



Latvian Presidency 2007-2008

Annual Report of the Council of the Baltic Sea States
The 16th Year of the Council's Activity 2007-2008
Adopted at the
Council of the Baltic Sea States
Ministers' Deputies Meeting in Riga, Latvia on 3 June 2008

Committee of Senior Officials



Annual Report from the Committee of Senior Officials

Table of Contents

COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS (CSO), 16th YEAR OF THE COUNCIL'S ACTIVITY.

The Committee of Senior Officials (CSO).....	P5
Summary of the Committee of Senior Officials Activities.....	P7
Technical Summary from the CBSS Secretariat.....	P14

The contents below is listed thematically in order of the agreed upon long term priorities as adopted by the Declaration on reform of the CBSS.

ENVIRONMENT

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

AGENDA 21 FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION – BALTIC 21 (B21).....	P17
--	-----

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WORKING GROUP ON ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (WGEC).....	P23
--	-----

ENERGY

BALTIC SEA REGION ENERGY COOPERATION (BASREC).....	P29
--	-----

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

EUROFACULTY PROJECTS IN KALININGRAD & PSKOV.....	P31
PROJECT <i>BALTICNESS</i>	P32

CIVIL SECURITY AND THE HUMAN DIMENSION

TASK FORCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS (TF-THB).....	P35
WORKING GROUP FOR COOPERATION ON CHILDREN AT RISK (WGCC).....	P39
WORKING GROUP ON DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS (WGDI).....	P43
WORKING GROUP ON NUCLEAR AND RADIATION SAFETY (WGNRS).....	P46

SECRETARIAT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES.....	P48
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The Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) Latvian Presidency

Chairman - Ambassador Valdis Krastiņš, Latvia

Latvian Delegate – Ms Sandra Martinsone

The Committee of Senior Officials consists of 11 officials appointed by their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs and one representative from the European Commission. The Committee consists of 11 men and 5 women including the Director of the CBSS Secretariat and the Secretary to the Committee who are also both present at the meetings. One delegate is on maternity leave. Countries may appoint additional delegates as appropriate to attend the meeting which has happened frequently over the last year during the reform discussions.

Mr. Valdis Krastins, Chairman, Mr. Karsten Petersen, MFA of Denmark, Ms. Pille Kesler, MFA of Estonia, Mr. Mikko Hirvi, MFA Finland, Mr. Jan-Axel Voss, MFA of Germany, Mr. Kornelius Sigmundsson, MFA of Iceland, Ms. Sandra Martinsone, MFA of Latvia, Ms. Kornelija Jurgaitiene, MFA of Lithuania, Mr. Dag Briseid, MFA of Norway, Mr. Zbigniew Kruzynski, MFA of Poland, Mr. Alexander Sverchkov, MFA of the Russian Federation, Mr. Michael Odevall, MFA of Sweden, Mr. Petteri Vuorimaki, European Commission, Ms. Gabriele Kötschau, Director of the CBSS Secretariat, Mr. Bjarke W. Bøtcher, Senior Adviser and Secretary to the CSO, Ms. Katarzyna Barcikowska, MFA of Poland (leave), Ms. Hanna Lehtinen and Mr. Tauno Pesola also represented the MFA of Finland during the reporting period.



From left to right - Bjarke W. Bøtcher, Mikko Hirvi, Michael Odevall, Gabriele Kötschau, Petteri Vuorimaki, Kornelija Jurgaitiene, Jan-Axel Voss, Marja-Leena Vuorenpää, Karsten Petersen, Kornelius Sigmundsson, Pille Kesler, Vladimir Koptelov, Sandra Martinsone, Alexander Shapel, Zbigniew Kruzynski, Dag Briseid, Valdis Krastins

Summary of the Committee of Senior Officials Activities

The CSO have convened for 10 meetings during the reporting period.

The Annual Report covers activities conducted during the Latvian Presidency of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), 1 July 2007–30 June 2008. In its capacity as the governing body of the CBSS in-between the Ministerial Sessions, the CSO ensures the implementation of decisions emanating from the Ministerial Sessions and the Baltic Sea States Summits. Furthermore, the CSO monitors the functioning of the three CBSS core working groups (Working Group on Democratic Institutions; Working Group on Economic Cooperation; Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety), the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings, the work of the other CBSS Structures and Working Bodies, as well as Baltic Sea cooperation in general.

The CSO is assisted by the Permanent International Secretariat in Stockholm. After the decision of the Heads of Government at the 3rd Baltic Sea States Summit in Kolding Denmark, 2000, as also reflected in the CBSS' Terms of Reference, the CBSS encompasses all multilateral intergovernmental regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.

H.E. Ambassador Valdis Krastins of the Latvian Ministry for Foreign Affairs chaired 10 meetings of the CSO during the Latvian Presidency, in the cities of Riga, Jelgava, Jurmala, Brussels and Copenhagen. The CSO was instrumental also in the preparation of and follow up to the CBSS Political Directors meeting in March 2008 in Riga, as well as for the negotiation of documents for the CBSS Ministers' Deputies meeting and for the 7th Baltic Sea States Summit in June, also in Riga.

The continuation of the Baltic Sea States cooperation

The Latvian Presidency led the reform discussion of the CBSS, as mandated by the CBSS Foreign Ministers at the 14th Ministerial Session held in Malmö, Sweden in June 2007.

The Member States, through the CSO, participated in meetings debating the future priorities for CBSS cooperation.

The CSO focused its monitoring and decision making on the three main priority areas of the Latvian Presidency, namely, education, energy and civil security, with a view to achieve common objectives, greater visibility and concrete results.

Education



The priority area of Education had the objective of enhancing the competitiveness of the regional educational institutions at a European and global level.

The EuroFaculty programme in Kaliningrad was successfully completed with a Final Conference on 4-5 October 2007. Sweden, as member of the troika, gave a speech on behalf of the Latvian Presidency, underlining the successful completion of the project and that *“it is one of the most important and concrete successes of Baltic Sea*

cooperation". The CSO extended its gratitude to Denmark as the lead-country for this project in 2000-2007. To benefit from the lessons learnt in the project, the CSO approved a research project aiming at identifying the factors that have been important for the successful restructuring of the Law and Business Economics studies at the Immanuel Kant State University of Russia (IKSUR) in Kaliningrad. In October 2007 the CSO decided to use parts of the financial surplus from the EuroFaculty Kaliningrad project for the research project on "Research into factors important for the successful restructuring of the Law and Business Economics studies at the Immanuel Kant State University of Russia (IKSUR) by the CBSS EuroFaculty Kaliningrad Project"

A major new CBSS project decided on by the CSO in Autumn 2007, was the foundation of another EuroFaculty project in the city of Pskov, north-western Russia. The aim of the project is to upgrade university education in Business Economics/Business Administration at both a state and a non-state institution in Pskov. The CSO has established an International Expert Group, as the project's steering body, consisting of representatives of the CBSS Member States. For the first time, all CBSS Member States decided to jointly finance this EuroFaculty project for an initial three year period. In addition, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg participate as donors to this project. During the spring of 2008, Sweden as the Lead Country for the EuroFaculty Pskov project, undertook a competitive selection process in order to choose a consortium, which will implement the project in Pskov. Once the university consortium has been appointed and established, the concrete project activities are expected to be launched at the two receiving institutions in Pskov in autumn 2008. The Lead Country will regularly report to the CSO about the progress of the project.

The Latvian CBSS Presidency organised a High-level meeting of Education and Science encompassing representatives of the CBSS ministries of Education and Science entitled "*Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development and Competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region*" in Riga on 13 September 2007, with the objective of discussing the role and possible contribution of higher education and science in promotion of sustainable development and competitiveness in the Baltic Sea Region as well as enhancing cooperation between CBSS Member States, in the field of education.

The Latvian CBSS Presidency also organised a "*CBSS meeting with regional networks, organisations and NGOs dealing with education issues*" in Riga on 27 February 2008, discussing the current stand of the higher education sector in the Baltic Sea Region and the current issues, challenges and problems with the view to formulate defined proposals and ideas on how the higher education could be enhanced within the CBSS to better facilitate the competitive and sustainable development of the region. Chair's Conclusions from both Meetings were adopted as reference points for future implementation.



The priority area of energy had the objective of creating competitive and free energy markets and promoting the use of renewable resources as well as efficient

consumption of energy, in the Baltic Sea Region. At the CSO meeting in Riga on 12 September 2007, the CSO decided that the CBSS Secretariat would provide increased secretarial assistance to the Latvian Chairmanship of the Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC), including preparation of, and participation in, the meetings of the Group of Senior Energy Officials (GSEO) and, maintenance of the BASREC website. The CSO Chairman presented the CSO's priority area of energy at the 15th Annual BSSSC Conference in Turku on 13-14 September 2007, at the IX Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) General Conference in Pärnu on 27-29 September 2007 and at the seminar "*Challenges for 21st Century: Energy and Environment Sustainability – sharing experience between the countries of the Black Sea and Baltic Sea Regions*" held in Stockholm on 16 October 2007. The Chairman underlined the importance of energy issues in the region, highlighting the relation between energy consumption and climate change, the promotion of renewable energy resources, the development of a competitive and free energy market, as well as the coordination of the Member States' positions towards legislative activities of the European Commission.

Civil Security and the Human Dimension



Cooperation within the field of Civil Security had the objective of promoting democracy, human rights and social security, stability, security and prosperity in the Baltic Sea Region.

At its meeting in Riga on 12 September 2007 the CSO decided to prolong the mandate of the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) with a focus on adults 6 months, and subsequently at its meeting in Riga on 27-28 March 2008 for another 36 months. The CSO decided on the longer prolongation due to the fact that the majority of potential external donors only support projects with the duration of at least two years. The efforts to counteract trafficking in human beings among the Baltic and Nordic countries will therefore continue to include Russia, Germany and Poland.

During the Latvian Presidency, the Task Force has organised training seminars for the diplomatic corps working in countries of origin, transit and destination, in order to better identify victims of trafficking. The Task Force also organised a NGO Seminar on victim support entitled *Models for Cooperation between State Actors and Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region*. NGOs from seven different Member States participated with 12 different representatives. Two representatives from IOM and one representative from the UNOCD also participated.

Since 2001, the CBSS cooperation in the field of Civil Protection has been coordinated within the framework of the Lead Country Function for Civil Security, under Polish leadership. In practice this transnational cooperation has largely taken place within the Eurobaltic Civil Protection Programme. The 6th Baltic Sea Civil Protection Directors-General Meeting on 3-4 October 2007 in Karlstad, Sweden, decided to synchronise the Civil Protection cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region with

the Presidency of the CBSS. The 7th Baltic Sea Civil Protection Directors-General Meeting, to be organized by the Danish Emergency Management Agency in the autumn 2008, will continue to streamline the transnational level Civil Protection cooperation within the general framework of the CBSS.

Recognising the importance of this cooperation as part of the priority area Civil Security, the CSO decided in the spring of 2008 to accept the invitation of the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA), as the Lead Partner, to give the CBSS Secretariat a mandate to become a Partner in the project application "Eurobaltic Risk Reduction in City Areas (ERRICA)" prepared for the EU Baltic Sea Region Programme. The application was submitted to the relevant funding authorities in late May 2008. ERRICA is a follow-up project of Eurobaltic (2003-2005) and Eurobaltic II (2006-2007), both led by the SRSA and co-financed by the EU INTERREG IIIB Programme and supported by the CBSS. ERRICA would therefore be a natural continuation of this well-established Eurobaltic Civil Protection cooperation, representing BSR national authorities, regional and local actors, businesses, research institutions and non-governmental actors.

In April 2008, the CSO decided that the CBSS Secretariat should become a partner of the proposed Interreg IV Baltic Sea Labour Market Project, as initiated by the Baltic Sea Region Trade Union Network (BASTUN). The application for this project was submitted in late May 2008.

Increased cooperation and coordination with other regional actors

During the Latvian CBSS Presidency, activities aimed at increasing levels of collaboration and coordination with other actors in the Baltic Sea Region, and in particular the CBSS Special Participants and Strategic Partners, as well as with other regional councils and initiatives in Europe, were undertaken with high importance.

Meetings between the Special Participants resp. the Strategic Partners and the so-called "troika" of the CSO (consisting of the CSO delegates of the outgoing, current and incoming CBSS Presidencies) were held in Copenhagen on 5 December 2007. In order to make cooperation with the special participants and the strategic partners more effective, the Latvian CBSS Presidency proposed to merge the two categories into a single notion of "strategic partner". A decision on this was included in the Declaration on the reform of the CBSS as presented to the Ministers' Deputies meeting held in Riga on 3 June 2008.

In order to maintain good co-ordination between the CBSS and the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Arctic Council, a coordination meeting of their respective presidencies took place in Stockholm on 3 March 2008.

In order to increase the interaction between the CBSS and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), the Latvian Foreign Minister and the Latvian CSO Chairman attended the 16th BSPC Conference in Berlin on 27-28 August 2007, as well as the Extended Standing Committee meeting in Brussels on 22 January 2008, and had bilateral consultations with the President of the Standing Committee of the BSPC on 20 February 2008.

