



Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council
Executive Committee Meeting
Tallinn, 20th February 2009

Minutes

Chairman: Reine J. Johansson
Rapporteur: Sally Clink

1. Welcome

a. Apologies and adoption of the agenda

There were apologies from the following members: Bengt Ingerstam, (Swedish Consumers' Coalition), Peter Mohnert (represented by Mr. Von Lukowicz, the German Sportsfishermen's Association), Gunnar Norén (Coalition Clean Baltic) and Pim Visser (European Association of Fishing Ports and auctions). The list of participants is in Annex I.

Point 2 of the agenda (Presentation of the Control Proposal) was deleted because Mathieu Briens DG Mare was unable to come and present the proposal. Some members expressed their regret about this. This had happened to both the NS RAC and the BS RAC in the same week. One member wanted it pointed out to the Commission that there was a need for the RACs to be consulted alongside the Council process. The Commission representative assured the ExCom that he would convey these comments to the Commission. The agenda was renumbered. A new Point 3 **Selectivity** was added to the agenda.

b. Adoption of the minutes from ExCom 20/11/08

The minutes from the last ExCom were adopted.

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

Niki Sporrang (Fisheries Secretariat) and Henrik Svenberg (Swedish Fishermen's Federation) were appointed to check the minutes.

2. Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy

There was a brief discussion of this point. One member asked whether focus should only be given to BSRAC related subjects. Another member felt that this was an important subject and that the BRAC should prepare itself to concentrate on matters relating to the Baltic Sea. It was agreed by members to await the arrival of the Green Paper before discussing how to deal with this issue. The Secretariat informed that Poul Degnbol, DG Mare, had agreed to come to the BSRAC's General Assembly on 8th May to present Green Paper and explain the reform process.

3. Selectivity

The chairman raised this point in connection with the Terms of Reference for a scientific request made to ICES on “Ways to improve selectivity in Baltic cod fisheries for which cod is recognised as target species” (attached as Annex 2 to these minutes). His wish was not to interfere with the forthcoming BSRAC Demersal WG, but he felt it was an urgent issue, which should be dealt with immediately. He put forward the proposal to put together as soon as possible a short-term project of 5/6 vessels from initially Denmark, Germany, Poland and Sweden with the aim of considering a review of the selectivity of the gear in the cod fishery. This gave rise to a general discussion about whether there was a need right now for specific trials and studies into selectivity. Some members felt that the current positive state of the cod year classes meant that such trials were unnecessary. There was concern about taking over-anxious measures. Others felt that since the cod stocks were in a good position, it was all the more reason for the BRAC to be pro-active and to take responsibility for them. Benefits could be wide-ranging, for example with respect to the market and with a view to reducing discards. One member pointed out that he was not opposed to carrying out trials, but that his organisation did not have the financial resources to pay the fishermen to take part in these trials. A representative from the NGOs asked whether it would be possible at the coming Demersal WG to have a detailed explanation of the selectivity issues and the gear types used in the cod fishery. The Chair of the Demersal WG, Michael Andersen, said he would look into that. In that connection, he informed that the Danish Fishermen’s Organisation had made an application to the European Fisheries Fund for a project to draw on the expertise from national scientists at meetings. Vesa Tchernij of ICONEX was invited to comment on the proposal from the chairman. He supported carrying out trials whilst the stocks were in a positive state. From his discussions with fishermen, it had emerged that they were interested in improving the capacity of the gear so as to take care of the catch coming into the trawls. He suggested that the trials consist of a technical phase where the net makers and fishermen are involved, followed by a phase where the scientists come on board and carry out measurements. The Commission representative gave the background to the Commissions’ report on selectivity of the trawl fishery for cod in the Baltic and the conclusions drawn from it and the scientific request to ICES. After the exercise with ICES, the Commission will assess the socio-economic consequences of any new development. He pointed out that the input from the BSRAC was important to the process. The Chair concluded that the ExCom agreed to a short-term project and that work would start immediately to look into it.

4. Brief news from the BSRAC Working Groups

Report from the Pelagic WG

Ryszard Malik, Pelagic WG Chairman, informed the ExCom of the agenda points for the forthcoming Pelagic WG on 17th March. He added that he had been to a Pelagic RAC WG in Leiden on 29th January and that he would invite Christian Olesen, Chair of the WG to the BSRAC WG with a view to discussing areas IIIa and 22-24. The next pelagic WG was expected to take place later in the year just after the STECF review. He mentioned the gcPLUS workshop “Facilitating Governance of Baltic Sea Fisheries by Improving Communication among Stakeholders” which had taken place in Gdynia on 15th-16th January 2009 and which had been a success.

