

**Meeting report**  
**Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council**  
**General Assembly**  
**Gdynia, 8th May 2009**

**What was decided at the meeting:**

The General Assembly:

- approved** the nomination of Steve Karnicki as honorary chair of the BS RAQ for the three years 2009 -2012
- approved** the nomination of Reine Johansson as chair of the ExCom
- approved** the nominations of the new membership of the ExCom
- **approved** the request for membership by the May-Britt Landin of the Fishermen's Federation for Small-Scale Fishery in Sweden
- **agreed** to approve the annual report and the annual accounts by email correspondence by an agreed deadline
- approved** the proposed work programme and gave the Executive Committee the mandate to adjust the programme during the year should the need arise
- approved** the presented budget and authorised the Executive Committee to adjust the budget during the year should the need arise
- **appointed** as certified auditor for the 2009-2010 accounts: Jan Hallerup, Hallerup Net ApS, Overgaden Oven Vandet 48E, 1415 Copenhagen K, Denmark
- **approved** the increase in membership fee to € 250 per member
- **approved** the amended wording in the statutes about non-payment of membership fee
- **approved** the appointment of members of the Executive Assembly for 2009 -2012

**Welcome by Reine J. Johansson, Chairman of the BS RAC**

On the initiative of Reine Johansson, the General Assembly held a one-minute silence in tribute to 5 Polish fishermen who had lost their lives at sea.

In his welcome to the meeting he pointed out that the RACs perceive initiatives from the Commission differently, but the most important achievement of the RACs was that they have generated lively debate in the working groups and in ExCom. He encouraged members to take up the challenge to enter into the debate. This was particularly the case for the BS RAC given the political developments in the region and the fall of the iron curtain.

## **Election of Honorary chair of the General Assembly**

Michael Andersen, Danish Fishermen's Association, nominated Steve Karnicki as Honorary Chair of the General Assembly. This was seconded by the Henrik Svenberg, Swedish Fishermen's Association. In accepting the nomination, Steve Karnicki pointed out that he counted on the understanding and cooperation of the members.

## **Adoption of the agenda**

Gunnar Norén, Coalition Clean Baltic, suggested that the point "Changes to the membership of the General Assembly: update, new members" be moved forward in the agenda to allow any new members to enter into the discussions.

The agenda was adopted with this amendment.

## **Opening address**

Minister Kazimierz Plocke, Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, said the he was very honoured to host the meeting in Poland and was very happy that the BS RAC had chosen Gdynia. He congratulated the BSRAC on its three years. He was happy with the cooperation with the BSRAC and with the activities which the BS RAC had been working with, such as MSP. The General Assembly was taking place at an important moment because the Commission had produced its Green Paper with a view to a reform of the CFP, and the Polish administration took a great interest in this, also in view of the Polish Presidency of the EU in 2011. He hoped that Baltic fisheries management would take on a more regional approach. It was also important to protect the coastal fishery. The BSRAC had an important role to play in maintaining a dialogue between the sector, science and administration - and the BSRAC was able to link these three areas together. He hoped all would work wisely together to secure access for future generations to the Baltic Sea.

## **Presentation by Professor Ilan Chabay, Chalmers University**

"Understanding, dialogue, and consensus: summary of our project with the Baltic Sea RAC"

Ilan Chabay gave a power point presentation and explained the aim of the project: to understand the process and dynamics of dialogue and consensus formation in the BS RAC and the role of science in that. The project is funded by Baltic 2020 and the European Fisheries Fund. He thanked Reine Johansson, BS RAC chair for assisting the start of the project. He also thanked Ewa Milewska (WWF) and Ryszard Malik (Chair of Pelagic WG), as well as Axel Wenblad Director General at the Swedish Board of Fisheries. The team had been looking at the views by BS RAC members of fisheries and fish stocks. They have carried out interviews with BS RAC members, scientists and the Commission. They have found that since 2006 there has been a noticeable improvement in the organisation and in trust within the RAC. The key area of interest has been science, where there is

uncertainty and complexity, and various factors contribute to that. On the basis of the work done so far, the team has been able to make some recommendations:

- There is a need for improvement in the understanding of science
- Create more venues for exchange between the different groups
- Use framing questions and joint fact finding
- Need for better feedback between RAC and Commission
- There needs to be interaction between constituents and representatives in the RAC
- Develop a Polish round Table as an example to increase the coherence of the voice of the RACs.

