



ROUND TABLE RESOLUTION

Consolidation of cooperation of Baltic Sea sub-regional organisations

Within the framework of the VII International Environmental Forum “Baltic Sea Day”

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Participants: 20

The Round Table was attended by 20 participants representing the following organisations:

- Council of Baltic Sea States/ Committee of Senior Officials (CBSS/CSO)
- Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)
- Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions / Baltic Sea Commission (CPMR/BSC)
- Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC)
- University of Greifswald, Department of Geography and Geology
- Nordic Investment Bank
- European Commission, Environment Directorate
- Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference BSPC
- John Nurminen Foundation
- Stockholm International Water Institute
- Vodokanal St. Petersburg
- St. Petersburg Research Centre for Ecological Safety RAS
- SPbPO “Ecology and Business”

After giving presentations of the different organisations present, the Round Table focused and discussed the following topics:

- Examples of existing cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.
- Challenges and priorities for the future concerning e.g. pollution prevention, cleaner production, sustainable consumption and sustainable answers to demographic changes.
- The necessity for a better coordination between sub regional organisations and what kind of mechanisms should be applied.
- Sustainable regional development: facilitating and taking part in networking, exchanging experiences, sharing knowledge and interact on developing projects. Priorities of specific topics were discussed.
- The prospects for the future of the Forum “Baltic Sea Day” were discussed in the light if this could be a possible mechanism to consolidate the cooperation between sub-regional organisations and actors in the Baltic Sea Region.

The following points were raised by the participants of the round table:

Sub-regional cooperation

- **Keeping in mind that** cooperation at regional and sub-regional level is essential. Cooperation in the Baltic Sea region comprises of a wide range of organisations representing various stakeholders (IGO's, NGO's etc) at different levels (local, regional and international level)
- **Stressing the importance** of developing common positions for issues of common concern for the Baltic region, in order to ensure the best possible resource mobilization, and thus the best use of limited personal and financial resources.
- **Taking into account** limited resources and the need to gain synergy of the work done in the various organisations, thereby avoiding double work and overlaps.
- **Recommends that** existing networks and organisations as well as results and data already produced are utilised, without adding new superfluous administrative layers, by appropriate exchange of information between the different organisations.

Actions at various levels

- **Recalling that** political support is of utmost importance to ensure commitment to implement environmental requirements and to facilitate sufficient resources.
- **Recalling further the importance** of transparency in the work of the regional organizations and of raising public awareness.
- **Stressing the importance** of being able to identify specific “bankable projects”, from within the programmes of actions, and the specific information needed by the International Financial Institutions for this purpose.
- **Recommends that** due account of input from all relevant stakeholders is taken into account and public participation encouraged in order to ensure commitment and actions to be taken at local, national, and regional levels as well as the private sector

Consolidation of cooperation

- **Recalling that the Ecosystem approach** to the management of human activities adopted by the joint HELCOM/OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in 2003 echoes the concepts in other international initiatives such as Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD, (1992), European legislation (Water Framework directive as well as the emerging European Marine Strategy).
- **Keeping in mind that with the Ecosystem Approach** the state of the ecosystem itself is used as a measure by which to identify, plan and implement management actions needed to combat pollution from all sources and to promote protection, as well as sustainable use and development, of the environment. This differs from earlier sector-by-sector approach.
- **Acknowledging that the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan which is being** developed implements the concept of the ecosystem approach in the region. The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan will be the guiding tool to ensure that all possible measures are taken to reduce pollution in the Baltic Sea and to repair the damage done to the marine environment. The HELCOM action plan, which has already been widely heralded as a front-running initiative for the regional seas, taking into account the newly drafted EU Marine Strategy, will provide a unique opportunity to take joint wide-scale and decisive actions to achieve the ultimate target of having a healthy marine environment with balanced eco-systems for the present generation to enjoy.

- **Acknowledging that HELCOM is the environmental focal point** in the Baltic Sea region and the environmental policy maker for developing common environmental objectives and actions providing an integrated framework and instruments to foster and facilitate environmental cooperation in the region.
- **Acknowledging that HELCOM** is the regional body executing global commitments and declarations in the Baltic Sea region.

Actions to be taken

- **Reminding that** the next most important step in the development of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, which is expected to be finalised and adopted by HELCOM in the latter part of 2007, will be to identify and detail the kind of actions needed to achieve the environmental objectives within a given timeframe for each of the main environmental priorities.
- **Recalling further that based** on environmental monitoring and assessments four major environmental concerns have been identified: eutrophication, pollution by hazardous substances, loss of biodiversity and environmental impacts of maritime transport.

CBSS support for cooperation and action

- **Recalling the wide support** by Ministers, CBSS and VASAB to the development of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.
- **Recalling that CBSS** has worked to maintain a political commitment to the topic of environmental protection of the Baltic Sea. Being an overall political forum for regional intergovernmental cooperation, the Council of the Baltic Sea States shall continue to encourage and support HELCOM activities.

The St. Petersburg Baltic Sea Day Forum

- **Acknowledging that the St. Petersburg Baltic Sea Day** is an important forum for improving coordination and cooperation between organisations and activities related to issues on environmental protection
- **Recommends that** the St. Petersburg Baltic Sea Day Forum is utilised as a mechanism for exchanging information contributing to enhanced regional and sub-regional cooperation.

The International St. Petersburg Baltic Sea Day Forum 2007

- **Recommends further that the following possible** topics should be considered at the next International St. Petersburg Baltic Sea Day to be held in 2007:
 - The development of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan
 - The Russian Maritime Doctrine
 - The European Marine Strategy
 - The EU-Russian bilateral environment cooperation
 - Monitoring of inputs of nutrients and hazardous substances and their effects in the Baltic Sea marine environment (including remote sensing)
 - Application of the principles of the Water Framework Directive in transboundary waters
 - EIA in a transboundary context
- **Recommends also** that the issues to be considered at the International Baltic Sea Day are included to the agenda of various national organizations;

- **In this respect took note** of the proposal to address the Maritime Collegium under the Government of the Russian Federation with a proposal to include the International Baltic Sea Day to its programme of activities,

Especially in the context of arranging the St. Petersburg Baltic Sea Day, the local organizing committee **made the participants aware** of challenges posed, such as:

- the need for a status as a continuous international project, in order to facilitate fund raising
- the need for a standing Secretariat to be situated in St. Petersburg,
- the desire for a declaration of intent, signed by all Baltic Coastal States, on the status of the St. Petersburg Baltic Sea Day Forum

and **welcomed** the proposal by the 2006 Organizing Committee to formulate their recommendations regarding possible structure and function of such a project as well as the possible funding sources.