

Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council
Executive Committee Meeting
Klaipeda, 12th May 2010
Draft Minutes
Chairman: Reine J. Johansson
Rapporteur: Sally Clink

1. Welcome

Reine J. Johansson, BS RAC Chair, welcomed all the participants.

a. Apologies and adoption of the agenda

The secretariat informed of the apologies received. These are included in the participants' list as Annex1.

<http://www.bsrac.org/archive/Dokumenter/EXCOM%20120510/Annex%201%20Participants%20120510FINAL.xls.pdf>

There were 19 ExCom members present and 23 votes assembled.

Point 7 of the agenda concerning the Femern Belt was removed, because the invited speaker informed that the timing was not appropriate. It was agreed to replace this point by results from the Lithuanian research into BACOMA and T90 with 120 mm meshsize.

Henrik Svenberg asked to include salmon under AOB.

The agenda was then adopted.

b. Adoption of the minutes from ExCom 12/12/09

The minutes from the last ExCom were adopted.

c. Appointment of members to verify the minutes from the meeting

Nils Höglund, (Coalition Clean Baltic) and Michael Andersen, (Danish Fishermen's Association) were appointed.

2. Election of the vice-chair (for the year 2010 - 2011)

The Secretariat read from point 38 of the statutes of the BS RAC. Lothar Fischer proposed Ewa Milewska for a further year as vice-chair. The proposal was seconded by both Michael Andersen and Niki Sporrang. In accepting, Ewa Milewska said that she would continue with pleasure. She wished that there was always unanimity within the BS RAC, and she advised that everyone should be ready

to learn from each other and be constructive. The BS RAC was going through a unique moment with CFP reform; it was important to seize the opportunity and make the most of this.

3. Update by the Secretariat

Presentation of Annual Report for 2009 - 2010
Presentation of the draft financial statement for 2009 - 2010
Work Programme for 2010 - 2011
Estimated operating budget for 2010 - 2011

With reference to the discussions and presentations at the General Assembly the day before, these documents were all adopted by the ExCom.

The secretariat informed that she would give a full update on the expenditure for the current year at the next ExCom meeting in July, as expenditure was only just being entered into the accounting system.

4. WWF presentation on Long Term Management Plan principles and overview of the programme "Baltic Ecoregion Program"

Mats Abrahamsson began by saying that everyone was attending the meeting for different reasons, but there was agreement that the current fisheries management system does not work. He explained briefly the background to WWF: represented in over 100 countries and with over 5 million supporters. Mats Abrahamsson explained that he represented the Baltic Ecoregion programme, and was coordinator of the offices in the Baltic Sea region. He explained that bulk of the work over recent years has been with:

1. Eutrophication: he thought that WWF was almost the only organisation to have worked so intensively with the agricultural sector.
2. Work with fish and fisheries.
3. Working on a better management of the sea, where he sees that there is very little coordination of activities and, without better integration, he foresaw that this will be a problem.

Mats Abrahamsson felt that there was a need for a new CFP and a need to change the management system. In his opinion the new policy should include three elements:

1. Ecosystem-based management.
2. Long-term management plans, which should be based not on species, but the fishery or a certain area.
3. Some sort of regionalisation with decision-making at a lower level than now. This requires stakeholder involvement, and in the future there should be decision-makers in the group. There is a need to set targets and objectives for each fishery - the process to develop this must involve stakeholders and decision-makers.

He called for effective management tools and the involvement of the sector in deciding on these tools. There was also a need for markets that support sustainable fishing - so as to be able to catch

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less fish, but still make a reasonable profit. There was a need to increase public awareness, and the best solution to this was MSC certification. He summarised the conclusions: to work together in order to have more fish in the sea. He referred to a selection of printed WWF material which was available at the meeting.

Henrik Svenberg commented that it was impressive to see what WWF was presenting. He asked about the economy of WWF and whether it had a democratic structure. Mats Abrahamsson replied that WWF derived about 60% of its global financing from supporters, 25% from governments and about 11% from companies. WWF has a board.

Alex Olsen sought clarification as to whether WWF was suggesting that imports to the EU should stop. Since about 60% of the fish consumed in the EU is from imports, the EU is unable to meet its own supply. Mats Abrahamsson said that this was not the case: WWF does not want to stop imports, but if the EU fishery is to compete with imports, the need was for well-educated consumers. Jesper Kobberø sought clarification concerning the MSC scheme. Mats Abrahamsson explained that WWF is a member of the MSC scheme, which, in his opinion, is currently the best that there is.