The CSO has encouraged all structures and working bodies of the CBSS to seek cooperation with the BSPC in areas of mutual interest. At the CSO meeting in Riga

on 15-16 April 2008 the CSO discussed a number of parliamentary inquiries submitted to several governments by members of parliaments on the cooperation between CBSS and BSPC, and regarding follow-up to the resolutions of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. With the view to better inform the BSPC about CBSS activities, the CSO decided that its annual report, also including the annual reports of the working groups and task forces operating under the auspices of the CSO, as well as the final documents from either the Ministerial Session or Summit, should be sent for the information of the BSPC Standing Committee.

In October 2007, the CSO attended the final conference of the *Baltic Euroregional Network* (BEN) BSR Interreg III B project which took place in Jelgava, Latvia, back-to-back with a CSO meeting. At the BEN final conference, the Political Director of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Ilgvars Klava, gave an intervention and noted the importance of the BEN project and cross-border cooperation (CBC) in general, emphasising the added value of further strengthening the cooperation between the CBSS and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The BEN project was cited as a concrete project that served as an incubator for new projects. The conference speeches highlighted the main results of the project's different work packages and the sustainability of the results achieved. In addition, ideas for follow-up projects were presented. To further enhance the cooperation with other regional actors, the CSO continued its support to the *Baltic Euroregional Network* which aims at building the capacity of Euroregions/border regions required for cross-border cooperation. On completion of the BEN project, the CSO decided to look favourably at possible future project proposals for the continuation or further development of the BEN-project. In this regard the CSO requested that the CBSS Secretariat gather the relevant BEN Stakeholders for an exploratory meeting which discussed the abovementioned future project options.

Joint Annual Session with the European Commission

The CSO held its annual joint session with the European Commission in Brussels in March 2008. The annual joint session has become a valuable tradition and provides for a useful dialogue in order to achieve synergies and to find areas of mutual interest for hands-on cooperation.

Strengthening the cooperation with the CBSS Observer States

At the CSO's annual consultation with the 7 CBSS Observer States in Riga 19 February 2008, the CSO and representatives of the Observer States discussed ways of ensuring increased participation of the observers in relevant fields of common interest. The CSO Chairman encouraged that the annual consultations with the Observer States be held in Stockholm in the future, in order to take advantage of the Observer States contact points. The CBSS Secretariat met with representatives of the CBSS Observer States in Stockholm on 7 April 2008, to brief on the ongoing reform process and discuss opportunities for concrete co-operation in several fields, including the EuroFaculty project in Pskov, the Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (WGNRS), The Task Force on Trafficking of Human Beings (TF-THB), the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk (WGCC) and Baltic 21. At a meeting in Stockholm on 9 June 2008 the CSO Chairman briefed representatives of the Observer States about the results of the CBSS Ministers' Deputies meeting and the 7th Baltic Sea States Summit held in Riga on 3-4 June

2008, focusing on the reform of the CBSS and the future cooperation with the Observer States.

In regard to cooperation with Belarus the CSO decided to circulate the fact-finding mission report and encourage CBSS Structures to consider its implementation.

Administrative Issues

At the CSO meeting in Brussels 6-7 March 2008, the CSO adopted the revised guidelines for the Internship & Scholarship programme of the CBSS Secretariat, as presented by the CBSS Secretariat meaning that; a) the duration of internships should generally not be shorter than approx. six months, b) the scholarship should be granted to residents of the CBSS Member States only and c) applicants from Observer States or third countries can, if qualified, apply for an internship in the Secretariat, but would have to cover all associated costs themselves. The CSO also recommended that the size of the scholarship be increased to reflect actual minimum living expenses in Stockholm. This was reflected in the Secretariat's budget for 2009, adopted by the CSO at its meeting in Riga on 27-29 May 2008.

The Northern Dimension Partnership on Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)

The CSO co-decided, together with the NDPHS Committee of Senior Representatives, to prolong the temporary status of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Public Health and Social Well-being Secretariat as a project of the CBSS for 18 months at its meeting in Riga on 12 September 2007, and for a further 18 months at its meeting in Riga on 6-7 March 2008.

The CSO decided to prolong the temporary status in the expectation that the Partnership will soon initiate a formal exchange of letters between the Partners, which is expected to result in establishing an International Secretariat of the Partnership with its own legal capacity. It is foreseen that this procedure will take 18 months to complete. The temporary project is to come to an end as soon as a legal capacity of the NDPHS Secretariat has been authorised by NDPHS Partners.



AMBASSADOR VALDIS KRASTIŅŠ,
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS (CSO)
AND THE LATVIAN DELEGATE TO THE CSO MS. SANDRA MARTINSONE

Technical Summary from the CBSS Secretariat

In this year's compilation of the Annual Report of the Committee of Senior Officials the Secretariat has tried to reflect the three main changes in orientation that will have bearing on the cooperation in the future

- The organisation will give more focus to project management and financing
- The organisation will follow the agreed upon long term priorities as adopted by the Declaration on the reform of the CBSS
- The organisation will be assisted by new or groups comprised of experts and provided with a specific mandate

The expert groups may include, as appropriate, cross-sectoral actors from the governmental and non-governmental arena, not excluding private sector and academia.

The reports of the affiliated structures of the CBSS or Units of the CBSS Secretariat, namely the WGCC and Baltic 21, to some extent act as complementary models in terms of finance acquisition and project collaboration. The composition of the groups is expert-focused and specialist, and in the case of Baltic 21, also multi-stakeholder.

The newest addition to the CBSS, the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) is composed of a multi-ministry expert group. The TF-THB has been mandated for a further 36 months and is currently investigating possibilities for project finances. The Secretariat has highlighted aspects pertaining to finance, group composition, mandate and achievements and outcomes throughout the report. In the WGCC report funding for specific activities are broken down into percentages and can be understood at a glance.

This year's report also varies from the most recent years in the structure and order of the contents. The reports are grouped into thematic segments. These segments relate to the five long term priorities of:

Environment
Economic Development
Energy
Education and Culture
Civil security and the human dimension

The reports themselves are submitted by the Chair of each respective Working Group, the Chair of the TF-THB and the two Units of Children at Risk as well as Baltic 21. It is worth noting that the two unit reports, although dependent on approval from their own governing boards have been inserted into the thematic groups under the priority headings as they operate under the host agreement of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat report has been streamlined to focus on the financial budgetary aspects of its functions and to give a brief outline of personnel changes and the internship programme. The information and communication strategy is also included here.

The other development relates to the work done by the Secretariat and its role as a service agency to the Council. This year the Annual Report aims to define the *relationship* between the CBSS as an organisation and the affiliated structures and cooperation partners. The report is oriented towards the concrete decisions taken by the Committee and gives focus to the diverse plethora of implemented projects and activities undertaken by the Latvian Presidency of the CBSS and in related formats and bodies.

The Secretariat is also pleased to announce that the CBSS has committed itself to participate in three new projects in the forthcoming period; a new EuroFaculty project in Pskov (Russia), a civil protection project on risk reduction in city areas – ERRICA and a Baltic Sea Labour Market project initiated by a labour market project. The CBSS, through its Secretariat, is also exploring joint project applications with the Baltic Sea Euroregional Network (BEN).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Kötschau', is positioned above the printed name.

Dr. Gabriele Kötschau
Director of the Secretariat

Environment



...the long term priority of Environment for the future of Baltic Sea Cooperation may include climate change



Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region - Baltic 21

Chair of Senior Officials Group: Ms. Anne-Cerise Nilsson, Sweden

Head of Baltic 21 Secretariat: Mr. Risto Veivo

Sectors and Lead Parties:

Agriculture – Germany and Poland

Education – Finland and Norway

Energy – BASREC

Fisheries – not active during reporting period

Forests – Sweden and Latvia

Industry – Sweden

Tourism – Germany

Transport – not active during reporting period

Spatial Planning - VASAB

Priorities / Strategy Guidelines (as adopted 2004)

1. Baltic 21 will support the CBSS and its processes in the pursuit of sustainable development.
2. Baltic 21 Sectors and Spatial Planning will strengthen involvement in cross-sectoral work, and will work towards achieving the agreed goals and visions.
3. Baltic 21 will adopt and act as the umbrella for a focused set of "Lighthouse Projects" designed to demonstrate sustainable development in action.
4. Baltic 21 will identify funding sources to support the Lighthouse Projects and other region-level sustainable development initiatives.

Four Ad-hoc Working Groups (addressing strategy guidelines 3 and 4)

- Bio-energy Promotion – Sweden (joint group with BASREC)
- Education for Sustainable Development – Finland / Åbo Akademi University
- Innovation and Sustainability - Germany
- Balanced Urban and Rural Development – Union of the Baltic Cities

Main achievements during the period

Implementation of Baltic Sea regional Lighthouse projects by Baltic 21 members (eight implemented to date)

Development of four new strategic BSR projects by the Ad-hoc Working Groups

Development of Baltic 21 Eco-region project

Input to CBSS High-level meeting on Education and Science

Contribution to the 16th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development

Development of portfolio of actions on sustainable rural development

Intensified contacts with financing agencies and programmes

Increased activity of countries at SOG

About Baltic 21

Composition of Baltic 21

Baltic 21 Senior Officials members are currently composed of representatives from the 11 CBSS Member States as well as representatives from Baltic Fishermen Association; Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum; Baltic Ports Organisation; Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs; Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation; Baltic Sea Tourism Commission; Baltic University Programme; Coalition Clean Baltic; CPMR Baltic Sea Commission; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; European Investment Bank; European Commission; European Union for Coastal Conservation; Helsinki Commission; International Chamber of Commerce; Keep Baltic Tidy; Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) Nordic Council of Ministers; Nordic Environment Finance Corporation; Nordic Investment Bank; Union of the Baltic Cities; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; United Nations Environment Programme; Visions and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea 2010 (VASAB); World Bank; World Business Council for Sustainable Development; World Wide Fund for Nature. The group is composed of 20 female representatives and 30 male.

The Secretariat of the Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region, Baltic 21, operates as an administrative unit within the CBSS Secretariat. The Baltic 21 process was launched by the Heads of Government of the Baltic Sea States in 1996 and the Action Programme was adopted by the Council in 1998. The programme focuses on advancing sustainable development in eight economic sectors, spatial planning and seven cross-sectoral joint actions. It is being implemented by the Baltic 21 multi-stakeholder network with members representing various government ministries and agencies from the 11 Baltic Sea states, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academic and financial institutions, as well as networks of local and regional authorities and business.

Several of the Sectors and some of the Joint Actions of Baltic 21 have made good progress both in implementing and upgrading their actions programmes. This was reported in detail to the Baltic Sea States Summit in 2006.

The Baltic 21 Strategy Guidelines were adopted in 2004 in order to enhance the implementation of the Action Programme and focus the efforts of the multi-stakeholder network. These Guidelines emphasize (1) Baltic 21's support to the Council of the Baltic Sea States, (2) cross-sectoral activities, (3) Baltic Sea Regional Lighthouse Projects designed to demonstrate sustainable development in action, as well as (4) the aim to identify funding sources for such projects. Following the Strategy, Baltic 21 has contributed to shape the policy agenda in Baltic Sea Region and beyond in the field of sustainable development, supported by concrete activities demonstrating sustainable development in practice.

In the following, the main actions taken by Baltic 21 to develop new activities and approaches during the Latvian Presidency will be presented. Simultaneously with facilitating these processes, the Baltic 21 Unit is providing secretarial support to the Baltic 21 decision-making bodies and carrying out its other regular tasks such as promotion and liaison. Further information on the activities of Baltic 21 and the unit is available at the Baltic 21 web-site (www.baltic21.org). Baltic 21 will also submit a

report to the Heads of Government at the Baltic Sea States Summit, Riga, Latvia 4 June 2008.

Main actions during the reporting period

During the reporting period (the Latvian Presidency of CBSS) and recent years, the Baltic 21 network has been particularly successful in development and implementation of concrete projects and actions. Nine Baltic 21 Lighthouse projects have been adopted and eight of them implemented to-date. They have covered a broad scope of topics, producing tangible results in areas such as sustainable tourism, education in ecosystem health and sustainable agriculture, rural development, forest management, urban mobility and governance, and marine transport. The budgets of these projects have been ranging from 2-4 million Euro and have been mainly financed through the European Union's transnational territorial cooperation programme for the Baltic Sea region.

During the reporting period, Baltic 21 developed its project approach further. This was started by the adoption of new focal themes for Lighthouse Projects already in 2006, followed by setting up ad-hoc working groups to address the themes and develop strategic Baltic Sea Regional Projects. The process was pro-actively facilitated by the Secretariat, and even if started previously, took mainly place during the Latvian Presidency of CBSS. The four ad-hoc working groups were established by the Baltic 21 Steering Body, the Senior Officials Group (SOG) in March 2007. The working groups had three meetings each and submitted their final reports to SOG in April 2008. The groups addressed and successfully developed project proposals on the following themes: (1) Bio-energy Promotion, (2) Innovation for Sustainable Production, (3) Education for Sustainable Development, and (4) Balanced Urban and Rural Development. The working group on Bio-energy Promotion was initiated in close co-operation with BASREC. As a result of the process, applications for four strategic projects will be submitted to the first call of the BSR Programme 2007-2013 by project consortiums created within the working groups. All four project consortiums include partners from national level in (nearly) all BSR countries plus other experts and stakeholder organisations. Simultaneously, Baltic 21 has initiated the Eco-region Project to integrate and better disseminate the results of Baltic 21 sectors and projects.

