



Swedish Presidency 2006-2007

Annual Report from the Committee of Senior Officials The 15th Year of the Council's Activity 2006-2007

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Annual report from the Committee of Senior Officials

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**The CBSS Committee of Senior Officials at their Annual Observer State Consultations
in Stockholm, 2006**

Annual Report

The Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)

The annual report covers activities conducted during the Swedish Presidency of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), 1 July 2006–30 June 2007.

In its capacity as the governing body of the CBSS in-between the Ministerial Sessions, the CSO monitors the implementation of decisions emanating from the Ministerial Sessions and the Baltic Sea States Summits. Furthermore, the CSO monitors the functioning of the three core working groups (Working Group on Democratic Institutions; Working Group on Economic Cooperation; Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety) and the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings and the work of the other CBSS Structures and Working Bodies and follows 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 Christer Persson of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs chaired 9 meetings of the CSO during the Swedish Presidency, in the cities of: Lund, Kalmar, Stockholm, Brussels, Visby, Karlskrona and (twice) Malmö. The CSO was instrumental also in the preparation of and follow up to the CBSS Political Directors Meeting in March in Stockholm and the Foreign Ministers Meeting in June in Malmö.

The continuation of the Baltic Sea States cooperation

A possible new content and format of the Baltic Sea States cooperation was outlined by the Swedish CBSS Presidency. The Member States were presented with a vision by the Swedish CBSS Presidency on a renewed Baltic Sea States cooperation and to participate in its further deliberation.

The CSO focused its monitoring and decision making capacity on the three main priority areas of the Swedish Presidency; Energy and the Environment, Civil Security and Trade and Investment with a view to achieving common objectives, greater visibility and concrete results:

Energy and Environment

The priority area of Energy and the Environment had the objective of advancing the protection and maintenance of the Baltic Sea Region's natural environment.

The coordination of energy issues was substantially aided by the capacity of a triple Swedish chair of Baltic 21, BASREC and the CBSS Presidency. Both Baltic 21 and BASREC representatives attended a number of CSO meetings to report on their work under the BASREC Group of Senior Energy Officials (GSEO) and the Baltic 21 Senior Officials Group (SOG).

Civil Security

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.

- The CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings with a focus on adults (TFTHB) was established, and its terms of reference adopted by the CSO on 23 February 2007. The efforts to counteract trafficking in human beings among the Baltic and Nordic countries will now also include Russia, Germany and Poland.
- Education is an important part of CBSS cooperation. In September 2006, the CSO agreed to prolong the CBSS EuroFaculty project in Kaliningrad for another 6 months.
- The CSO decided to accept Scanbalt's application as a Strategic Partner widening the CBSS network in the area of science and innovation.
- Throughout the year, the CSO at several meetings discussed a potential CBSS EuroFaculty project in the Russian town of Pskov. In order to advance Member States interest in contributing financially to the project, the CSO decided to undertake a feasibility mission to Pskov with the view to explore the opportunities. The feasibility report, which was financed by the Swedish CBSS Presidency, was presented to the CSO in May 2007.
- In order to explore the opportunities for increased cooperation with Belarus, the CSO instructed the CBSS Secretariat to undertake a fact-finding mission to Minsk in May 2007.

Trade and Investment

The aim of promoting trade and investment in the Baltic Sea region resulted in furthering the removal of barriers to trade and investment and increased contacts between businesses in the region.

- The CSO throughout the Swedish Presidency, discussed the creation of a "mechanism" to pursue the removal of barriers to trade and investment, as originally proposed by the CBSS Business Advisory Council. While the actual negotiations took place within the CBSS Working Group on Economic Cooperation, the CSO monitored and guided the process.
- The CSO held a meeting back-to-back with the CBSS Working Group on Economic Cooperation, which also included a joint working session of the CSO and the WGEC.

CBSS / NCM Joint Project – BEN

The CSO paid particular attention to the Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN) Project throughout the year and initiated the discussion on whether the "BEN Model" of lead and joint partners working together in a cross regional and cross border forum with project funding, could be approved by the CSO.

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

The CSO decided to prolong The Northern Dimension Partnership on Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) Secretariat as a temporary project of the CBSS at its meeting in Stockholm on 20-21 March 2007.

The CSO decided to limit the project to 6 months with subsequent extension thereof by another 6 months if necessary. This six-month period was extended to a continuing six-month period on 6 April 2007. 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.

Increased cooperation and coordination with other regional actors

During the Swedish 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 the autumn of 2006.

As a never-done-before invention, a meeting convening practically all regional councils and initiatives in Europe was held on 16 November 2006 in Malmö. This meeting resulted in an improved overview of the activities of the respective organisations, as well as increased exchange of information between the organisations.

In order to maintain good co-ordination with the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Arctic Council, several meetings and consultations were held whenever relevant.

Delegates from the CSO, Presidency and the Secretariat took an active part in the joint seminar entitled *Regional Cooperation in Northern Europe and in the Black Sea Region: Exchange, Enhance, Elaborate* in Bucharest, Romania, 27 April 2007. The Seminar was organised by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with key note speakers from the German Presidency of the EU, The Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the European Commission and country representation from Greece, Finland and Russia to name a few. The conference was divided into three sections; valuing regional expertise, cooperation between the EU and the regional initiatives and bridging the two regions.

CBSS / NCM Personnel Exchange Program

With the view to develop further the already good working relations between the CBSS and the Nordic Council of Ministers, the CSO endorsed a programme for short term exchange of personnel between the secretariats of the two organisations.

Joint Annual Session with the European Commission

The CSO held its annual joint session with the European Commission in Brussels in February. 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.

In order to increase the interaction between the CBSS and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), the CSO Chair attended the 15th BSPC conference in Reykjavik on 4-5 September 2006 as well as the Extended Standing Committee meeting in Berlin on 20 June 2007, and had bilateral consultations with the BSPC Chair on 20 February 2007. The CSO encouraged all structures and working bodies of the CBSS to seek cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Strengthening the cooperation with the CBSS Observer States

At the CSO's annual consultation with the 7 CBSS Observer States 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 Chair tasked all CBSS Structures and Working Bodies to consider involving the Observer States in their work whenever relevant. The CSO paid special attention to ensuring more regular participation of the Observer state United Kingdom.

Administrative Issues

In order to make the communication more concise and reader friendly, the Swedish Presidency proposed to the CSO a new and shorter format of the agendas for and minutes from CSO meetings.

The CSO favourably decided on a proposal from the CBSS Secretariat to purchase and install an e-archive, in order to ensure that documents relating to the Baltic Sea cooperation can be managed efficiently and be kept safe for future reference.

Annex 1: Working Group on Democratic Institutions (WGDI)

2006/2007 Annual Report of the Working Group on Democratic Institutions

I. Introduction

The Member States of the CBSS recognise that a well-functioning democracy depends on continuous promotion of democratic values and principles, as well as on the development and strengthening of democratic institutions. One of the main objectives of the CBSS is to provide a framework for common efforts aimed at promoting democratic development in the region. For this purpose the Council established its Working Group on Democratic Institutions (WGDI) in 1992.

The WGDI arranges its activities according to an activity-plan which is discussed by the WGDI and CSO chairpersons at the beginning of each period and later endorsed at the first CSO meeting. The activity-plan envisages the expected outcome of the WGDI activities. In order to maximise the results of the meetings of the WGDI, the Members should ensure continuity in, and the expertise of, their representatives participating in the Working Group. Expert meetings, seminars and conferences may assist the work of the WGDI and recommendations from these events are then transmitted to the WGDI. The CBSS Secretariat provides support to the WGDI and follows up on its decisions. In order to avoid duplication of activities and to ensure synergy of efforts, the Working Group cooperates closely with other working structures within the Baltic Sea Region.

II. The Polish WGDI agenda and activities during 2006-2007

The capacity of Chair of the WGDI rotates on an annual basis. From July 2006 to July 2007 the Working Group has been chaired by Poland. The lead topic during the reporting period was the fight against corruption in the context of transparency, access and civic participation possibilities within the public field. During this period, the WGDI has held 3 meetings: 16-17 November 2006 in Warsaw; 6-7 February 2007 in Warsaw and 14 May 2007 in Warsaw. A bigger conference *Relations between Corruption, Democracy and Human Rights* was organized by the WGDI on 15 May 2007 in Warsaw. Two mini-seminars have been arranged in preparation to the Conference in May. One on 17 November 2006 in Warsaw with participation of the representatives from the Polish Central Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Polish Academy of Science and Batorego Foundation (NGO) and another one with the focus on the role of free media in fighting corruption, on 7 February 2007 in Warsaw. Members from academia (Warsaw University, Nicholas Copernicus University of Toruń and independent researchers), Polish Journalists' Association and Batorego Foundation participated at the latter.

Civil society

Civil society is an important intermediary between the state and the citizens, and is thus an essential and necessary part of any democratic society. During the period 2006 - 2007, the WGDI also focused on civil society and citizens' participation. As a follow-up to the WGDI Study on Citizens' Participation, undertaken under the previous WGDI Swedish Presidency, the WGDI together with the International IDEA and the CBSS Secretariat on

4 October 2006 in Stockholm organised a seminar on *Citizens' Participation in Political Decision Making Processes* (Seminar Report attached). The aim of the seminar was to bring the findings identified in both the IDEA Handbook *Initiatives to Encourage Higher Turnout: an Inventory with Case Studies* and the WGDI Study to life with concrete action. The seminar therefore focused on how to increase citizens' participation both in relation to elections and in-between elections. The seminar was organised back-to-back with the 6th Baltic Sea NGO Forum that made it easier for the NGO representatives to participate at the Seminar and for the WGDI members to participate at the NGO Forum. The WGDI Chair addressed the NGO Forum and informed about the work and future plans of the group, as well as participated at the panel discussion. In addition, the CBSS Secretariat maintains close and regular contact with the Baltic Sea NGO Forum Consultative Committee.

The WGDI engaged NGOs in its work under the period chaired by Poland. To gather the necessary expertise for the Conference on corruption issues, the WGDI involved experts from NGOs and academia from the CBSS Member States. NGOs from Ukraine and Belarus also participated at the Conference. NGO representatives were also involved in both mini-seminars in preparation for the Conference.

Cooperation with other organisations and CBSS Observer States

The WGDI receives invitations to attend meetings, seminars or conferences arranged by other organisations, the topics of which fall within the terms of reference of the WGDI. During the period, the WGDI was invited to attend the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC). The WGDI Secretary attended the 15th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland, on 4-5 September 2006.

As already mentioned above, the WGDI, CBSS Secretariat and International IDEA co-organized a joint seminar on citizens' participation in October 2006.

The WGDI whilst chaired by Poland established contacts with a CBSS Observer State Ukraine. Representatives from the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated at the WGDI meeting on 6-7 February 2007 and the Conference on corruption issues in May. Experts from Ukrainian NGOs also took part at the Conference.

