



MINUTES BBSRC PRE-GENERAL ASSEMBLY

25 September 2013, Saint-Malo (Brittany, FR)

Welcoming words, introduction by Mr Ayhan Özkan, President of the Balkan and Black Sea Commission

Mr Ayhan Özkan thanked the Region of Brittany for the high quality of the organisation and for the pleasure to be here in St-Malo, 40 years after the creation of the CPMR.

Mr Özkan explained that although some time has been lost since Odessa due to misunderstandings, from now on, the BBSRC must progress on the subjects that will enable it to become a recognised player in the strategies and programmes for South-East Europe.

[The draft minutes of the BBSRC General Assembly held in Odessa on 26 April 2013 were unanimously adopted.](#)

“Black Sea Synergy and Danube Strategy, lessons learnt from the Tulcea seminar”, by Mr George Siscu, Vice-President of the Tulcea County Council (Romania) and Vice-President of the BBSRC: [read the speech](#)

“Outstanding questions regarding the functioning of the BBSRC to be resolved”

Mr Ayhan Özkan brought up the issue of membership fees, non-paid by some members and questioned the legality of the decisions made under these conditions.

Mr Özkan then proposed that **Mr George Siscu** be appointed as substitute member of the BBSRC within the CPMR Political Bureau, with the decision taking effect in May 2014.

With regard to the secretariat of the BBSRC, Mr Özkan proposed that the CPMR General Secretariat provides the technical secretariat for the Commission with the support of a Turkish Advisor, Mr Berkol Alevli. Mr Alevli could participate in useful meetings. The travel and accommodation expenses incurred by Mr Alveli when carrying out these functions would be covered financially by the CPMR's BBSRC budget.

As provided for in the rules of procedure, the head office of the BBSRC is located in Kavala. It could become more active. Mr Özkan informed participants that the Region of Odessa hopes to open a BBSRC regional office and expressed his agreement.

He expressed his hope that the BBSRC rules of procedure and the CPMR statutes remain the only rules that govern the functioning the BBSRC and indicated that the Turkish Members will become more active in this context.

Regarding working languages, he hoped that the President of the BBSRC would be able to express himself in his mother tongue during the BBSRC General Assemblies.

Mr Apostolos Papafotiou reminded participants that the BBSRC is a CPMR Geographical Commission and therefore any steps towards autonomy must be avoided. In light of the budgetary constraints, he considered that it would be difficult to finance another person in addition to the personnel from the CPMR General Secretariat that are appointed to work for the BBSRC. He questioned the necessity of adding another working



language during the General Assemblies, reminding participants that the members from the South of the Mediterranean do not have the possibility to express themselves in their mother tongue during the CPMR meetings.

Mr Özkan indicated that he does not wish to appoint a second person in charge of the secretariat, but to have support provided by Berkol Alevli. He expressed his hope to develop the BBSRC membership towards Russia and Azerbaijan and indicated that the BBSRC would have a higher budget available if every Region paid its membership dues.

Mr Pavlos Damianidis considered that the historical reasons that explain the differences in the amount of membership fees between the Members no longer apply, and therefore the schedule of dues should be reviewed.

He supported Mr Özkan's proposal concerning Mr Alevli.

With regard to the office in Kavala, this is provided by the municipality. The personnel on site is available to the BBSRC. This approach must be carried forward. The possibility of opening regional offices in other countries, like in Odessa, is extremely useful.

BBSRC Technical Agenda:

Mr Patrick Anvrouin, Director, CPMR, reminded participants of the proposals for technical organisation that were put forward at the General Assembly in Odessa: [see the PowerPoint presentation](#)

At the end of the debate on these issues, an agreement was reached to focus the BBSRC's activities on three priority areas: tourism, entrusted to a Greek Region, Business Cooperation, entrusted to the Province of Sinop, and external cooperation entrusted to Odessa.

The BBSRC will also be active on the Danube macro-region and the Black Sea Synergy.

Mr Damianidis emphasised the difficulty in getting numerous working groups to function and encouraged moderation. He would like these groups to launch cooperation projects cofinanced by the CBC Black Sea Basin-European Neighbourhood Instrument programme.

Mrs Eleni Marianou reminded participants that the BBSRC is the smallest CPMR Geographical Commission, with a limited budget. This Commission must be made more attractive if it is to gain new members. Projects should also be submitted to European programmes. Mrs Marianou stressed that a discussion should be held around the membership fees, in particular given the retreat of some members and the wish expressed by Greek regions to reduce their increased contribution to this Commission. It would be advisable for the Commission to establish different financial scenaria to meet the budget requirements. Mrs Eugeniya Volynets, Director of Department, Odessa Region, informed participants that an important [international economic forum would be held from 31 October to 1 November in Odessa](#), and invited participants to take part in it.

Mr Alevli suggested that national meetings should be organised to increase BBSRC membership. He also proposed updating the BBSRC website, being active on social networking websites and publishing articles on the specific problems of the Balkan and Black Sea area.

In conclusion, Mr Ayhan Özkan reiterated his invitation to hold the next General Assembly of the BBSRC in Edirne. In order to take into consideration the elections that will be held in Greece on 14 May 2014, he suggested that the General Assembly takes place at the end of May or early June.