In support for the pursuit of CBSS on sustainable development of the region, Baltic 21 has also followed on the call from the CBSS High-level Meeting on Agriculture and Environment, Saltsjöbaden, Sweden 19-20 April 2007, by developing further its work on sustainable rural development, and has contributed to the CBSS High-level Meeting on Education and Science, Riga, Latvia, 13 September 2007. Baltic 21 organised a seminar on Sustainable Rural Development 19 November 2007, Uppsala, Sweden, and mandated the Ad-hoc Working Group Urban and Rural Development to extend its work with a specific focus on creating actions on sustainable rural development. The interim outcomes of Baltic 21's work on sustainable rural development will be reported to the Baltic Sea States Summit, Riga, Latvia 3-4 June 2008. The outcome of the CBSS High-level Meeting on Education and Science has influenced the new strategic project on education for sustainable development.

The priorities of the Swedish Chairmanship of Baltic 21 were strongly linked to the implementation of the Strategy Guidelines (as adopted 2004). A specific action of the Swedish Chairmanship was promotion of Baltic 21 towards actors in Ukraine and Belarus. This was successfully advanced by the unit and further enabled by a specific grant from the Swedish Ministry of Environment. Experts from Belarus and Ukraine, as well as from the Mediterranean region, were also invited and contributed by presentations at the seminar on sustainable rural development (Uppsala, Sweden 19 November 2007). During the Swedish Chairmanship, Baltic 21 also intensified its co-operation with funding agencies and discussed co-operation possibilities on project financing at working meetings with Nordic Environment Finance Co-operation (NEFCO), Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) and Nordic Council of Ministers. NEFCO also hosted the Baltic 21 Senior Officials Group meeting 10-11 April 2008, Helsinki, Finland. Co-operation with HELCOM was intensified by participation at the Implementation Group of Baltic Sea Action Plan as well as HELCOM's participation at the SOG. Russia took actively part at the SOG Bureau and several of the sector and project activities. European Commission nominated a new focal point for Baltic 21.

Summary of meetings and events

During the reporting period the Baltic 21 Senior Officials Group met twice, following its normal procedure. The SOG Bureau met three times, the Sector and Joint Action Lead Parties once, and the four Ad-hoc Working Groups met three times each. In addition, several of the Baltic 21 Sectors had a number of meetings, and the Lighthouse Projects arranged their own activities.

There were 19 meetings during the second half of 2007 and 9 meetings during the first half of 2008.

The meetings organised by Baltic 21 (SOG, SOG Bureau, Lead Party and Responsible Actor, Ad-hoc Working Groups, and the Seminar on Sustainable Rural Development) enjoyed full secretarial support from the Baltic 21 Unit. In case of the events of the Lighthouse Projects, the Baltic 21 Unit contributed by presentations plus in some cases by advice. The Anniversary Seminar and exhibition will be organised and produced by the Unit. Further detailed information on the meetings (agendas, reports, participation) is available at the Baltic 21 web-site (www.baltic21.org).

A selection of Baltic 21's outside relationship with partners can be summarised thus

- Baltic 21 joined the BSAP Implementation Group.
- HELCOM participated at SOG 28, Helsinki, Finland 10-11 April 2008, and HELCOM Executive Secretary addressed the meeting.
- UBC Chaired the Baltic 21 Ad-hoc working Group Urban and Rural Development. UBC participated in SOG and contributed with two Lighthouse Projects (BUSTRIP and SUSTAINMENT).
- VASAB continued its active involvement at SOG and at several Baltic 21 working groups. VASAB also co-operated in organising the 10th Anniversary Exhibition of Baltic 21.
- NIB contributed to the Baltic 21 Seminar on Sustainable Rural Development, Uppsala, Sweden 19 November 2007.
- NCM took part at the Baltic 21 SOG meeting 28, Helsinki, Finland 10-11 April 2008.

- UNEP Grid Arendal contributed to the Baltic 21 Ad-hoc Working Group Balanced Urban and Rural Development plus assisted Baltic 21 in promoting its goals and co-operation in Ukraine and Belarus.
- Baltic 21 organised a side-event (7 May 2008) and participated as observer at the 16th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, New York, United States 5-16 May 2008.
- Baltic 21 had working/expert level contacts with Belarus, Ukraine and Italy
- Baltic 21 had working/expert level contacts with INTERREG
- Baltic 21 had working/expert level contacts with the Baltic Sea Tourism Commission.
- Baltic University Programme contributed to Baltic 21 by Lighthouse project EHSA and participated actively at SOG, Education Sector, and Ad-hoc Working Group Urban and Rural Development.

Economic Development



...the long term priority of Economic development for the future of Baltic Sea Cooperation may include, innovation and competitiveness and a favourable business environment, fostering entrepreneurship, cluster development, maritime economy, transport and logistics, research and development, customs cooperation and well-functioning labour markets



Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC)

Chair - Mr. Aivars Gulbis, Latvia

Priorities during the period chaired by Latvia

During the period chaired by Latvia the WGEC focused the work on a limited number of issues, which in its view would contribute to the overall competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). The issues included as follows: innovation promotion and cluster creation in the BSR, tackling obstacles to trade and investment and the work of the SOLVIT. The Working Group also discussed aspects of the CBSS reform concerning economic cooperation and the future of the WGEC, in particular. The WGEC followed the activities of the CBSS Working Group on Customs Cooperation and Border Crossing Aspects, where Latvia also had a Chairmanship. Some summarising conclusions would be suggested at the end of the Report.

Number of Meetings

During the reporting period four meetings have been held in Riga focusing on cluster creation, development and promotion.

Secretarial Function

The WGEC is being provided with a Secretary Function, a Deputy Director / Senior Adviser from the CBSS Secretariat.

Composition of the Working Group

The WGEC is currently composed of 21 experts including representatives from the 11 CBSS Member States and the European Commission as well as representatives from the Business Advisory Council, the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association and Baltic Sea Trade Union Network. Out of the 21 experts 16 are men and 5 are women.

Main achievements and activities of the WGEC

Promotion of Innovation

The members of the WGEC were able to attend the International Conference "International Partnership for Innovation: Challenges and Opportunities" – "Baltic Dynamics 2007", organised in Riga on 13-15 September 2007 in conjunction with the Latvian CBSS Presidency 2007-08. In particular, the WGEC was invited to the session "Innovation & Entrepreneurship Support", which had a strong emphasis on Innovation. As a result of the Conference and the CBSS High-Level meeting on Education and Science held back-to-back with it, the establishment of an ad-hoc Expert Working Group on Higher Education, Science and Innovation was recommended to aid the promotion of innovation by the High Level Meeting of the Ministries of Education and Science during the Latvian Chairmanship in the CBSS.

The Chair established good links with representatives of the Baltic Sea Region Innovation Network (BSR InnoNET), who have actively participated in some of the WGEC meeting and gave their valuable input to the Workshop on Promotion of

Cluster development in the Baltic Sea region, held in Riga on 15 January 2008. It was also noticed that the BSR – InnoNET project (funded by the EU) could be a viable tool for future cooperation in innovation policy. It would have a particular value if the Russian innovation networks join the next project (Transnational Programme) to be possibly launched after the expiration of the current one in 2009. At the same time, due to certain time constraints and pending the discussions on the future scope of the CBSS within the ongoing reform process, unfortunately it was not possible to duly discuss synergies on promotion of innovation with other stakeholders, especially with the Nordic Council of Ministers. However, there is room for such a dialogue in the future.

Promoting Cluster Development in the Baltic Sea Region

The Chair has organised a Workshop with an extended participation of national experts on Promotion of Cluster Development in the BSR, held on 15 January in Riga. The Workshop touched upon important aspects of cluster formation, as well as looked into the role of governments in this process. A good participation of the Russian experts gave the Workshop additional dimensions and outlooks on the creation of clusters across the borders. Dr. Christian Ketels from Harvard Business School, as well as other prominent national experts in this field presented their views and ideas. The Conclusions from the Workshop are annexed to the Report.

The Chair and the Secretariat participated in the 5th Economic Forum of the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association held in Turku (Finland) on 1 October 2007, which was titled “Clusters in the Baltic Sea Region and Baltic Sea Region wide Cluster Policy”. The Chair presented the WGEC and introduced part of the Latvian Chairmanship Programme devoted to competitiveness and cluster creation. A fruitful exchange of ideas at the Forum was conducive to further planning and shaping the work of the WGEC on the cluster topic. The BCCA, as a CBSS Strategic Partner, received a cross-invitation to the WGEC Workshop on Cluster Development in Riga and presented the topic of “Cluster approach as a tool for industrial policy in the BSR”.

Following the recommendations of experts from the Workshop, Latvia has proposed to establish a special task-force of experts dealing with cluster development. Discussions displayed already an on-going work in this field. At this stage it was decided not to develop the idea, but to promote cluster development on a general level, until a specific demand for such a task force is in place.

Tackling obstacles to trade and investment

Since there was not enough support in the WGEC to the idea of establishing national inquiry points for barriers on the basis of the BAC proposal (the Swedish CBSS Presidency 2006-07), Latvia attempted to address this issue under a different angle. Namely, the intention was to explore the potential of the renewed Market Access Strategy of the EU, as well as raise awareness in the business community about SOLVIT.

As an outcome of discussions, there was an emerging understanding that CBSS could bring value-added by studying and trying to expand a pragmatic attitude of the SOLVIT centres of the Nordic countries towards operators from non-EU members.

The WGEC contemplated on a draft proposal of Mr. Sarunas Radvilavicius, the coordinator of the Baltic Euroregional Network project (BEN), on a new project regarding cross-border obstacles in the Baltic Sea Region. Such a project could be developed and implemented within the continuation of the BEN process beyond 2007. To be noted that by the end of the Latvian Presidency term this BEN project idea was not carried further.

Other topics of importance

The future of the WGEC in light of the ongoing reform of the CBSS was discussed both at the WGEC and the CSO meetings. By present, it seems that the differing positions of the Member States prevent the Chair from building consensus in the Group. The attempt of the Chairman to find a compromise solution on a gradual reform of the WGEC – by transforming it from the permanent working body to a networking structure - so far has not materialised. For example, Germany has put forward a discussion paper proposing to consider including the topic of Maritime Economy on the CBSS agenda, and in particular, as an option, entrusting the WGEC with this task.

Traditional interaction with the Barents Euro-Arctic Council was on the WGEC agenda. Russia, as the Chair of the BEAC in 2008-09 put forward some useful proposals on how to improve interaction in the economic field between the two organisations. It concerned synergies between the working bodies of both organisation with a similar profile and competence. The proposals could be discussed further under the Danish Chairmanship taking into account developments within the CBSS reform process.

The Chair and the Secretariat participated in the 9th Annual Summit of the Baltic Development Forum in Tallinn on 4-6 November 2007. The Secretariats' Report from the Summit, as well as the State-of-the-Region Report 2007 were made available to the WGEC. The SORR, among others, contained important recommendation for policy-makers on competitiveness issues.

The WGEC continued liaising (through the Secretariat) with the CBSS Working Group on Customs Cooperation and Border Crossing Aspects. The WGCB continued the work on consolidating and implementing basic recommendations and decisions of the Baltic Sea Customs Conference (dissolved in the fall 2003) through launching a special Questionnaire. The work will be carried out through the Danish Presidency in the CBSS.

The Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN) prepared and presented a project proposal titled "Baltic Sea Labour Network" – BSLN, seeking funding from the INTERREG IV B. The aim of the project is to promote tripartite experience and structures of the Nordic Countries in the Baltic States, Poland and Russia. Upon the invitation of the BASTUN, on 25 April 2008 the CBSS CSO took a decision to join the Project in a capacity of a partner, once the project is in place. It was presumed that the Secretariat will represent the CBSS and will report back to the CSO.

Summary of the year and plans for the future

The integration process of the the Baltic Sea Region has reached a stage of consolidation, where there is a less need for governmental support to large economic

initiatives. The cooperation takes place “in the field” and is carried out by the economic actors themselves. The business environment would improve even more with the accession of Russia to the WTO. Cooperation on the governmental level should continue to promote economic interaction and to improve business climate. There is also a need to streamline the cooperation process mainly on a national, but also on a multilateral level.

During the Latvian Presidency the regional economic stakeholders have indicated several times and on several occasions what they expected from the CBSS. This included as follows: the work conducive to integration of markets, enabling freedoms of the common market, supporting strengthening and consolidating of clusters, supporting linkages between the clusters, creating platforms for cluster management, use cluster knowledge in regional infrastructure investments, focusing on practical and critical spheres such, as Education, Research and Development, Infrastructure/Logistics. The topic of Maritime Economy could become a relevant subject-matter to deal with in the future as well.

The ability of the organisation to address those topics would to a large extent depend on the expertise and the availability of the necessary tools (instruments). In this regards there is a clear need to have specialised expert groups which would work on the basis of a limited scope and time-span. Some projects or any other tangible activity could result from the work of such specialised units.

