Council in June 2009 and it will be one of the main priorities of the Swedish EU Presidency during the second half of 2009.

The Strategy's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/baltic/index_en.htm



crises, emergencies and disasters of today's globalised world. Professor Bengt Sundelius from the Swedish National Defence College focused on the general level of crisis management, arguing that the challenges facing us today are more complex than ever, occurring in a transnational environment and in real time, demanding immediate decisions and response. He therefore proposed to establish a research-based program for capacity building and training aimed at the strategic level of leadership. The Baltic Sea Region could function as a best practice region in the wider European context.

“ Oil transportation is increasing significantly, ship size is on the increase, containerisation is growing, and economic demands put more and more pressure on maritime business. All this creates a need to develop new risk prevention

Mr Henrik G. Petersen from the Danish Emergency Management Agency introduced a comprehensive preparedness planning and crisis management approach in order to initiate a wider discussion in the region. He proposed two general objectives, namely to boost the overall quality of the preparedness programmes and to enhance the overall quality of the crisis management capability. To this effect, he suggested that a network of crisis management experts should be established.



The Danish Chairman of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) Ambassador Karsten Petersen and Senior Adviser Dr Christer Pursiainen

Critical infrastructure is traditionally a field that is regulated nationally. However, Mr Christer Pursiainen, Senior Adviser at the CBSS Secretariat, noted that this field has become a new issue of European integration with the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection. He posed the question of how would it be possible to take into account the particular cross-border effects of critical infrastructure vulnerabilities as well as the specific regional features of European sub-regions. Consequently, he argued for a more concentrated regional strategy with regard to critical infrastructure protection.

Maritime safety

The Baltic Sea both gives the region its name and unites it. But not without problems, however. In the maritime safety workshop, Mr Jorma Rytkänen, Research Director at Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences, summarised the risky conditions for maritime traffic in the Baltic Sea. Oil transportation is increasing significantly, ship size is on the increase, containerisation is growing, and economic demands put more and more pressure on maritime business. All this creates a need to develop new risk prevention measures to improve safety and security.

Mr Isto Mattila, Policy officer in Maritime Surveillance at DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission, presented the ongoing work in the maritime surveillance area, and noted that progress towards establishing a cross-sectorally integrated EU maritime surveillance network was one of the key objectives in this work, aiming at the full interoperability of the various systems. As a step in this direction, he argued for a common, integrated approach to surveillance in the Baltic Sea basin.

One does not have to start from the be-

CBSS-RELATED CIVIL SECURITY NETWORKS AND STRUCTURES

- Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety
- Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings
- Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk
- Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation
- Directors-General Annual Meeting on Civil Protection
- Prosecutors General in the Baltic Sea Region Annual Meetings
- Expert Group on Tax Cooperation
- Baltic Sea Region Task Force on Organised Crime

gining, however. Ms Monika Stankiewicz, Professional Secretary at HELCOM, noted that preparedness for accidental oil spills and maritime safety are at the core of HELCOM work in very practical and concrete terms. While a lot has been done, a detailed set of measures to further improve maritime safety and increase response capability in the Baltic has been agreed in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, adopted by the ministers of environment in November 2007. In the discussion, it was emphasised especially that in order to ensure safety and security at the Baltic Sea, Russia's full involvement is essential.

Safe and secure everyday life

The media attention is often focused on large-scale disasters and emergencies, yet the everyday safety issues are however overwhelmingly responsible for most of the deaths, injuries and related costs.

The workshop on everyday safety and security started with a review on the threat of communicable diseases. Profes-

“ the Strategy should pay due attention to the forms of co-operation already existing instead of creating rival structures and programmes

sor Karl Ekdahl, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, noted that the priorities for the region should be HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, both of which show very stark disparities between Eastern and Western Baltic region.

Professor Robert Ekman from the National Centre for Learning from Incidents and Accidents of the Swedish Rescue Services Agency noted that, from the perspective of causes of death, injuries are among the major ones. Every year injuries cause 800,000 fatalities in Europe. However, injuries can be prevented using multiple strategies that address risk factors. A body of evidence suggests that one of the most effective strategies for preventing injuries is through community-based work,

as implemented by the WHO-sponsored International Safe Communities Network, for instance.

Ms Johanna Suupää, Anti-racism Ombudsman for Finland, spoke about the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance. She suggested that the UN Convention on Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and the relevant EU Directives meant that there is no need for a specific Baltic standard on the topic. Areas of joint concern include internet-based racial incitement, access for non-citizens to basic rights in the labour market, health and education, absence of a legal definition of racial discrimination, inadequate monitoring of racial incidents and, finally, issues concerning the Roma communities.

Safety pays back

In his concluding words to the Helsinki Roundtable, the CBSS CSO Chair Ambassador Karsten Petersen hoped that at least some of the initiatives proposed in the workshops would find their way into the Strategy and its action plan. Moreover, he remarked that the Strategy should pay due attention to the forms of cooperation already existing instead of creating rival structures and programmes.