III. Future Activities of the Working Group

The promotion of democracy, the rule of law, fundamental rights and the fostering of civil society will remain a focus of the CBSS. Cooperation with other regional and international institutions as well as the CBSS Observer States and other CBSS working structures will be crucial in carrying out this task and avoiding the duplication of efforts. The future of the WGDI has been thoroughly discussed during the period and the group decided to continue its work according to the Terms of Reference in the present format, gathering up to three times per year. The Chairing period will remain twelve months. Chair rotation will be in accordance with the overall CBSS Presidency rotation. Every WGDI presiding Chair will propose one (maximum two) leading topics that will be approved by the Working Group. The WGDI may involve experts in its work on an ad-hoc basis, thus also adding the possibility of sharing information and closer cooperation at expert level in the Baltic Sea Region. To conclude the period and summarise the work on the leading theme, every chaired period will strive for a concrete result, e.g. a study, survey, conference or

seminar. These may outline a basis for appropriate recommendations. Since the number of meetings has been reduced, the WGDI will intensify “virtual” contacts within the group via e-mails, CBSS extranet and various IT tools to prepare documents and decisions in-between the meetings. In this way, while reducing the number of issues discussed, more focus, stronger output and value-added can be achieved by the Group.

Attachment no 1 to the Annual Report of the WGDI: Seminar Report on Citizens’ Participation in Political Decision-making Processes

4 October 2006, Stockholm

The seminar took place at the premises of International IDEA on Strömsborg in Stockholm and was attended by a diverse group of experts working in fields related to the topic of citizens’ participation. The group engaged in fruitful discussions on how to improve participation among citizens and approached the issue from many angles. The list of participants is enclosed at the end of this report.

The head of the IDEA Programme on Electoral Processes, Mr. Andrew Ellis, opened the seminar by welcoming the participants and gave a short presentation on the history and development of IDEA. Special attention was paid to the IDEA’s activities in electoral processes. Ambassador Christer Persson, the CBSS CSO Chair, also addressed the participants. The rest of the seminar program was divided into three sessions. The first session included presentations by the CBSS-WGDI and CBSS Secretariat on the *Study on Citizens’ Participation* and Carleton University Professor Jon Pammett’s explanation of worldwide voting trends. The second session began with a presentation by IDEA on the new IDEA Handbook *Engaging the Electorate* and was followed by Mr. Linus Källander, the project leader for the 2006 Swedish School Elections, who outlined the aim, process and results of the project. Finally, all participants were invited to contribute their experiences and suggestions on how to improve citizens’ participation.

The Study on Citizens’ Participation is to be found at the following address:
<http://www.cbss.org/summits/reykjavik2006/reports/studyofcitizensparticipation.pdf>

Study on Citizens’ Participation in the Baltic Sea region.

WGDI member Ms. Martina Holmgren and Ms. Johanne Thorhauge from the CBSS Secretariat presented the *Study on Citizens’ Participation* in which a comparative overview of the level of participation in the Baltic Sea region is presented. The presentation included the study’s background, an overview of the political structures, the actual level of participation in the respective CBSS Member States, initiatives taken to improve participation in a number of the CBSS Member States, and conclusions. However, the focus was the actual participation during and in between elections. Moreover, factors impacting participation were elaborated.

Critiques of the Study on Citizens’ Participation.

The reactions to the findings of the Study on Citizens’ Participation were diversified and generally constructive. It was agreed that the report was very useful, giving a clear overview of the state of citizens’ participation in the region. Particularly the Latvian NGO representative, Rasma Pipike, found the descriptions of Latvia to be very accurate and insightful. She also supported the NGO-relevant conclusions.

There were also some critical remarks about the study. Some argued that the comparison of legislative frameworks was too thin, particularly considering that the goal of the study was to measure the effect of political structures on participation. An increased focus on direct democracy and minorities was requested, as well as a more thorough treatment of minorities and indigenous people and the relation between civil society and individual citizens. Finally, the reliability of the data regarding untraditional participation was questioned, because it came from a variety of sources.

Finnish WGDI member Matti Niemivuo supported a focus on local government in an attempt to increase the low voter turnout at the local level and pointed out that Finland is in the process of reforming local government by reducing the number of municipalities.

Participation and worldwide trends

Prof. Jon Pammett broadened the scope to global voting activities. His presentation provided an overview of the general downward trend in voter turnout since 1945, with an average decline of about 10%. Prof. Pammett then pointed out some problems that academics face when analysing these trends. Surveys from the field are rarely representative and tend to miss many non-voting groups.

Studies have shown that some of the main reasons for not voting are: **disinterest** (voting is becoming a marginalised activity, especially among young people), **negativity** (often perceived to be the most important reason, although this is not necessarily the case in practice) and **personal priorities** (other activities being more important than voting).

Prof. Pammett suggested studying the connection between voter turnout and other forms of participation, and whether the same people who abstain from voting also abstain from other forms of participation. Further topics for future studies are the nature of participation and whether the change in participation is consumer-related.

IDEA Publication

Maria Gratchew presented the new IDEA publication and addressed more specifically the diversity of initiatives encouraging higher voter participation in different countries. The main objectives of the new publications are to disseminate information and share knowledge on voter maximization activities in an effort to stimulate a more informed debate and to inspire and promote new thinking and the design of new activities. The case study is a response to the growing number of individuals from electoral committees, universities, NGOs, and research committees from many countries who have asked IDEA for advice on reversing the decline in electoral participation. It is intended that organizations that have addressed IDEA will use the book as a source of inspiration. The publication includes about 50 case studies in six categories, such as information and advertisement campaigns, entertainment projects and inducement projects.

Ms. Gratchew noted that improving turnout often seems almost as important as the election itself, while other forms of participation tend to be forgotten. This is encouraged by the fact that voter turnout is easy to compare quantitatively and by our lack of knowledge about people's participation in other fields. In addition, Ms. Gratchew noted how few projects are followed up by an evaluation, which is surprising given the resources invested in them. The book includes both evaluated and non-evaluated projects as well as successful and unsuccessful activities. Brief information about the book is attached to this report.

Swedish School Elections

Mr. Linus Källander, *Skolval 2006* Project leader, presented an overview of the school elections, which took place at the same time as the national and local elections. The initiative for school elections came from a youth organisation and was mainly funded by the Ministry of Justice. The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs was tasked by the Government to work with the project. The aim was to give youth an opportunity to practice voting and democracy, to encourage contact between young people and politicians, and to foster engagement with and discussion of democratic values. Throughout the duration of the project, the youth organization visited schools, arranged workshops and forums, initiated discussions, and created role-plays. Politicians were invited to schools to discuss issues and to make young people 'understand the game' of politics.

The elections were designed to be as authentic as possible regarding rules, ballots and ballot boxes. Teaching material about parliament and democracy was included. Though the school election was held at an earlier date, the results were presented at the same time as the real elections results. More than 400,000 students (ages 11-18) at 1,500 schools participated. Voter turnout was about 6% higher than for the real elections. About 9% of the ballots were blank, with most of these coming from the upper grades.

Youth participation

The topic of youth participation figured heavily in the seminar. The Swedish school elections, the slight emphasis on youth in the *Study on Citizens' Participation*, and Prof. Pammett's presentation all reinforced this focus.

Mr. Helge Hellberg from the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs asked for more elaboration of findings relating to young people's views in the conclusion of the study and suggested widening the scope to include the possibility of lowering the voting age to 16 (this has been done on a trial basis at the local level in some German states). Mr. Linus Källander agreed and argued that lowering the voting age would be purposeful if followed up with information and debate. It was reminded that the turnout at the Swedish school elections was 6 % above the turnout for the real elections.

Ms. Rasma Pipike voiced concerns with the information supplied during the school elections and questioned if politicians' speeches at schools might be propaganda. The potential problem was limited by schools abstaining from inviting radical parties and by teaching democracy to the students.

Prof. Jon Pammett highlighted the potential of school elections to influence not only students, but also parents and other members of society.

Roundtable discussion

At this point, participants were invited to present their experiences with different projects. They were especially encouraged to address evaluation techniques and future plans.

Participants from Sweden acknowledged that evaluation techniques are crucial but also very difficult to work with. They stressed the need to allow some qualitative conclusions. Even when the outcome of a project cannot be put into numbers, it can still be valuable to follow the people's vibes. This approach was supported by NGO representatives who particularly stressed the importance of involving NGOs in the promotion of social inclusion, even if progress was not manifested directly in the voting results. Also the NGOs were seen as a way to bridge the growing gap between politicians and citizens.

Participants also argued that different countries need unique approaches. In Finland, where a "Citizens' Participatory Plan" was introduced in 2003, a small unit founded by the Ministry of Justice analyzed methods to increase voter turnout within the frame of Finnish

society. For example, compulsory voting was ruled out because it would not appeal to Finnish citizens.

Prof. Henry Milner from Montreal University supported diverse approaches but emphasized information and civic education as a common denominator. He referenced the civic education project *Experiments in Political Socialization: Kids Voting USA as a Model for Civic Education Reform*. Among other things, the project concluded that people will vote only if it is worth doing. A precondition for making it worthwhile was a certain level of general knowledge and information. The project was based on questionnaires sent out to 30 countries.

The need to exploit modern technology and to establish closer links between institutions, citizens and public-private partnerships was mentioned. Estonia, which is one of most advanced countries in terms of electronic voting, noted that it is likely to increase participation. However, the specific effect of electronic voting still needs to be evaluated as a number of factors could have had an influence on the higher turnout.

The Polish WGDI representative, Ms. Dorota Preda, emphasized the Polish people's lack of trust and interest in politics, i.e. they do not believe their vote will change anything. This negativity, previously mentioned by Prof. Pammett, is not only found among youth and results in people abstaining from voting because they are unhappy with their situation, rather than using their vote to effect change. It was unclear without further analysis whether an advertisement campaign would serve any purpose in this respect. The final question for representatives from the Baltic countries and Poland was whether NGOs are part of the solution or also part of the problem. Do they guide citizens towards active involvement or play a key role in keeping societies and political systems distant?

Ms. Katarina Sundberg, former chair of the WGDI, closed the seminar by summing up the perspectives for the Working Group. She noted that many questions touched upon are relevant for the Working Group, especially those concerning civic education, engaging youth and working closer with NGOs and the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs. Ms. Sundberg concluded that the seminar was successful in bringing together NGOs and the Working Group and in evaluating the WGDI Study on Citizens' participation.

List of participants

WGDI

Ms. Tiiu Viljasaar (Estonia), Mr. Matti Niemivuo (Finland), Ms. Gaivile Stankeviciene (Lithuania), Ms. Dorota Preda (Poland), Ms. Katarina Sundberg (Sweden), Ms. Martina Holmgren (Sweden)

International IDEA

Mr. Andrew Ellis, Ms. Maria Gratchew, Prof. Jon Pammett, Carlton University

CBSS Secretariat

Ms. Anitra Jankevica, Mr. Alexander Domesle, Ms. Johanne Thorhauge

Election commissions

Ms. Inger K. Mogensen, Head of the Office of Election Affairs, Denmark

Ms. Anne Birte Pade, Election Consultant, Denmark

Baltic Sea NGO Forum

Ms. Annette Sjodin, Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights, Ms. Rasma Pipike, Pilsoniska Alianse, Latvia, Ms. Maret Merisaar, Coalition Clean Baltic, Estonia

Academia, civil society and authorities

Ms. Paivikki Lindroos, Secretary to the BSPC, Mr. Jussi Aaltonen, Ministry of Justice, Finland, Mr. Linus Källander, SKOLVAL, Project leader, Mr. Helge Hellberg, Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs, Prof. Henry Milner, University of Montreal

Annex 2: CBSS Working Group on Economic Cooperation (Swedish Chairmanship July 2006 - June 2007)

The overriding objective, during the chaired period by Sweden, of the Working Group on Economic Cooperation was to enhance the role of the CBSS in facilitating trade and investment between countries of the Region and to achieve results that make a difference to companies trading and investing in the region. The Working Group, amongst others, attempted to consider ways of deepening the regional economic interaction and strengthening competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region in a wider European context and globally. Means of increasing the interplay with the business sector were addressed accordingly.