Final Conclusions

WGEC Workshop on promotion of Cluster Development in the BSR from 15 January 2008, Riga

Cluster development (policy) is one of the tools in enhancing competitiveness in the globalised world. Not least, clusters play a role of locomotives in growth of regional prosperity. For the Baltic Sea Region cluster promotion is a challenging process due to several circumstances. Firstly, because the Region is small and economies are basically small. Secondly, the market is not enough integrated, there are cultural, linguistic and legal differences. Thirdly, there are infrastructural hardships and a permanent energy deficit.

Geographical proximity is a positive factor. The BSR should be able to offer something regional by consolidating and pulling together smaller clusters in order to reach a critical mass. Smaller clusters should be assisted in getting across the border to each other. The BSR needs to find its own model (niche) of cluster development (not copying the USA), basically founded on an enhanced cluster interconnectivity. At the same time one should keep in mind the importance of increasing specialization of clusters which could also lead to some weak clusters disappearing. However, there are areas in the BSR where a cluster formation has already succeeded and grows continuously (due to a most suitable model found). For example, - ScanBalt, representing an alliance of networks in the bio-tech industry, Medicon Valley Academy, MedCoast Scandinavia.

There is an important role for public authorities in supporting development of clusters. For example, specific (targeted) national cluster policies were applied in such countries, as Austria, France, Germany and Sweden. There is also an

established cross-national collaboration of cluster initiatives in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Northern Germany, Norway, and Sweden. In addition, in some countries public sector acts as a universal regulator, guarantor (trust aspect) and an entrepreneur/investor, as well as it plays crucial role in supporting and promoting local authorities. The latter are often called to be stabilizers of industrial-innovative networks. Some countries rely on strategies applying a bigger extent of governance from “the top” to the self-evolving process of cluster development.

Among key action areas where governments can play a role are the following: work conducive to integration of markets, enabling freedoms of the common market, supporting strengthening and consolidating of clusters, supporting linkages between the clusters, creating platforms for cluster management, use cluster knowledge in regional infrastructure investments. Work on cluster development should also imply an effective platform for bringing together public authorities and business leaders. Some countries use cluster policy to coordinate the dispersed research resources. For the future, some experts suggested focusing on practical and critical spheres such, as Education, Research and Development, Infrastructure/Logistics.

When it comes to cluster initiatives, the governments should participate, be ready to implement recommendations, support data availability. They also may allocate funding and initiate clusters. At the same time, what they should refrain from is picking members and identifying action priorities. It is not out of place for governments to set a strategy for the next “wave” of cluster development with the view to streamline this process.

The accession of Russia to the WTO, as well as the accession of some of the EU members to the Monetary Union, would considerably improve business environment for cluster development in the region. The CBSS could contribute to creating a bridge between the EU cluster efforts, such as for example, BSR InnoNet and the Russian cluster efforts in the BSR.

In order to follow-up the results of the Workshop, it is advisable to start with picking a pilot cluster where a number of CBSS countries, ideally including Russia, have positions in it. Then one could explore with businesses in these clusters whether creating more organised linkages between them makes sense.

Actions aiming at raising awareness about clusters and innovations for the local authorities could be launched. Business leaders, representatives of the existing clusters and cluster initiatives, cluster networks (BSR InnoNet), public and local authorities, and national experts could be involved. The outcome of the European presidential Conference on Innovation and Clusters to be held in Stockholm on 22-23 January 2008, as well as the ongoing work of the BSR InnoNet should also be widely taken into account.

The CBSS could consider establishing a special task-force consisting of experts and dealing with cluster policy issues as set by the Mandate within a limited time-span.

Energy



...the long term priority of Energy for the future of Baltic Sea Cooperation may include, energy security, energy efficiency and saving, renewable energy and the impact of energy on the environment

Energy



Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC)

Upon the decision of the CSO the Secretariat provided a support to the Chairman (Latvia) of the BASREC Group of Senior Energy Officials. In total, the Secretariat assisted six meetings of the GSEO and three workshops. The GSEO meetings: Riga, 16 October 2007; Riga, 30 November 2007; Riga, 17 January 2008; Riga, 3 April 2008; Berlin, 16 May 2008; Riga, 02 June 2008. The Workshops: Workshop on Energy Infrastructure projects in the Baltic Sea Region – Riga, 29 November 2007; Workshop on Renewable Energy Sources, Climate issues and Energy Efficiency – Riga, 02 April 2008; Joint Seminar between the CSEO and the Baltic Gas Group – Berlin, 15 May 2008. There is a growing support in the GSEO towards a deeper cohesion between the BASREC and the CBSS. This also implies a full-fledged secretarial support of the CBSS Secretariat to the activities of BASREC/GSEO. In particular, it concerns the next triennial BASREC period 2008-2011, which would be decided upon at the BASREC Ministerial meeting in Copenhagen in mid- September 2008.

Education and Culture



...the long term priority of Education and Culture for the future of Baltic Sea Cooperation may include, the EuroFaculty concept, student and academic mobility, upgrade of science and research capacity, cultural heritage, contemporary culture and the promotion of regional identity

Education



High level meeting on Education and Science

During the Latvian CBSS Presidency, education was included as a permanent area in the CBSS cooperation. On 13 September 2007, CBSS High-Level Meeting of Education and Science took place in Riga. The CBSS Secretariat was closely assisting in organising of this High Level Meeting. On 27 February 2008, the CBSS Latvian Presidency organised the CBSS meeting with regional networks, organisations and NGOs dealing with education issues. The goal of this meeting was to discuss the current stand of the higher education sector in the Baltic Sea Region; the current issues, challenges and problems with the view to formulate defined proposals and ideas on how the higher education could be enhanced within the CBSS.

CBSS EuroFaculty

Completion of the EuroFaculty Kaliningrad project (LC EF-K)

Throughout 2007-2008, the Secretariat continued its assistance to the Lead Country for the EuroFaculty project in Kaliningrad. The Secretariat is a member of the project's steering body, the International Expert Group. The Secretariat undertook preparation of minutes from the expert group meetings, assisted with the communication between the lead country and the CSO, and provided other kinds of assistance to Denmark as the project's lead country. The EuroFaculty project in Kaliningrad was successfully completed with a Final Conference on 4-5 October 2007, where Sweden, as member of the troika, gave a speech on behalf of the Latvian Presidency, underlining the successful completion of the project and that "it is one of the most important and concrete successes of Baltic Sea cooperation". The CBSS Secretariat Director attended a panel at the conference. The final expert group meeting was held in April 2008, after which the final report on the project was presented to the CSO. The Secretariat was tasked to assume responsibility for the administrative handling of the research project on identifying the factors that have been important for the successful restructuring of the Law and Business Economics studies at the Immanuel Kant State University of Russia (IKSUR) in Kaliningrad. This task is expected to be completed before the summer of 2009.

Start of the EuroFaculty project in Pskov (LC EF-P)

During 2007-2008, the Secretariat assisted with the preparatory work for the new EuroFaculty project in Pskov in north-western Russia. The Secretariat facilitated for the decision making in the CSO regarding the launch of the project e.g. by preparing analytical material, and took part in three fact-finding travels to Russia. To facilitate financial contributions, the Secretariat had a close dialogue with relevant ministries in most of the CBSS Member States as well as with the Nordic Council of Ministers and with the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, both of which decided to join the EuroFaculty project in Pskov as external partners. When the CSO in December 2007 decided to formally launch the project and to form the project's steering body, the

International Expert Group, the Secretariat became a member hereof and will attend the meetings of the group. The Secretariat will provide secretarial assistance to Sweden as the project's Lead Country and undertake the preparation of minutes from the expert group meetings. In addition the Secretariat attended various other meetings with the Lead Country, relating to the preparations of the Call for Letter of Interest and other issues relating to the implementation of the project.

Baltic University Programme

The Baltic University Programme was closely involved in the Latvian CBSS Presidency initiatives on education - the CBSS High-Level Meeting of Education and Science in September 2007 and the CBSS meeting with regional networks, organisations and NGOs dealing with education issues in February 2008. The Baltic University Programme was also an active participant and keynote speaker in project *BALTICNESS* on several occasions, e.g. seminar on environmental stand of the Baltic Sea in Copenhagen.



The Project *Balticness* was the largest initiative and definitely the central cultural activity of the Latvian Presidency.

The project *Balticness* encompassed three parts staged within one umbrella event: a photographic exhibition, a jazz concert with accompanying visual elements and a roundtable discussion centred on a different topical issue for the Baltic Sea Region and beyond.

The photographic exhibition – ***Where the Baltic Sea and People Meet*** features the work of 24 young artists and 40 different photographic works, which accent the significance of the Baltic Sea as a unifying element in the region. The exhibition has travelled to every destination of the project apart from Berlin. It was exhibited in deliberately public surroundings, for example the library, the ferry terminal, the airport departure hall, the shopping galleria, the university campus, the cultural centre, the cafeteria, the entrance reception as well as the art gallery. The conscious choice of different and diverse venues maximised the variety of people who connected with the photographs and the region itself in an inclusive and participatory way. *Balticness* is also the name of the photo exhibition catalogue produced in association with the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art that facilitated the photo competition.

The jazz concerts staged within the framework of *Balticness* were unique. Each concert performance was complemented by an invited guest musician or two who resides in the country that the performance was to take place in. Latvian musicians performed together with jazz artists from each of the Baltic Sea States. Traditional national folk songs from each country were revisited in new and contemporary jazz rearrangements. These guest performances and jam sessions were recorded on a

compilation CD which will be released along with this issue at the 7th Baltic Sea States Summit.

The seminar programme of roundtable discussions had 11 different themes.

- Science and Infrastructure upgrade potential in Estonia
- Small language education in Helsinki
- Cooperation in St. Petersburg
- Competitiveness in Stockholm
- Energy and Welfare in Oslo
- Sustainable Tourism in Reykjavik
- Environmental consultancy in Copenhagen
- Maritime Economy in Berlin
- Migration in Warsaw
- Transport and logistics in Lithuania
- Branding in Riga

The invited panellists, guests and decision makers are all involved in the particular field of interest.

The project involved 32 different institutions from the 11 different member states.

Across all three platforms the project speakers, organisers, photographers and musicians added up to 250 people. The total amount was composed of 167 men and 83 women giving a percentage of 33% participation of women – hitting our target of at least 30% participation. Participation in the seminar programme alone was over 500 participants. The exhibition due to its location in places like the ferry terminal and the airport departure lounge was viewed by thousands. The jazz concerts were attended in each of the cities by another type of audience and further add to these figures depending on the capacity of the club.

A more detailed breakdown of participation figures and achieved aims of the project can be obtained by downloading the PDF of the Summer 2008 edition of the CBSS Journal at www.cbss.org.

In the words of one of the photographers

Ms. Anete Aramiņa from Latvia

The main motivation to take part in this competition was its vast scale – it was a good opportunity for young photographers to exhibit their works not only in Latvia, but also abroad. It was also a good opportunity to compare your way of thinking with ideas of foreign photographers and also to see yourself in a broader context. The interesting theme was also a part of my motivation – it was exciting, it set no limits and did not encourage uniformity. I was very pleasantly surprised when the news reached me that somebody wished to purchase my photograph, even more so as I hadn't had such an experience in Latvia. I am very happy that my works can be of interest to somebody.

Civil Security and the Human Dimension



...the long term priority of Civil Security and the Human Dimension for the future of Baltic Sea Cooperation may focus on civil society, civil protection and civil security, these topics may include the fight against trafficking in human beings the protection of children's rights, youth affairs, the promotion of people to people contacts and consumer protection



**Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings with focus on adults (TF-THB)
Chair – Ms. Inga Dobelniece, Latvia**

Priority during the period chaired by Latvia

Identification of victims of trafficking, who are often discovered outside their countries of residence or origin, is a prioritised task for the TF-THB. Therefore, training of diplomatic and consular personnel in identifying victims is one of the central goals for the TF-THB and this has also been an activity in focus during the Latvian chairmanship. Another major task of the Task Force is to improve the existing national referral mechanisms in order to ensure that identified victims are being provided with support in line with international human rights standards in all the countries in the region. To assess the overall situation in the CBSS region on how the state actors and the civil society best can cooperate in order to fulfil their respective obligations in this field the TF-THB arranged a successful NGO-seminar in Riga in the end of May.

Number of Meetings

During the reporting period two meetings have been held in Riga with very good participation of experts from all capitals.

Composition of the Working Group

With some minor shifts over the reporting period the TF-THB is currently composed of 24 experts from the Ministries of Interior, Ministries of Justice, Ministries of Social Affairs, Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Welfare, and the Ministries of Family Affairs in the CBSS members states. The group is also privileged to have one expert from a national Central Police Bureau and two experts from the Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security at the European Commission. Out of 24 experts 15 are women and 9 are men.

Secretarial Function

The TF-THB is being provided with a Secretary Function, a Senior Adviser who is funded on a secondment from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and is a part of the Core Team at the CBSS Secretariat.

