



**36th CPMR GENERAL ASSEMBLY
CPMR BALKAN & BLACK SEA REGIONAL COMMISSION (BBSRC)
PRE-ASSEMBLY MEETING**

Wednesday 1st October 2008

MINUTES

The meeting was open by Mr Georgios Tsiotras, President of the BBSRC and Secretary General of the Region of Central Macedonia (Greece).

Present at the meeting were:

CROATIA / HRVATSKA

PRIMORSKO-GORANSKA

Ivo ZRILIC, Member of the County Government in charge of Maritime Affairs and Transport

GREECE / ELLAS

ATTIKI (Athens)

Martha NTOUMA, EU programs Officer

Zoe KAKARA, EU programs Coordinator

IONIA NISIA (Ionian Islands)

Sotirios VOSDOU, Secretary General

Spiridon KOLLAS, Advisor to the Secretary General

KENTRIKI MAKEDONIA (Central Macedonia)

George TSIOTRAS, Secretary General

Theodora AVGOULIDOU, Expert Adviser to the Secretary General

NOTIO AIGAIO

Charalambos KOKKINOS, Secretary General

M. BIBAS, Adviser

ROMANIA

TULCEA

Victor TARHON, President

Dan CHIRIAC, Councillor

TURKEY/TÜRKIYE

ÇANAKKALE

Hasan Huseyin AYTÖP, President of Provincial Assembly

Resul KARAKURT, Provincial Director of NGOs

Recai BASARAN, Mechanical Engineer

TEKIRDAG

Aydin Nezih DOĞAN, Governor

UKRAINE/UKRAÏNA

ODESSA

Peter KHLYTSOV, Deputy Governor

Anna URSOL, Chief Officer of the Division of European integration regional policy and cross-border cooperation

CPMR

Patrick ANVROIN, Director at the Secretariat General

Anthony PAPADIMITRIOU, BBSRC Executive Secretary

INVITED GUESTS

Mr Yasar YAKIS, MP, Chairman of EU Harmonization Committee, Grand National Assembly and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey

President Tsiotras welcomed on behalf of the BBSRC, in the lovely and historic city of Bayonne, all distinguished members and observers participating in the BBSRC Pre-Assembly Meeting, thanking for the invitation the President of the Aquitaine Region Mr Alain Rousset. He also welcomed the presence of the recently elected President of the Tulcea County Council, Mr Victor Tarhon, and representatives from Romania who were not able to participate in the Rhodes BBSRC General Assembly meeting due to regional government elections which took place in Romania around the same time.

He then invited all members present to elaborate on the Agenda of the meeting and to actively participate as it will set the priorities of the BBSRC until its next General Assembly which is foreseen to take place in Odessa on 11 June 2009.

He next welcomed the presence of Mr Yasar YAKIS, MP, Chairman of EU Harmonization Committee, Grand National Assembly and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, who is scheduled to intervene later in the meeting, and made special reference to the important contribution to the works of the BBSRC of all member regions from Turkey, extending a special welcome to BBSRC vice president Aydin Nezih DOGAN, Governor of Tekirdag.

He then informed participants that there is an increasing interest from other maritime regions from the Balkan and Black Sea area to become involved with the work of CPMR and that, despite the troubled political circumstances in the wider Black Sea area, it is important to stay focused on the BBSRC objectives by making further efforts to foster cooperation among BBSRC member regions on both technical and political levels. He stressed that this is even more important in difficult times and that the BBSRC task is to work to raise opportunities. He went on to say that there is no doubt that although several projects are offered through cooperation programs in the area, little progress has been made until today involving BBSRC member regions. We need our regions to have the technical capacity to cooperate with each other in this direction, transferring experiences and best practices. In this perspective, he informed member regions that there will be a meeting of the BBSRC Technical Commission in Thessaloniki on 7 November 2009, where all members will have the opportunity to be informed of the latest opportunities on financial possibilities in order to establish closer cooperation among our regions. He also stressed that it will be important to receive contributions from all BBSRC member Regions in order to increase cooperation in this field. More information will be given later today and in writing in the coming days.

