



III. News and Views

6TH CBSS MINISTERIAL SESSION IN RIGA

The Council of the Baltic Sea States had its 6th meeting 2-3 July 1997, this time in Riga. The CBSS consists of the Foreign ministers of eleven states in the Baltic Sea Region and the European Commission. Also the President of the UBC, Mr Anders Engstrom, participated, as well as many other representatives of Baltic Sea Organisations.

The main topic was the implementation of the Kalmar Action Programmes for the Baltic Sea States cooperation and the European Commission's Baltic Sea Region Initiative, adopted at the CBSS 5th meeting in Kalmar. Concrete actions have been taken and a number of initiatives made over the past year. The ministers evaluated the work already done and made the decisions for further follow-up. The role of CBSS in the European context was discussed as well.

In the Kalmar Programme "Increased people-to-people contacts and civic security", the importance of continued cooperation in the spheres of

civic security and combating organised crime was emphasised. A Task-force on Organised Crime in the Baltic Sea Region, established by Heads of Government in Visby in 1996, was also noted. The Council will continue to study the concept of civic security.

The close cooperation between the CBSS and other organisations acting in the region, such as BSSSC, UBC, Ars Baltica and Baltic Tourism Cooperation, was welcomed.

The Kalmar Programmes also emphasise "Economic coordination and integration". The progress made towards economic integration, was noted. The establishment of the Baltic Business Advisory Council was particularly welcomed. Special attention must be paid to the growing East-West-East traffic in the Region.

Border crossing remains a problem. National authorities have been given the task of monitoring the situation.

The necessity for sustainable and coherent economic growth in the Region and elimination of disparities in economic performance between the countries was emphasised.



Strengthening Environmental Protection is also an important part of the Kalmar Programmes. The intensive work of the Helsinki Commission were welcomed.

The Ministers instructed the CSO to prepare and consider a final proposal for setting up a permanent CBSS secretariat and, if agreed upon, submit the proposal to ministers for decision by written procedure.

The CBSS meetings are highly valuable. As a general conclusion, from the UBC point of view, it is of course important to coordinate governmental, regional and local goals. The needs at the local levels should guide the development in a high degree. There must be more cooperation and less top-down managing. The self-governing of local authorities must be emphasised, because it is often at the local level where the problems emerge.

EIB FORUM TO DISCUSS NORTHERN EUROPE

The European Investment Bank (EIB), the long-term financing institution of the European Union, will hold this year's Forum in Stockholm on 23 and 24 October 1997 on the theme "Bridging The Seas in Northern Europe". Over 300 experts from the European Union and from Central and Eastern European countries will discuss the challenges and opportunities lying ahead for Northern Europe. They are representing international institutions, national and local au-

thorities, banks, industry, non-governmental organisations and the media. Mr Paweł aboklicki, Secretary General for UBC, is invited to deliver a presentation in this event.

The EIB was established in 1958 under the Treaty of Rome setting up the European Community and is supporting capital investment projects that further European integration and other EU objectives. While strengthening economically weak regions in the EU has always been its main objective, the



EIB is also participating in the implementation of the Union's development and cooperation policy toward some 120 countries throughout the world.

In 1996, the EIB provided loans totalling ECU 23.2 billion, of which 2.3



billion for projects outside the EU. The Bank borrows on the capital markets the funds for its lending. Its bonds are regularly rated "AAA" by the leading rating agencies. As the EIB works on a non-profit basis it can pass on to project promoters the excellent conditions obtained on the markets.

Growing Role in the Baltic region

The Baltic is becoming increasingly important for the EU and its partner countries. With the exception of Russia, all countries around the Baltic seaboard are either EU members (Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland) or signatories of European agreements (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia). Under a regional environmental protection programme, the EIB has financed water treatment plants in Warsaw and Stockholm, Greifswald, Schwerin, Kiel and Lübeck. Smaller scale environmental schemes are being financed under EIB global loans (credit lines) to partner banks in Germany, Sweden, Finland, Poland and Latvia. The EIB is making available its finance, know-how and experience in a number of Central and Eastern European countries since 1990; lending in the Baltic countries started in 1993. By the end of 1996, the total lent in eleven countries in the region had

reached nearly ECU 5 billion. Under a new mandate for the period 1997-1999, the EIB is to provide another ECU 3.52 billion in the region. In addition the Bank will also, at the request of the EU's Council of Ministers, create a substantial pre-accession lending facility to support the candidates for membership.