The team would be reflecting after the Science Workshop of 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> May. The aim was to have a final report by August 2009. He concluded by thanking the BS RAC for making the project possible.

### **Presentation of CFP reform and Green paper: Ernesto Penas Lado Acting Director, Directorate E, DG Mare**

Ernesto Penas gave a power point presentation. He explained that the overall aim of the Green Paper was to present a vision of what the reform should deliver and asked what could be done to reach the goal. It was a diagnostic document illustrating the elements in the CFP which needed improving. It gave an analysis of the shortcomings of the CFP, among other things: overcapacity, the need to reconcile the contradiction between short-term decisions and the wish to achieve long-term management, and ecological sustainability. Not everything in the CFP worked badly. Ernesto Penas gave an account of the existing problems in the sector and the challenges which should be confronted. For instance, there was the need to focus decision-making on long-term principles, to address the fact that policy was extremely paternalistic, and the need to develop a culture of compliance. There was also the challenge of reconciling the need to achieve a self-sufficient industry whilst at the same time preserving the small-scale coastal fisheries. Another dimension was the integration of the CFP in the EU's maritime policy, meaning that the CFP could not operate alone. Other elements to consider were the knowledge base (science) for policy making, the most appropriate way of using the resources, aquaculture, relative stability, the 12 nautical mile limit, trade and markets, and structural policy and public financial support. Ernesto Penas explained the timescale for the work included a public debate until the end of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009. He underlined that this was an historical opportunity for stakeholders to bring forward ideas and to contribute to the debate. He also pointed out that the CFP allows for testing out things and ideas: and if they succeed, they could be incorporated in the management system of a reformed CFP. In this connection the Baltic Sea was a good area for this. So the challenge was to take the debate seriously, to be creative and to come forward with suggestions and ideas which can be tried out before 2013.

There were wide ranging comments to the presentation. Fisheries sector representatives remarked that such broad comments as "overcapacity" and "over-subsidised" needed to be qualified, and the discussion of subsidies in the fisheries sector should be taken in relation to other sectors such as agriculture. Initial reactions to the Green Paper may have been catastrophistic, but there was support for the process and it was a good thing to include increased responsibility for the industry, as well as

taking into account regionality. One fishermen's representative pointed out that overcapacity is not a general problem, but limited to some member states. Representatives from the NGOs were positive about the Green Paper and welcomed the proposal to remove detailed decision-making from Council level. It was interesting to see how a more regional management could be introduced, and at the same time it was important that coastal and small-scale fisheries were dealt with. The issue of tradeable rights was important and should be dealt with on a stock-by-stock basis. A representative from the importers and exporters sector welcomed the paper and at the same time drew attention to the markets issue and said that the global market should be taken into account.

Ernesto Penas replied that the RACs as a regional body could not replace the Council and EP. These two would continue to take the important decisions, with the remainder being taken over by other bodies. Nothing had been decided on tradeable rights. With respect to processing, the Commission was aware of the global market, and in that connection protectionism was not an option.

Steve Karnicki concluded that it was very important that the BS RAC was active in the discussions in connection with the reform.

## **Reports by Working Group chairpersons for the BSRAC year 2008-2009**

- Demersal Working Group (Michael Andersen, Danish Fishermen's Association)

Michael Andersen informed that there had been two meetings during the year. He invited the representatives from the green organisations to participate more in these meetings, and encouraged Commission representatives to take part. The TAC for cod was not an issue for 2008 and he did not expect it to be so in 2009 because of the management plan which was working quite well. The focus in the coming year would be on selectivity and on other stocks: the WG should be prepared for discussions on other species such as plaice. The first WG meeting of the new RAC year had been on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

- Pelagic Working Group (Ryszard Malik, Association of Fishermen's of Sea-PO)

Ryszard Malik explained that there had been two meetings during the year and that the WG had produced a first position on the long-term management of pelagic species. He attended the joint RACs' seminar on long-term management, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> September 2008, Nantes, as well as the Pelagic RAC WG meeting in Leiden on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009. The first WG meeting of the new RAC year had been on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009. A next WG would probably be in June.

