



Editorial


The first BSSSC newsletter in 2009 allows me once more to state that it is an honour for the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg to take over the chairmanship of BSSSC for the next two years. As the gateway to both northern and eastern Europe it has always been in the interest of Hamburg to maintain a close and cordial relationship to its neighbours in the Baltic Sea Region in order to ensure a prosperous common development and future.



With regard to the fruitful co-operation of the BSSSC member regions under the chairmanship of the Eastern Norway County Network I am very confident that, during the following two years, we further succeed in advancing the vast potential of the Baltic Sea Region.

The Hamburg BSSSC Board meeting in February, the BSSSC seminar "Meeting the climate challenge in the Baltic Sea Region" as well as the BSSSC youth conference on the EU Baltic Sea Strategy marked an auspicious beginning of this process. Both the seminar and the youth conference already focused on main topics of the present BSSSC work plan as adopted by the Board in February: Climate Change and Sustainable Development, Youth Policy as well as the EU Baltic Sea Strategy. With its key priorities in 2009 and 2010, the work plan faces the challenges BSSSC and its member regions have to take in the upcoming years.

I hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter! With best regards


Carsten-Ludwig Lüdemann
Chairman of BSSSC



Youth conference, February 2009. Young people discussed approaches for the EU Baltic Sea Strategy in the town hall of Hamburg. © BSSSC Secretariat

"We are the future you are planning for!" Youth & the EU Baltic Sea Strategy

3rd to 4th of February 2009 marked the dates for the youth conference "We are the future you are planning for!" organised jointly by the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, the BSSSC Youth Network and the European Commission within the framework of the consultation on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea (SBS). Around 80 young and youthful people from all around the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) got together. They discussed their views and expectations for the Commissions upcoming SBS and were joined by representatives of the European Commission that are directly responsible for drafting the strategy. A true and direct dialogue that is not possible for most people.

However, even with the European officials present the event was truly a youth conference at its best. The participants started by exploring graffiti, dance, rap-music and film classes at the Kulturpalast Billstedt in Hamburg and didn't stop dancing until the end. The workshops on the following day were set up to inspire creativity, active dialogue and achieved a fantastic flow of ideas.

During those discussions the participants stated clearly that politicians and structures of today should be aware of their present decisions having much more influence on future generations than their own and therefore should always follow the principle of "Nothing for us [youth] without us"! *continued on page 2*

Youth Policy

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The participants made clear that they are seriously concerned about the environment in and around the BSR and considered the Baltic Sea as their natural heritage. The core message is that everybody is affected and contributes to environmental challenges and therefore everyone has the responsibility to act as well. Young people want more public awareness campaigns, a stronger public involvement and stricter environmental standards and recognize that only if we can preserve the sea and the coastal zones, our region can be an attractive place to live in and for tourists to visit.

Concerning prosperity throughout the BSR, young people want to see a regional approach: act and buy locally. The participants called for more support to young entrepreneurs and small to medium enterprises and proposed a regional micro-credit system as one possible tool. Education was considered as a cornerstone and the participants called for a more harmonized system and free higher education throughout the region.

In order to create common understanding, enhance accessibility and attractiveness, young people called for a common history book for the BSR, more



Gerd Tarand and Alexandra Ehlers, representatives of the BSSSC Youth Network, gave a presentation at the 2nd EU stakeholder conference in Rostock. © BSSSC Secretariat

support for offering appropriate labour places in the precise companies in order to avoid brain drain. Young people like to get around safely and in an eco-friendly manner. Therefore they want to see a highly developed railway system linking all BSR states.

Young people see safety as consisting of a clear and strong basis of social life and society, including social protection and guaranteeing equally safe conditions in the fields of public health, medical assistance and a real safe home and family for everyone. It must be pointed out that this approach differs a lot from the general approach to safety related issues.

The BSSSC youth representatives related to the Board, myself and Alexandra

Ehlers, had the honour of presenting the results of this conference at the 2nd Stakeholder Conference on the EU Baltic Sea Strategy that took place a few days later in Rostock/Warnemünde. During our short contribution we also noted that young people are willing and wanting to do more and even sacrifice something to get it done. Even if some of their ideas seem as far-away dreams, most of them are simple goals, that can be accomplished. Naturally, we got a nice applause from the audience when we presented that the participants from Hamburg also wanted to see the BSR as the first oil, coal and nuclear energy free zone in the world.