Focus on Communication Infrastructure and SMEs

The best-known EIB-financed schemes in the Nordic EU member countries are the two rail and road links (bridges and tunnels) across the Scandinavian straits, the Great Belt and the Øresund. In the new EU member states in Scandinavia, the Bank granted major loans for the railway lines on the east and west coasts of Sweden, and for railway and road sections in southern Finland. The second largest sector financed in the Nordic countries, after transport, is energy, frequently associated with environmental protection. The largest project was the so called 'Baltic Cable' linking the Swedish and German power grids.

In the Baltic States, the EIB has financed several rail and road connections including the Via Baltica, ports and airports, energy and telephone networks, as well as power stations. The Bank also assists the development of small and medium-scale manufactur-



EIB Headquarters in Luxemburg.

ing and tourism enterprises through its global loans to selected banks in all three Baltic countries.

The EIB Forum 1997 follows similar events in Amsterdam in 1995 on the role of private sector financing of major infrastructure, and in Madrid in 1996 on partnership in the Mediterranean.

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INVITATION TO ECO-BALTIC CONFERENCE

**2nd ECO-BALTIC Conference
Environmental Management in
the Baltic Sea region, 9-11 October 1997, Gdańsk, Poland. The
Event for EMAS and ISO 14000
series.**

The 2nd ECO-BALTIC Conference will be held in Gdańsk, Poland, October 9 - 11, 1997. The event is organised by the International Network for Environmental Management (INEM) as an official part of the Gdańsk Mil-

lennium Celebrations. It is under the patronage of the Ministers of the Environment of Poland, Mr. Źelichowski, Ms. Lindh, Sweden and Dr. Merkel, Germany. It offers the **Information Forum** through workshops, dealing with the latest development in environmental management (mainly EMAS and ISO 14001) and what it means for Eastern Europe the **Contact-Forum** on company level, formally arranged through the „Company Contact Service“ the **Presentation-Forum** for



I N E M

companies and their activities.

The 2nd ECO-BALTIC Conference is organised in cooperation with HELCOM (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission) and the BCCA (Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association). It aims to provide business and industry with the environ-



mental management instruments they need to improve their performance and their competitiveness on the European and international markets.

The conference helps industries in Central and Eastern Europe to adapt to the market demands of an integrated Europe and meet the challenges posed by international standards in the key areas of environment and quality (the European Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and the international ISO 14001 norm.

Further information/registration:

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BALTIC 21



Baltic 21, the Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region, is an initiative taken by the region's Prime Ministers at their meeting in Visby in May 1996. In the Declaration from this summit the Heads of Government agreed on an Agenda for Action which proposed three thematic Action Programmes covering increased people-to-people cooperation and civic security, economic coordination and cooperation and strengthened environmental protection. They also decided about the development of an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region.

From the point of view of the Baltic 21 process, it is significant that this initiative emerges from the highest political level, thus indicating the integrated and cross-sectoral nature of Agenda 21 and Sustainable Development. The very notion of those two concepts involves an integration of social, economical and environmental perspectives, Sustainable Develop-

ment is thus not only related to the environment sector or any other sector, even if much of the work have to be organised along such lines for practical reasons.

The Saltsjöbaden Declaration. "Towards an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region", emerging from a meeting of the Ministers of Environment in Saltsjöbaden outside Stockholm in October 1996, outlined the scope, format, time-schedule and structure of Baltic 21, to be elaborated, and also defined the organisation of the work. The emphasis should be on regional cooperation, and the work should build on what is already going on in the region, primarily Helcom, Vasab and the International Baltic Sea Fisheries Commission.

It was also decided to focus attention on seven main sectors:

- agriculture
- energy
- fisheries
- forestry
- industry
- tourism
- transport

For each of these sectors two lead-countries have been appointed. The time-schedule is short, Baltic 21 should be ready for consideration in the first half of 1998, and adopted at the highest possible political level. The Agenda should include an action programme for sustainable development, and i.a. include financing.

A steering group, the Senior Officials Group (SOG) has been formed "to closely monitor, contribute to and steer the process" ... and to provide a forum for negotiation of the document. Participants are government representatives, representatives of International Financial Institutions, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the International Chamber of Commerce, the Union of the Baltic Cities, NGO's and others. The SOG has some 30 members and will meet regularly during the process. Progress of the work is published at the Baltic 21 Website <http://www.ee/baltic21/>

UBC is represented in the work on Baltic 21 through its Environmental Commission and Mr Peter Gavelin from the City of Sundsvall.

