

Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council

Executive Committee Meeting

Gdynia, 8th May 2009

Minutes

Chairman: Reine J. Johansson

Rapporteur: Sally Clink

1. Welcome

a. Apologies and adoption of the agenda

Apologies had been received from:

Peter Breckling (Union of German Cutter Fishery) – mandate given to Lothar Fischer (German Cutter-and Coastal-Fishermen’s Association)

Thomas Thomsen (The Fishermen's Association of Bornholm and Christiansø) – mandate given to Kim Kær Hansen or his substitute (Danish Fishermen’s Association)

Pim Visser (European Association of Fishing Ports and Auctions) – mandate given to Kim Kær Hansen or his substitute (Danish Fishermen’s Association)

Mathias von Lukowicz (German Sportsfishermen's Association) - represented by Stefan Spahn (German Sportsfishermen's Association)

Peter Mohnert (European Anglers Alliance) - mandate given to Stefan Spahn (German Sportsfishermen's Association)

Bengt Ingerstram (Swedish Consumers’ Coalition) – mandate not transferred

Gunnel Edelman Blom (Nordic Coastal Fisherwomen) – mandate not transferred.

It was agreed that in the light of discussions at the General Assembly on the validity of the ExCom meetings, it would in future be stated in the minutes how many members were present and how many mandates there were.

The list of participants is in Annex I. There were 18 ExCom members or nominated representatives present, and 22 votes assembled.

b. Adoption of the minutes from ExCom 20/02/09

The minutes from the last ExCom were adopted.

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

Ottilia Thoreson (WWF) and Henrik Svenberg (Swedish Fishermen's Federation) said they would check the minutes.

2. Confirmation of members of the ExCom, and ExCom Chair (for the years 2009 – 2012) and election of Vice-Chair (2009 –2010)

The confirmed members and substitutes of the Excom, as well as the BS RAC chair are attached in Annex 2. Lothar Fischer (German Cutter-and Coastal-Fishermen's Association) nominated Ewa Milewska as vice-chair of the ExCom for 2009-2010. This was seconded by Ryszard Malik (Association of Fishermen's of Sea- PO). The nomination was adopted by consensus.

3. Draft annual report and accounts for 2008 -2009

These were approved by the ExCom and would be subsequently approved by the General Assembly by e mail (deadline 25th May 2009).

4. Budget: Status on the new budget 2009 -2010

- Update on income and expenditure

The BSRAC had received its first instalment from the Commission, so there was no cash flow problem.

- Membership and member state payments

The Secretariat informed on which members and member states had paid their fees. The secretariat would now send a first reminder to those members who had not yet paid.

- The offer by Birger Rasmussen, Association of Danish Fishermen's Associations, to cover the costs of the Salmon and Sea trout WG April 2009

The ExCom took note of this. The Secretariat informed that this would require an amendment to the BS RAC's partnership agreement with the Commission.

- Members' response in registering for meetings and sending in travel claims

The Secretariat gave a strong reminder to members to adhere to the deadlines.

5. Nord Stream: discussion in connection with gas pipeline project in the Baltic

Werner Zirrig, Permitting Manager of Nord Stream, gave a power point presentation and explained the actions that had recently been carried out related to the fishery. He pointed out the issue of over-trawlability. Once the pipelines were constructed, they would be fishing friendly, but not all vessels had the power to pull the gear over the pipelines. He gave an account of an action plan that Nord Stream had produced to deal with fishery issues. A new trawl door Thyborøn 15VF was now being tested. Thomas Thomsen (Fishermen's Association of Bornholm and Christiansø) was involved, and a report was being written, together with FOGA. It would be available in two weeks' time.

He gave an explanation of the mitigating measures that Nord Stream was proposing and the process of negotiation of compensation agreements with the fishermen.

Finally, he explained the installation schedule and the timescale for the work.

Reine Johansson, Chair of the BS RAC, said that the presentation had been concrete and had pointed out the problems affecting the fishermen.