Gerd Tarand
BSSSC Youth Network



Participants at the youth conference are concerned about the environment in and around the Baltic Sea.

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Other Topics

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BSSSC Work Plan

As a result of the BSSSC Board meeting in Hamburg on the 3rd of February 2009, the BSSSC Board approved the key objectives for the Hamburg chairmanship. BSSSC will continue to act as a political network organisation open to all regions in the Baltic Sea area bringing added value to regional co-operation on every side of the Baltic

Science and Education

BSSSC regards education and science as key elements for the further development of the Baltic Sea region which is already home for a considerable number of world-class universi-



BSSSC Board meeting in Hamburg. © BSSSC Secretariat

BSSSC Board approved key objectives for 2009–2010

Sea. BSSSC will be a co-operation partner to other BSR organisations at the national, regional and local level and will continue to advocate the views of sub-regions to national authorities and EU institutions. Envisaged activities of BSSSC in the years 2009 and 2010 include:

ties and research institutions. Therefore, the organisation will support all efforts to strengthen European research within the region by supporting border crossing co-operation in the field of science. Academic co-operation, e.g. the exchange of students as well as that of scientists, will be strengthened by promoting the European instruments of funding. Additionally, BSSSC will support co-operation in primary and secondary education. In this context the organisation specifically appreciates the extension of European programmes for regional co-operation in education. Besides, BSSSC will support the exchange of experiences within the field of school management and school organisation hereby using European programmes of funding like Comenius Regio.

Maritime Policy

The Baltic Sea is a fragile environment which we all heavily depend on, not only as an area for transportation but also as an area for production of food and for recreation. BSSSC will continue its commitment for an ambitious implementation of the European maritime policy in the Baltic Sea region. One major objective is the development of the region into Eu-

rope's maritime best practice region by 2015. Therefore, BSSSC will continue the dialogue with the EU Commission on an appropriate implementation of the European maritime policy matching the needs and consulting the expertise of the regions. The organisation will support projects of an integrated maritime policy suitable to mitigate the environmental effects of maritime activities in the region. For example, it will initiate the introduction of land-based power supply for ships in all relevant ports of the Baltic Sea region and the introduction of environmentally differentiated fair-way and/or harbour dues in order to set incentives for the usage of low-sulphur fuels.



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Climate Change and Sustainable Development

BSSSC is convinced that it is essential to undertake major efforts in Europe to cope with the effects of the climate change until

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BSSSC Work Plan

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the year 2020. The organisation underlines the need to coordinate and co-operate on strategies to achieve at least a 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. The necessary changes will not occur by themselves but must be addressed at a political level – also by regional and local authorities. BSSSC shall contribute to the further development and implementation of this process. Thus, the BSSSC Annual Conference in October 2009 in Zealand, Denmark, will focus on how regions can cope with the challenge of climate change.

It will serve to give a special regional input to the following UN climate summit in Copenhagen by the end of the year. Furthermore, BSSSC will support and contribute to the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and will continue the constructive co-operation with Baltic 21 and BSSSC.

Youth Policy

Youth exchange and youth initiatives are important factors for creating a common space of successful co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region. Having successfully carried out a youth conference on the EU Baltic Sea Strategy in February 2009



in Hamburg, BSSSC will now concentrate on the CBSS conference on youth empowerment in Copenhagen in May 2009 and will organise a youth conference on youth participation and sustainable lifestyles in Region Zealand, Denmark in October 2009.

Transport and Infrastructure

Together with the so-called Amber Coast Transport Initiative BSSSC aims to open up the untapped hinterland transport potential of the Baltic states linking Kaliningrad Oblast and Poland with Belarus (including Western Russia and Northern Ukraine).

In close co-operation at the policy level (e.g. transport ministries) together with administrative agencies (e.g. port authorities, customs) and commercial entities (e.g. private multi-modal transport operators) the initiative will organise an exchange of best practice based on a round table approach including institution building. Furthermore, BSSSC will continue to support the development of the project “TransBaltic – Towards an integrated transport system in the Baltic Sea Region” as a flagship-project in the framework of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy.