The President then called Anthony Papadimitriou, BBSRC Executive Secretary, and all participants for further comments and contributions before concluding his initial remarks.

Adoption of the Agenda: The agenda was unanimously adopted.

Participants then took formal notice of the minutes of the Rhodes BBSRC General Assembly which were distributed and will be formally adopted in the 2009 BBSRC General Assembly in Odessa, Ukraine. For any comments please contact BBSRC Executive Secretary A. Papadimitriou.

Brief Activity Report "From Rhodes to Bayonne" by A. Papadimitriou, Executive Secretary of BBSRC.

During the past 3 months and under the leadership of its President Professor G. TSIOTRAS, Secretary General of the Region of Central Macedonia, Greece, the BBSRC has been engaged into the following areas:

Involvement with the work of the CPMR: The work of CPMR and its other 5 Geographical Commissions has been followed closely, promoting the special interests and political priorities of the wider Balkan and Black Sea area.

Anthony Papadimitriou, Executive Secretary of the BBSRC took part in the following international meetings:

- The First Regional Meeting on Cross-Border Cooperation, Sustainable Development, Territories and Decentralized Cooperation in the Balkans of French local and regional authorities engaged in the Balkans, which took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 3-4 July 2008. Mr A. Papadimitriou, representing both the CPMR and the BBSRC, co-chaired the Second Plenary Session on "A synergy of actors for territorial development" and spoke about the role of the BBSRC in the area.

- The International Conference on the Launching of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe Black Sea Euroregion, which took place in Varna, Bulgaria, on 26 September 2008, reminding participants of the role and active participation of the BBSRC in the preparatory process for the Constanta and Odessa Conferences.

At the same time, the BBSRC participated actively as an integral part of the CPMR in all administrative and other day-to-day issues in cooperation with the CPMR secretariats in Rennes and Brussels.

Member Regions of the BBSRC participating in CPMR working groups: BBSRC member regions became actively involved in the CPMR working groups on Energy and Tourism. More specifically, Ms Theodora Avgoulidou, from the region of Central Macedonia, our representative together with Tulcea to the CPMR working group on Tourism, took active part in the meetings organized by this W.G. on a European Level.

The future of CPMR. The enquiry on the future of CPMR was concluded and the final report will be presented at the Bayonne CPMR G.A. by Mr Jean-Didier Hache, the Islands Commission Executive-Secretary, who directed the enquiry. 14 BBSRC Regions have answered the questionnaire.

BBSRC membership policy: The policy of increasing BBSRC membership has continued, mainly through contacts with the Diplomatic Missions of Georgia and Ukraine in Athens. The visit to regions in Russia and Georgia has been postponed due to the political situation in these countries. A trip to the Krasnodar Region in Sochi, which was planned for the coming September on the occasion of the CoR Relex Commission bilateral EE/Russia meeting, was postponed. Our trip to the maritime regions of Ukraine will take place early next year. BBSRC Executive Secretary Mr Anthony Papadimitriou, taking part in the VARNA Conference on the establishment of the Black Sea Euroregion, had contacts with representatives from the Vraila County Council from Romania and the President of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (Georgia) Mr Mikheil Makharadze, and discussed an eventual membership of these two Regions in the CPMR and BBSRC. During his participation at the First regional meeting on trans-border cooperation in Sofia, he had the chance to meet with Mr Grogorovski from the Iasi County Council and with the Vice President of the Caralasi County Council Mr Paunescu. Contacts were also developed with the Union of Municipalities of the Marmara Region, based in Istanbul, Turkey.

Contacts with member Regions of the BBSRC: While he was in Varna, Mr Papadimitriou had a working meeting with the new Governor of Varna Mr Hristo Kontrov and his deputy. They confirmed their interest in taking part in the Thessaloniki BBSRC Technical Committee meeting.

