Report on Workshop A – Crime prevention

Moderator: Mr. Jani Taivalantti, European Commission

Summary
Discussions converged on three aspects of crime prevention, which all brought up pros and cons of a macroregional approach:

- **Analysis** of crime threats: An accurate and up-to-date analytical picture of the crime threats in the Region forms a necessary basis for further law enforcement cooperation in the region. A Baltic Sea Region Organized Crime Threat Assessment could be one solution, albeit limited by the global and European linkages of organized crime.

- **Social and economic preventive measures** (non-law enforcement) can mainly benefit from common training and exchanges of experience. Here the involvement of all relevant stakeholders (public, private and NGO) in a structured way is necessary.

- **Common law-enforcement actions and interventions** between police, customs, and/or border control in the Region can reap great benefits, but are hampered by organizational uncertainty. The Baltic Sea Task Force Organised Crime (BSTF-OC) mandate needs to be evaluated to end uncertainty about its future.

Secure borders: Mr. Gil Arias, FRONTEX

With the exception of Southern Poland's border with Ukraine, pressure of illegal immigration from third countries to the Baltic Sea Region is very low in an EU comparison. In the future the Region's major international airport will face increased pressure.

Frontex has had some activities in the Region in cooperation with the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC), mainly conferences and certain joint operations based on yearly risk analysis. The joint operations have so far focused on detecting fake seamen from third countries, aiming to remain illegally in the EU.

Frontex's mandate is limited to operations on the EU's external borders. A representative from the Stockholm Police Department called for more focus on movements within the Schengen area and the flow of illegal immigrants moving from south to north within the EU.

Combating Organized Crime: Mr. Erkki Hämäläinen, Helsinki Police Department

While there already are several Organised Crime Threat Assessments that cover parts of the Region (Europol OCTA, OCTA for Russia (ROCTA), Nordic OCTA) it may be necessary to go deeper in the analysis of the threats to the Region.
There are many forms of bilateral law enforcement cooperation going on in the Region, while the main multilateral forums are the Nordic Police and Customs Cooperation (PTN) and Baltic Sea Task Force Organised Crime (BSTF-OC). Direct law-enforcement cooperation in stronger and has long traditions in the Nordic context. The BSTF-OC’s strength is that it includes Russia, but it is currently hampered by uncertainty about its long term future, with the current mandate ending in 2010.

Mr. Hamalainen proposed the following actions to be considered for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region:

- Extending the Nordic direct law-enforcement cooperation to cover the whole Baltic Sea Region;
- Finding stronger political support for the BSTF-OC guaranteeing its stability and permanency;
- Reinforcing the external dimension, in particular cooperation with Russia, which requires high-level political commitment;
- Stronger preventive approach for combating crime, in particular through closer cooperation of all relevant public and private stakeholders (e.g. in maritime crime it is important to involve harbors and shipping companies in preventive work).

This could possibly be achieved the creation of a coherent Baltic Sea Region security programme, which should be based on an adequate crime threat assessment. The programme should be based on solid concepts and focus on crucial functions of the Region. This includes point to point security concepts in the logistical chain, as well as assuring legal business structures and financial transactions in the supply chain.

While individual authorities in the Member States will remain central in finding ways to activate already existing cooperation structures, two concerns were raised in the discussion:

1. possible fragmentation due to insufficient cross-sectoral cooperation (police, customs, border guard…)
2. possible fragmentation due to too many cooperation structures existing.

**Combating trafficking in human beings, drugs, and fire arms: Mr. Menno Hagemeijer, Europol**

Mr. Hagemeijer reminded that a regional approach may not always be useful, as criminal activities in regions are ever more intertwined. He recommended the Baltic Sea Region to focus on facilitating factors in its fight against organized crime, such as document forgery (eg. in the transport sector), sharing best practice, focus on input into the Europol OCTA, improving cooperation with the private sector, and making more use of analysis work files (AWF) and joint investigation teams (JIT).

Translating the Europol OCTA into actions and operational activities is up to the individual Member States. Europol can also provide operational support through the
AWFs. He encouraged the Region to make use of the Europol platform to solve problems in the Baltic Sea Region.

Much of the following discussion focused on engaging Russia. While reiterating the need for commitment from the highest political level, it was concluded that the existence of an EU-Russia roadmap should, generally speaking, be connected to future crime prevention work in the Baltic Sea Region.