Other focal points of the work of BSSSC in the next two years will be the promotion of intensified co-operation with Russia, better use of EU programmes for projects in the region, public health and quality of life with a working group on communicable diseases and antibiotic resistance as well as the continued co-operation in the Baltic Sea Strategy of the EU.

Dr. Jan Thiele
BSSSC Secretariat



News from Brussels



The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in October 2008 unanimously adopted amendments to the MARPOL Annex VI regulations to reduce harmful emissions from ships. The main changes will see a progressive reduction in sulphur oxide (SOx) emissions from ships, with the global sulphur cap reduced initially to 3.50% (from the current 4.50%),

of directive 2005/33 as regards the sulphur content of marine fuels to bring European legislation in line with the IMO regulation.

Shipping companies that operate in the Baltic Sea see a major competitive disadvantage. Fuel with only 0.1 % sulphur would be up to 60 % more expensive as the fuels used by their European competitors who work e.g. in the Mediterranean Sea. Companies like Scandlines or TT Line ex-

Less shipping emissions in the Baltic Sea – a competitive disadvantage?

effective from 1st January 2012; then progressively to 0.50 %, effective from 1st January 2020, subject to a feasibility review to be completed no later than 2018.

In the Baltic Sea – a so called Sulphur Emission Control Area (SECA) – the situation is different. The limits will be reduced to 1.00%, beginning on 1 July 2010 (from the current 1.50 %) and to 0.10 %, effective from 1st January 2015. The European Commission is now preparing the revision

of directive 2005/33 as regards the sulphur content of marine fuels to bring European legislation in line with the IMO regulation.

They are calling for a change towards fuels that would not comprise more than 0.5 % of sulphur. Chances are little that the European Commission will be able to go into these arguments seeing the fact that they were deeply involved in the decision making process on IMO level.

Dr. Lars Friedrichsen, Hanse-Office Brussels



Dr. Lars Friedrichsen (left) took over Brussels Antenna from Günther Schulz. © Hanse-Office Brussels

Handing over Brussels Antenna

Günther Schulz, a long-standing expert in European and Baltic Sea affairs, provided the Norwegian chairmanship of BSSSC with his expertise and his tightly knit Brussels network throughout the years 2007 and 2008. The former director of the Hanse-Office for Schleswig-Holstein came back to the premises at Avenue Palmerston 20 for a handing over ceremony of the Brussels Antenna the evening of 10th December 2008. As from the 1st of January 2009 the Antenna is back at the Hanse-Office where the deputy director for Hamburg, Dr. Lars Friedrichsen, took over. Many members of the Baltic Sea family in Brussels came over to participate in Günther Schulz second farewell party at the Hanse-Office and to deliver their best wishes to his successor.

Thanks a million, Günther, and see you around!

EU Baltic Sea Strategy

The European Commission prepares a strategy for the Baltic Sea region as requested by the European Council on the summit in December 2007. In the beginning neither the Council nor the Commission itself had a clear-cut idea of what the strategy should look like. The Commission decided to structure the discussions along four pillars (environment, prosperity, accessibility and safety/security) and go into the region itself in order to talk to the stakeholders about their needs for the future.

The opening conference in Stockholm on the 30th September 2008 and four so called round-tables on the respective pil-



Stefan Herms, BSSSC Secretary General, in discussion with Danuta Hübner (right), Commissioner for Regional Policy. © BSSSC Secretariat

The Commission gathered the results of the consultation process so far and presented them in Rostock on 5th and 6th of February. 360 experts in the field came together at Yachthafen Residenz Warnemünde and discussed the findings. The ideas of the Commission go in the direction of a roll-

ning – is that there will be no extra money on top of what is foreseen for the region in the financial framework 2007 to 2013. Further on no one aims at setting up any new structure or organisation in addition to the large number of organisations that already exist around the Baltic Sea. The discussions in Rostock showed that creativity is needed to come up with EU added value and new results under these circumstances. But, the Baltic Sea region with its century-long history of cooperation in all the fields mentioned should be the perfect surrounding to serve as a model for macro regions and a new governance approach. Creativity, dedication for the region and good cooperation among the already existing organisations: all this can be found in the position paper of BSSSC and five other organisations (UBC, B7, BSC-CPMR, BDF and Euroregion Baltic) that was presented to the Commission by the end of the year 2008.