BALTIC MARITIME INITIATIVE

The background of this initiative is based on the worry about the problem of ever growing number of maritime and other organizations around the Baltic Sea Region. All claiming their uniqueness and importance, and all after various funds. To ensure the efficiency of operations a coordinating umbrella should be established in order to avoid overlapping and duplicity of actions. Maritime issues should be run in a most effective way allowing a fast set up of maritime infrastructure in the Baltic Sea Region.

To evaluate the situation Dr. Bangemann, EU commissioner, suggested to arrange a Baltic Maritime Future Conference in Helsinki. In the conference, which took place in Helsinki on September 10. 1996, over 200 participants were presenting all the Baltic Region countries and the Commission.



THE BALTIC MARITIME INITIATIVE, BMI's objectives as set in the conference are:

- coordinate of existing maritime activities to avoid overlapping
- bring together maritime players of different sectors
- guarantee the bottom - up - approach
- ensure that maritime industry is involved
- innovate, execute, coordinate and evaluate programs for the Baltic



Sea Region (e.g. Tacis/ Phare, Cross-border, TEN, Interreg etc.)

BALTIC MARITIME DATA BASE is needed to get comprehensive and integral tool for all maritime actors in the Region allowing to run coordinated actions and to improve cooperation among maritime industries. The Data Base's. first phase was completed at end of June 1997 as a joint project of the City of Helsinki and the Commission. The Baltic Maritime Data Base is based on Internet technology, the ba-

sically commercial information to be utilized is easily accessible and free of charge. The subject categories of the system are entitled: Companies, Routes, Statistics, Events, Law and Regulations, Associations, Research. It is based on existing WWW pages at the moment consisting of 140 WWW pages. This pilot data base is to be found under following address:

http: / www.tieke.fi / tieke / baltic.

This data base is a first of its kind and will be used as a model for other maritime data bases, first by the recently founded MARIS centres around Europe. The second phase of the data base, which will further expand the contacts, will be executed in 1998 with the same Helsinki team and in cooperation with the Commission. The implementation of the BMI is planned to start with setting up panels on specific items (e.g. Short Sea Shipping, MARIS, Maritime Resources, - Research etc.) important is that the already existing panels on the subjects are to be utilized. The final aim of the BMI is to create an official project: The Baltic Maritime Master Plan for the EU Commission.

TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

This Conference, prepared by VASAB 2010 in co-operation with the German Federal Ministry for Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development and other German institutions took place in Rostock 12 - 13 June 1997. The main idea of the Conference was to facilitate the INTERREG II C introduction to the BSR. The Conference was attended by more than 180 representatives and over 80 transnational spatial development projects for which Community assistance will be requested were presented in it.

The Conference had two plenary sessions and three working groups. One of the groups was devoted to the BSR settlement structures development. The urban projects of EU member-states had the focal point in the organisation and canalisation of economic growth. The urban projects of the transition countries had the focal point in the creation of an urban network in these countries to develop economic growth. Summing up the results of this working group one has to underline the lack of long-term, strategic dimension in the current co-

operation of the BSR cities. Therefore the INTERREG II C creates an opportunity to supplement current co-operation between towns and cities with a long term perspective, addressing the problem of competitiveness of BSR cities with regard to the other Pan-European city networks. The INTERREG II C can help with examining the existing city potential, the missing links and weaknesses of the BSR city network

The Conference also adopted the resolution which **reaffirmed the importance of the VASAB projects** which were developed from the cross-sectoral spatial planning perspective „Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010" (VASAB 2010) and named in the „Stockholm Declaration on sustainable spatial development policy in the Baltic Sea Region“ and stress that in view of limited resources national development projects must be optimised through transnational co-operation.

Underlined the importance of INTERREG II C, PHARE and TACIS integration.

Stressed the need:

to realise projects which support economic activities and sustainable



development, optimise sectoral investment for regional development and contribute to future job creation,

to focus on operational measures, e.g. concrete regional project management, pilot and demonstration projects, planning activities preparing investment, such as expertises, feasibility studies, action concepts, land use planning in further developing research projects and studies, to concentrate activities on most important projects for the Baltic Sea Region and to combine therefore project ideas.

It was also decided that the work on INTERREG II C concrete multilateral projects **will continue**. The participants will revise their project proposals according to eligibility criteria of EU with their partners found here, hand it over to VASAB-Secretariat up to the end of August, discuss it at a follow-up conference in Karlskrona in autumn 1997 and at similar events and use it than in applying for Community support.