Representatives from the green organisations asked whether the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) had taken into account the potential effects on the fish stocks. There was no mention in the EIA on the fishery and fish stocks in coastal areas. Would there be an impact on the seabed and sea habitats in the marine environment? There were also concerns about whether heat production from the pipeline would influence the structure of the sea bottom. There was also the question of decommissioning the pipeline after its expected lifespan of 40-50 years.

Werner Zirrig explained that the pipeline would be laid in sequences and in timelines, so it would not affect the fish stocks spawning area in the Bornholm deep. There were rules on laying and operating the pipeline, and the concerns raised would go into this. The EIA study will be considered and taken into account when the decision to lay the pipeline is taken. Removing the pipeline could have an even bigger environmental impact - so a decision on this would be taken when the pipeline had run its course. He was unable to reply to the implications of temperature increase from the pipeline.

Representatives from the fisheries sector raised the issue of compensation and pointed out that it would be appropriate to give information on who would receive compensation – in particular with a view to giving a part of it to the share fishermen. Similar concerns were raised about removing the pipeline, and the question was asked about whether the pipeline could be dug down into the seabed. There was one more concern about the fact that recent information showed that the Gulf of Finland was very polluted, and if there is some blasting to lay down the pipelines, this may enter the food chain.

An invited expert from the oil and gas sector expressed concerns about the project being a joint-venture with different tasks being allocated to different companies; he also had questions related to the physical properties of the pipeline and the compensation fund.

Werner Zirrig replied that the question of a compensation fund was being investigated. Digging down the pipeline would depend on the structure of the seabed which varies along the route of the pipeline. He thanked ExCom members for their questions and comments.

There was no discussion on a follow-up to this meeting with Nord Stream.

6. Letter to Baltic 2020 on RESTOCK

The invitation to the ExCom to approve a letter from the BSRAC to Baltic 2020 recommending the RESTOCK project gave rise to much discussion and differing opinions. Representatives from the green organisations were unable to support sending the letter: one organisation had concerns about re-stocking, given the fact that the cod stocks were improving. Another organisation could not see anything in the research project to address diseases. A third organisation had reservations about signing it because the BS RAC did not support re-stocking. The chair of the Demersal WG pointed out that RESTOCK was a scientific project to investigate the consequences and methodology of re-stocking, rather than an application to start a restocking project. Moreover, the research team had covered many of the concerns expressed, in particular the genetic issue. Other members pointed out that the risks of restocking were known, but felt the project had merits as research work. A lot of work had already been done in the project, and it would be useful to see what contribution it could make.

The chair of the BSRAC said that it would be regrettable to miss this last piece of the research. Without taking any position on re-stocking as a RAC, he proposed a small amendment to the draft letter to highlight that the project is not directly related to re-stocking.

Consensus could not be reached on the proposal to amend the letter.

The chair of the Demersal WG concluded that several voices for different reasons had been opposed to the proposal and these must be taken on board. Concerns had been expressed at the ExCom, and it had not been possible to reach consensus.

The chair of the BSRAC concluded that the proposal was withdrawn.

7. Selectivity – from Demersal WG 18th March 2009

Michael Andersen was invited to give an update on the subject and the meetings of the Demersal WG.

Michael Andersen said it would be prudent to have a Demersal WG in order to prepare documents for the planned ExCom in June and to work on the advice from ICES, expected on 29th May. It was agreed to hold the next Demersal WG on 9th June in Copenhagen.

8. Review of the CFP: discussion and decision on how to work on this

The chair of the ExCom introduced the item by encouraging ExCom members to reply to the Commission's invitation to start the debate on the reform of the CFP. Ernesto Penas, DG Mare, underlined the importance of the BS RAC investing time and effort in this debate. It was not simply a question of indicating whether there was agreement with the Green Paper, but of making proposals and being innovative in the next six months. It was important to present ideas now, otherwise they will not be analysed in the impact assessments. There were two aspects to the reform process:

1. Legal aspect
2. Preparatory aspect: many of the ideas that can go into the debate may be considered too innovative, but they can help the process. The Baltic RAC is perhaps the ideal place for testing innovative approaches.