I. Removing barriers to trade and investment

- The efforts were directed at searching for an appropriate and suitable form of activity to address obstacles and problem-areas for economic actors in the Baltic Sea Region, based on the BAC's proposals. The Working Group was not able to reach a consensus on this proposal. The alternative German proposal was not acceptable to the BAC, as having a low added-value. The work on this subject is deemed highly important for the CBSS and the respective structures and working bodies of the CBSS will carry this work further.
- Regular contacts were maintained with the CBSS Working Group on Customs Cooperation and Border Crossing Aspects (WGCB), which among others, is in charge of addressing the "2-hour" objective and enhancing cooperation between the Customs authorities of the Member States. The Chair and the Secretariat attended a meeting of the WGCB sub-group on 16-17 January 2007 in Stockholm and the 2nd WGCB meeting on 10-11 May 2007 in Stockholm where the Multi-Annual Action Plan was adopted.
- The WGEN discussed ways of improving the performance of the CBSS information gateway for small and medium-sized enterprises – www.balticmarket.org. The German Ministry for Economics and Technology as a hosting party has refreshed the homepage and improved the general look of the Portal. An Intern in the CBSS Secretariat was assigned for three months (during April – June 2007) to assist in updating respective national links and making the Portal more visible within Internet search engines. The WGEN considered useful the possibility to extend the content of the Portal to include investment promotion, or as an alternative to create a new, more comprehensive portal, or an akin collaboration tool. Further

investigations as regards both financial and human resources will be continued as feasible with the view to draw up a relevant project proposal.

II. Improving framework conditions for business

- Four seminars were arranged to raise awareness in government as well as in the business community of the detrimental effects of corruption on the business climate: Saint Petersburg – October 2006, Warsaw – January 2007, and Stockholm – February 2007 and Tallinn - May 2007. The Seminars helped the business community/companies to learn more about integrity measures and how to conduct business without resorting to corrupt behaviour. The Seminars were met with active interest among attending companies, suggesting that many companies are eager to learn how they can develop internal rules of conduct and how the use of such rules can benefit their business.
- The WGEC explored ways to improve opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises by building networks and expanding regionally, through the so-called “Mentorship” model. In November 2006 Mr. Per Ivarsson from the Swedish company *Sweden East European EL SWEL AB* presented the practices of his company in communicating experiences to other companies in Lithuania and Latvia under the umbrella of the so-called, Baltic Mentor Academy. The Member States informed about similar national “mentorship” initiatives which were included into a special overview compiled by the Secretariat. The overview would serve as a tool to spread best practices and respective knowledge among the Member States and beyond in this sphere.
- A Conference on *the Baltic Sea Region’s Integration in the Global Economy* was held in Stockholm on 22 May 2007 in conjunction with the meeting of Ministers in charge of Trade and Economy. The Conference was organised by the Swedish National Board of Trade and Stockholm Institute of Transition Economies, supported by the Swedish Foreign Ministry. The focus of the conference was the effects of global trade liberalisation and integration of the CBSS region and its individual countries. A qualitative assessment of trade barriers was also made allowing for the WGEC to consider this topic more in-depth in the fall. The Swedish Minister for Foreign Trade, Sten Tolgfors, introduced a policy panel on the subject of the Baltic Sea Region’s integration with the global economy
- Mr. Anders Lindholm informed the Working Group in November 2006 about a programme for territorial cooperation 2007-2013 with the emphasis on the new INTERREG Baltic Sea Transnational Programme 2007-13. The WGEC found useful if relevant projects could be suggested from the side of the CBSS to seek co-funding with the new ENPI financial instrument. However, such challenges as finding project partners, providing the indispensable share of funding, as well as searching for the needed expertise in putting down projects, should be addressed.
- The WGEC continued benchmarking on business indicators in the Baltic Sea Region and commissioned in May 2007 a World Bank report on the Baltic Sea Region profile 2007. The Report provided a fresh overview of conditions in the member States as regards “doing business” and suggested some useful recommendations for national reform.

- The Working Group based on input from the Secretariat conducted a series of discussions on how to implement and deal with the Road Map on Investment promotion in the Baltic Sea Region. Based on annual national notifications from the Member States, the Secretariat prepared an overview which was helpful in identifying further directions of the work. The CBSS Secretariat also participated as a partner in the “Branding” Action Group set up and led by the Baltic Development Forum to work out a “branding” strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

III. Promoting cooperation with Kaliningrad

- The WGEC held its third meeting in the city of Kaliningrad, where it used the opportunity to meet with the Government of the Kaliningrad Region and the Maritime Port Authorities. The Authorities concerned provided a useful overview and assessment of the conditions for increased trade between Kaliningrad and other CBSS-countries and for an increase in foreign investment in Kaliningrad Oblast, as well. The members of the WGEC informed their respective institutions and responsible officials on the outcome of the WGEC meetings with the view to seek the follow-up. There was a general feeling that the topic of Kaliningrad should be kept on the CBSS agenda with a possibility of inviting, as feasible and appropriate, representatives of the Government of Kaliningrad to the WGEC meetings.

IV. Cooperation with other regional bodies and initiatives

- A useful update and exchange of information and planned activities was conducted with the BEAC, represented by the Chair of the BEAC Working Group on Economic Cooperation, Ms. Barbro Widing (Finland). The WGEC deemed useful to develop synergies between the CBSS and BEAC for the benefit of the business community, especially when it comes to cooperation under the Northern Dimension “umbrella”. Possibilities for concrete projects should be also explored against the background of the new financial opportunities deriving from the ENPI 2007-13. Once the BEAC establishes a permanent international Secretariat (in Kirkenes, Norway), tentatively in late fall 2007, there will be a direct exchange and developing contacts between the CBSS and BEAC Secretariats.
- Cooperation with the Baltic Development Forum was continued. The Chair and the Secretariat attended the 8th Annual BDF Summit in Helsinki, 29-31 October reporting back to the WGEC on important and noteworthy developments in the Regional economy, as well as provided some highlights from the State-of-the-Region Report 2006. Contacts with the BDF were also maintained through the Baltic Sea Initiative 2010 process, where the BDF assumed the leadership.
- The Chair and the Secretariat attended the IV Economic Forum organised by the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association in Turku on 22 September 2006, where the main priorities and planned activities of the Swedish CBSS Presidency were presented to the business community. A representative of the BCCA contributed viably to discussions in the Working Group regarding the topic of tackling barriers to economic co-operation in the region. A regular participation of

the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN) in the work of the WGEC provided an additional interface with one of the important social partners in the region being conducive to addressing issues of the labour market.

V. Preparations for the meeting of Ministers responsible for Trade and Economy

- The meeting of the CBSS Ministers in charge of Economy and Trade was held in Stockholm on 23 May 2007. The Ministerial session adopted the Chair's Conclusions which will serve as a basis for further work of the WGEC under the Latvian and, possibly, Danish Presiding Chair's, thereon.
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- **Attachment no 1 to the Annual Report of the WGEC:**

Conclusions of the Chair of the 6th CBSS Ministerial Conference on Trade and Economy

Stockholm, May 23, 2007

At the invitation of the Minister for Foreign Trade of Sweden, Ministers in Charge of Trade and Economy of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and the Russian Federation, or their representatives, met in Stockholm on May 22-23, 2007 for their 6th Conference¹.

Economic Cooperation in the Region – Increasing Competitiveness, Removing Barriers and Facilitating Trade and Investment

The Ministers confirmed the political will and commitment of their countries to actions of common interest with the aim of spurring trade and economic growth in the Region.

The Ministers reviewed the results achieved since the adoption of the Bergen and Moscow Actions Plans. They welcomed

- *The Road Map on Actions Aimed at Achieving Competitive, Stable, Transparent and Predictable Investment Conditions in the CBSS Member States²* as a valuable tool for benchmarking investment conditions and business climate;
- Efforts by the Working Group on Economic Cooperation to promote business relations between the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation and other CBSS countries;

¹ The Ministers welcomed the representatives of the CBSS Observer States (France, Italy, Slovakia, and Ukraine), as well as representatives of the Business Advisory Council (BAC), the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA), the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN), and the Nordic Investment Bank.

² "The Road Map on Actions Aimed at Achieving Competitive, Stable, Transparent and Predictable Investment Conditions in the CBSS Member States" presented by the CBSS Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC) at the 6th Baltic Sea States Summit in Reykjavik on June 6-7, 2006

- The establishment of a CBSS Working Group on Customs Co-operation and Border Crossing Aspects and preparations underway by customs authorities to resume measuring the time needed for goods to cross borders. Ministers confirmed their support for the 2-hour goal for border crossings of goods first set in the Bergen Action Plan. They acknowledged the constructive work of the Business Advisory Council and its efforts to support the CBSS's work to remove barriers to trade and investment.
- Efforts by past and present CBSS Presidencies to raise awareness in government as well as in the business community of the detrimental effects of corruption on the business climate. A series of seminars targeting the business community on integrity measures to aid companies conduct business without resorting to corrupt behavior was met with active interest among attending companies, suggesting that many companies are eager to learn how they can develop internal rules of conduct and how the use of such rules can benefit their business.

Ministers noted that realization of the potential for further economic growth in the Region requires continued improvement of the business environment. They agreed on the need to develop further coordinated actions in areas of special importance to the competitiveness of the Region. They underlined the importance of promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and the growth of SMEs, e.g. by making SMEs more interested in expanding their business into neighboring markets in the Region. Positive experiences can be shared in this regard from various mentorship projects. Ministers encouraged Member States to coordinate efforts to develop project proposals and to strengthen the ability of project leaders to apply for project financing, including from available EU instruments. They also emphasized the need for continued actions in the fight against corruption.

The Baltic Sea Region as a Part of Global Trade

The Baltic Sea countries have benefited from rapid growth of their foreign trade. There is also a strong and still untapped potential for further growth as suggested by a study commissioned by the Swedish CBSS Presidency on *Potential gains from trade liberalization in the Baltic Sea region*. The study was made by the Swedish National Board of Trade and presented at yesterday's conference on The Baltic Sea Region's Integration in the Global Economy.

The accelerating trend towards growing competition in the global economy means new challenges for the Baltic Sea region where growth in trade has long been driven by the growth in global demand. While the Baltic Sea region continues to defend its world export market position, it should take more actions in order to accelerate inward foreign investment flows and increase the level of domestic investments.