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe: The close cooperation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and especially its Chamber of the Regions, has been continued during the past months. The BBSRC with its executive secretary participated in the official launch of the "Black Sea Euroregion", which took place in Varna on 26 September 2008, with the adoption of its constituent Act and Statutes by approximately 15 members from Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Georgia and Armenia. Among the 15 founding members of the Black Sea Euroregions, 6 are Regions, from which 3 are members of the BBSRC (the County Councils of Constanta, Tulcea and Galati), the other 3 being the County Council of Vraila, Romania; Tahul Regional Council from Moldova; and the Adjara Autonomous Republic from Georgia. Elected as President was Mr Constantinescu, the president of the Constanta County Council and Vice President of the BBSRC. Mr Papadimitriou's meeting with Mr Mildon the President of the Congress; Mr Bohner, its Secretary General; Mrs. Ludmila Sfirloaga, the President of the Chambers of the Regions; and Mr Jean-Paul Chauvet and Cordiale from the secretariat reaffirmed the excellent relations between the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the BBSRC.

The Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme 2007-2013: The Black Sea Joint Operational CBC Programme 2007-2013, under the European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI) of the EU, was submitted to the European Commission as all participating states sent their letters of Agreement to the Joint Managing Authority in Budapest. Mr A. Papadimitriou met with Ms Sorina Canea from the Joint Management Authority, who has expressed her interest in coming to the 1st BBSRC T.C. meeting to be held in Thessaloniki on 7 November 2008.

BBSRC Technical Commission (T.C.): The BBSRC Technical Commission will meet for the first time in Thessaloniki following the kind invitation of BBSRC President Mr Tsiotras to host it. The establishment of a BBSRC “Technical Commission of Senior Officials” with 1 or 2 representatives from each BBSRC Member Regions was decided during the Canakkale 2007 BBSRC General Assembly in order to deal with specific projects and policies as a flexible working body. Its working language will be English.

Administrative matters: During the past 3 months, the Executive Secretary has run the day-to-day business of the Commission and has maintained contacts between the Region members, potential members, international organizations and the CPMR, dealing as well with several secretarial matters (drafting the minutes, preparing the meetings, etc.) together with the assistance from the Rennes CPMR Secretariat. However, as the BBSRC is involved with an increased number of activities and responsibilities, the secretarial support should be increased.

President Tsiotras, after thanking Anthony Papadimitriou for his report, went on to say that the next item on the agenda, “Proposals and brainstorming on how inter-regional cooperation could be fostered in the Balkan and Black Sea area”, will be deferred to the end of the meeting.

He then gave the floor to Mr Yasar Yakis, MP, Chairman of EU Harmonization Committee, Grand National Assembly and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, for his intervention.

Intervention by Mr Yasar Yakis.

Mr Yakis began by thanking President Tsiotras for his invitation and Executive Secretary A. Papadimitriou for the excellent presentation of BBSRC activities. He then said that he had believed that his presentation would be outside of the dealings of the BBSRC, but that after listening to the report of BBSRC activities, his presentation seems relevant to the work of the BBSRC. He noted that the Balkan and the Black Sea region has always been very important for Europe, and that instability in the area has negatively affected stability in Europe and in the world at large. He then referred to the recent events in Georgia, expressing the feeling that the Black Sea area will be very high on the agenda of international affairs in the foreseeable future for several reasons, among others because: 1. Huge quantities of oil and gas from energy producing countries from the Caspian Sea are transported to the European markets from either via the Black Sea itself or from countries which surround the Black Sea. The Balkan is the continuation of this area. 2. With Bulgaria and Romania joining the EU, the Black Sea has become more a Euroatlantic region, as both Romania and Bulgaria are also NATO member states and the European Union has become littoral to the Black Sea. 3. Recent events in Georgia may affect regional and world balances and international relations very much in the near future if the situation gets out of control. However, he believes that although the ingredients are there to a certain extent, the situation is far from a crisis out of control, so that there is no reason to be pessimistic and the situation is and will remain under control for some time to come. He said that Russia is using the ethnic minorities in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in order to strengthen its position in these areas, but that this pretext may also backfire, as ethnic questions are very critical questions and the Russians are very much aware of it. Mr Yakis said that if Russians do not withdraw from the above territories voluntarily, he does not know how they could be forced by third parties to withdraw from these areas. On the other hand, he said, Russian authorities will have to explain and justify to the international community their presence in the territories of another country. This issue is going to continue for some time.