Main achievements and activities of the TF-THB

Prolonged mandate

The agenda of the TF-THB meetings during the reporting period covered activities with respect to finding solutions and funds for its prolongation. Since its start in the end of 2006 the TF-THB has not been able to function at its fullest potential due to the lack of long-term mandate and required funding. On March 27, however, the CSO adopted the TF-THB's proposal for a prolonged mandate and provided the task force with a 36 months mandate. The mandate will run for 36 months after the prior

expiration date of 30 June 2008, i.e. until 30 June 2011. This decision did not include any costs or economic support from the Member States of the CBSS and therefore funding for future activities still remains an unsolved issue of highest importance. Nevertheless, the mandate allows the TF-THB sufficient time to explore and apply for the funds needed to finance current and future activities and also to expand the level of cooperation in this field.

Diplomatic training

Training for diplomatic and consular personnel in identifying victims of trafficking has been agreed to be a priority for the CBSS Task Force. Such trainings include the following components:

1. Basic information regarding flows of the traffic.
2. Understanding of the nature of the crime as well as knowledge of international and national law.
3. Specific instructions regarding victims of trafficking to increase comprehension of their vulnerable situation.
4. How to assist victims on issues such as social, medical and legal assistance both in the country of origin and the country of destination.

Under the Latvian Presidency to the CBSS the training for consular staff “*Train for trainers*” took place on 6-7 December 2007 in Riga in connection with the 4th meeting of TF-THB. The two days training programme included a general introduction to the field of trafficking in human beings by the lecturers from the Latvian Resource Centre for Women, “Marta”. On the second day the Norwegian field practices were presented by Mr. Jan Austad as well a special lecture by the Swedish police liaison officer Mr. Staffan Pettersson, which was given in order to raise the consular staff’s awareness about their professional roles in identifying and assisting the victims. The lecture was given on the basis of an analysis of a real case.

The training was very positively received by the participants as shown by a specially conducted evaluation survey and many participants commented that the lectures with practically oriented information are the most important and would be desirable also for the future. Some participant suggested different improvements (e.g., that the European Union aspects ought to be included, in particular, the issue of Schengen visas) which are listed in the evaluation report. Overall, the training proved to be a good foundation for developing future seminars.

NGO Seminar on improved victim support

On 29-30 May a seminar with focus on victim support and the NGOs working with this in the Baltic Sea Region was held in Riga. The working group delegated as responsible for preparing the NGO seminar and its agenda met in Stockholm at the CBSS Secretariat in mid April to decide on the main topics for discussion for the seminar and deal with its practical arrangements.

The aim of the NGO seminar was to explore the current methods of cooperation between the civil society and the state actors, e.g. the law enforcement, in providing victim support and how their respective tasks best can be coordinated. The main topic for discussion was how the civil society perceives the situation on how the

states fulfil their obligations to protect and promote human rights of trafficked persons in coordination with the NGOs.

The seminar was based on round table discussions where the NGOs were given the floor for presentations on the current situation, trends on human trafficking and existing models for cooperation with law enforcement and other state actors in their respective countries.

After each presentation the governments had an opportunity to comment on the presentations and brief about their working methods and how the coordination could be enhanced.

(Invited to the seminar was also two representatives from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to give their view on latest trends on human trafficking and present examples and best practices on cooperation between state actors and civil society. The seminar also had a representative present from Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office / Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR) to give practical input on how to improve coordination of tasks based on their handbook on joint efforts in the national referral mechanism.

In addition, a representative from European Women's Lobby (EWL) was taking part in the seminar to share the outcomes and lessons learned from the current Nordic Baltic Pilot Project and also discuss possibly ways for the TF-THB to follow up on preventive and protective activities of the project and coordinate the work in line its outputs.

The goal of the seminar was to come up with hands on suggestions on enhanced international coordination and how the countries in the region best can support each other in the national referral mechanisms. The main output of the seminar was a joint document on ways to move forward in the coordination process for improved victim support, both nationally and internationally, in the region.

Summary of the year and plans for the future

The TF-THB is currently exploring the possibility of external funding and how to implement joint activities with other stakeholders in the region in order to mutually benefit from each others experiences and avoid duplication of work. The TF-THB is at the moment developing a joint project on regional victim support with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The TF-THB has also had ongoing dialogues for cooperation with other actors in the region, especially the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, and concrete discussions have been initiated with the Nordic Council of Ministers (which was present at the last meeting in Riga to explore possibly ways to cooperate).

Discussions to involve the observer states of CBSS, as well as other relevant countries in its near vicinity, in the work of the TF-THB has been initiated and contact with some of them has already been established.

During the Latvian chairmanship an ongoing mapping of existing legislation on trafficking in the Member States and an overview of existing NGO's working against

trafficking in human beings in the region was initiated and this activity will be followed up on and developed in the future. The TF-THB aims at expanding its trainings activities in the region and to broaden and deepen the cooperation with NGOs and other stakeholders in order to implement more joint counter trafficking activities in the future.

A major achievement during the Latvian chairmanship was the prolonged mandate of the TF-THB. The mandate was needed in order to enable the TF-THB to apply for external funding and also to provide the Task Force with a more stable basis for strategic planning and implementation of activities. With this important instrument in place the expert group has a great possibility to implement practical hands on activities, which are crucial in the fight against human trafficking in this region.

Civil Security and the Human Dimension



**Working Group for Co-operation on Children at Risk (WGCC) & Children's Unit
Chair - Ms Anniki Tikerpuu, Estonia (Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs)
Vice Chair - Ms Agneta Björklund, Sweden (Swedish Ministry of Health and
Social Affairs)**

The WGCC consists of ten members; all member countries to the CBSS except Latvia have appointed senior officials to the group. The WGCC consists of representatives from the line ministries dealing with children's issues, mainly ministries of social affairs, ministries of education and designated child ministries. The group consists of six women and four men. The European Commission has not assigned a member to the WGCC. Chairmanship of the WGCC is rotated among the members to the group and does not follow the CBSS presidency.

Meetings of the WGCC

The Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, the WGCC, has had two meetings, one in Stockholm on October 22 – 23 2007 at the invitation of the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and one in Helsinki on April 1 – 2 2008 by the invitation of the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. At the meetings of the WGCC the national representative from the TFOC Expert group on Human Trafficking has been present. Reports from the meetings of the WGCC are published on the Childcentre website.

During the year, a sub group of the WGCC consisting of the representatives from Norway, Sweden and Estonia has worked together with the secretariat to detail the actions taken regarding the rights of children in institutions. The subgroup has met on four occasions during the year, twice in Stockholm, once in Oslo and once in Tallinn.

Priority A: Protecting Children from all Forms of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Internet related abuse of children

Expert meeting: In cooperation with the World Childhood Foundation and Linköping University in Sweden, the WGCC organised a meeting of researchers on support to children abused in internet related settings. 30 experts from the region and outside of the region met in London.

Financing: The World Childhood Foundation: Travel and accommodation for all participants.

Outcomes:

- a. Written report from the meeting.
- b. Researchers at the meeting are presently involved in drafting a proposal to the EU Safer Internet Programme developing the strands discussed.

EU – Russia meeting: In December 2007 the secretariat was invited to present the WGCC activities in relation to Internet related abuse of children at the EU – Russia meeting in Luxembourg on the topic.

Financing: The European Commission.

Outcome: The WGCC in continued dialogue with Russian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of Education and Science and of the Interior on the organisation of a Moscow based EU-WGCC – Russia conference on Internet related violence against children.

Priority B: Street children and children without a family

During the year the WGCC has not implemented activities under this priority.

Priority C: The Rights of Children in Institutions and in Other Forms of Protection

Following the recommendations from the Conference the WGCC has set up a sub group working on the practical implementation of the suggested activities. The subgroup consists of the Estonian chair to the WGCC, the Swedish vice chair and the Norwegian member to the WGCC. The secretariat is also participating in the subgroup meetings.

Developing training for professionals monitoring children’s institutions: The WGCC has commissioned two Norwegian experts from the County Governor of Hordaland to develop a training that shall increase the skills and competence of staff supervising and auditing the situation for children in residential and institutional care.

Financing: The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality.

Outcome: A training manual is under development.

Expert meeting: The WGCC gathered experts from the region to a meeting to discuss and assess the plan developed by the commissioned experts and to give input to the discussions of the WGCC on the training.

Financing: The Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs and the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality.

Outcome: Written report from the meeting submitted to the WGCC and published on the childcentre web site.

Mapping of resources available for children leaving institutional care: The WGCC has commissioned a study mapping available support measures in place in the member countries for young people leaving institutional care. The mapping is finalised by the end of June 2008 and will document programmes implemented by public agencies as well as projects implemented by NGOs in the member countries.

Financing: SIDA Baltic Sea Unit, 100%.

Outcome: The report will be published in English and in Russian.

Priority D: Young offenders and Self Destructive Behaviour of Children

Expert meeting: In November the WGCC organised an expert meeting and knowledge seminar on the topic of assistance to and rehabilitation of children that commit crimes. The expert meeting was attended by experts from all member states to the WGCC.

Financing: The Russian Ministry of Education and Science financed accommodation and all meeting costs.

Outcome: Full report from the meeting published on the childcentre website.

Priority E: Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children

The WGCC has during the year finalised the two year training: Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking, the BSR CACVT. This training programme trained 47 professionals from 10 countries in the region.

Seminars: One training seminar on reintegration of child victims of trafficking was held in Stockholm on September 13 – 14 2007. 47 participating experts. Diploma presented to the experts by the Swedish Minister for Elderly Care and Public Health. One follow up seminar to the training was held during the year in Druskininkai, Lithuania on January 22 – 23 2008.

Financing: European Commission Daphne II programme – 42%,
Save the Children Sweden – 32%
Oak Foundation – 26%

Outcome:

- a. An established network of 47 trained experts in 10 member countries and neighbouring countries.
- b. A CD Rom including resources, tools and reports for professionals to use when meeting with child victims of trafficking or unaccompanied children. Tools and reports are in Russian and in English.

Documentation:

The WGCC has commissioned a mapping of cases of children trafficked in the region. The report from the mapping, The Frail Chain, including interviews with affected children was published in English and in Russian on January 31 2008.

Financing: European Commission Daphne II programme: 100%.

Outcome: The Frail Chain – Support to Child Victims of Trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region. Report published in English and in Russian.

Joint evaluation meeting:

The WGCC met together with the CBSS Task Force Against Human Trafficking to discuss lessons learnt from the BSR CACVT training and documentation projects. The meeting was hosted by the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and was held back to back with the WGCC meeting in October 2007. Save the Children Sweden, one of the co-funders of the BSR CACVT training programme participated in the meeting as did Women's Forum, a Swedish based NGO with experience in the field of counter trafficking measures.

Financing: The Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

Outcome: Report from the joint meeting published on the web site.

National Contact Points on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children are appointed in all CBSS member states except Germany and Russia. Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova take part in the implementation of the programme and have also appointed National Contact Points, NCP. The NCPs have during the year not had a designated meeting on their own. All NCPs were invited to the follow up seminar of the BSR CACVT training held in Druskininkai, Lithuania on January 22 – 23 2008 in order to meet with and share the expertise of the network of trained experts in the region. NCPs from Denmark, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland participated.

Financing: The National Contact Points participating financed their own travel and accommodation. Interpretation and venue were financed through the EU Daphne grant.

Dissemination

The WGCC programme has met with interest from several states and international organisations. In September 2007 the WGCC programme was presented at the Council of Europe conference in Yerevan.

Financing: Council of Europe

In October 2007 the programme was presented at the OSCE regional conference in Vilnius.

Financing: WGCC budget.

In November 2007 the WGCC was invited to organise a half day seminar at the Swedish embassy to Washington on the topic of child trafficking. The event was coordinated with the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Financing: The Friends of the House of Sweden in Washington financed travel and accommodation for the experts presenting.

In January 2008 the programme was presented at a conference organised by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior and Save the Children Spain.

Financing: The conference organisers.

Children's Unit

The secretariat function of the WGCC is carried by the Children's Unit staffed by the Head of Unit 100% and between January and December 2008 a Project Officer 20%. The Children's Unit operates on a separate budget built on member states' voluntary contributions. All member states except Latvia and Russia contributed to the Children's Unit in 2007. The Project Officer is a part of the follow up process to the Oslo ministerial meeting which is financed partly by the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality.

The Childcentre web site

The website www.childcentre.info publishes regional information on programmes, projects, research and events of interest to experts and practitioners working with children at risk in the region. The website is updated by the network of National Coordinators in the member states.

Associated Expert Group to the NDPHS

The WGCC is associated expert group to the Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Wellbeing. As such, all activities and plans are presented to the partners at meetings of the CSR of the NDPHS and at the NDPHS web site.

Civil Society and the Human Dimension



Working Group on Democratic Institutions (WGDI) Chair – Ms. Sandra Martinsone, Latvia

Priority during the period chaired by Latvia

Latvia continued the work initiated during the last reporting period chaired by Poland in 2006-2007, focusing on corruption issues. However, this year the intention was to move forward from a general discussion about corruption in the context of democracy and human rights, to more specific aspects of this problem - the potential threat posed by corruption to public institutions and their integrity, impartiality and legitimacy. Thus, the main priority during the Latvian Presidency was **strengthening the rule of law through good governance: corruption prevention in public administration.**

Number of Meetings

During the reporting period two meetings and the seminar *Corruption prevention in public administration in the Baltic Sea Region* have been held in Riga. The WGDI also participated at the Conference *Prevention and combating of corruption: tendencies and future challenges*, organised by the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau of Latvia on the occasion of its five year anniversary in Riga on 9 October 2007.