Countries in the Baltic Sea Region have responded to the new challenges by launching a wide range of actions to improve the underlying conditions driving their competitive strength, e.g. to improve access to finance, innovation and cluster development. Ministers noted that national efforts could be more effective if also supported by cross-national programs drawing on the combined assets of several countries. They welcomed in this regard the initiative to start work to develop a Baltic Sea Strategy and a concrete

proposal to reform the CBSS, and that a report on the results of these efforts be submitted to the Baltic Sea Summit in June 2008.

Ministers looked forward to Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization and wished for a rapid completion of remaining steps towards Russian membership in the WTO.

Ministers emphasized the need for further action to facilitate trade between the Baltic Sea countries. Recalling the positive experiences of the SOLVIT network, which connects governmental agencies across Europe in order to help companies and individuals caught between differing regulatory systems, they

- called for measures to make the SOLVIT centres better known among the business community;
- encouraged responsible national authorities to ensure that the resources available to their SOLVIT centres are adequate to the demand for their services.

Ministers also took note of the offer by some members of the CBSS to make their enquiry points for barriers to trade ready to address complaints submitted also by non-EU/EEA members of the CBSS.

Annex 3: Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (WGNRS)

CBSS Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (WGNRS) 2006-2007

Within the reporting period (6th Baltic Sea States Summit on 7-8 June 2006 in Reykjavik, Iceland, until 14th CBSS Ministerial Session on 13 June 2007 in Malmö, Sweden) the WGNRS continued its activities with regard to already covered issues as well as included new topics into its work. The capacity of Chair of the WGNRS has been passed on from Germany to Norway on 1 January 2007 and the WGNRS will be chaired for 2007-2009 by Mr. Finn Ugletveit, Senior Adviser, Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority.

I. Meetings

Since the 6th Baltic Sea States Summit on 7-8 June 2006, two WGNRS meetings were held: on 26-27 October 2006 in the Swedish Radiation Protection Authority in Stockholm, and on 12-13 April 2007 at the Estonian Radiation Protection Centre in Tallinn. In conjunction with the meetings, the WGNRS paid technical visits to relevant institutions in the hosting country as the Emergency and Response Centre of the Swedish Radiation Protection Authority in Stockholm, Sweden, and the Paldiski nuclear site and sterilisation facility in Estonia.

In addition to the WGNRS members, at the Stockholm meeting the CBSS Observer States Slovak Republic, Ukraine and the United States of America as well as experts from the Radioactive Waste Management Agency of Lithuania, the IAEA Waste Safety Section and the Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate were present. At the Tallinn meeting, the CBSS Observer States Ukraine and United States of America were present

as well as the Head of Emergency Response, Health Protection Agency, Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response, United Kingdom, to report on the Polonium (Po-210) events in 2006, a representative of the Lithuanian State Nuclear Safety Authority (Emergency Unit) and the Principal State Nuclear and Radiation Safety Inspector of Belarus.

At the Reykjavik meeting in April 2006, the WGNRS had decided to change the set-up of WGNRS meetings. One of the two annual meetings should be used for a topical meeting where a concrete subject will be discussed in depth. The WGNRS had decided to have the first topical meeting on emergency preparedness in Stockholm in October 2006. However, due to a request by the CSO to take on the agenda the issue of surface burials especially in Lithuania, the first topical meeting was postponed. At the Tallinn meeting, the WGNRS decided to have a topical discussion of the Po-210 events that had been recognised in late 2006 and that lead to actions taken in several CBSS Member States and later on the death of one person in the United Kingdom. Therefore the WGNRS postponed the planned topical meeting. At its Tallinn meeting in April 2007, the WGNRS agreed to set up a small Working Group to analyze the objectives, aim and possible outcome of topical WGNRS meetings and to come up with an evaluation/proposal as soon as possible. It was decided that this Working Group will consist of Norway (Chair), Denmark and Germany.

At the beginning of each meeting, National Progress Reports by the Member States were presented on nuclear and radiation safety activities and achievements since the last meeting. Members commented on and discussed issues in the reports that were of common interest. All the National Progress Reports as well as other (meeting) documents are available for all WGNRS members and the CSO at the WGNRS Extranet. In addition, since the Stockholm meeting, Observer States present at the meetings are invited to give a respective national report.

II. WGNRS Activities

The agenda of the WGNRS meetings during the reporting period covered preferably activities which are relevant with respect to emergency preparedness:

• Environmental Monitoring

- *Principles on External Dose Rate Measurements*

The Baltic Sea States already exchange on a daily base results of the routine external dose rate measurements. For better harmonisation of the measurements the WGNRS had established an Expert Group on External Dose Rate Measurements which held its fourth meeting in Freiburg/Germany in February 2007. The main topic of this meeting concerned the actual efforts of the modernisation of the dose rate network in the different countries. The WGNRS took note of the activities of the Expert Group at its meeting in Tallinn in April 2007 and encouraged it to continue its work.

- *Radionuclides Measurements in Air*

The scope of the CBSS Agreement of the Exchange of Radiation Monitoring Data (7 June 2001) has been extended 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 Reykjavik on 7-8 June 2006. Since then, a prototype for the exchange of air radiation monitoring data has been established and the exchange between some

CBSS Member States already started. At the previous meeting of the Expert Group on External Dose Rate Measurements in Freiburg/Germany in February 2007, the intention was expressed that after about 1 year routine operations will function.

- *Access to Results of National Dose Rate Networks*

The relevant list of IP addresses and login credentials has been updated.

• **Overview of Routine and Emergency Monitoring Programmes in the CBSS Member States**

The WGNRS had decided earlier to follow-up only routine monitoring programmes. In this respect, the EC presented an overview on the routine monitoring programmes in the CBSS Member States and demonstrated the new EURDEP restricted website.

• **Regional Agreement on Assistance**

The WGNRS discussed the necessity of a Baltic Sea Regional Agreement on Assistance especially in view of ongoing processes on the international level (IAEA) and decided to park the issue of a Baltic Sea Regional Agreement until the outcome of the international discussions becomes clearer. A decision if the WGNRS should aim for a regional agreement on assistance or finally drop the issue will be taken at a later stage.

• **International Exercises**

Another CBSS Communication Exercise was held in October 2006 (organised by Iceland) and it was agreed to hold the next one within one year (organised by Sweden). At the WGNRS meetings, regular reports were given by those CBSS Member States participating in international exercises and the CBSS Member States are asked to inform regularly the Secretary to the WGNRS about upcoming exercises in their countries and to invite other WGNRS members as observers to these exercises. Regional cooperation in relation to international exercises is also discussed.

III. Other

Other issues dealt with by the WGNRS were i.a. surface burials and especially the planned near surface repository in Lithuania, recent incidents in Sweden and Norway, Polonium (Po-210) events in 2006. Further, the **comparative tables** on Intervention Levels and on Handling and Control of High-activity Sealed Radioactive Sources were updated regularly.

To **increase public awareness and visibility** of the WGNRS activities, the WGNRS published an "Activity Report of the Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety 1992-2006" which was presented at the 6th Baltic Sea States Summit in Reykjavik in June 2006 (downloadable at www.cbss.org/structure/wgnrs/).

The **WGNRS Working Group Fund** has been used to

- cover travel expenses for invited external experts;
- support some WGNRS members with their travel expenses to ensure their participation in the WGNRS meetings.

Annex 4: The New CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings with focus on adults

CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TFTHB)

Throughout the course of the Swedish Presidency, the Secretariat provided technical assistance to the establishment of the new CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TFTHB) and its presiding Chair. The TFTHB has during the year been chaired by Sweden, Mr. Per Wallén, Ministry for Foreign Affairs. This assistance included supporting activities with respect to constituting, coordinating and presenting the group to other international organisations. Furthermore, the secretariat has during the reporting period provided support during meetings, assistance in the exchange of ideas regarding agendas, the preparation of draft minutes

During the period chaired by Sweden, and since the establishment of the Task Force, two meetings were held with very good participation of experts from all capitals. The first was held on 28 November 2006, at the premises of the International Permanent Secretariat of the CBSS in Stockholm Sweden, and the second on 22 March 2007 at the Ministry for Family, Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in Bonn, Germany.

The Secretariat has, together with the Chair, had meetings with the European Commission (The cabinet of Franco Frattini, Commissioner for , Freedom, Security and Justice, DG Relex and EuropeAid), as well as with Members of the European Parliament. The Secretariat has also met with the Nordic Council of Ministers in order to discuss possible cooperation.

A visit has been undertaken to Athens to meet with representatives from the Ministry Foreign Affairs to share best practices and learn more about Black Sea cooperation. Furthermore, the secretariat visited London to meet with representatives from FCO, Home Office, the newly established United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre and a number of NGO's to learn more about UK's efforts in the fight against trafficking.

The TFTHB has agreed that the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, (ETS nr 197, 2005) should serve as a point of departure and guidance for all efforts and proposals of its work. Identification of victims of trafficking, who are often discovered outside their country of residence or origin is thus a prioritised task for the TFTHB. Therefore, training of diplomatic and consular staff in identifying victims is one of the central goals for the TFTHB. This training should be undertaken together with the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk.

Furthermore, the WGCC and the TFTHB secretariats has started to coordinate actions fighting trafficking making use of the synergy there is in the co-location of the secretariats.

As there are currently no funds available for any activities, the secretariat has started to explore the funding possibilities in order to be able to perform its activities.

The secretarial function is funded by the Swedish Government until 31 December 2007.

Annex 5: Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States

A. Overall activities of the Secretariat

During the period 2006-2007 the Secretariat continued, under the guidance of the CSO, to provide technical assistance to the CBSS Presidency. Main events during the reporting period were the preparation of the 14th Ministerial Session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in Malmö, Sweden, complemented by the meeting of the Political Directors and two high / Ministerial level meetings of the CBSS Member and Observer States in firstly and jointly, Environment and Agriculture on 19-20 April 2007 and the 6th Ministerial Conference on Trade and Economy in May.

The Swedish Presidency continued the trend of tracking synergies between the Working Groups and the structures in the planned events. These synergies could be seen in the more project based inter-relation between the pillars of the economic, social and environmental bodies when planning seminars, events and initiatives. Good examples of this can be found illustrated below with firstly the *Gotland Initiative* and follow up in Bornholm and also the seminar on civil security issues organised jointly by the Romanian Embassy, SIPRI, the Swedish Presidency, the CBSS Secretariat, The Swedish National Defence College and the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. Both of these events concentrated on sustainable practice across a wide field of disciplines and took a broad but complex and expert level look at the interrelated issues concerning the Swedish Presidency priorities of Civil Security, Trade and Investment and Energy and Environment.

In addition under the auspices of the Swedish Presidency and with preliminary Swedish funding a new Task Force, located in the Secretariat, came into being. At the 6th Baltic Sea States Summit in Reykjavik on 8 June 2006, the Heads of Government welcomed the initiative to integrate the successful work of the Nordic Baltic Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings into the CBSS framework, with the objective of fostering actions and enhancing co-operation to combat such trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region and its near vicinity. The CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TFTHB) was established after a decision taken at the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials meeting, on 7- 8 November 2006, in Kalmar, Sweden. The Task Force is composed of experts from relevant Government ministries in CBSS capitals.