Henrik Svenberg had a suggestion for the future working of the ExCom. Given that WWF has people working within the BS RAC, he felt that what had been heard today showed an apparent lack of knowledge of what the RAC is doing. He pointed out that as far as the Swedish sector was concerned, the WWF guide to fish had destroyed the market. He was disdainful of the comments on cooperation and sharing goals, and felt that the presentation was patronising to the BS RAC. He suggested that in future time should not be devoted to this, since BS RAC members expected the ExCom to take serious decision on how to manage fisheries. Peter Breckling strongly supported these comments and asked for this discussion in future to take place in the working groups in an environment which is more fruitful.

Reine Johansson commented that he had always felt that the BSRAC should be open – and he encouraged Mats Abrahamsson to stay and enter the discussions, in order to value the BS RAC in future.

5. Report from Demersal WG on 14th April 2010

Michael Andersen, chair of the demersal WG, gave a brief summary of the meetings and activities of the Demersal Working Group during 2009 –2010. Essentially, there had been two meetings: the summer meeting devoted to the ICES advice and recommendations from the BS RAC, and then a meeting to discuss technical issues and discards and an evaluation of the cod management plan. Henrik Svenberg suggested that given the short discussion of the review of the cod management plan, the ExCom should put together a summary of all the recommendations and suggestions made by the BS RAC and then have a further meeting to follow up on this. Reine Johansson took note of this suggestion. There were no comments from the participants.

6. Report from Pelagic WG on 15th April 2010: Draft recommendations on LTMP for pelagic species

Reine Johansson suggested that today there should be a discussion of the draft recommendations, though not necessarily an adoption, in order to prepare a good text.

Michael Andersen expressed his regrets that after a good working group in April, and a good job in drafting a text, some members of the Pelagic Working Group had had such unconstructive ways of

working. He pointed out that if members are unable to attend the working group, they should send representatives to negotiate on their behalf. He sought a more interactive way of working.

Niki Sporrang pointed out that there had been representatives from the NGOs at the meeting: she was asking for a better structure for the process, and some of the written comments that they had sent in were seeking a clarification of certain issues. There was a difference of working culture between the fisheries sector and the NGOs. They were also calling for meeting documents to be sent out in good time.

Lothar Fischer pointed out that the non-paper was issued on 17th March, and the working group took place on 15th April, giving almost four weeks to discuss the non-paper internally. His organization was able to live with the revised draft recommendations. Michael Andersen added that he was satisfied with the participation of the NGOs at the meetings, and he believed that a consensus could be reached, but he regretted that there was a lack of understanding of the procedures, and the addition in the text of comments that were not discussed at the meetings.

Ewa Milewska pointed out that there had been a good discussion in the working group, but she added that with respect to the section (5.2) on trigger levels, they reserved the right to comment later. Michael Andersen agreed with the comments on trigger points: the differing views on trigger points were not properly reflected. Reine Johansson was also satisfied with the participation at the working group meeting, and he encouraged working group members to show up and to have confidence in themselves and to take part in the discussions. The main positions were laid out in the draft paper.

Isabelle Viallon commented that the impression of the Commission was that the BS RAC should be able to reach consensus on this matter, so it was strange that there should be a discussion on the process rather than the contents.

The secretariat pointed out that a separate set of minutes, as well as draft recommendations had been produced from this working group. The secretariat suggested a way forward to working with draft recommendations sent out by the secretariat: WG members could send in comments in a separate paper covering language, comments and suggestions for text changes, rather than writing directly in the text as text changes. Several members agreed with this proposal. Niki Sporrang supported the call for procedural structures, and then pointed out that there was very little in the draft text where they differed on the issues. But there were two outstanding points: 1. Not wanting reference to support from the structural funds (in section in section 5.1): 2. The Bothnian Bay and the Bothnian Sea (in Section 5.2), where the NGOs had concerns about the Bothnian Bay stock.

Henrik Svenberg remarked that the draft text was very elaborate and could benefit from being clearer on some points, where the recommendations from each section could be highlighted. He also had comments to the two Gulf of Bothnia stocks, and said that better data is needed for the two stocks and that the assessment should be separate, but managed together. At the same time he made a plea for better quality of the comments sent in, so that they contribute to a better management of the stocks. Niki Sporrang remarked that the comments from the NGOs could perhaps be better, but the intention was to underline the uncertainty of the actual situation of the stocks, and not to aggregate the stocks at this stage.

Reine Johansson concluded the point by saying that the document would not be adopted today, but there would be a dialogue amongst the BS RAC until the deadline of 24th May.