Report from the Salmon/Sea trout WG

Gunnar Asplund, Salmon/Sea trout WG Chairman, informed of the forthcoming WG on 10th March. It will be first and foremost an information meeting. He reported that the management plan for salmon finally seemed to be on track. The Commission's consultation paper was awaited and the Commission's salmon workshop was postponed until the end of April. The Commission representative explained that the new salmon action plan was ambitious. He added that the consultation paper, which contains 20 questions for stakeholders, will be made available in the coming days.

a. Report from the Demersal WG

Michael Andersen, Demersal WG Chairman, explained the contents of the draft agenda for the Demersal WG on 18th March. As it was a draft agenda, there was a strong invitation to come with other issues. Selectivity was one agenda point, the aim of which was educative, and he was trying to get as many outside inputs as possible - including scientific input for the benefit of those who do not know so much about the issues.

5. Admin matters

a. Budget update for current year

The Secretariat gave a brief status on the budget for the current year. The year was expected to end with a surplus because of meetings not held this year or postponed to the following year. The Secretariat had expressed regret to the Commission that a proportion of this money could not be transferred to the next year to improve the performance of the BS RAC.

b. Draft budget and work programme for 2009-2010

- Budget

The Secretariat presented the draft budget. Travel and meeting costs were becoming expensive items, so the Secretariat would be calling on the good will of MS and organisations to provide meeting rooms as in kind payment. Some meetings had not been budgeted for in the hope of external support.

The Secretariat had received 36 commitment forms from members. Lithuania had not been able to provide its commitment for the coming year, so the budget would have to be adjusted accordingly. The Swedish Fishermen's Federation had agreed to be guarantor for one more year only for part of the EU funding. The Secretariat had contacted the Danish Fishermen's Association concerning the other part of the funding.

There were no comments to the budget.

- Membership

The Secretariat reminded the ExCom they had written to all ExCom members and substitutes to ask if they would consider another three years with the BSRAC. It was also necessary to appoint a new Honorary Chair of the General Assembly.

The SYEF (Swedish Fishermen's Organisation) had applied for membership of the BSRAC. Information and the request from this organisation are included as [Annex 3](#) to these minutes.

- Work Programme

The work programme was presented. It was suggested and agreed to include the possibility of an ExCom in June in case there was a need to take a decision on BS RAC advice on TACs and quotas for the next year. The Finnish Fisheries Association kindly offered to provide a meeting room for this ExCom. There were no other comments to the Work Programme.

c. Wording for the statutes on members who don't pay

The suggested wording was accepted and will be put forward to the General Assembly. It was agreed not to include a deadline, but to note in the minutes that the ExCom interprets the deadline of payment to be timely, according to which members are reminded to pay once. The text is included as [Annex 4](#).

6. The BSRAC Conference under the Swedish Presidency – planning

The representative from the Swedish government, Marcus Öhman, informed that this conference would be from 1st October to 2nd October (lunchtime to lunchtime), to be held in Stockholm. BSRAC members were interested to know what the theme or aims of the conference would be. The chair informed that a meeting would soon be arranged at the ministry in Stockholm to discuss the details, including clarification on financing. He underlined that the BSRAC had full influence over the conference. One member was willing to provide input and ideas from the processing sector. Another member pointed out that there were a lot of developments going on around the Baltic and that the Swedish Presidency was using the Baltic as its platform.

7. The BSRAC Science Workshop – update on planning

Michael Andersen gave a brief update on the planning. The aim was to have a dialogue on the pitfalls that there can be in using scientific assessments. Ilan Chabay and his team at Chalmers University would be organising the work. The hope was to start on 6th May with an evening session, budget allowing, then to have a full day on 7th May. It would hopefully be an educative workshop.

8. Outcome of the Workshop on Spatial Planning

The chairman felt that it was important to reflect further on the outcome of this workshop and to take it up at the coming ExCom on 8th May, especially with respect to financing. It was important to consider budget and relations with other organisations such as HELCOM. Some members expressed that it had been a good workshop in terms of the different aspects that it had brought up, but that there had been a lot to digest. One member pointed out that spatial planning was already being implemented, but the question was to know what role the BS RAC could play and what level of

involvement the BS RAC should assume. It was hoped that the forthcoming Kick-Off Conference in Brussels on 26th February would facilitate reflection.

9. Confirmation of date and place of next ExCom meeting

This would be in Gdynia on Friday 8th May (afternoon)

10. Any other Business

Polish website

Ryszard Malik pointed out that the BSRAC was now available in Polish at www.bsrac.pl
Some of the newsletter was being translated into Polish and posted on the Polish website.

Review of the functioning of the RACs.

There was a discussion on the best way to contribute to the Commission's request for input from the RACs on how the RACs were functioning. Members were generally satisfied with the working of the BS RAC, and the dialogue with the Commission was considered to be excellent. The BS RAC was not known to complain about things. Problems, for example, with the budget and the need for flexibility could be more appropriately brought up bilaterally with some member states. It was agreed by the ExCom to make the functioning of the RACs a point of work for the forthcoming review of the CFP.