



Note no1

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A starter's list of transport-related initiatives in the Baltic Sea Region

Since the early 1990s, the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has witnessed dramatic economic and social development. This progress is bound to continue as the economic growth in the BSR is currently the fastest in Europe. Along with the intensified economic and political cooperation between countries, regions and private sector stakeholders, a plethora of various joint bodies, initiatives, councils and forums have emerged in the BSR.

This note aims to clarify the web of acronyms and organizations in the BSR dealing with the transport sector. However, the division between transport and other activities is not always easy to make, and this paper is not an exhaustive list of all relevant activities. For this purpose, the initiatives are divided as follows:

- Multilateral agencies and organizations, which are ratified by Governments
- EU funded programmes
- Subregional joint bodies
- Public-Private Partnership and other joint bodies

Multilateral agencies and organizations

An overall political forum for intergovernmental cooperation in the BSR is the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The composition of CBSS includes representatives from ministries of transport of the CBSS Member States and the European Commission. It has taken a series of transport sector development in its agenda (See www.cbss.org), and it has also devoted a specific committee for that purpose. Despite its far-reaching goals, CBSS' transport committee has made relatively little progress. The environmental initiative of eleven CBSS Member countries, Baltic 21 (www.baltic21.org) has had much more impact on sustainable transport issues.

The broader BSR activities have also meant that formal co-operation in the transport sector within Nordic Council has been disbanded. The Nordic governments have decided to streamline co-operation and simplify the structure of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The number of councils of ministers has been cut from 18 to 11. This means that the Council of Transport Ministers has been disbanded as of January 2006.

The Convention on the Protection of the Maritime Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, which entered into force in 1990, and operates under the name Helsinki Commission or HELCOM (www.helcom.fi) is working actively to protect the marine environment. HELCOM also works closely with international bodies such as the International Maritime Organisation IMO.

The BSR-based International Financial Institution, the Nordic Investment Bank (www.nib.int) is owned by the Governments of the Nordic countries, and since 2005 also by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. NIB's outstanding loans exceed 11 billion euros. Transport sector is one of NIB's key areas. Its recent transport infrastructure lending includes, for example, Helsinki-Lahti Motorway, A1 motorway from Gdansk, Arlanda Express rail connection, Oslo toll system and Århus port expansion project.

EU funded programs

The largest EU-funded transport programme is that of Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T)¹. The European Commission estimates its total funding to 350 billion euros till 2006. The EC estimates that over 300 billion euros is spent in TEN-T in 2007-2013, some 80 % of which is to be funded by Member States or by EIB loans. As Member States' budget funding is not yet decided



Prof. Lauri Ojala

Phone +358 2 4814 243
Mobile +358 50 502 7031
Fax +358 2 4814 640
E-mail lauri.ojala@tse.fi

¹ See at: http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/index_en.htm

² See at: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/intermodality/motorways_sea/index_en.htm



for this period, the outcome may be far less than what the EC anticipates. Six of the 30 projects awarded a TEN-T status are specifically in the BSR, and one other, Motorways of the Seas², has great relevance for the region too.

Another initiative funded by the European Commission is Marco Polo, which aims at enhancing Short-Sea Shipping and the usage of rail transport.

The European Regional Development Fund has funded the INTERREG programme, which has had sub-programmes in the BSR. The programme is similar regional sub-programmes in other parts of the EU too.

In the INTERREG IIIB Neighborhood Programme, some 30 transport-related projects have been funded since 1998, which have a total budget of some 50 million euros (www.bsinterreg.net). All in all, INTERREG IIIB has funded over 120 projects with a total funding of over 120 million euros.

Many of these have been coordinated by Lead Partners in Turku, such as NeLoC, InLoc, Logon Baltic and DaGoB. Port of Turku has also been a Partner in some of these. In addition, INTERREG I, II and III programmes. Most of these involve transport and logistics related projects, such as IIIA and IIIC³.

INTERREG Neighbourhood Programme (NP) also includes cooperation between EU and e.g. Russia and Belarus. These are often linked to EU's Technical Assistance programme for CIS countries (TACIS; www.tacis.org). This has funded mostly projects with at least one EU country and Russia. Some of these have also been devoted to transport issues. For example, LogOn Baltic has a TACIS component involving three partners from St. Petersburg.

Subregional joint bodies

Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation, BSSSC (www.bsssc.com) is a political network for decentralised authorities (i.e. level directly below the national level authorities, such as counties) in the BSR founded in 1993. Its ad hoc Transport and Infrastructure Work Group released a survey on the transport infrastructure planning in the BSR in 2006. This survey will be elaborated following a BSSSC conference to be held in September 2006 in Kiel.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region is an inter-governmental body dealing with, among other things, transport infrastructure development in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and North-Western Russia. It also involves a number of regions and regional development bodies in its work.

Union of Baltic Cities, UBC (www.ubc.net) is a decentralized network organization uniting over 100 cities of the BSR. UBC aims to promote and strengthen cooperation and exchange of experience among the cities in the BSR, to advocate for common interests of the local authorities in the region, and to act on behalf of the cities and local authorities in common matters towards regional, national, European and international bodies. Transport and tourism issues are firmly on UBC agenda, as demonstrated in the declaration of its Transport Commission that was signed in the UBC conference in Turku in 2005.

Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions CPMR's Baltic Sea Commission is one of six Commissions representing the member regions of the Baltic Sea area. The Commission bases its strategy on the fundamental ideas of the EU-wide CPMR. Actions in the transport sector comprise, among others, safe and sustainable transport; effective intermodal transport corridors; Short sea shipping; Financing transport infrastructure; and maritime and air connections across national and regional borders. The Finnish section of CPMR is housed by the Regional Council of Päijät-Häme in Lahti (see www.pajjat-hame.fi).