The Annual Financial Report for FY 2006 shows a budget surplus of €12263.00, mainly due to the Secretariat's efforts of maintaining a cost efficient approach in all its activities and a good budgetary discipline. Apart from the influence of the inflation index in the CBSS Member States, the increase of the budget for FY 2007 of 2.2% compared to the budget for FY 2006 can be attributed to increases in salaries and related costs, travel expenses, communications (information strategy) and the introduction of two new chapters to the budget i.e., the working group funds and the CBSS internship/scholarship programme.

During the reporting period, the Secretariat and Units have gained new staff members. A Press and Communications Officer and a Office Administrator were employed. A Senior Adviser and a Head of Unit to the Baltic 21 Unit joined the Secretariat. The NDPHS recruited a new Head of Secretariat and a Senior Adviser. The Administration of the Secretariat and Units continued to consist of three staff members. Additional personnel

were employed on a short term basis due to sick leaves both in the core Secretariat and the Administration. The Senior Adviser to the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings was seconded by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The contract is valid for a period of 16 months, currently ending in December 2007.

B. CBSS Structures & Working Bodies serviced by the Secretariat

B1. Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)

The Secretariat has continued to provide technical and administrative support to the CSO Chair and the CSO as a whole in the performance of their duties. Nine meetings of the CSO were serviced by the Secretariat. The Secretariat also provided support for the CSO Chair in the preparation and execution of several other meetings throughout the Swedish CBSS Presidency.

The Secretariat continued to perform a liaison function for the CBSS Presidency in contacts with a wide range of actors, including CBSS Member States and the European Commission. In line with the Secretariat Terms of Reference and in accord with other relevant CBSS documents, the Secretariat also served as a focal point for all CBSS structures and working bodies, CBSS Special Participants and Strategic Partners as well as with the CBSS Observer States and relevant international organisations.

B2. Working Group on Democratic Institutions (WGDI)

Throughout the reported period of the WGDI being chaired by Poland the Secretariat provided technical assistance to the WGDI and its Chair. This assistance included the provision of support during meetings, assistance in the exchange of ideas regarding agendas, the preparation of draft minutes, the preparation of the Seminar on *Citizens' Participation in Political Decision Making Processes* and Conference *Relations between Corruption, Democracy and Human Rights*, summarising the work of the period Poland chaired the WGDI. The latter also included extensive research to prepare the conference background paper, and searching for experts from academia, specialised agencies, NGOs and media.

During the period chaired by Poland, the WGDI held three meetings. The first on 16-17 November 2006, the second on 6-7 February 2007 and the third on 14 May 2007. All meetings were held in Warsaw. Two mini-seminars on the leading theme – fight against corruption - have been arranged under the Polish Presiding Chair. One on 17 November 2006 with participation of the representatives from the Polish Central Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Polish Academy of Science and Batorego Foundation (NGO) and another one with the focus on the role of free media in fighting corruption, on 7 February 2007 in Warsaw. Members of academia (Warsaw University, Nicholas Copernicus University of Toruń and independent researchers), Polish Journalists' Association and Batorego Foundation participated at the latter.

The WGDI Secretary also assisted the WGDI Chair by attending and subsequently reporting on the 15th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) that took place in Reykjavik, Iceland, on 4-5 September 2006.

B3. Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC)

During the period chaired by Sweden, the Secretariat provided technical assistance to five regular meetings of the Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC). These meetings took place on the following dates and in the following locations: Lund, 14-15

September 2006; Stockholm, 14-15 November 2006; Kaliningrad, 27-28 February 2007, Visby 11 April 2007, and Stockholm 22 May 2007. In addition, the Secretariat provided assistance to the CSO – WGEC Special Joint Session in Visby held on 12 April 2007.

The Secretariat contributed with a number of analytical/background working papers and relevant reports to the WGEC meetings (referred to in the WGEC annual report). Useful contacts were maintained with the World Bank, which led to the production of a subsequent World Bank study on doing business in the Baltic Sea Region 2007

B4. Working Group on Nuclear Radiation Safety (WGNRS)

The Secretariat ensured a smooth transition from the former presiding WGNRS German Chair to Norway (2007-2009) and provided full technical assistance to two regular WGNRS meetings (Stockholm, 26-27 October 2006, and Tallinn, 12-13 April 2007). The Secretariat informed the WGNRS at these meetings on events and activities within the CBSS cooperation of interest and relevance for the WGNRS. In addition, the Secretariat also provided assistance to two meetings of the Preparatory Group ahead the ordinary WGNRS meetings with participation of the former German Chair, the present Norwegian Chair and at one meeting the Swedish WGNRS member.

As in the reporting period 2005-2006, the Secretariat provided the WGNRS in addition to the assistance for/at the meetings with technical assistance in the preparation and compilation of papers: the regular update of the “Comparative Table on Handling and Control of High-activity Sealed Radioactive Sources in the Baltic Sea Region”, the compilation of “Intervention Levels within the CBSS Member States” and especially the compilation and update of papers related to the implementation of the Joint Declaration on the Exchange of Air Radiation Monitoring Data (2006). In addition, the Secretariat represented together with the WGNRS Chair the WGNRS and gave a presentation on its activities at the 6th Baltic Sea NGO Forum (Saltsjöbaden, 5-7 September 2006).

B5. Baltic 21 Network and Unit

Purpose of the Baltic 21 Unit

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 – in addition to being a part of the co-operation of Baltic Sea States – includes a strong multi-stakeholder involvement. A large number of BSR organisations and actors are contributing to the implementation of Baltic 21, and the Secretariat is serving the whole Baltic 21 network. As part of this multi-stakeholder approach, the membership of the Baltic 21 steering body, the Senior Officials Group is open to all Baltic Sea regional organisations committed and contributing to sustainable development as well as to relevant international financing agencies.

The actions of the Baltic 21 Network and the work of the Secretariat during the reporting period aimed at the implementation of the Baltic 21 Strategy Guidelines (as adopted by the Senior Officials Group in 2004). Good progress was made in many regards. In the following, the main achievements are presented under each Strategy Guideline (the full titles and content of the Strategy Guidelines can be viewed at the Baltic 21 website www.baltic21.org).

During the reporting period, Baltic 21 Senior Officials Group (SOG) was chaired until 6 October 2006 by Mr. Adam Galczynski, Poland, and from 6 October 2006 by Ms. Anne-Cerise Nilsson, Sweden. The period for holding the capacity of chair of Baltic 21 is two

years. The Secretariat was lead by Head of Unit Mr. Risto Veivo from 1 September 2006, and was organised through part-time engagement of the former Head of Unit Mr. Marek Maciejowski during July-August 2006.

Supporting CBSS processes on sustainable development (SG 1)

Following Strategy Guideline 1, Baltic 21 supported the CBSS in the pursuit of sustainable development. During the reporting period, Baltic 21 contributed strongly to the contents and/or organising of three CBSS events and co-operated intensively with BASREC in questions related to sustainable energy policies, especially bio-energy promotion.

From the perspective of Baltic 21, the most important meeting of CBSS addressing sustainable development during the reporting period was the High-level meeting on Agriculture and Environment, Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, 19-20 April. Baltic 21, as invited to contribute with an input to this meeting, organised a considerable process to involve the members of its network to propose concrete actions. As a result of this process, Baltic 21 provided a report proposing 21 concrete actions addressing the issue of eutrophication of the Baltic Sea from different perspectives. All the proposed actions were supported by committed partners for implementation.

Baltic 21 contributed to the organising of the Gotland Initiative event, Visby, Sweden, 15 August 2006, to promote the protection of the Baltic Sea and raise awareness of the problem of eutrophication. This event was followed up by a joint seminar organised by the CBSS, Baltic 21 and B7 in Bornholm, Denmark, 16-17 April. Baltic 21 provided expertise for the content preparation of both events, participated on the spot, and provided an intervention in Bornholm, presented by SOG Chair Anne-Cerise Nilsson from Swedish Ministry of the Environment. On the occasion of the Bornholm event, Baltic 21 also provided a Pro Memorandum on a possible Sustainable Baltic Islands project to promote concrete actions addressing the challenges discussed at both Gotland and Bornholm events.

Regarding BASREC, Baltic 21 participated in the work of BASREC Bio-energy Working Group, and co-operated with BASREC in preparation of a project idea for a Baltic Sea Region Strategic Project on Bio-energy Promotion. A specific Ad-hoc Working Group was established by the decision of the SOG at its meeting number 26, 20-21 March, Riga, Latvia, to support the further development of this project and make related policy recommendations.

Implementing sectoral goals and strengthening cross-sectoral work (SG 2)

Following Strategy Guideline 2, Baltic 21 Unit serviced SOG meetings 25 and 26, SOG Bureau meetings 25, 26 and 27, Lead Party and Responsible Actor meetings 14 and 15 and several meetings of the Baltic 21 Sectors. These meetings provided the concrete venue for joint decision-making, debating and consensus-building on new actions to enhance the Baltic Sea regional sustainable development process. Member countries, sectors and stakeholder organisations participated actively and contributed with initiatives and expertise.

Many of the Baltic 21 Sectors made good progress in their work towards the sectoral goals. The Agriculture sector was re-vitalised under the lead of Germany, organising a series of three seminars and sector meetings during the reporting period. Forestry sector continued its active work lead by Sweden and Latvia. Education (Finland and Lithuania), Industry (Sweden and Russia) and Tourism (Germany and Sweden) sectors continued their active work lead by different countries. VASAB continued its active lead of the

Spatial Planning sector, and BASREC led the actions for the Energy sector. European Commission (DG Fisheries) continued as lead party of Fisheries sector. Furthermore, discussions on co-operation possibilities were carried out also between the Baltic 21 Unit and the EU Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council (RAC) on Fisheries. Also several of the Joint Actions made good progress, most notably Joint Action 4 (City co-operation and sustainable development issues at local communities), where the Union of the Baltic Cities in co-operation with other Baltic 21 members and related actors worked on a number of important projects, including the Baltic 21 lighthouse projects BUSTRIP and SUSTAINMENT. During the reporting period, the BUSTRIP project was also the main contribution to actions on Transport Sector.

Promoting and Creating Baltic Sea Regional Lighthouse Projects (SG 3)

To implement Strategy Guideline 3, demonstrating sustainable development in action by regional lighthouse projects, Baltic 21 worked through five different ad-hoc working groups during the reporting period. The first of these groups was established by SOG meeting 24, and it developed actions on the previously adopted Lighthouse Themes and contributed to the input of Baltic 21 for the preparation of the BSR Trans-national Territorial Co-operation Programme 2007-2013. The next four groups were established by SOG meeting 26 and they concentrate on the themes of Bio-energy Promotion, Education for Sustainable Development, Innovation and Sustainability, and Integrated Management for Urban and Rural areas. During the reporting period, all the four groups had a joint kick-off event (Riga, 19 March) and their respective first meetings (May-June). The interest among Baltic 21 members to contribute at these groups has been high and the work of all groups has made a good start. Based on the successful input of Baltic 21 to the preparation of the BSR Trans-national Territorial Co-operation Programme 2007-2013, each of these groups is well positioned to develop a strategic project to be funded by the new programme during the coming years.