The Commission envisages the following next steps in 2009:

- ▶ bilateral discussions with the member states by the end of February
- ▶ interservice consultations in March and April
- ▶ endorsement by the Commission in May
- ▶ presentation of the results on the June summit of the European Council
- ▶ adoption under Swedish Presidency in the second half of 2009.

A comprehensive collection of the presentations of the Rostock conference can be found online: www.conference-rostock.de.

Dr. Lars Friedrichsen,
BSSSC Brussels Antenna

Second EU Stakeholder Conference in Rostock



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© State Chancellery Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

lars in Kaunas (along-side the BSSSC Annual Conference), Gdansk, Helsinki and Copenhagen provided the stakeholders with the possibility to expound on the fields that are most important for the future development of the region. The future of the region itself, the young people, had their say in Hamburg at the Baltic Sea Strategy youth conference this February, which was organized jointly by the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, BSSSC, the European Commission – DG Regio – and the Hanse-Office.

ing action plan with some 20 indicative actions along the above-mentioned pillars. Upcoming council presidencies of Baltic Sea littoral states (Poland second half of 2011, Denmark first half of 2012, Lithuania second half 2013) will guarantee the continuation of the work.

But, to make absolutely clear that the strategy is still at this point a process in the making, all of these actions were introduced as “preliminary examples of possible actions (to be confirmed)”. The only certainty, so far – and that it was from the very begin-



BSSSC seminar at GKSS Research Centre in Geesthacht. © GKSS

BSSSC Seminar

The BSSSC seminar on 2nd of February 2009 was hosted by the GKSS Research Centre in Geesthacht near Hamburg. In a series of presentations and discussions, both

tries of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) establish a distinguished expert community on many aspects related to regional climate variability and change.

tems in the Baltic Sea basin. The report is now available as a comprehensive Springer book. In concluding his presentation, Prof. von Storch stressed that geophysical and ecological science should not formulate policy, but prepare the factual basis for decision makers, who need to consider also other, in particular normative arguments. He strongly suggested discussing climate change not only in the context of mitigation, but relating climate change more closely to adaptation. This would be particularly appropriate for actors and decision makers responsible at the regional to local scales. Despite of all mitigation efforts, it appears obvious that climate change is already ongoing in the Baltic Sea Region and that at least part of the projected future climate changes (as, for example, assessed in the BACC report) will inevitably materialize in the future. Ignoring or delaying adaptation measures could be non-sustainable and, thus, dangerous.

Prof. von Storch gave two examples of how knowledge on climate change and variability is assessed and translated for use e.g. by various decision makers in Ger-

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Meeting the Climate Challenge in the Baltic Sea Region

the past and expected impact of global climate change in the Baltic Sea Region and means how to ensure that related research findings are transferred to decision makers at local to regional levels were addressed. The international, interdisciplinary research programme BALTEX (Baltic Sea Experiment), established within the World Climate Research Program (WCRP) in 1994, deals with the earth system of the entire Baltic Sea catchment including terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Important elements of the program are research on climate variability and change and related impacts on ecosystems. In his presentation the BALTEX Secretariat's head, Dr. Hans-Jörg Isemer, stressed that the contributing institutions and scientists from all coun-

A recent major achievement of BALTEX is the publication of the "BALTEX Assessment of Climate Change for the Baltic Sea basin (BACC)". Prof. Hans von Storch, director at the Institute for Coastal Research at GKSS and lead scientist of BACC, summarized the major BACC findings. He recalled that the BACC author team consists of more than 80 scientists from 13 countries, covering relevant disciplines of climate and climate change impact research. The assessment report offers an up-to-date overview of the present evidence of climate change in the recent past, climate projections up until 2100 using the most sophisticated regional climate models available, and an assessment of climate change impacts on terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosys-



17th BSSSC Annual Conference

Between the EU Baltic Sea Strategy and the UN Climate Summit: The Region Zealand in Denmark will host the next BSSSC Annual Conference. The conference will be held from 13th to 15th October 2009 in Ringsted.

The Region Zealand is pleased to take this role in a year of two other significant milestones of regional, European and global significance – the presentation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change hosted by the Danish government in December 2009. The Region Zealand aims to interlink the BSSSC Annual Conference with these two important topics by focussing on climate issues within the scope of the EU policy on the Baltic Sea region. Thus gaining and disseminating current and progressive knowledge on the possibilities of developing the Baltic Sea region together.