The Rostock-Warnemünde conference on 5–6 February 2009, where the Commission presented the tentative items for concrete action, confirmed that the Commission had listened to the Roundtable. Maritime surveillance and other maritime safety issues, disaster capacity enhancing, measures against cross-border crime and preparedness to respond to cross-border health threats, as well as injury prevention, are all on board. While the issue of governance of the Strategy is still under discussion, the overall spirit is to rely on existing structures. In general, it seems that the forthcoming Strategy will provide a welcoming opportunity to put many of the long discussed ideas into practice.

While this will also inevitably require some financial resources, one should remember the wisdom of the saying that safety is a cheap and effective insurance policy.

FEBRUARY 2009

12 – 13 Stockholm
“Children and Online Sexual Violence”, Conference organised by the WGCC and partners

17 – 18 Copenhagen
BASREC Ministerial meeting

25 Brussels
Meeting of the BSPC Expanded Standing Committee

25 – 26 Brussels
The First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum

26 February - 1 March
Elsinor/Helsingør (Denmark)
VIII Baltic Sea NGO Forum

MARCH 2009

5 Stockholm
Thematic meeting with representatives of CBSS Observer States

9 Copenhagen
Meeting of the CBSS Political Directors

10 Copenhagen
Meeting of the CSO

10 Copenhagen
Meeting of the CBSS Working Group On Tax Cooperation

11 Copenhagen
Meeting of the WGEC

12 – 13 Tallinn
Meeting of the WGCC

24 – 25 Oslo
Nordic Conference on Child Trafficking

26 – 27 Copenhagen
7th Annual Meeting of Director-Generals for Civil Protection

ARIL 2009

6 – 7 Prague
“Child-Friendly Europe” Conference organised by the Czech EU Presidency

STRÖMSBORG DIRECT BY DR. GABRIELE KÖTSCHAU

The Baltic Sea Region – a safe and secure place?

Looking back to the times of cold war, to the times when the Baltic Sea divided countries and made border crossing a nightmare, we can today be proud of what we have achieved so far. The increasing free movement of people, goods and services promotes the dynamic development in our region; a region that is more and more seen as a model for other regions in Europe. Regional organisations and numerous NGOs have established a network in the region, including EU and non-EU countries, which covers a broad range of subjects and has turned the Baltic Sea into a sea that unites countries and people.

In spite of this encouraging development, we should not forget the challenges and risks that lie ahead in fields such as civil security. Easier movement across national boundaries also represents an opportunity for all kinds of cross-border criminality. Which instruments do we then have to counter these risks?

One of our strengths in the Baltic Sea Region is the close cooperation established in the field of border control, combating crime and protecting our Sea. The increasing amount of maritime traffic requires a good coastal surveillance system as well as good coordination. Task forces and organisations like the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC) – working under the umbrella of the CBSS and consisting of experts from all the countries in the Baltic Sea Region – have established a remarkable network. Having participated in the BSRBCC Summit end of November 2008 in beautiful Marstrand on the



Dr. Gabriele Kötschau,
CBSS Secretariat Director

southwest coast of Sweden, I was impressed by the activity of this network. Besides regular high-level and expert meetings there are joint multinational operations, such as checking boats in the Baltic Sea based on shared intelligence information and combating such threats as illegal immigration, smuggling and trafficking in human beings, drugs and arms.

This cooperation includes the exchange of information, experience and best practices, organising common training and developing common solutions. Some Baltic Sea States even participate in the patrol network in the Mediterranean region, bringing with them their experience from the BSRBCC. A further asset of this network is the integration of the neighbour countries such as the Ukraine and Belarus, the latter with a border length 3,614 km compared with a border length of 1,200

km with EU countries where there are major problems with illegal migration. The Ukraine as a part of the Black Sea Region cooperation (BSCF) can serve as a link between the two regions. The current German chairmanship called their Action Plan for 2009 “One vision, one mission for our common future”.

On the other hand we must not forget that there still are “real”, visible borders in our region.

Some countries are changing the structure due to Schengen access. The new rules in the Schengen region would make border crossing more difficult for the neighbours. This is still a challenge that we have to meet in order to abolish existing dividing lines and to avoid creating new ones.

Civil security is also in the focus of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy, last discussed in detail at the 2nd Stakeholder Conference in Rostock-Warnemünde on 5–6 February. As a result of a Swedish initiative the Strategy will be a priority for the Swedish EU Presidency (from 1 July 2009). Besides Environment, Prosperity and Attractiveness and Accessibility, Safety and Security in our region will be one field for action, covering issues from combating organized crime to communicable diseases.

The Baltic Sea Strategy can be built on existing structures in the region and can take advantage of the huge amount of actors, skills and experience to become more visible, more attractive, and more easily accessible – “What is the telephone number of the Baltic Sea Region?” – and even more secure.

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