During the reporting period, three new Lighthouse Projects were adopted by the SOG. These projects, BUSTRIP and SUSTAINMENT coordinated by the Union of the Baltic Cities, and Ecosystems Health and Sustainable Agriculture (EHSA), coordinated by the Baltic University Programme – provide considerable actions to advance sustainability on different issues in the Baltic Sea Region. BUSTRIP concentrates on sustainable urban transport, SUSTAINMENT aims at improved governance for sustainable development in cities and towns, and EHSA improves the competencies for sustainable agriculture in several BSR countries. Furthermore, two formerly tentative projects were also formally endorsed as lighthouse projects. These projects, Baltic SeaBreeze and BaltCoast, advance waste management and environmental protection at the archipelagos and among leisure boating activities, and support integrated coastal zone management, respectively. Baltic SeaBreeze is coordinated by Keep Baltic Tidy, and BaltCoast by the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

During the reporting period, Baltic 21 also endorsed a policy plan for its work on the Lighthouse Projects. This strategic theme of the work of Baltic 21 has been highly successful. Nine Lighthouse Projects have been adopted to date, addressing different and highly relevant challenges of sustainable development. The overall financial volume of these projects is close to 20 Million Euros.

In Autumn 2006, the Baltic 21 Unit made the initiative and contributed to the development of the proposal on Baltic 21 Eco-region Project. This project idea was linked with the

Swedish initiative of the Campaign on unsustainable trends in the Baltic Sea Region. The project proposal, submitted with the German Federal Ministry of Environment as its Lead Partner, did not yet receive funding from the current BSR Programme, but is under further development for a proposal to the new programme.

Identifying and developing funding sources for BSR sustainability actions (SG 4)

Following Strategy Guideline 4, to identify funding sources to support the lighthouse projects and other region-level sustainable development initiatives, Baltic 21 made good progress. This was achieved mainly through strong input to the preparation of the new BSR Trans-national Territorial Co-operation Programme 2007-2013, where Baltic 21 was invited to contribute to the consultation process on the programme. As a result of the input provided by Baltic 21, stronger reference to sustainable development was included into the draft programme and several strategic projects proposed by Baltic 21 were included.

During the reporting period, Baltic 21 discussed co-operation possibilities on project financing also at working meetings with Nordic Environment Finance Co-operation (NEFCO) and Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) Secretariat. This liaison is being continued, as well as investigation of co-operation possibilities with other funding agencies.

Supporting and promoting the actions

Supporting all the strategy guidelines, Baltic 21 has continued to promote sustainable development activities undertaken by its members and other actors through the Baltic 21 newsletter and web-site. Editions 2/2006 and 1/2007 of the newsletter were published and distributed to over 5.000 subscribers during the reporting period. The web-site was regularly updated to provide information and promote Baltic 21 actions and other activities on sustainable development. During spring 2007, Baltic 21 also renewed its promotional materials and produced also new materials on its sectors, joint actions and lighthouse projects.

Baltic 21 has also been represented and promoted at a number of events and meetings during the reporting period. The SOG Chair, supported by the Secretariat, undertook missions to Helsinki / Finland in October, Moscow / Russia in December, Copenhagen/Denmark (January), and Brussels / European Commission (February) to promote Baltic 21 and encourage stronger involvement of the respective member countries and the European Commission. The professional staff of the Secretariat took part at consultation events on the new BSR Trans-national Territorial Co-operation Programme, the European Territorial Agenda in the Baltic Sea Region perspective, and on the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.

Enabling all the actions reported above, the Baltic 21 Unit has had a full-time professional staff consisting of the Head of Unit and Senior Advisor. In addition the unit has been supported during limited periods by two interns, respectively, and by a project officer working on the production of the new promotional materials.

B7 Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk (WGCC) & Children's Unit

Meetings of the WGCC

The Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, the WGCC, has been chaired by Deputy Director General Mr Björn Bredesen from the Norwegian Ministry for Children and Equality. The group has had two meetings, 23 – 24 of October 2006 in Copenhagen, by the invitation of the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and 19 to 20 of April 2007 in

Lillehammer, Norway by the invitation of the Norwegian Ministry for Children and Equality. The meeting in Copenhagen prepared the conference on the rights of children in institutions and the meeting in Lillehammer agreed on how to bring the recommendations from the conference forward into concrete action. At both meetings the WGCC programme on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children was discussed and actions taken were evaluated.

WGCC programme on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children

The WGCC has during the year organised the Baltic Sea Region Comprehensive Assistance to Children Victims of Trafficking, the BSR CACVT. This is a training programme including 55 professionals from 10 countries participating in the implementation of the WGCC programme. During the year, four two-day training events have been organised in Vilnius, Warsaw, St Petersburg and Tallinn. The fifth and last training seminar will be held in Stockholm in September 2007. The BSR CACVT is made possible through funding from the EU Commission Daphne II programme and from Save the Children Sweden and the Oak Foundation.

The WGCC has commissioned a mapping of cases of children trafficked in the region. The report of this, including interviews with affected children, will be finalised in late 2007. The mapping is funded through the EU Daphne II programme.

The National Contact Points on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children had their 4th meeting in Warsaw to discuss their work and give input to the WGCC programme. National Contact Points are appointed in all member countries except Russia and Germany.

The WGCC has at its meetings invited the national expert to the Expert Group on Human Trafficking within the Task Force on Organised Crime. The invited national expert has given the WGCC important input to the work and in turn has received information on resources developed through the WGCC programme many of which that can be utilised in their work and information on developments in the region. The CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings, TTFHB, made a presentation of their work at the Lillehammer WGCC meeting and at the 4th Meeting of National Contact Points in Warsaw. Future cooperation between the two groups are foreseen as the WGCC and the TTFHB will jointly analyse the outcome of the BSR CACVT and the mapping programme.

WGCC programme on the Rights of Children in Institutions

The secretariat to the WGCC has made an inventory on how institutions in the member states are presently monitored in order to find the best way of adding value to the work of improving the rights of children in institutions. An independent expert was commissioned to make a report on how international organisations pursue the topic and on how the topics under discussion could best be operationalised by the WGCC. On this note an expert meeting was held in Oslo to prepare the conference on the rights of children in institutions. The WGCC in cooperation with the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and the Swedish presidency to the CBSS organised the conference: "The Rights of Children in Institutions in the Region of the Baltic Sea States- Improving Child Participation, Monitoring and Post Placement Assistance". The conference brought together senior officials from the 11 member countries and from Ukraine and Belarus and experts. The conference agreed on recommendations to the WGCC, recommendations that are the basis for the formulation of the WGCC programme.

The WGCC work on Children abused in Internet related settings

Last year's expert meeting on assistance to children with abusive experiences in Internet Contexts led to the publication of a report in cooperation with a Swedish Foundation. The European Commission and the WGCC are in cooperation looking at organising a meeting on Children abused in Internet Settings.

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.

C. CBSS Structures & Working Bodies served on ad-hoc basis or liaised with

Ars Baltica

The Secretariat attended the 34th Ars Baltica Organising Committee meeting that took place on 21 - 22 May 2007 in Copenhagen. Additionally, the Secretariat kept a close and regular working contact with the Ars Baltica Secretariat in Gdansk. The Secretariat provided assistance and advice to Ars Baltica in its efforts to involve Russia. The Secretariat also cooperated with Ars Baltica on preparing for the conference on Children's Culture in Visby.

Baltic Sea Monitoring Group on Heritage Co-operation

The Secretariat maintained a close working contact with the Baltic Sea Monitoring Group on Heritage Co-operation and featured the work of the Monitoring Group in Baltinfo. Ms. Helena Edgren, Chair of the Monitoring Group spoke about the work on cultural heritage cooperation in Baltinfo 82, and Mr. Hans Sandström introduced the Baltic Sea Region cooperation on building preservation in Baltinfo 84.

Business Advisory Council (BAC)

The Secretariat maintained regular contacts with BAC (Chaired by the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce) and coordinated multiple facets of the WGEC's activities in the context of the Road Map on Investments, as well as in connection with the work on tackling economic cross-border obstacles in the Region

Lead Country function for Civil Security (LC-CS) – EUROBALTIC, Civil Protection

The Secretariat is in direct contact with the Lead Country (Poland)/Programme Coordinator for EUROBALTIC I and II (Ms. Barbara Polak, Adviser to the Head of Polish Fire Service and Civil Protection), actively follows EUROBALTIC activities and participated in the 6th EUROBALTIC Civil Protection Programme Experts meeting (Stockholm, 29 August 2006). Furthermore, the Secretariat participated in the V Meeting of CBSS Civil Protection Directors General (Riga, 25-26 October 2006). For this occasion, the Secretariat drafted the speaking points for the Latvian CSO member representing the CBSS Presidency/Troika. The Secretariat further co-organised together with the Embassy of Romania in Sweden and SIPRI a Seminar on the Challenges for the 21st Century: Civil Security (Stockholm, 21 November 2006). For this occasion the Secretariat drafted the speaking points for the CSO Chair and prepared a presentation on

the WGNRS held by the Swedish WGNRS member. In addition, the Secretariat drafted the welcome address for the CSO Chair for the Workshop on Capacity Strengthening to Manage International Assistance in Civil Protection (Stockholm, 30-31 January 2007).

Lead Country function for EuroFaculty Kaliningrad (LC EF-K)

Throughout 2006-2007, the Secretariat continued its assistance to the work of the CBSS International Expert Group on EuroFaculty Kaliningrad, which monitors the implementation of the EuroFaculty project at the Immanuel Kant State University of Russia in Kaliningrad. During the reporting period, the Secretariat attended 3 meetings of the Expert Group. The Secretariat provided secretarial assistance at these meetings and undertook the preparation of minutes from the meetings. In addition, on several occasions the Secretariat assisted with translation or collection of information as well as with other tasks on behalf of the Lead Country - Denmark. In the autumn of 2006, the CSO decided to prolong the EF-K project for another 6 months. The EF-K project will be concluded with a final conference in October 2007.

Preparations for a potential EuroFaculty project in Pskov

Throughout 2006-2007, the Secretariat continued the investigatory preparations for a potential CBSS EuroFaculty project in the Russian town of Pskov.

The Secretariat maintained contacts with Sweden as the Lead Country of the potential project, with stakeholders at regional and federal level in Russia as well as with relevant authorities in the potential donor states. The Secretariat assisted with the preparations for an expert mission to Pskov in April 2007 with the objective of preparing a feasibility study for the project. The Secretariat administered the feasibility mission on behalf of Sweden, which kindly provided funds for the mission.

Senior Officials on Information Society (SOIS)

The Secretariat provided technical assistance to a regular SOIS meeting chaired by Norway in Oslo on 4 December 2006. Among others, Secretariat assisted in preparing the Final Report of the NeDAP/SOIS 2005-06 for submission to the 14th CBSS Ministerial session in Malmö

CBSS Working Group on Customs Co-operation and Border-Crossing Aspects (WGCB)

The Secretariat maintained close working relationship with the CBSS Working Group on Customs Co-operation and Border-Crossing Aspects attending a meeting of a WGCB sub-group on Multi-annual Action Plan, held in Stockholm on 16-17 January 2007, and the 2nd meeting of the WGCB held in Stockholm on 10-11 May 2007

Task Force on Organised Crime (TF-OC)

The Secretariat was/is in contact with the TF-OC Secretariat in (2006) Helsinki and (since the rotation of the chair lead country function was passed from Finland to Estonia as of 1 January 2007) Tallinn (e.g. with regard to the presentation by the Head of the TF-OC Secretariat at the CSO meeting on 31 January in Brussels) and participated in the last TF-OC meeting under the Finnish Chairmanship (Helsinki/Tallinn, 30 November-1 December 2006). At this meeting, the Secretariat briefed the participants shortly on the newly established CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings. The Secretariat also attended the first meeting of the TF-OC under the Estonian

Chairmanship (Kuressaare, 18-20 June 2007) and briefed i.a. about the priorities of the incoming Latvian CBSS Presidency.