It also supports Regions Zealand's own primary pillars of regional development as it is the region's pronounced goal to heighten the quality of innovation, accessibility, sustainability, education and health in the year 2009.

The BSSSC Annual Conference will also focus on the contributions given by the youth. The youth event, titled "YESS – Youth Event on Sustainable Societies", will take place at a separate venue in Roskilde. YESS is running a parallel programme, but will be introduced to the conference on the second day. It is important to Region Zealand that the input from the youth is integrated into the resolution adopted at this year's conference, as the youngsters will be the policy makers of the future.

As Region Zealand Council Chairman, I welcome you to the 17th. BSSSC Annual Conference in Ringsted! **Kristian Ebbensgaard**

Practical information

Ringsted has the advantage of its central location within the region and at the same time being within close travelling distance from Copenhagen. By train or car the trip can be made within less than one hour.

Region Zealand and BSSSC will open the conference website in early March 2009. For further questions, please contact Christian Rietz (crie@regionsjaelland.dk, Tel. +45 5787 5771) or Marlis Erichsen (merc@regionsjaelland.dk, Tel. +45 5787 5765).

BSSSC Seminar

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many. One is the North German Climate Office at GKSS with three major tasks:

- ▶ Communication of regional climate change information
- ▶ Support for correct use and interpretation of regional climate changes scenarios
- ▶ Determination of informational and interpretative needs among stakeholders.

The office has a clearly defined regional focus and operates in concert with other regional offices in Germany. The second example presented the recently founded German Climate Service Centre (CSC) with similar objectives on a national German level. CSC intends to actively contribute to climate change science and to producing knowledge on climate change relevant for Germany.

A lively discussion following the presentations focussed on how BSSSC members may have access to a sound and easily interpretable knowledge basis for decision making in the context of climate change. Is the bridge between science experts and decision makers properly established and how are – if at all – advisory mechanisms established in the BSR countries with special emphasize on the regional rather than the national or international levels?

As an ad-hoc idea for a possible joint initiative of BSSSC and BALTEX, two suggestions were made.

- ▶ establish a survey on how deliberation on regional climate change for regional decision makers is organised in the countries around the Baltic Sea
- ▶ based on this survey, establish a relevant mutually beneficial exchange of experience among the individual national or regional "climate advisors".



Prof. von Storch on the BSSSC Seminar. © GKSS

If the suggested survey would uncover a serious gap in the knowledge transfer between science experts and decision makers, means should be explored to close this gap. This year's annual BSSSC Annual Conference scheduled for October 2009 in Ringsted, Denmark, was mentioned as a concrete event where a dialogue between BSSSC representatives and climate experts may materialize e.g. as a jointly organized workshop.

**Dr. Hans-Jörg Isemer,
International BALTEX Secretariat**

More information

- ▶ www.baltex-research.eu,
- ▶ www.baltex-research.eu/BACC,
- ▶ www.norddeutsches-klimabuero.de



BSSSC Calendar

BSSSC Board Meetings and Seminars

- ▶ 18/19 May 2009, Skane, Sweden
- ▶ 13 October 2009, Zealand, Denmark
- ▶ 3/4 December 2009, Brussels, Belgium

BSSSC Youth Conference

YESS – Youth Event on Sustainable Societies

- ▶ 12-14 October 2009, Zealand, Denmark

BSSSC Annual Conference

- ▶ 13-15 October 2009, Zealand, Denmark

Upcoming Events

8th Baltic Sea NGO Forum

- ▶ 26 February–1 March 2009, Ellsinore, Denmark

European Summit of Regions and Cities

- ▶ 5/6 March 2009, Prague, Czech Republic

Fourth Stakeholder Conference on the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan

- ▶ 3 March 2009, Helsinki, Finland

AER Conference

“Regional answers to climate change”

- ▶ 30/31 March 2009, Limoges, France

15th Meeting of the NDPHS Committee of Senior Representatives

- ▶ 23/24 April 2009, Gdansk, Poland

HELCOM Youth Forum

- ▶ 4-6 May 2009, Stralsund, Germany

BALTEX International Conference Climate Change: The environmental and socio-economic response in the southern Baltic region

- ▶ 25-28 May 2009, Szczecin, Poland

SENDER

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