Summary of the Workshops on the objective
"To make the Baltic Sea Region safer and more secure"
Stakeholder Conference in Stockholm 30 September 2008

The workshop was moderated by Professor Esko Antola of Centrum Balticum think-tank, Turku, Finland.

The Baltic Master project was presented to introduce the discussion, which then strongly focussed on the issues related to maritime safety. It was considered that the action plan recommendations of the project (see www.bsrinterreg.net/projects.html) could be incorporated in the Baltic Sea Region Strategy, oil contingency planning as an example.

As conditions for the success of a project, the following were listed: 1) bottom-up, local and regional perspective, 2) political initiative, 3) use of existing tools, and 4) participation in ongoing policymaking.

- **Shipping safety** has improved during last 20-30 years, but the growth of traffic is increasing the risks as well. The additional pipelines, cables and wind power plants also have an impact on the general environmental status.

- The German and Russian **military deposits** of World War II are still laying in the Baltic Sea.

- Obligation to use **pilots** in all vessels could be agreed between the BSR states. Especially **winter navigation** poses a real challenge to the international staff serving on vessels.

- The existing **satellite tracking system** of maritime traffic could possibly be extended to meet the needs of disaster prevention. EU COM DG Mare informed that a pilot project of maritime surveillance is run in Western Mediterranean, and Baltic Sea would be the next in line.

- Finland is preparing a maritime safety strategy for BSR to contribute to the work of the EU and of International Maritime Organisation IMO.

In addition to maritime safety, the following topics were addressed:

- **Public health** should be related to the labour shortage and safety at work, where disparities are large in the BSR.
- **Energy supply security** issues have been discussed among the three Baltic states.
- **Cyber crime** was referred to as one area requiring special attention.
- Safety of **air transport** should also be kept in mind.
- **Crime prevention/cooperation between law enforcement officials**; drugs; border control; cyber crime; trafficking; Europol and intelligence sharing, migration and population movements; racism/xenophobia and intolerance; judicial cooperation in criminal and civil matters as well as issues relating to combating terrorism (such as protection of critical infrastructure) are important aspects of safety. There are still shortcomings in the agreed forms of cooperation: for instance, joint investigation teams of the police in case of cross-border crime are not frequently used between EU MS.
**Involvement of third countries**

The need to inform and involve relevant third countries, in particular the Russian Federation, was underlined by many participants. It was pointed out that extensive cooperation already exists in the context of the Four Common Spaces between the EU and Russia which cover many issues relevant to safety and security.

Commission assured its intention of preparing the strategy in a transparent fashion and noted that non-EU countries in the region have been invited to participate in the stocktaking events and roundtables. Northern Dimension structures offer a functioning way to keep these countries fully informed, and the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) offers additional means for this.

**Governance issues, strategy implementation**

To avoid frustration, **accountability** for the actions included in the Action Plan of the Strategy is crucial. Indicated actions will have to be as precise as possible with a clear timetable and designated responsible entity.

First **review** of the Strategy should be conducted in two years time from approval. The Prime Ministers of the 8 Baltic Sea Region Member States should meet annually in the framework of European Council meetings to discuss the Strategy implementation.

The international and EU regulations should be implemented, but with a Baltic Sea viewpoint. It was proposed that the existing structures of the Nordic Council of Ministers be extended to include the Baltic States, Germany and Poland.

Safety and security, which is both an objective and a subjective notion, would need to cross-cut also the other objectives of the Strategy.

For further discussion, reference was made to the Helsinki roundtable on safety and security on 9 December 2008.