D. Special Participants, strategic partners and other organisations or meetings

CBSS Special Participants:

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

The CBSS Secretariat attended the 15th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Reykjavik that took place on 4-5 September 2006. Throughout 2006-2007, the Secretariat maintained and enhanced its relations with the BSPC, especially in terms of information sharing and closer cooperation.

The Secretariat attended the BSPC Standing Committee meetings on 4 December 2006 in Berlin, 28 February 2007 in Brussels and Extended Standing Committee meeting on 20 June 2007 in Berlin. The Secretariat also attended the BSPC Secretary level meetings on 5 February in Berlin and 4 – 5 June 2007 in Schwerin, Germany.

B7 Baltic Islands Network (B7)

The Secretariat participated and addressed on behalf of the Swedish CBSS Presidency the B7 Annual Conference on the Åland islands (21-22 November 2006). In addition, the Secretariat works together with the B7 within the BEN project (www.benproject.org). In April 2007, the Secretariat organised together with Baltic 21 and the B7 Chair 2007 (Regional Municipality of Bornholm) the follow-up of the Gotland Initiative “What are the challenges for the Baltic Sea and the region’s sustainable development?” The aim of this initiative/event is/was to raise awareness of the environmental problems of the Baltic Sea and of the role, responsibility and possibilities of actors from all levels (municipal, regional, national level as well as the private sector, media, politicians etc.) to jointly tackle environmental and related social problems in our region (cf. above).

Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC)

The Secretariat participated in the 14th BSSSC Conference (Kiel, 22 September 2006) and drafted the speaking points for the CSO Chair for this occasion. The Secretariat further held a working meeting with the BSSSC Secretariat (Stockholm, 19 January 2007).

CPMR - Baltic Sea Commission

The Secretariat was/is in regular contact with the CPMR-BSC Secretariat in Lahti (until 2006)/Visby (since 2006) and met with CPMR-BSC representatives in conjunction with other events as e.g. the Special Consultation with the CBSS Presidency/Troika (Malmö, 8 November 2006) or at the Baltic Sea Organisations’ coordination meeting (Bornholm, 16 April 2007, both cf. below).

Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)

The Secretariat continued to network with the Union of Baltic Cities in the time between the previous and upcoming UBC General Conference (September/October 2005 in Turku, September 2007 in Pärnu).

CBSS Strategic Partners:

Baltic Development Forum (BDF)

The Secretariat continued liaising with the BDF Secretariat being involved in the stakeholder's process of the Baltic Sea Initiative 2010, and the Action Group on Branding of the Baltic Sea Region. The Secretariat participated in the 8th BDF Summit in Helsinki 29-31 October 2007.

Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA)

The Secretariat continued to develop its contacts with the BCCA. On 22 September 2006, the Secretariat attended the Forth BCCA Economic Forum in Turku (Finland), assisting the WGEC Chair in representing the CBSS at the Forum.

Baltic Sea NGO Forum

The Secretariat continued its regular and close contacts with the Swedish Chair of the Baltic Sea NGO Forum Consultative Committee, Ms Aase Fosshaug-Palme, contacts which included the provision of advice on planning and agenda of the Forum. The Secretariat participated and gave several presentations on the work of the CBSS and its Working Groups, while also moderating two working sessions out of four at the 6th Baltic Sea NGO Forum on 5 – 7 October 2006 in Saltsjöbaden. The four working sessions focused on: Civil Security and Human Trafficking, Discrimination and Inclusion with focus on Gay and Lesbian rights, Environment and Sustainability and Civil Society. The Secretariat also provided information material on the CBSS and Baltinfos for the NGO Forum participants.

BASTUN

The Secretariat continued networking with BASTUN through the involvement of a BASTUN representative in activities of the WGEC.

Group of Senior Energy Officials (BASREC-GSEO) & Energy Unit

The Secretariat continued to fulfil a liaison function with the GSEO after the BASREC Secretariat was discontinued in December 2005. The Secretariat attended two meetings of the BASREC-GSEO in Stockholm on 6-7 November 2006, and in Saint Petersburg on 27-29 March 2007. The Secretariat also participated in two BASREC Conferences: one – on renewable energy and energy efficiency, held in Stockholm on 6-7 November 2006, and was partly involved in preparations to the Conference on energy-related climate change and financing issues, held in St. Petersburg on 27-29 March 2007.

Other organisations and meetings:

Baltic Metropolises (BaltMet)

The Secretariat's Director addressed on behalf of the CBSS Presidency the BaltMet Mayor's meeting in conjunction with the BDF Summit in Helsinki (30 October 2006). The Secretariat also participated in the BaltMet Collaboration Cafe to discuss projects within the areas of innovation, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, regional infrastructures and inward investments in the Baltic Sea Region (Stockholm, 8 February 2007).

Baltic Sea Region Perspectives Conference

To raise awareness of the Baltic Sea Region in the European context and especially in Brussels, the CBSS (Secretariat) together with BDF, BSSSC, the European Parliament and the Brussels offices of various cities and regions in the Baltic Sea Region (Helsinki EU Office, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Information Office to the EU, Riga EU Office, City of Copenhagen, South Sweden European Office, Stockholm Region, Hanse-Office, Oslo Region European Office, Tallinn, South Denmark House) organised the “Baltic Sea Region Perspectives – Innovation, Mobility & Integration” conference (Brussels, 9 November 2006). For this occasion, the Secretariat drafted the intervention for the CSO Chair. The Conference Report is available at www.balticconference.kk.dk/

Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)

The Chair of the BEAC/Working Group on Economic Cooperation, Ms. Barbro Widing, was invited to the CBSS WGEC in November 2006 to present the programme of work and explore a potential for some synergetic activities between the two working groups. The Secretariat assisted the informal meeting between the CBSS and BEAC Presidencies held in Hanasaari on 18 January 2007.

Belarus

The Secretariat travelled to Minsk (Belarus) on 24-25 May 2007 for a fact-finding mission to explore additional possibilities for cooperation with their Belarusian counterparts and networks on expert level; a report on the results of the mission was distributed to the CSO.

BEN - EU Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013 / Joint CBSS-NCM “Baltic Euroregional Network” project

As project partner of the joint CBSS-NCM project “Baltic Euroregional Network” (BEN, www.benproject.org), the Secretariat organised/financed the 3rd BEN Steering Committee meeting and seminar on “EU Structural Policy 2007-2013” (Stockholm, 4-5 October 2006). The Secretariat further took part in the 4th BEN Steering Committee Meeting (Szczecin, 19 April 2007), the BEN seminar on the Legal Status of CBC Structures (Vilnius, 5-6 December 2006), the BEN seminar on the “Northern Dimension: from policy paper to concrete actions. The role of Euroregions and other CBC structures in the implementation of the Northern Dimension policy” (Lappeenranta, 25-26 January 2007, intervention drafted for the CSO Chair), the BEN seminar on “Cross-Border Co-operation and Regional Development” (Malmö, 15-16 March 2007, moderating one of the three working groups), and the Opening Conference of the complementing BEN EAST project “Legislative base and practice of cross-border cooperation in the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus and the European Union” (Moscow, 23-25 May 2007).

In addition, the Secretariat as co-organiser/financer of the BEN Final Conference in October 2007 held preparation meetings for the Final Conference with the local host in Jelgava, the NCM Office in Latvia and the incoming Latvian CSO Presidency (Jelgava and Riga, 22-23 February 2007). To adjust the BEN Best Practices Handbook, for which the Secretariat is responsible together with a Lithuanian partner, with the BEN Final Strategy, the Secretariat participated in a working meeting of the Strategy Working Group (Helsinki, 29 May 2007).

The BEN-project was featured with an article on “For the BENefit of Cross-Border Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region” in Baltinfo No. 84 (January/February 2007) and “The Parliament Regional Review” (Issue 4, March 2007).

With regard to the BSR INTERREG III B successor, the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013, the Secretariat participated in a Working Meeting on Strategic Projects (Kiel, 21 September 2006).

Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)

The Secretariat assisted the Swedish Presidency in technical preparations of the CBSS Political Directors meeting held in Stockholm on 22 March 2007.

The Secretariat assisted in preparations and follow-up to the annual Consultation with the organisations enjoying the status of Special Participant status held in Kalmar on 8 November 2006 and with the organisations enjoying the status of Strategic Partner held in Malmö on 16 November 2006.

The Secretariat assisted the Swedish Presidency in technical preparations of the Political Consultations in Moscow on 7-8 December 2006 in the Russian Foreign Ministry (Deputy Minister V.G. Titov and the leadership of the II European Department), as well as in the Ministry of Industry and Energy, Ministry of Health and Social Development and the Emergency Committee.

Directors General for Tax Administration in the Baltic Sea Region

For the first time ever, the Secretariat participated in the annual, this time 10th meeting of the Directors General for Tax Administration (Klaipeda, 19-20 October 2006) and for this occasion drafted the intervention for the Lithuanian CSO member representing the CBSS Presidency.

Meetings of Four Regional Councils in North of Europe

The Secretariat assisted the Presidency during the regular annual meeting of the "Four" in Moscow on 18 August 2006, organised by the Russian Chair of the Arctic Council, and during the Informal meeting of the "Four" in Hanasaari (Finland) on 18 January 2007, organised by the Finnish Presidency in BEAC.

The Secretariat assisted in preparations and follow-up to the extended meeting of Regional Councils, organisations and initiatives in Europe, held in Malmö on 16 November 2006.

Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)

The Secretariat assisted several bilateral meetings held in Copenhagen on 15 December 2006 and on 29 March 2007. Within the framework of the agreed scheme of staff-exchange between the CBSS and NCM Secretariats, two exchanges took place in Copenhagen on 7-8 December 2006 (Senior Adviser Ms. S. Ekfeldt-Nyman) and in Stockholm (Information and Communication Mr. Torkil Sørensen)

Prosecutors General in the Baltic Sea Region

The Secretariat participated in the 11th Meeting of the Prosecutors General in the Baltic Sea Region on 2-3 November 2006 in Riga and drafted for this occasion the speaking points for the Latvian CSO member representing the CBSS Presidency/Troika. The

Secretariat further provided the Polish Prosecutor General Office with practical advice for the upcoming 12th meeting originally scheduled for mid-April 2007, later postponed to autumn 2007.

Special Consultation of the CBSS Presidency/Troika with CBSS Special Participants and Strategic Partners

The Secretariat provided technical assistance to the CBSS Presidency/Troika in organising a Special Consultation Meeting with the CBSS Special Participants (Kalmar, 8 November 2006) and the CBSS Strategic Partners (Malmö, 16 November 2006).

