

2007-10-25

Regarding the cooperation NSC-BSC
A follow up from Kastrup

Background

The NSC- BSC cooperation has grown in importance during the last couple of years. Next year we will join together for the General Assemblies in Region of MidJylland in June.

This paper is based upon reports from our advisers of each NSC working group and BSC Executive secretary and shows the present status of cooperation (early October 2007).

Transport

The NSC Transport group Adviser attended a transport conference jointly organised by the BSC and the Interreg IIIB InterBaltic project in Bodö, Norway, on 14 June. The Adviser contributed to a session on Motorways of the Sea and also represented the NSC at a meeting of a "High Level Group" for intermodal transport in the Baltic Sea Region on 15 June.

A representative of the BSC Transport group attended a session on the transport priority under the Interreg IVB North Sea Programme in Brunstad, Norway, on 21 June, in conjunction with the Annual Conference jointly organised by the North Sea Programme and the NSC.

The Advisers / Coordinators for transport in the two Commissions are also cooperating indirectly as partners to the mentioned InterBaltic project, and are within this framework engaged in the drafting of a multimodal transport strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. This strategy will be further developed through a project under the Interreg IVB Baltic Sea Programme.

There are currently no plans for explicit cooperation events between the BSC and the NSC in the transport sector, although the transport Advisers / Coordinators in the two Commissions are set to meet a couple of times this autumn within the framework of the InterBaltic project. Members of the two Transport groups will meet again in conjunction with a CPMR seminar on ports and maritime transport in Spain on 19 November.

The meeting of the Transport group on 3 October recommended that the transport groups of the BSC and NSC should consider organizing at least one joint meeting per year.

Marine resources

Anders Fasth, Anders Carlberg and adviser Ann Bell attended the CPMR meeting on fisheries in Brussels on September 26. Rolf Gydemo from the Baltic Sea Commission Fisheries Group was also present. At that time there was a short discussion on cooperation issues which were more developed at the Marine Resources Political meeting in Copenhagen on October 10. The political group talked about which regions that could be interested in a

joint cooperation between NSC- BSC and also discussed practically how the cooperation could be done. There is a need for someone /one Region to keep it together and act as a “Liaison officer”. Other things that were discussed included a common website and the use of “best practise” between the groups.

A joint meeting during the fall of 2007 is planned to be taking place in Gotland. This meeting will be followed by another meeting during the General Assemblies in June.

Sustainable development

The Sustainable Development Thematic Group is working alongside the Baltic Sea Commission - Energy Working group and will be holding an Annual Conference together next year in April in Umeå, Västerbotten. This will be a joint conference and one of the topics is to look at ideas as to how the two groups could do joint projects.

The main theme for the conference is “Regional Actions for Sustainable Buildings/Housing”. The two groups will formalise strategic groups from their main groups to work on the development of the conference.

Currently the groups are taking the cooperation step by step but the cooperation could eventually lead to some sort of project development between the groups.

Culture and Tourism

Already in August 1995, the C&T group expressed its interest in co-operating with the Baltic Sea region. At that time, there was no BSC, so the attempt came to nothing. Currently, there is no C&T group in the BSC, but talks have been made trying to identify issues where NSC and BSC could cooperate on culture and tourism issues. One such theme could be the shared Viking heritage of the two regions.

The advisor attended the BSSSC meeting in Turku in September to discuss this with the BSC, and there is potential for increased co-operation on C&T issues. The newly formed Intercom Tourism group can also be a part of a future cooperation.

Innovation and education

The innovation and education group is currently trying to make contact with the CPMR Intercom group on Innovation led by Stockholm region and hoping to identify areas of mutual interest to be able to cooperate.

CPMR Intercom working groups

Stockholm region within the BSC is leading the Intercom group on innovation.

The group started its work in February of this year. About 10 regions from all the geographical commissions are in the group working on a position how innovation can become an investment in regional development. The next meeting will be taking place during next week.

Region Itä-Uusimaa from the Baltic Sea region will also be co-chairing the working group on agriculture together with the Region of Aquitaine in France. President Christel Liljeström will be working to find a common position regarding the future of the Common agricultural policy.

The BSC has also decided to work more closely with BSSSC network especially regarding transport issues in light of common discussions of a common marine arena in 2015.

Short analysis

It seems like most of the working groups in the NSC have an ongoing cooperation with their Baltic partners and are making good use of each others networks and competence. In the Strategic Committee meeting in September it was discussed that the NSC-BSC cooperation should be a standing point on each NSC Ex Com meeting in order to report on how the cooperation is developing. The common General Assemblies in June next year could also be a starting point to an even more developed cooperation.