

2nd Coordination Group meeting of the EUSBSR HA Neighbours

15th June 2015

Dzintari Concert Hall, Jurmala, Latvia. Meeting room “Western Foyer”

(List of participants attached)

- Mikko Lohikoski welcomed all the participants to the meeting and also presented the new logo and roll-up that has been created for the HA Neighbours.
- It was stated that since the last CG meeting in Turku the HA Neighbours’ work has focused on updating the EUSBSR Action Plan, writing funding applications and organizing various events
 - Examples of events during the last year:
 - HA Neighbours organized a joint event with PA Education in St. Petersburg in October 2014.
 - Meeting with Icelandic stakeholders interested in regional cooperation. Reykjavik, May 2015.
 - HA Neighbours Coordinator CBSS’ meeting in Sarajevo 21 April 2015 with DG Regio and regional organizations.
 - CBSS workshop on regional governance
 - 14 June 2015 meeting on Maritime issues in Jurmala, Latvia.
- Jan Lundin reported that CBSS project work is continuing and projects are being prepared.

Country tracks:

- Ms. Ann-Irene Saeternes presented the “country tracks” report on Norway:
 - May 2014 HA Neighbours and Norwegian stakeholders held a meeting in Oslo which attracted many participants. Intent was to get Norwegian ministries and national agencies involved in EUSBSR cooperation. Similar event is planned for Autumn 2015.
 - Ms. Saeternes told that the Norwegians haven’t yet quite found their way to the EUSBSR activities and there is still work to be done in getting them on board. One meeting per year isn’t enough.
 - PA Education has approached the Norwegians for discussions. Norwegians also interested in PA Energy.
 - Lohikoski said that discussions with Norwegian stakeholders should be continued and perhaps a meeting on EUSBSR, Norway and the Arctic strategy could be a good idea.
- Ms. Irina Karelina and Darja Akhutina presented the “country tracks” report on Russia:
 - Ms. Karelina has been involved in the development of the BSR Interreg programme and she had news on the financial agreement between EU and Russia.
 - Ms. Karelina told that the agreement will be signed before the 2nd call of the BSR Interreg programme. Russia will co-finance.
 - Cross-border cooperation programme agreements (CBC) will be finalized in the end of June.
 - All Russian Forum continues cooperation with VASAB
 - Ms. Akhutina continued and told that there are pursuits in getting more NGOs involved in BSR cooperation which are needed in many sectors.

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- Mr. Kari Hyppönen presented the “country tracks” report on Belarus (BSRUN):
 - The Baltic Sea Region University network (BSRUN) has university cooperation with many Russian and Belarussian universities. 4 Belarussian members in the network.
 - The CBSS Eurofaculty work in Pskov will continue. High value of the network it has already set up, no point in dismantling the work now. The terms of reference have been drafted for the network and they should be approved.
 - Student mobility in these countries done through the network doesn’t go through Brussels.
 - Belarus has been approved to the Bologna process.
- Mr. Jan Lundin presented the “Country tracks” report on Iceland:
 - Iceland will hold CBSS presidency 1 July 2016 ->
 - May 2015 DG Regio and HA Neighbours representatives arranged a meeting in Reykjavik to inform about EUSBSR possibilities.
 - Worth noting that the cooperation with Icelandic partners lies very much on the city-level.
 - Iceland participates already in EUSBSR activities through PA Secure (Icelandic partner), PA Innovation (BSR stars project partner), HA Climate (Expert Group level)
 - The May event was a positive one and information on EUSBSR opportunities were delivered.

Discussion:

- Kristiina Isokallio (PA Nutri) told that some cost-effective projects in Belarussian catchment area have been taken for further elaborations by Nefco.
- Iris Kempe reminded that the EU-Russian Civil Society Forum should be kept in mind in addition to BSR NGO Forum.
- It was stated that Neighbours have to be included even more in the PA/HAs work and projects.
- Marek Maciejowski (PA Health) informed that during the Northern Dimension (ND) Steering Group meeting held last month it was confirmed that the observer status of Belarus within the ND had been finalized. Consequently, the Northern Dimension Policy now includes Belarus as an observer. PA Health also emphasized that now that the revised AP is out, we are looking forward to the outcome of the ongoing revision of the NW Russia Strategy in order to identify common denominators for cooperation. It is advisable that both co-HACs take a closer look at this issue.

Flagship project presentations

- ROMINT
 - Is based on SEBA’s project Rominten/Vistynets
 - Idea: Jobs through cross-border cooperation on grass-root level and how to set up more small businesses
 - Seed money phase will be finalized in Autumn 2015. Project application has been sent to Life programme. Also CBC-programmes are relevant in this project. Money will not be applied from BSR Interreg for this project.
- Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue
 - Pilot project started with Narva/Ivangorod, initiated by CBSS and Körber Foundation in 2014.

- Secondary school students aged 16-19, theme “History & Shaping the Future”.
- Instagram exhibition set up in Brussels January 2015.
- The next Youth Dialogue takes place near Potsdam In two weeks.
- Funding from EU, Körber, Potsdam.