In addition, the Secretariat participated in the third coordination meeting of Baltic Sea Organisations (B7 Baltic Islands Network, BSPC, BSSSC, CBSS, CPMR-BSC, UBC, BDF) hosted this time by the B7 Baltic Islands Network in conjunction with the follow-up event of the Gotland Initiative (Bornholm, 16 April 2007, cf. above).

The Northern Dimension

The Secretariat participated in the conference on “The Northern Dimension and the Northern Cooperation” (Hanasaari, 17 January 2007), the BEN seminar on the “Northern Dimension: from policy paper to concrete actions. The role of Euroregions and other CBC structures in the implementation of the Northern Dimension policy” (Lappeenranta, 25-26 January 2007, cf. below). For both occasions the Secretariat drafted the intervention for the CSO Chair on the role of regional councils in the implementation of the new Northern Dimension policy. The Secretariat further participated and drafted speaking points for the CSO Chair on the Northern Dimension for the Conference “Regional Cooperation in Northern Europe and in the Black Sea Region: Exchange, Enhance, Elaborate” (Bucharest, 26-27 April 2007) and participated in the Parliamentary Conference on the Northern Dimension hosted by the European Parliament (Brussels, 28 February-1 March 2007). The Secretariat further assisted the Presidency at the Expert Workshop on Northern Dimension Transport & Logistics Partnership, organised by the Nordic Investment Bank in Brussels on 15 June 2007.

Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010 (VASAB)

The Secretariat participated in the VASAB BSR Stakeholders Conference (Warsaw, 6-7 November) and for this occasion drafted the intervention for the CSO Chair. In addition, the Secretariat drafted the intervention for the CSO Chair for the Seminar on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Baltic Sea Region (Stockholm, 24-25 May 2007).

E. Information and Communication Strategy, Baltinfo and Websites

Within the framework of the implementation of the Information and Communication strategy, and in accordance with its mandate, the Secretariat performed the following communication tasks.

The CBSS Official Journal of the Council of the Baltic Sea States *Baltinfo*

The editorial team changed during the early period of the Swedish Presidency and focused more attention on in depth questioning and interviewing. The last few issues of the period were themed by the intertwined topics of firstly sustainability and secondly economics to give an added value to the discussion points. The editorial team has commissioned works by respected scientists, artists, bankers and academics and moved

away from a strictly in house publication, reflecting a more professional and international outlook.

Lectures, Seminars and Conferences

The Seminar *Challenges for the 21st Century: Civil Security*. Sharing experiences between the countries of the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea regions took place on the 21 November 2006. The seminar was a joint event as outlined at the beginning of Annex 5 with the Secretariat working actively to provide a wide range of both speakers and participants across the fields of civil security (trafficking and organised crime, environmental hazards, including nuclear radiation safety and topics of stability particularly referencing smuggling and corruption).

Event and Exhibition

During the Political Directors Meeting and as a complement to the discussion on a renewed Baltic Sea Cooperation, the Secretariat curated an exhibition with the artist and photographer *Martina Hoogland Ivanow*. The exhibition was financed by the Swedish Presidency.

The website – cbss.org

The new CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings with focus on adults has been fully integrated into the cbss.org interface and now provides a online platform which can be built upon to represent the current trends and projects that was catered for before under the previous website of the Nordic Baltic Task Force against Trafficking.

Public queries and year books

There have been some substantial updates of the CBSS entries in various publications reflecting the new dynamics of the bodies.

Information brochure

The Russian translation process of the Council of the Baltic Sea States brochure is complete and layout and printing will happen in the early period of the Latvian Presidency.

F. Administrative Issues

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. Head of the Baltic 21 Unit: **Marek Maciejowski** (Poland) (1 July 2002 - 30 May 2006)
2. Communications Officer: **Didrik de Schaetzen** (Belgium) (1 May 2003 - 31 July 2006)
3. Office Administrator: **Sophie Levasseur** (France) (1 September 2004 - 31 July 2006)
4. Adviser Baltic 21 Unit: **Asha Davis** (USA) (11 November 2005 - 30 September 2006)

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. Senior Adviser: **Philipp Schwartz** (Germany) (since 13 September 2004)

4. Head of Administration: **Gertrude Opira** (Sweden) (since 15 September 2004)
5. Senior Adviser: **Bjarke W. Bøtcher** (Denmark) (since 17 October 2004)
6. Director of the Secretariat: **Gabriele Kötschau** (Germany) (since 1 September 2005)
7. Senior Adviser: **Anitra Jankevica** (Latvia) (since 1 September 2005)
8. Deputy Director of the Secretariat: **Phil Saprykin** (Russia) (since 15 September 2005)
9. Senior Adviser Baltic 21 Unit: **Mia Söderlund** (Sweden) (since 1 March 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: **Sofia Ekfeldt Nyman** (Sweden) (since 4 September 2006)

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

1. Communications Officer: **Hanna Gross** (Germany) (1 January - 28 February 2006)
2. Office Administrator: **Claudia Rodrigues de Almeida** (Sweden) (28 August - 22 September 2006)
3. Project Officer Baltic 21 Unit: **Asha Davis** (USA) (1 February - 31 July 2007)

Financial Contributions and Budget

At the time of closing the financial accounts for FY 2006, all CBSS Member States had paid their contributions to the CBSS Secretariat in full. The financial annual report for FY 2006 was finalised in March 2007 and audited by the Swedish National Audit Office in April 2007. The Audit Report was submitted to the Secretariat on 23 April 2007. The reports will be presented at the CSO meeting in Karlskrona on 30 May to 1 June 2007.

The budget of the CBSS Secretariat for the financial year 2007 was adopted by the CSO at its meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland held on 10-12 May 2006. The approved total estimated spending for FY 2007 is € 887.000.

The budget of the newly established CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings for FY 2006-2007 has been financed through extra contributions made by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The main budget of the Baltic 21 Unit for FY 2006 was acquired through the contributions paid by the governments of the Baltic 21 Member States. Regarding the budget for FY 2006 all Member States except Russia paid their contributions. Sweden made an additional host country contribution of €83.066. The budget for the Baltic 21 Unit for FY 2007 was adopted at the SOG 25 meeting held in Warsaw, Poland on 5-6 October 2006, with a total spending of €409.740.

The budget of the Energy Unit (BASREC) was covered by grant contributions from the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). The contract for the project ended 31 December 2005. By the end of the project, BASREC's budget was exceeded by EUR 12.291. The Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) suggested, in his letter dated 17 May 2006, that the budget deficit be covered through voluntary contributions from all the CBSS Member States according to the percentage of their yearly contributions to the CBSS budget. By the end of 2006, all Member States except Russia had paid the voluntary contribution to cover the BASREC budget deficit. The CSO consequently

instructed the CBSS Secretariat to undertake necessary procedures to write off the remaining deficit, amounting to €1474,92. The unpaid amount has reduced the CBSS surplus for 2006 by the same amount.

In accordance with the decision taken by the CSO at the inclusion of the Children's Unit in the secretariat of the CBSS, the budget of the Children's Unit was covered through the voluntary contributions from the CBSS Member States. During 2006 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 Children's Unit. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs supported the Conference on Children in Institutional Care organised by the Children's Unit in Stockholm in November 2006.

The Swedish Ministry for Social Affairs and Ministry for Foreign Affairs have, during the period, contributed with the rent for the premises and with the overhead costs shared by all units and the secretariat.

Co-location with the NDPHS Secretariat

As of September 2004, the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social-Wellbeing (NDPHS) is co-located with the CBSS Secretariat. A co-location implied that the NDPHS would enjoy all administrative and logistic support from the CBSS Secretariat but would formally constitute a separated entity in the Secretariat. At its meeting in St. Petersburg on 6-7 April 2006, the NDPHS Committee of Senior Representatives (CSR) accepted a proposal by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials to make the NDPHS Secretariat a temporary project of the CBSS as an interim solution while the NDPHS Secretariat undertakes the necessary steps to gain legal capacity, in accordance with relevant legislation in the host country. The temporary project is to come to an end as soon as legal capacity has been authorized to the NDPHS Secretariat itself.

The Committee of Senior Officials of the CBSS decided to limit the project to six months with subsequent extension thereof by another six months if necessary. A prolongation of NDPHS Secretariat as a project of the CBSS was approved through silent procedure undertaken by the CBSS CSO and the NDPHS CSR in April 2007.

The budget of the NDPHS for fiscal year 2006 was covered through contributions from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden. Voluntary contributions were made to the NDPHS Appropriation Account by Finland, Norway and Sweden. Additional voluntary contributions for a NDPHS Database were made by Germany, Norway and Sweden.

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

1. Head of NDPHS Secretariat: **Lars Blad** (Sweden) (23 August 2003 - 28 February 2006)
2. Senior Adviser: **Jurate Sabaliene** (Lithuania) (1 January 2005 - 30 April 2006)
3. Adviser: **Asha Davis** (USA) (from 1 October - 30 November 2006)

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

1. Head of NDPHS Secretariat : **Marek Maciejowski** (Poland) (since 1 June 2006)
2. Senior Adviser: **Bernd Treichel** (Germany) (since 1 December 2006)

CBSS Secretariat Internship Programme

During the Swedish Presidency of the CBSS, the Secretariat hosted 14 interns from 8 different countries. 11 interns benefited from the CBSS Scholarship:

1. Ms. **Viktoria Dobrot** (Germany) assisted the Secretary to the WGEC (Mar-June 2006) and the Head of the NDPHS Secretariat (July).
2. Ms. Natalia **Taranova** (Russia) assisted at the CBSS Secretariat July-Sept 2006 and was supervised by the Secretary to the WGEC.
3. Ms. Olga **Boltenko** (Russia) assisted at the CBSS Secretariat Aug-Sept 2006 and was supervised by the Head of the CAR Unit.
4. Mr. Simonas **Meizis** (Lithuania) assisted the NDPHS Secretariat July-Sept 2006.
5. Ms. Jessica **Thomas** (USA) assisted at the NDPHS Secretariat Aug-Oct 2006.
6. Ms. Ida **Löfström** (Sweden) assisted at the CBSS Secretariat Sept-Dec 2006.
7. Ms. Veronika **Kuscher** (Germany) assisted the NDPHS Secretariat Sept-Nov 2006.
8. Ms. Asta **Gulijeva** (Lithuania) assisted at the CBSS Secretariat and was supervised by the Baltic 21 Unit Oct 2006-Mar 2007.
9. Mr. Alexander **Domesle** (Germany/USA) assisted the Secretary to the CSO from Oct-Dec 2006.
10. Mr. Peteris **Timofejevs** (Latvia) assisted at the CBSS Secretariat Jan-Feb 2007 and assisted the Secretary to the CSO and further assisted the Secretary to the WGDI.
11. Ms. Alexandra **Ronkina** (Russia) assisted the CAR Unit Jan-Mar and May-June 2007.
12. Dr. Robin **Hagelberg** (Germany/Switzerland) assisted at the CBSS Secretariat from April-June 2007 and was supervised by the Secretary to the WGEC.
13. Ms. Maxi **Nachtigall** (Germany) assisted the NDPHS Secretariat April-Sept 2007.
14. Ms. Aslı **Tepecik** (Turkey) assisted at the CBSS Secretariat and was supervised by the Baltic 21 Unit April 2007-June 2007.