The ExCom held a short initial exchange of views on certain fundamental aspects of the CFP. The Chair suggested an in-depth analysis to be done in due time by the BS RAC. This work was considered of such importance that it demanded a separate, ad hoc WG to deal with the matter. The ideas from the Chair received large support from the Committee.

There was a discussion on the practical way of dealing with this. It was proposed and agreed to create a WG which could be held in conjunction with the ExCom in Finland. No specific terms of reference were needed. It was important to reach a common position to be sent to the Commission. The Fisheries Secretariat among others raised the point that a formal group should be created with a set timeline and reimbursement for flights etc.

9. Maritime Spatial Planning

The chair of the BSRAC pointed out that objective was to decide when to deal with this subject. Ewa Milewska (WWF) informed that she had participated on behalf of the BS RAC at the kick-off conference in February in Brussels. Otilia Thoreson (WWF) was working on a project and terms of reference with WWF Germany to make an inventory of certain levels of jurisdiction around MSP. This project could contribute to the work of the BSRAC. She had contacted Peter Breckling (Union of German Cutter Fishery, who had shared the steering group for planning the BSRAC workshop on MSP), and he was positive about the idea. Otilia will inform on this at the ExCom in June.

Katarzyna Kaminska (Government Poland) informed of HELCOM's plan to create a forum on MSP and to invite different organisations including the BSRAC to create some principles on MSP to be sent to the Commission. She would inform the Secretariat of the dates of the HELCOM forum.

10. Salmon – draft recommendation to Commission

Gunnar Asplund, Chair of the Salmon WG gave the background to the draft recommendation from the WG. It should be seen together with the 2007 recommendation. Gunnar Norén (CCB) pointed out that the Salmon and sea trout WG had worked very hard on the paper. He suggested a change in wording in the text on page 3 from:

“The question of an overall TAC should include all fishing activities.”

to:

“The salmon lifecycle, with its migration between the sea and rivers, requires a proper management with control of fisheries activities both in open-sea, coastal areas and rivers, and therefore an overall TAC should include all salmon fishing activities”.

Niki Sporrang (Fisheries Secretariat) abstained to this amendment and requested it to be written in the minutes.

Stefan Spahn (European Anglers Alliance/German Sportsfishermen's Association) asked how it would be possible to control a quota for anglers. Gunnar Norén replied that it would be up to national level to decide how the quota should be used.

The chair of the ExCom concluded that the proposal from the Salmon WG could be adopted with the amended wording and be put forward to the Commission. The Fisheries Secretariat abstained.

Stefan Spahn (European Anglers Alliance (EAA) / German Sportsfishermen's Association (VDSF)) has informed by e mail of 14th May 2009 and pointed out that it should be added to the minutes that he abstained with the votes of the EAA and the VDSF to the approval of the recommendations on Baltic Salmon.

11. Cormorants – draft BS RAC resolution on cormorants (forwarded from the Salmon WG 10th March 2009)

Due to lack of time, this point was postponed until the next ExCom.

12. Planning of the BS RAC conference

The ExCom chair reminded the ExCom that he had had the mandate to discuss this with the Swedish administration. The latter had confirmed that funding would be made available for the conference. Now it was possible to meet and to plan the conference and prepare a draft agenda to be put to the next ExCom. Such a meeting should take place no later than June. The aim of the conference was to highlight important fisheries issues of the Baltic and the environment. There was support for this. ExCom members were encouraged to contact the Secretariat.

13. Date and venue of the next ExCom

It was agreed to hold the meeting on 22nd –23rd June in Vaasa at the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia. The exact timing would be confirmed subject to travel to and from Vaasa.

14. AOB

Niki Sporrang, Fisheries Secretariat, informed that they, WWF and a few environmental groups were planning a conference on the regionalisation of the CFP on 29th September in Brussels. The BSRAC ExCom would be invited.