Public-Private Partnerships and other joint bodies

TEDIM (www.tedim.com) is a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) between the Ministries of Transport in the BSR and a set of private sector bodies with interest in transport telematics, transport infrastructure and related issues. During its over twelve years of action, TEDIM has supported numerous development efforts and pilot projects on, for example, usage of EDI in transport, border-crossing facilitation with Russia.

Northern Dimension entered EU vocabulary in 1997 initiated by Finland, which wanted to strengthen EU's dialogue with Russia. The initiative did not gain an own programme budget under EU, and its impact has remained marginal. Since 2005, however, attempts have been made

to establish a Northern Dimension Transport and Logistics Partnership (NDTLP) as a more concrete part of ND. The NDTLP has not yet found any specific or concrete form, and time will tell, if this initiative in the planning is about to lift off.

Baltic Sea Chamber of Commerce Association, BCCA (www.bcca.de) serves to unite the Chambers of Commerce of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. Some of these have a public sector status while representing the private sector interests. In Germany, for example, membership in the local Chamber of Commerce is mandatory for firms. BCCA has had a keen interest in transport infrastructure and sector development in the BSR.

Baltic Ports Organisation, BPO (www.bpoports.com) comprises over fifty of the most significant ports in the BSR. BPO's objective is to improve the competitiveness of maritime transport in the BSR by increasing the efficiency of ports, marketing the Baltic region as the strategic logistics centre, improving the infrastructure and co-operation with the port users/operators, applying new technology in order to improve the performance and cost efficiency of ports, among other things.

In the research community, Nordic Transport Research, NTF (www.ntf-research.org), has been advocating transport research especially in the Nordic countries, but its activities have lately been scaled down. In logistics and supply chain management research, a tight-knit community called NOFOMA (www.nofoma.org) has effectively pulled together researchers in this field since 1989 in the BSR and beyond.

Baltic Development Forum, BDF (www.bdforum.org) is an independent non-profit networking organization with members from large companies, business services, major cities, institutional investors and business associations in the Baltic Sea region. The mission of BDF is to promote the BSR as an integrated, prosperous and internationally competitive growth region. BDF maintains a Round Table for developing the transport sector and infrastructure in the BSR. The BDF Summit 2006 is to be held in October in Helsinki. The Summits typically attract over 300 high-level participants.

³ See e.g. the IIIA sub-programme between Finland and Estonia at <http://www.interreg-finest.net/> or the sub-programme Nord at <http://www.interregnord.com/scripts/en/index.asp> as well as IIIC North at http://www.interreg3c.net/web/north_en



In addition to BDF, the word "Forum" has been particularly liked by various actors setting up initiatives in the BSR. These include at least the following (with some relevance to transport issues):

- Baltic Sea Forum, (Pro Baltica) based in Northern Germany (www.baltic-sea-forum.org/en/);
- Baltic Environmental Forum, which is based in Latvia, but has a wider network mainly in the Baltic States(www.bef.lv/);
- Baltic Economic Forum, which is run by a private business school in Riga (www.balticeconomicforum.com/);
- Baltic Forum, an Estonian-based activity concentrating in Russian issues (www.e-nation.ee/); and
- International Baltic Forum, based in Stralsund, with a local rather than truly international agenda (<http://www.user.fh-stralsund.de/~ostseef/>).

Some recent BSR initiatives also include the Baltic Sea centre based in Visby, which has a strong Government backing of Sweden. Finnish initiatives include, for example, The Baltic Institute of Finland (www.baltic.org) based in Tampere.

In 2006, the City of Turku decided to establish its own centre devoted to social, political and economical issues around the Baltic Sea, named Centrum Balticum. The operations will be based on a foundation, with the intention to include local universities and other bodies in its work.

As shown above, the BSR abounds with initiatives all wanting to stay in the business with their agenda. Any new entrant in the already rich "flora & fauna" of BSR-specific organizations and initiatives will have to add unique value not only locally, but also BSR-wide and perhaps beyond. In addition, the founders should have a long term commitment to back up the newcomer.

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Lauri Ojala

About the author

Dr. Lauri Ojala is professor of logistics at the Turku School of Economics, Finland. His research interest include logistics and transport markets.

He has worked as an expert for international agencies such as The World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Nordic Investment Bank and UNIDO in development projects in, for example, The Baltic States, South Caucasus and Central Asia.

In 2006-2007, he is in charge of two EU part-funded logistics projects in the Baltic Sea Region; DaGoB deals with transport of Dangerous Goods (www.dagob.info) and LogOn Baltic deals with logistics and ICT competence (www.logonbaltic.info)

He is currently the European Editor of The International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management.



Developing Regions through Spatial Planning and Logistics & ICT Competence - 2006-2007

Baltic Sea Region INTERREG III B, Neighbourhood Programme
Measure: 2.2. Creating sustainable communication links for improved spatial integration
Community Initiative Programme 2000-2006

LogOn Baltic aims at improving spatial integration by transferring knowledge in ICT and logistics competence.

The main objective is to produce and disseminate information for regional development agencies on how to support enterprises in the participating regions in their effort to improve ICT and logistics competence, thus improving regional development.

Contact:

LogOn Baltic Project Office

Turku School of Economics
Rehtorinpellonkatu 3
FI- 20500 TURKU
FINLAND

www.logonbaltic.info

info@logonbaltic.info