7. Report by Lithuania on research into BACOMA and T90 using 120 mm mesh size

Sharunas Toliushis, from the Lithuanian Fisheries Service, gave a power point presentation. He began by saying that since the 1990s the landings and the resources of cod have not been in good shape, but a small increase in resources is currently being observed – possibly due to the measures implemented (Regulation 1226/2009: reference made to the specifications of the top window codend BACOMA). He showed a picture of the two BACOMA windows before and after 1st March 2010: the window post 1st March has about a 45% bigger square than before. He gave an account of the research carried out by the research vessel Darius – a 24 metre stern trawler, using a bottom trawl, and trawling in different places in the Lithuanian EEZ. Trials had already been done in 2009 using a 110 mm mesh size in connection with selectivity studies and to record the rate of discards – so it was useful to compare the results from 2010 using the 120 mm mesh size. A special cover had been made for the cod ends. Trawling took place for 1-hour periods with 110 mm and 120 mm. He pointed out that a limited amount of trawls had been carried out, and he was aware of the constraints of the method used. But the selectivity results were as shown obviously improved, and some indications could be drawn. The results showed retention of cod in the codend and cover according to length of the fish, as well as escapees by length group, using the 110 mm and 120 mm mesh sizes. Interpolations were then made of the selectivity curve with respect to 110 mm and 120 mm and the length of the cod. The concluding findings were:

- Bycatch of undersized cod with: Bacoma 110 mm = 6.9%, Bacoma 120 mm = 3.1%
- Maximum length of escaped cod: Bacoma 110 mm = 42 cm, Bacoma 120 mm = 51 cm
- Catches of cod of commercial size with Bacoma 120 mm were 7% lower

Krzysztof Stanuch had a question concerning the codend and the cover, and the distance between the BACOMA window and the cover. He referred to research in Poland, which would appear to show that the L50 selectivity observed in the Lithuanian trials was rather small. Sharunas Toliushis explained that if there are a lot of fish, the selectivity does not work in the cover, but if there are 250 kilos of fish, it does work.

Niki Sporrang had a question about the different results obtained in the different areas fished. Sharunas Toliushis referred to the map in the power point, and explained that the differences in selectivity were due to different stock size distributions in different areas.

Reine thanked Sharunas Toliushis for the presentation, which would be returned to and evaluated after the meeting in Brussels (19th –21st May). Then it would be possible to make a roadmap for all kinds of science in connection with selectivity. There was a lack of current research and figures from BACOMA and T90, and there was a need to go further in this development.

8. SAMBAH: Baltic Sea harbour porpoise: Static Acoustic Monitoring of the Baltic Sea Harbour

Mats Amundin presented himself and his colleague Daniel Wennerberg, both of whom work at Kolmårdens Wildlife Park in Sweden. He gave a power point presentation, starting with basic facts and views on the harbour porpoise. He added that the status of the porpoise in the wild is not a problem, for example in the North Sea, whereas it was thought to be a problem in the Baltic Sea. The aim of the project SAMBAH was to find out more, and to establish whether it is a problem. It was

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thought that pollution is a problem, and that bycatch is a problem in gillnets. It is not known how many porpoises there are and where they are. The aim of the project was to:

- Get some better estimates of distribution
- Identify hotspots or important areas
- Increase knowledge - educate people about this species
- Implement best practice methods to assess the population

The project is a multi-national project, although Russia is not included. He outlined the project area, which excludes the Bothnian Bay and Sea because porpoises are extremely rare in that area. There have to be about 300 porpoise detectors in the project area out at sea for two years: this is a challenging task. The detectors are located on the sea bed, and there are buoys to identify them. He pointed out that there are some anchoring factors to consider and here he was very happy to talk to the stakeholders and involve the fishermen. He added that trawling is the “headache.” He asked whether these detectors were located where the trawling takes place – and here he was relying on and begging for the cooperation and support from the fisheries sector to get this information. The project had been considering broadcasting the positions of the detectors via AIS and disseminating the positions via digital sea charts and via fisheries federations. Would this work, he asked.

Both Michael Andersen and Henrik Svenberg were positive and willing to cooperate. It was possible to come and present this to the organisations and to make use of the fisheries press. However, were the positions of the detectors negotiable? The fishermen were very particular about their trawling. Ryszard Malik pointed out that this would be difficult in Poland: AIS is not on the fishing vessels, the fleet is large, and there is no fisheries newspaper in Poland. Steve Karnicki asked if it was possible to get real -time information from the detectors; and commented that there was no proof that there is a sub-population of harbour porpoises in the Baltic. Mats Amundin replied that the data from the detectors is uploaded every three months. He informed that a recent genetic paper claims that there is a separate sub-population, but this is still an unanswered question. A question was asked as to why Danish porpoises are not just invading the Baltic from Denmark. Mats Amundin replied that the focus of this project is not on actual population origins, but to ensure that the Baltic is inhabitable for porpoises.

Thomas Thomsen pointed out that the buoys would come into conflict with the salmon fishery and the longlines used, because they drift and can come into conflict with the buoys. He also underlined the rarity of porpoises, referring to observations by his father and earlier generations.