Composition of the Working Group

The WGDI is composed of 11 civil servants. Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Russia are represented by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Finland – by the Ministry of Justice and Sweden – by the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality. Out of 11 WGDI members 5 are women and 6 are men. The Working Group has been privileged to have an expert advice and participation by the relevant institutions in the CBSS Member States - the Ministry of Finance of Denmark, the Ministry of Justice of Estonia, the Ministry of Finance of Sweden, the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau of Latvia, Special Investigation Service of Lithuania, Central Anti-Corruption Bureau of Poland, Centre for Public Policy *PROVIDUS* from Latvia, *Transparency International* Latvian Chapter *DELNA* and the Estonian Police.

Secretarial Function

The WGDI is being provided with a Secretary Function, a Senior Adviser from the CBSS Secretariat.

Working Group Fund provision

The Working Group has been provided 5000 EUR from the CBSS Secretariat's budget. The money has been used for the summarization of the questionnaires, additional research and analysis of other sources of information in order to prepare comparative analyses *Corruption prevention in public administration in the CBSS*

Member States. The study was carried out by the Centre for Public Policy *PROVIDUS* from Latvia.

Main achievements and activities of the WGDI

Comparative analysis of the practice of corruption prevention in public administration in the Baltic Sea Region

The result of the WGDI work in 2007-2008 is the comparative analysis of the practice of corruption prevention in public administration in the Baltic Sea Region. The CBSS Member States represent a wide variety in terms of public administration traditions, perceived levels of corruption, and approaches to managing the risks of corruption. The WGDI commissioned experts from the Centre for Public Policy *PROVIDUS* in Latvia, to carry out the comparative analyses. The study was done with an aim to give an overview, new ideas and best practices on corruption prevention mechanisms for the use of experts in the Baltic Sea Region. This analysis focuses on *internal* mechanisms of corruption prevention and promotion of integrity in public administration. It provides a concise overview of countries' strategic approaches to anticorruption at large and, in particular, measures available to public agencies to prevent possible corruption internally. The review of the CBSS countries demonstrates a trend to emphasize the prevention of corruption in most countries, including those having traditionally high levels of trust and integrity in the public administration. National policy documents and guidances are being developed. However, the daily responsibilities to tackle the risks of corruption remain with the management of particular agencies.

To further increase the capacity of individual public agencies in corruption risk management, it is recommended to increasingly share best practices accumulated within the particular institutions, both nationally and internationally. The study has identified a set of measures, which are used by public agencies in various CBSS Member States. These include:

- the identification of high-corruption-risk areas within agencies and assessment of particular corruption risks,
- defining of warning signs that signal suspected misconduct,
- procedures to develop agency-specific rules of conduct and solutions for typical ethical dilemmas faced by certain categories of public officials,
- clear guidance as to how the public officials and particularly the leadership of agencies should react when they suspect improper behaviour,
- the creation and development of focal points (responsible officials, units) within agencies or within the sectors of administration that have the necessary knowledge to assist the officials in cases of doubt, to maintain the adequate level of awareness among the staff and to review the existing routines of work from the view of corruption prevention.

The value of the study, being done within the CBSS framework, is that the problem is looked at from the regional perspective, and the issue of corruption is put on the political agenda. Developing internal network of experts is an added value. The study was based on the questionnaire, covering eight topics (regulatory framework, restrictions for public officials, internal procedures, awareness-raising of public officials, implementation and review mechanisms/ procedures of corruption detention, corruption prevention in recruitment and human resource management, declaration of assets of public officials, the best practice), which was prepared and distributed to

the WGDI members as the first stage of this project. For countries that did not submit answers, experts gathered the necessary data independently, however it must be mentioned that additional research was performed on all participating countries.

Data compiled from the CBSS member countries contain good practice examples under all of the above mentioned, as well as other areas. Further process of mutual sharing and learning would help strengthening good, effective and democratic governance in the whole of the Baltic Sea Region.

The comparative analysis was presented at the seminar *Corruption prevention in public administration in the Baltic Sea Region* on 22 May 2008 in Riga. Further on, the WGDI has sent the study to the OECD, Secretariat of the Group of States against corruption (GRECO), the Global Programme against Corruption, Transparency International, the European Anti-Fraud Office, INTERPOL Group of Experts on Corruption, the International Institute for Educational Planning, and the respective agencies dealing with anti-corruption measures in the CBSS Member States as its contribution for good governance.

Preserved, developed and broadened network of experts and professionals from the region dealing with anti-corruption issues

Anti-corruption issues have now been on the WGDI agenda for two years. This continuity has ensured that the informal network of experts and professionals from the region dealing with anti-corruption issues has been preserved, broadened and further developed.

Summary of the year and plans for the future

During the reporting period, the WGDI focused on *internal* mechanisms of corruption prevention and promotion of integrity and goodness in public administration.

By the proposal of Russia, the WGDI was acquainted to the Programme *Tolerance*, undertaken by St. Petersburg Government, which is aimed at tolerance promotion and prevention of xenophobia, ethnic and religious prejudice. Russia has also suggested that the CBSS should create an expert group on tolerance. However, no other country has expressed support to this proposal so far. Since the CBSS is currently undergoing the reform process, it remains to be seen what the future of the Working Group on Democratic Institutions will be. It has been suggested that the WGDI, which was created in early nineties, has exhausted its agenda and the mandate, and therefore has lost its relevance and should be closed.



**CBSS Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (WGNRS)
Chair – Mr Finn Ugletveit, Norway**

Priority during the period by Norway

The CBSS Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (WGNRS) is a forum for exchange of information and coordination of efforts to enhance and strengthen nuclear and radiation safety in the region. The WGNRS recognises and emphasises the importance of co-operation between all CBSS Member States. The success of the WGNRS depends to a great extent on the active participation and contribution of information by all CBSS Member States and Norway has continued to value this participation.

Number of Meetings

The WGNRS meets formally twice a year, but has developed a network that functions even in between the meetings as a channel of practical information and cooperation. During 2007 – 2008 the WGNRS is chaired by the Norwegian representative in the WGNRS Mr. Finn Ugletveit, Senior Adviser at the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority, with an active participation of the representatives of the eleven member states and the EC as well as some of the observer countries.

Composition of the Working Group

The participants in the WGNRS are mainly senior representatives of the respective competent authorities and mainly have their expertise knowledge in the field of radiation protection, nuclear safety and nuclear and radiological emergency preparedness and response. The WGNRS consists of 12 men and 2 women.

Secretarial Function

The WGNRS is being provided with a Secretary Function, a Senior Adviser from the CBSS Secretariat.

Working Group Fund provision

The Working Group has been provided 5000 EUR from the CBSS Secretariat's budget.

Currently, the joint efforts of the WGNRS focus on the following topics:

Exchange of Monitoring Data. The scope of the CBSS Agreement of the Exchange of Radiation Monitoring Data (7 June 2001) has been extended to airborne measurements by the Joint Declaration on the Exchange of Air Radiation Monitoring Data on the basis of the mentioned CBSS Agreement which was favourably recognised by the Heads of Government at the 6th Baltic Sea States Summit in June 2006 in Reykjavik. The WGNRS has finalised the technical guidelines and the CBSS Member States obliged to make the data exchange fully operational by the summer 2008.

Regional agreement on assistance in the case of an emergency. The WGNRS has continued to discuss the necessity of a regional agreement on assistance especially in view of ongoing processes on the international level and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At the same time, to avoid duplication of work, the WGNRS has monitored the international development on these issues. A decision if the WGNRS should aim for a Baltic Sea regional agreement on assistance will be taken based on an analysis of these ongoing international actions.

Emergency Exercises and Training. The need and the feasibility for common actions have been considered to strengthen the emergency preparedness co-operation in case of radiological and nuclear accidents. As the CBSS Member States are participating in international exercises in the field in question, the WGNRS has discussed the possibility to establish additional regional objectives to international exercises. The CBSS Member States also invite each other as observers to national exercises of common interest for an exchange of experience. The WGNRS itself has organised one CBSS Communication exercise in 2007 and one in 2008.

National Reports. The members of WGNRS as well as the CBSS Observer States participating in the meetings of the working group have prepared national reports for each WGNRS meeting, concerning the exchange of information on national activities in radiation protection, nuclear safety and emergency preparedness and response. The reports act as a chain for exchange of general information between the CBSS Member States and their competent authorities in the field of nuclear and radiation safety. The reports also describe the overall situation regarding the pollution of radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea Region.

Topical Day. In 2007, the WGNRS decided to organise annual “Topical Days” where specific topics are presented and discussed among different representatives from CBSS Member States and Observer States in more depth. In recent years, malevolent acts involving radioactive material have been included among the scenarios the states are planning for. The use of a radiological dispersal device (RDD) or “dirty bomb”, combining radioactive material and conventional explosives, is among these scenarios. The WGNRS recognised a need within the region to enhance the knowledge and experience and decided to arrange the first Topical Day on this topic. The two-day seminar in Copenhagen 2-3 April 2008, organized by the Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) within the framework of the WGNRS, proved to be a success. All the Member States and some Observer States were represented by experts from nuclear authorities as well as from rescue, military and law enforcement communities. The objective of the seminar was to provide a forum for authorities responsible for planning and response to radiological events in the CBSS states where experience and knowledge on this subject could be shared and discussed. The focus was on the radiological aspects of the problem. The seminar provided the respective authorities with an enhanced basis for their national response capabilities and in the longer perspective a closer and better international cooperation in the response to such events.

Internal Cooperation



Annual Report CBSS Permanent International Secretariat

Director – Dr. Gabriele Kötschau

The Secretariat employed staff consists 8 men and 9 women from the following countries: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Personnel

The following staff members have completed their assignment at the CBSS Secretariat and Units during the reporting period (in chronological order of employment):

1. Senior Adviser **Philipp Schwartz** (Germany) (13 September 2004 -13 August 2007)
2. Project Officer **Asha Davis** (USA) (1 March 2006 - 31 July 2007)
3. Senior Adviser: **Sofia Ekfeldt-Nyman** (Sweden) (4 September 2006 – 31 December 2007)

The following staff members are currently employed at the CBSS Secretariat and Units (in chronological order of employment):

1. Head of the Children's unit: **Lars Lööf** (Sweden) (since 15 June 2002)
2. Administrative Officer: **Ligia Broström** (Sweden) (since 1 September 2004)
3. Head of Administration: **Gertrude Opira** (Sweden) (since 15 September 2004)
4. Senior Adviser: **Bjarke W. Bøtcher** (Denmark) (since 17 October 2004)
5. Director of the Secretariat: **Gabriele Kötschau** (Germany) (since 1 September 2005)
6. Senior Adviser: **Anitra Jankevica** (Latvia) (since 1 September 2005)
7. Deputy Director of the Secretariat: **Phil Saprykin** (Russia), since 15 September 2005)
8. Senior Adviser Baltic 21 Unit: **Mia Crawford** (Sweden) (since 1 March 2006 - on maternity leave since May 2007 until July 2008)
9. Head of NDPHS Secretariat: **Marek Maciejowski** (Poland) (since 1 June 2006)
10. Office Administrator: **Sandra Ewert** (UK) (since 1 July 2006)
11. Press and Communications: **Anthony Jay** (UK) (since 22 August 2006)
12. Head of the Baltic 21 Unit: **Risto Veivo** (Finland) (since 1 September 2006)
13. Senior Adviser NDPHS: **Bernd Treichel** (Germany) (since 4 December 2006)
15. Senior Adviser: **Christer Pursiainen** (Finland) (since 1 January 2008)

The following people were hired on a temporary basis at the Secretariat during the reporting year (in chronological order of employment)

1. Project Officer: **Pēteris Timofejevs** (Latvia) (26 July 2007 to 31 December 2007)
2. Project Officer Baltic 21 Unit: **Yury Kazhura** (Belarus) (1 September 2007 to 30 September 2007)
3. Senior Adviser Baltic 21 Unit: **Caroline Höffmann** (Germany) (1 September 2007 to 31 August 2008, substitute for maternity leave, on 50% sick leave since March 2008)
4. Project Officer Baltic 21 Unit and Children at Risk Unit: **Alexandra Ronkina** (Russia) (28 January 2008 to 31 December 2008)
5. Senior Adviser Task Force in Human Beings: **Anna Ekstedt** (Sweden) (14 January 2008 to 30 June 2008)

Financial Contributions and budgets

The 2007 budget of the CBSS Secretariat was acquired through the CBSS Member States' contributions. At the time of closing the financial accounts for the year 2007, all CBSS Member States had fully paid their contributions to the core CBSS Secretariat. The financial annual report for FY 2007 was finalised in March 2008 and audited by the Swedish national Audit Office in April 2008. The audit report was submitted to the Secretariat on 5 May 2008. The reports was presented at the CSO Meeting in Riga on 14-16 May 2008.

The budget of the core CBSS Secretariat for financial year 2008 was adopted by the CSO at its meeting in Malmö on 11-12 June 2007. The approved total estimated spending for FY 2008 is € 920.000 plus additional one time cost of € 20.462 for the installation of an E-archive system.