- Salmon/Sea trout Working Group (Gunnar Asplund, Swedish Fishermen's Federation)

Gunnar Asplund explained that over the first three years of the RAC's life, work had been concentrated on a recommendation for a management plan for salmon. A recommendation had been produced in 2007. The Commission had started a consultation process on a new management plan, and a new paper had been produced by the Salmon/Sea trout Working Group. It would be interesting to see how the Commission would deal with this issue.

## **Changes to the membership of the General Assembly: update, new members**

The Secretariat informed on a new application for membership received from the Fishermen's Federation for Small-Scale Fishery in Sweden. The representative May-Britt Landin, was invited to present her organisation and to say a few words about herself. Their application was approved by the General Assembly.

The Polish fishermen's Union had been removed from the membership list because it had never participated in any meetings and had not paid its membership fee. The General Assembly took note.

### **Draft annual report and accounts for 2008 - 2009**

The Secretariat gave an account of the contents and format of the report for 2008 –2009. It presented the objectives of the RAC and how these had been met. It also gave an account of the meetings that the BSRAC had held, as well as meetings that BS RAC representatives have taken part in. Attempts were being made to make the BSRAC more visible: for example by producing a newsletter, and with a website now in Polish. The accounts were being finalised by the accountant and would be sent to the Commission as soon as possible. The General Assembly agreed to approve both items by e mail, as they had first to be approved by the ExCom. It was emphasised that it was normal practice for them to be adopted at the meeting, and this should be adhered to in future.

### **Proposed budget and work programme 2009 – 2010**

The Secretariat presented the proposed budget and drew attention to the fact that travel and hotel costs may be a more expensive item. There were no comments.

The BS RAC chair Reine Johansson presented the work programme for 2009 –2010 and highlighted the key areas of work for the coming year. Some members had comments to the dates for some meetings. It was important that some dates for meetings could be changed. One member highlighted the importance of agreeing on a date for the ExCom meeting in June, given the agreement to look at the TACs and quotas for 2010. One member also suggested holding an ExCom in connection with the planned BSRAC conference on 1<sup>st</sup> –2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009.

Both the budget and work programme were approved by the General Assembly.

### **Election of members of the ExCom, Chair and vice-chair (for the next three years)**

The Honorary chair pointed out that it was the mandate of the ExCom to elect the vice-chair, so this item was removed.

The Secretariat read out the list of nominations that had been received. There were no other nominations given at the meeting. The nominations were approved. One member pointed out that that in future the list should be made available to all members for information. A representative from the Polish fisheries sector sought clarification about substitutes. It was explained that if the elected ExCom member was unable to attend a meeting, he/she could ask another member organisation of the BS RAC to send a representative as a substitute, provided the organisation has paid its membership fees.

For the position as Chair of the BSRAC, Henrik Svenberg of the Swedish Fishermen's Federation nominated Reine Johansson. This was seconded by Lena Talvitie of the Finnish Fishermen's Federation. The General Assembly approved the nomination.

### **Appointment of a certified auditor to audit the annual accounts of the BSRAC**

The General Assembly approved Jan Hallerup, Hallerup Net ApS, Overgaden Oven Vandet 48E, 1415 Copenhagen K, Denmark as certified auditor for the 2009-2010 accounts

### **Proposed increase in membership fee**

The General Assembly approved the proposed increase in membership fee to €250.

### **Proposed amendment to the statutes about non-payment of membership fee**

The Secretariat explained the motivation behind the proposed amendment. There was a discussion as to whether any deadline should be included in the wording. It was agreed by the General Assembly that the message conveyed in the statutes is that there should be an obligation to pay. It was agreed to include in the minutes to the meeting that if a payment has not been received after a second reminder, then the wording in the statutes would apply. The proposed amendment was adopted.

### **AOB**

Krzysztof Stanuch of the Fishing Shipowners' Association, Poland, raised the problem of validity of meetings in the case when a quorum is not reached. The ExCom chair confirmed that it must be ensured that participation must be adhered to in accordance with the statutes. He appealed to ExCom members to participate fully in meetings. The Commission clarified the procedures with respect to meetings and explained that ExCom members can nominate substitutes to take part and thereby secure a quorum at the meetings.

### **Closing remarks by the Honorary Chairperson of the BSRAC**

Steve Karnicki closed the meeting and thanked all participants for taking part. He emphasised the role of the RACs in connection with the review of the CFP.