Mats Amundin explained the methods used to get the data. Afterwards a habitat modelling would be carried out to see what parameters affect the distribution of the porpoises. There was a website www.sambah.org. SAMBAH will participate in meetings, exhibitions etc. He referred to the conclusions in his power point (slide 16). Two years for this project was a long time.

Ryszard Malik asked what the consequences will be from the project – for example will it mean closed areas? Mats Amundin replied that they were not involved in the management or decision-making process, but just in getting more information.

Michael Andersen agreed with this, but pointed out that there could be practical implications and the project could help to work towards resolving the issues – it could even be a weapon in the armoury against the driftnet ban because the results may show that there are very few porpoises. Henrik Svenberg asked whether, on the basis of knowledge obtained so far, they had noticed anything since Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council

the ban on driftnets. Mats Amundin said that there was not enough data to say anything about trends. But he added that the landings of bycatch was not a good scheme.

Reine Johansson concluded the discussions, and encouraged the two representatives to take contact with the fishermen.

9. Report from ICES meetings

- MIRAC meeting (ICES –RACs’) meeting 26th-27th January 2010

Michael Andersen said that this meeting had been organised by the BS RAC. At the meeting ICES presented the new approach to advice, following the MSY principles. A report from the meeting had been put on the BSRAC website (see under newsletter section week 3- 4 under “Other news and meetings”).

- ICES workshop on MSY 22 -26 March 2010

Michael Andersen said that this was a very technical meeting and it took a lot of in-depth knowledge to deal with this. The workshop was divided into two groups to deal with respectively: data rich and data poor situations. (See under newsletter section week 11- 12 under “Other news and meetings”).

10. Report from Advisory Meeting of the CFCA – meeting with RACs 2nd March 2010

Reine J. Johansson, who had attended the meeting, highlighted two things:

1. The most important thing was that the CFCA presented the new programme to deal with control issues – including the Baltic. In the autumn the BS RAC would invite Harm Koster (Executive director of CFCA) to come a meeting of the BSRAC.
2. The meeting went through some staff changes in the organisation – to also come and inform the RAC about this.

So Harm Koster could come and tell the BS RAC how he sees the control issues in the future.

Reine J. Johansson also added a few words about the Conference on CFP, which took place at La Coruña (2nd –3rd May), and stressed that it was extremely important that the BS RAC follows up on this. He referred to the positive comments by e mail from Euan Dunn (RSBP and member of the NS RAC), whereas folk from the industry were very worried about CFP reform. Reine Johansson shared the concerns of the industry representatives. He added that if the BS RAC is to have a say on regionalisation, then they must revert to this in the autumn. The role of the RACs was seen as positive when referring to speeches from the NSRAC, Pelagic RAC and Baltic RAC. But it was hard to understand the Commission’s thinking. So it was important to help each other and put forward proposals, perhaps to go to the Commission or to invite César Deben (Director, Directorate A, Policy and coordination, DG Mare) to a BS RAC meeting in the autumn in order to come and have a discussion on how to establish a bottom up approach. (Note 1)

11. AOB

Henrik Svenberg called for a meeting of the Salmon WG and to coordinate this with the Commission. He suggested that it could involve:

- Presentation of the observer scheme for sea mammals
- Exchange of views with the Commission on their line of thinking on a new management plan
- Some conclusions on the future process for creating a management plan

Steve Karnicki had a question about the Baltfish process and regionalisation.

Reine Johansson answered that he thought the process was important, but that Baltfish will not work in the long run.

Dates for coming meetings

The following dates were agreed on, after much discussion:

Joint Working Group (Demersal, Pelagic, Salmon + sea trout) afternoon of 8th June (from 15 hours) and all day 9th June, Stockholm (at the time of writing it was not confirmed whether the chair of the Salmon and Sea trout WG would be able to attend – he has now confirmed this).

Executive Committee meeting all day 6th July, Hamburg (participants to arrive the night before in order to make an early start).

Links to the presentations

By Mats Abrahamsson

Final version awaited.

By Sharunas Toliushis

[http://www.bsrac.org/archive/Dokumenter/EXCOM%20120510/SharunasTrawl%20selectivity_LT_2010\[1\].pdf](http://www.bsrac.org/archive/Dokumenter/EXCOM%20120510/SharunasTrawl%20selectivity_LT_2010[1].pdf)

By Mats Amundin

[http://www.bsrac.org/archive/Dokumenter/EXCOM%20120510/SAMBAH%20presentationMicrosoft%20PowerPoint%20-%20Ppt0000007%20\[Skrivebeskyttet\].pdf](http://www.bsrac.org/archive/Dokumenter/EXCOM%20120510/SAMBAH%20presentationMicrosoft%20PowerPoint%20-%20Ppt0000007%20[Skrivebeskyttet].pdf)

Note 1

The email correspondence referred to by Reine J. Johansson is on the BS RAC website under the ExCom meeting of 12th May 2010.