The budget of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) from September 2006 to June 2008 was financed through extra contributions made by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The CSO decided at its meeting in Riga 27-28 March to prolong the mandate of the TF-THB, which expires on 30 June 2008, for a period of 3 years, i.e. until 30 June 2011. The prolongation is provided on condition that no direct financial implications for the CBSS are involved. A three-year prolongation is a necessity due to the fact that the majority of potential external donors only support projects with the duration of at least two years.

The budget of the Baltic 21 Unit was acquired through the contributions paid by the Member States. Regarding the budget for FY 2007 all Member States except Russia paid their contributions. Sweden made additional contributions for projects to strengthen Russian participation and increase the visibility of Agenda 21 during the planning phase of the ECO-region project, Baltic 21 project with Belarus and Ukraine and for the follow-up of the joint declaration from the high-level conference held in Saltsjöbaden, 19-20 April 2007. Sweden also contributed with an annual host country contribution amounting to 75,474 Euros.

The budget of the Children at Risk Unit was covered through voluntary contributions from the Member States. During 2007 all Member States except Latvia and Russia contributed to the budget. Additionally, Norway and Sweden supported the follow up

of the Expert Meeting in Kiev and the Ministerial Meeting in Oslo. The European Commission supported the DAPHNE Project of the CAR Unit. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency funded the 4th meeting of National Contact Points in the Baltic Sea Region held in Warsaw, 8-9 May 2007.

Administered Projects

In the first half of 2007, the Swedish Presidency initiated, launched and financed/ co-financed three projects. The CBSS Secretariat was responsible for the financial management and reporting of all funds assigned to these projects:

1. Reducing Alcohol Problems in the Baltic Sea Region – International Conference on Effective approaches to Tackle Alcohol Related Problems in Local Communities. The Conference took place in Riga, Latvia on 12-13 March 2007. Funding for the conference came from the Swedish Agency for International Development (SIDA) and the Swedish MFA. The final report for the conference has been forwarded to SIDA and the Swedish MFA at the end of 2007.
2. Feasibility mission for the CBSS EuroFaculty Project in Pskov - The Secretariat finalised the final report for the EuroFaculty Pskov feasibility mission. The feasibility study was circulated to the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) in May 2007, while the financial report was submitted to the donor - the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2007.
3. The CBSS Reception and Concert held at Berwaldhallen in Stockholm on 21 March 2007 - Funds came from the Swedish CBSS Presidency. The final financial report for the project was forwarded to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2007.

During 2007 the Secretariat continued the administration, follow up and reporting of the Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN) project. The Final Conference of the project was co-organised by Zemgale Planning Region and the CBSS Secretariat on 24-26 November 2007. Over hundred participants representing 35 partners of the project and the CBSS CSO were present, as well as some representatives of the local and national media. The final audit of the BEN project was carried out in December 2007. The Audit report was signed in January 2008 by Price Waterhouse Coopers.

In May 2008 the Secretariat took over the administrative aspects of the project on “Research into factors important for the successful restructuring of the Law and Business Economics studies at the Immanuel Kant State University of Russia (IKSUR) by the CBSS EuroFaculty Kaliningrad Project” from the former Danish Lead-Country Function for EuroFaculty Kaliningrad.

Co-location with the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing (NDPHS)

The Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social-Wellbeing (NDPHS) Secretariat continued to be co-located with the CBSS Secretariat. A co-location implies that the NDPHS would enjoy all administrative and logistic support from the CBSS Secretariat but would formally constitute to be a separate entity in the Secretariat. The budget of the NDPHS for 2007 was covered through contributions from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and

Sweden. During 2007, voluntary contributions were made to the NDPHS Appropriation Account by Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Lithuania and Sweden. Additional voluntary contributions for a NDPHS Database were made by the European Commission, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Norway, Sweden and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

At its meeting in Brussels 6 -7 March 2008, the CSO agreed to the request made by the Norwegian Chairmanship of the NDPHS, that the temporary status of the NDPHS Secretariat as a project of the CBSS, which expired on 7 April 2008, be prolonged for a period of 18 months starting on 8 April 2008 to 7 October 2009.

CBSS Secretariat Internship Programme

During the Latvian Presidency of the CBSS, the Secretariat hosted 10 interns from 9 different countries. 7 interns benefited from the CBSS Scholarship:

Maxi Nachtigall (Germany) assisting NDPHS
Aslı Tepecik (Turkey) assisting Baltic 21
Dominik Jankowski (Poland) assisting WGEC and WGNRS
Barbara Dąbkowska (Poland) assisting Press and Communications
Adem Kula (Bulgaria / Turkey) assisting the WGEC
Milda Urbonaite (Lithuania) assisting CAR Unit
Cristian Norocel (Romania) assisting the Director and Press and Communications
Anton César (Sweden) assisting the CSO Secretary
Matts Weurlander (Finland) assisting the WGD
Olga Kantokoski (Russia) assisting the NDPHS

The revised terms of reference for the CBSS Internship are summarised in the CSO report.

Communication



The first half of the Latvian Presidency the Secretariat editorial team published two issues of the journal – the first with an extensive interview with the Latvian Foreign Minister. The second was a bumper issue with an interview with the Chair of the BSPC.

The Secretariat's Press and Communication Officer, jointly with the Nordic Council of Ministers office in Vilnius, produced the Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN) publication entitled *For the BENefit of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region*. The publication was prefaced by Prof. Danuta Hübner, the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Mr. Halldór Ásgrímsson, the Secretary General of the NCM and Dr. Artis Pabriks, the Foreign Minister of Latvia at that present time. The publication was meant as a capacity building tool and was published in English and Russian.

The Secretariat also organised another joint seminar with UI – this time on the topic of energy. See following section on external cooperation.

The second half of the Latvian Presidency the implementation of the Information and Communication Strategy has been dominated by the imminent launch of an enterprise content management system for the secretariat. The purchase of a new server specially designated for the operation and storage of the new system, the configuration and design of the new system and the training of staff. The system will be operational by the end of the Latvian Presidency.

The second development has been the redesign and re-launch of the Official Journal of the Council of the Baltic Sea States which will premier at the 7th Baltic Sea States Summit in Riga.

A CD recorded over the course of the year long series of Jazz concerts will also be made freely available.

The Secretariat Information team consisting of one Senior Adviser and the Press and Communication Officer were also extensively involved in the development, organisation, and subsequent presentation of the Latvian Presidency project *Balticness*. The participation, cooperation and media network for the Council has been greatly expanded due to this project not to forget the general visibility of the CBSS. Assistance with the Summit preparations was also given.

The first half of the forthcoming Danish Presidency will focus efforts on the production of a new CBSS brochure including all the elements of the reform process.

The Secretariat will also assist in the production and design of the necessary Presidency media materials.

The renewal of the CBSS website platform will be prioritised over the second half of the forthcoming Danish Presidency.

In addition the Press and Communication Officer of the Secretariat assisted the units of B21 and CAR, and the Latvian Presidency as well as the NDPHS with press and media related issues and materials.

External Cooperation



...the Secretariat of the CBSS will continue to coordinate its activities, seek synergies and complementarity with external and or affiliated councils, bodies, organisations and regional actors involved in Baltic Sea Cooperation

External Cooperation



CBSS Observer States

The CBSS Observer states are: France, Italy, Netherlands, Slovakia, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Members of the CSO and representatives from the Secretariat met with high officials of the seven CBSS Observer States for the Annual Consultations in Riga on 19 February 2008, discussing ways of ensuring increased participation of the observers in relevant fields of common interest. The Observer States were informed of the Latvian Presidency programme and briefed on the ongoing reform process. The CBSS Secretariat also met with the CBSS Observer States, in Stockholm on 7 April, to brief on the ongoing reform process and discuss future co-operation. The Observer State representatives consisted mainly of higher officials of the respective embassies in Stockholm. The Heads of Units and Senior Advisors at the CBSS Secretariat briefed on the undertakings of the Task Force on Trafficking of Human Beings (TF-THB, the Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (WGNRS); and the units Baltic 21 and Children at Risk (CAR) welcoming the Observer States to future co-operation.

The **Ukraine**, being a member of the BSEC and an observer state to the CBSS, is a valuable link between the two regions and is in the focus of a closer cooperation also in the CBSS. The CBSS Secretariat had been given the possibility to participate in the Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the EU and the Black Sea Region in Kiev on 14 February and to give an intervention with the focus on CBSS activities, the ongoing reform process as well as the broad range of future cooperation between the two regions and their role giving added value to the EU policy. In addition the meeting with the Political Director in the Foreign Ministry of the Ukraine stressed the wish of a closer cooperation, including a EuroFaculty project in Kiev and other regions of the Ukraine.

Italy

In order to strengthen the links between the organisations (Central European Initiative, CEI; Adriatic Ionian Initiative, AII and the CBSS) the **Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, on behalf of the CEI, invited to a meeting of the Presidencies and the Secretariats in September 2008 in Trieste (Secretariat of the CEI) in order to explore a closer future cooperation between the organisations.

In general we are facing an enhanced approach from councils and further organisations in the Baltic Sea Region, but also from beyond, to exchange information, experiences and best practices on concrete issues, but also regarding how to successfully networking within the region and organising seminars on issues of mutual interest. In addition a closer cooperation with the CBSS is wanted from other countries (to become an observer state or even a member state) in order to strengthen the links and to take advantage from the different experiences in the regions.

Baltic 21 had working/expert level contacts with both Ukraine and Italy

Embassy cooperation

Within the project *BALTICNESS*, the CBSS Secretariat closely cooperated with the Latvian Consulate-General in St. Petersburg and Latvian Embassies in Denmark, Norway (also covering Iceland), Poland and Sweden.

External Cooperation on a technical level

Belarus

In order to include Belarus more in the CBSS network, the Secretariat was charged with a fact finding mission to Minsk in May 2007. A meeting with fourteen authorities, the University and NGOs showed a broad interest of the Belarusian experts to participate in and contribute to the work of the CBSS. The respective CBSS structures were approached by the CBSS Presidency to explore the conditions and to include Belarus in their work. In some fields (WGNRS; CAR, Baltic 21) the country is already involved; the process is going on.

International Organisations based in Stockholm

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

Organised several seminars on different subjects in Stockholm and Bucharest, in cooperation with further partners, last in October 2007 on energy, with a broad participation from member- and observer states and beyond, including research and the business community

Swedish National Defence College (SNDC)

Organised several seminars on different subjects, in cooperation with further partners, last in October 2007 on energy, with a broad participation from member- and observer states and beyond, including research and the business community

Utrikespolitiska institutet (UI)

Organised several seminars on different subjects, in cooperation with further partners, last in October 2007 on energy, with a broad participation from member- and observer states and beyond, including research and the business community. Next seminar in preparation will be held in Stockholm in October 2008, focusing on environment

International bodies outside the region

Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) / Black Sea Region

Organised several seminars on different subjects in Stockholm and Bucharest, in cooperation with further partners, last in October 2007 on energy, with a broad participation from member- and observer states and beyond, including research and the business community (UI, SPRI, SNDC). Next seminar in preparation will be held in Stockholm in October 2008, focusing on environment. In the Black Sea Region further countries has shown interest to become a CBSS observer state.

Romania is one of the most active partners in organising common seminars and exploring possibilities of future cooperation, on different issues of mutual interest.

Central European Initiative (CEI)

The CEI Summit in Sofia, **Bulgaria**, in November 2007 was a clear sign that an enhanced cooperation with other regions in Europe, not least with the CBSS, was welcome and appreciated. The CBSS Secretariat was given the opportunity to make an intervention on the CBSS activities, the ongoing reform process as well as chances of future cooperation in the fields of mutual interest.

South East Europe Co-operation Process (SEEPC) / Balkan region

The CBSS Secretariat was invited to the “8th South North East Forum” in Budva, Montenegro on 25 – 26 October 2007, in order to present the CBSS networking, to give impulse and to discuss opportunities for and issues of future cooperation with other regions and organisations, not least in the Balkan region.

Economic Development



BAC, WGCB

The Secretariat continued liaising with such CBSS working structures as the Business Advisory Council (BAC), and the CBSS Working Group on Customs Cooperation and Border-Crossing Aspects (WGCB). The Secretariat had several meetings with the BAC Chairman, Mr. Peter Egardt, President of the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, where different aspects of the work of the WGEC and economic cooperation on the whole were discussed. However, it should be noted, that the involvement of the BAC in the work of the WGEC has considerably decreased since past. Regarding the WGCB, the Secretariat continued liaising with the Chair (Latvia), and was informing the WGEC on the ongoing developments and work in the WGCB.

BASTUN, BCCA, and BDF

The Secretariat continued interacting with the CBSS Strategic partners – the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA), the Baltic Development Forum (BDF) and the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN). In 2007-08 apart from cross-invitation to the regular annual events, such as the 9th BDF Summit in Tallinn (November 2007), and the 5th BCCA Economic Forum in Turku (October 2007) in which the Secretariat participated together with the Latvian Presidency, the interaction also materialised in some other important activities. The BCCA has contributed a lot to the WGEC Workshop on Promotion of Cluster Development held in Riga on 15 January 2008 with a specific input on Cluster issues. The Secretariat was invited to participate in a BDF led process (in a partnership with the BSSSC) of a regional joint energy and climate platform. The aim of this process is to contribute to sound Energy and Climate future of the BSR. There are some emerging perspectives for developing some joint activities energy with the BDF leading to the 10th BDF Summit in Copenhagen in late fall 2008. The CSO has supported the invitation of the BASTUN to join a new project on Baltic Sea Labour Network in a capacity of a partner. The role of the Secretariat and the scope of the CBSS engagement in the project will be defined in due course.

Nordic Investment Bank (NIB)

The CSO Chairman assisted by the Secretariat met with the President and the CEO of the NIB, Mr. Johnny Åkerholm, in Turku on 1 October 2007 within the framework of the 5th BCCA Economic Forum. The discussions resulted in some useful ideas on the CBSS reform and interaction between the Bank and CBSS working bodies. The Secretariat had a follow-up meeting with Mr. Nils E. Emilsson, First Vice-President (Head of Lending), and Mr. Harro Pitkänen, Senior Director, Business Development and Control in Helsinki on 5 March 2008. The NIB was invited to the BASREC Workshop on Renewable Energy Sources, Climate issues and Energy Efficiency held in Riga on 02 April 2008 and presented more in detail the Bank's profile and potential areas of joint activities with the BASREC, including the funding opportunities. Cooperation with the NIB would continue, especially targeting such fields of common concern, as mitigation of climate change and energy with an emphasis on projects within Renewable Energy Sources (hydro, wind, bio-mass, geothermal and solar power) and a more effective use of energy

Coordination



Regional Coordination efforts have been broadened in a number of different forums

Regional Councils

Four Regional Councils in the North

The Secretariat provided a support to the Presidency in organising a subsequent meeting of the four regional councils in the North in Stockholm on 3 March 2008 (the Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and the Nordic Council of Ministers). The invitation was extended also to the members of the CBSS “Troika” (Sweden and Denmark), the European Commission and the Northern Dimension Partnership on Public Health and Social Well-being.

The delegations have informed each other on internal developments and addressed a variety of issues of common concern including the following: the ongoing reform of the CBSS and its impact on regional cooperation, preparations to the VII Baltic Sea States Summit in Riga in June 2008, new EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, and implementation of the Northern Dimension. The four councils expressed a joint interest in addressing the following areas of cooperation: climate change and environmental protection, energy and exploration of resources, education and enhancing competitive edge, challenges of the globalization. The meetings of the “four” proved to be a good supplement to the ongoing cooperation and any other activity taking place on a bilateral level between the councils.

CBSS-BEAC

Interaction with the BEAC led to some concrete proposals from the Russian BEAC Presidency on how to enhance synergy and institutional cohesion between the two Councils, especially as regards economic cooperation. The proposals will be further considered by the working bodies concerned. Good working relations were established with the new Barents International Secretariat (BIS) in Kirkeness (Norway). Networking with the BIS would be further developed, as regards timely exchange of information about substantial topics and the Calendar. The Secretariat attended the 11th BEAC Ministerial session held in Rovaniemi (Finland) on 14-15 November 2007 as a guest.

Special participants

The Council of the Baltic Sea States currently has six *Special Participants*, they are: the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), the Baltic Islands Network (B7), the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation (BSSSC), the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe – Baltic Sea Commission (CMPR-BSC), the

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC).

Strategic Partners

The Council of the Baltic Sea States currently has eight *Strategic Partners* and they are: the Baltic Development Forum (BDF), the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA), the Baltic Sea Forum – Pro Baltica, the Baltic Sea NGO Forum, the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN), the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), ScanBalt and the association for Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea Region (VASAB).

The Secretariat provided a support to the Presidency in organising a regular annual consultation meeting between the CBSS “Troika” and the CBSS Special Participants and Strategic partners in Copenhagen on 5 December 2007. Unlike before, the partners were invited not exactly to an exchange of information on the ongoing activities, but to have a franc dialogue regarding the CBSS reform and visions for the CBSS in the future. For the first time, the Secretary-General of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) attended such a meeting, which was not conventional for the format of such gatherings in the past. The useful findings and conclusions from the meeting were taken into account during the CSO discussions on the reform process.

BSPC

During the reporting period, the relationship between the CBSS and the BSPC was further strengthened. The CBSS Chairman-in-Office participated at the 16th BSPC Conference in Berlin, 27 – 28 August 2007, and presented a report that was highly appreciated by parliamentarians. Following the already established tradition, the Chair of the BSPC Standing Committee was invited to participate at the 7th Baltic Sea States Summit. Further on, the CSO Chairman addressed the BSPC Expanded Standing Committee in Brussels on 22 January 2008. The CBSS Secretariat participated at the BSPC Standing Committee meeting on 28 – 29 May in Helsinki and the BSPC Secretary level meeting on 19 February in Riga. Both Secretariats had a joint meeting on 17 September 2007 in Stockholm. The BSPC has been also participating at the leading initiative of the CBSS Latvian Presidency, project *Balticness* – the BSPC Rapporteur on Eutrophication was one the keynote speakers at *Balticness* seminar in Copenhagen, dealing with the environmental standing of the Baltic Sea.

B7 Baltic Sea Seven Islands Network

The CBSS highly appreciates its cooperation with the B7 network, emphasizing the importance of sub-regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and B7 network's efforts in the field of environment, people-to-people contacts, youth policies, tourism, energy, maritime safety and policy, cross-border cooperation and other fields. During the CBSS Latvian Presidency the CBSS Secretariat has taken part in the B7 events under the Bornholm Chairmanship, among others the Annual Conference on 6-7 December 2007, and continues to maintain close contacts with B7 during the Saarenmaa Chairmanship.

BSSSC Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation

The CBSS has continued to its close cooperation with the BSSSC, participating in its Annual Conference and other events. Moreover, during the CBSS Latvian Presidency

the CBSS has strengthened its relation with the BSSSC, following the BSSSC's invitation for the CBSS Secretariat to attend its Board meetings regularly as Observer. The CBSS acknowledges the important role of the BSSSC in enhancing the regions' influence and interests in central policy areas in the BSR and the EU. The CBSS Danish Presidency will be represented in the forthcoming BSSSC Annual Conference in Kaunas in September 2008.

Union of Baltic Cities (UBC)

The Secretariat (together with the Presidency) attended the IX UBC General Conference in Pärnu, 27-28 September 2007. The Conference focused its work on such issues of importance for the CBSS, as climate change, cultural cooperation and promotion of Youth affairs. Some recommendations towards fostering cooperation with the UBC and its specific Commissions were suggested in the Report prepared by the Secretariat.

Baltic Sea NGO Forum

The CBSS Latvian Presidency provided a crucial support in organising of the VII Baltic Sea NGO Forum in Riga on 12 – 13 May 2008. The Forum was devoted to citizens' participation for sustainability in the Baltic Sea Region and addressed the following issues: NGO sustainability and legislation, climate change and energy, social inclusion and human rights, non-formal education and cultural diversity. The CSO Chairman addressed the Forum on behalf of the CBSS. The CBSS Secretariat also participated at the Forum.

HELCOM

The Secretariat (together with the Presidency) participated in the HELCOM 3rd Stakeholder Conference on the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) held in Helsinki on 4 March 2008. The mission of the CBSS was of an exploratory nature. The Conference aimed at identifying methods and means to ensure the implementation of the BSAP (adopted at the HELCOM Ministerial meeting in 2007 in Krakow, Poland). Some ideas on how to improve forms of cooperation with the HELCOM, as well as on how to ensure a political support to the BSAP implementation process were put forward by the Secretariat to the CSO.

ScanBalt

The CBSS Secretariat has established a close and concrete cooperation with ScanBalt Secretariat in Copenhagen. Through this cooperation, ScanBalt took an active part at the CBSS High-Level Meeting of Education and Science in September 2007 in Riga.

VASAB Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010

The relationship between the CBSS and VASAB has always been close and this tradition was continued during the CBSS Latvian Presidency. The CBSS CSO Chair gave an introductory speech in the first VASAB Annual Conference on 23 April 2008 in Riga, emphasizing the importance of VASAB's trade mark, vision-based strategies, in developing the region.

Collaboration



BEN Baltic Euroregional Network

The Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN) finalised its two-year Interreg III B project successfully in December 2007. The project represented a unique cooperation, where the CBSS worked actively with the cross-border regions and the Nordic Council of Ministers, aiming at promoting spatial development and territorial integration in the Baltic Sea region at local and regional levels. Based on this successful cooperation, the CBSS has welcomed and supports the future activities of the network. The process for creating new projects within the EU Baltic Sea Region Programme and other EU programmes was started in 2008; a brain storming meeting was facilitated by the CBSS Secretariat in Tallinn on 31 March 2008 and in the autumn 2008 a Partnership Conference will be organized, also to be facilitated by the CBSS Secretariat.

Civil Protection



Lead Country Function for Civil Security (LC-CS), EUROBALTIC II and ERRICA

The CBSS continues to have Civil Security in its different dimensions as a priority area, including civil protection. Following the tradition, the CBSS Secretariat contributed to the annual high-level event, the 6th Baltic Sea Civil Protection Directors-General Meeting in Karlstadt in October 2007. During the Latvian Presidency and the preceding presidencies the CBSS has also supported EUROBALTIC civil protection projects, co-financed by the EU BSR Interreg IIIB Programme. The EUROBALTIC II (2006-2007) was successfully concluded in December 2007. EUROBALTIC Risk Reduction in City Areas (ERRICA) is a follow-up project of this already established civil protection cooperation and brand. The CBSS CSO decided to support the new initiative and a new proposal was prepared and offered to the EU Baltic Sea Region Programme in May 2008, with the CBSS Secretariat as a partner responsible for the strategic level conferences and political communication of the project.

TF-OC - Task Force on Organised Crime

During the Latvian Presidency, the CBSS continued to cooperate and change information with the TF-OC. The CBSS Secretariat participated in the task force's meeting in May 2007. TF-OC has in 2008 adopted a new project oriented working approach, which in the future opens new possibilities also for the CBSS to participate in the TF-OC project cooperation.

Prosecutors General in the Baltic Sea Region The CBSS continued liaising with this very important law enforcement network in the Baltic Sea Region and the CBSS Representative participated in the 12th Conference of the Prosecutors General of BSR in Gdansk-Gdynia in February 2008.



High Level Meeting on Cultural Cooperation

The Secretariat attended (on behalf of the Presidency) a high-level meeting on Culture, organised on the initiative of the Russian Ministry of Culture and was held in Veliky Novgorod on 14-15 November 2007. The meeting aimed at discussing ways of improving and enhancing multilateral cultural interaction in the Baltic Sea Region, as part of the CBSS reform process. Some of the ideas were further discussed and elaborated in Moscow on 10-11 December 2007 during the CBSS Presidency consultations with the Russian line ministries involved in the CBSS activities.

The Baltic Sea Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage Cooperation

During the reporting period, the CBSS Secretariat continued a close liaison and cooperation with the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage Cooperation. In September 2007, the Monitoring Group organized a highly successful Cultural Heritage Forum on Cultural Tourism in Vilnius, pointing to the need of cooperation between different actors within this growing field. The Latvian CSO delegate addressed the Forum on behalf of the CBSS. The Group also prepared a Code of Good Practice on Underwater Cultural Heritage Protection, to be used by all the countries around the Baltic Sea. The Monitoring Group has initiated networking on Cultural Heritage Education for Children, as well as continued the fight against illegal export of cultural goods and Black Archaeology. The CBSS Secretariat involved the Monitoring Group in project *BALTICNESS* – the Coordinator of the Monitoring Group was a keynote speaker on two occasions: the seminar in Reykjavik on sustainable tourism and seminar on branding of the region in Riga. Both topics closely relate to the activities of Monitoring Group.

ARS Baltica

Even though ARS Baltica reports to the Ministers of Culture, the CBSS Secretariat was in close and regular contact with the ARS Baltica Secretariat. This includes consultations about the ARS Baltica future strategy and exchange of information on cultural affairs, especially involvement of the Russian counterparts. The ARS Baltica Chair was interviewed in the CBSS journal May 2008.

Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs

The CBSS Secretariat continued the close and regular cooperation with the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs by involving the Youth Secretariat in project *BALTICNESS* and other cross-cutting issues. The youth co-operation promotes young people's active citizenship and their participation in civic and democratic life; it encourages youth exchange and volunteer activities in order to promote a better understanding and knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region. The main focus of the

WGYA during the last year was on people-to-people contacts, young entrepreneurship, youth research, intercultural learning and the co-operation with other relevant structures in the Baltic Sea Region, esp. BSSSC and UBC in the realization of projects.

Health



NDPHS

The NDPHS continued to be co-located with the CBSS Secretariat and contributed to the CBSS Secretariat overall administrative expenses with its own budgetary resources.

NDPHS participated in a meeting of the CSO and exchanged information.

CBSS and NDPHS actively supported each other in knowledge and network exchange.

Following a CBSS invitation, NDPHS also participated in the 7th meeting of the four Regional Councils in the North (3 March 2008).

The NDPHS and the CBSS Secretariats discussed possible future cooperation projects, such as labour market / commuters, in cooperation with the BSPC and Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN).

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