Leaving aside the negative aspects, the Black Sea area is at the same time an area of great opportunities, some of which are already realized in the military, economic and political areas. Mr Yakis then went on to analyze 2 initiatives launched by Turkey in the military field, related to the illegal migration and activities in the region and the so-called Operation Black Sea Harmony with the participation of the littoral countries of the Black Sea. On the political level, he referred to the initiative taken by Turkey following the crisis in Georgia, called the “Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform”, in which 5 countries participate, the initiative being still under development. On the economic level, he referred to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which has functioned for about 15 years. Also the European Union has recently shown great interest in the activities of the BSEC and in 2007 launched an initiative called Black Sea Synergy involving the Black Sea countries and the European Union. He then spoke about the EC Enlargement Strategy Document, which was also discussed by the European Parliament, which in a recommendation asks the EU to go beyond the Black Sea Synergy Initiative and proceed to the establishment of a Black Sea cooperation agreement which should include in equal partnership

all the Black Sea littoral states and the European Union. Efforts have to be made to involve and include the participation of Russia, aiming at the creation of the Union of the Black Sea, similar to the recently established Union of the Mediterranean. Time will show how the crisis in Georgia will affect the European Parliament's recommendation. Mr Yakis expressed the hope that it can be implemented.

President Tsiotras thanked Mr Yakis for his valuable contribution and stressed that indeed the Black Sea is very high on the political and economic Agenda and that we have to make every effort to foster cooperation and take advantage in this cooperation.

Briefing on CPMR/BBSRC application for "Sectoral Partnership Dialogue" status with the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). Introduction by Anthony Papadimitriou, BBSRC Executive Secretary.

Mr Papadimitriou reminded participants that during the Rhodes BBSRC G.A., it was decided that the BBSRC, through the CPMR, would examine the possibility of applying for Sectoral Dialogued Partnership status with the BSEC. President Tsiotras has studied this option and the BBSRC, through the CPMR, is ready to submit an official application for SDP status with the BSEC. He went on to say that as the BBSRC does not have by itself a legal personality, the official decision to this effect will be taken tomorrow by the CPMR General Assembly, and following the adoption of this decision the road will be clear for the submission of an official application with the BSEC. In this interest, a small delegation will visit the BSEC International Secretariat in Istanbul, together with BBSRC Vice President Governor Dogan, in order to file the letter of application with the BSEC Secretary General Ambassador Chrysanthopoulos. Mr Papadimitriou stressed that this is an important development for our organization, as member regions of the BBSRC will have the possibility of taking part in certain working groups of the BSEC, bringing a regional dimension to its work, as several policies discussed are directly related to the maritime regions of the wider Black Sea area. The regional dimension on several issues will contribute positively to the works of the BSEC working groups. What are the next steps in case of a positive outcome of our application? The BBSRC will have to decide in which BSEC working groups there is an interest to participate, and then it will be necessary to select the member regions which will take part in those working groups through regional representatives on behalf of the BBSRC.

Mr Yasar YAKIS, intervening on the subject, stressed that the BSEC has dealt for some time with sectoral issues as well, in this way meeting more with the expectation of its member counties to be target oriented and to deal with concrete issues compared to the initial stages of the BSEC, some 15 years ago, when it was dealing with general political issues. This coincides with the priorities of BBSRC to be involved on issues and policies of sectoral dimension. He went on to say that he wanted to share this information because when he was deputy under-secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was involved with the preparatory meetings leading to the establishment of the BSEC, and since then he has closely followed the evolution of the BSEC into an active regional international organization.

Preparation of the 1st BBSRC Technical Commission meeting in Thessaloniki, 7-8 November 2008: Introduction by Theodora Avgoulidou, Expert Adviser to the Secretary General, Central Macedonia Region; Patrick Anvrouin, CPMR Director; and Anthony Papadimitriou, BBSRC Executive Secretary.

Ms Avgoulidou started by explaining how the T.C. will be structured and work, reminding participants that it was established by Decision at the BBSRC G.A. in Canakkale. The region of Central Macedonia has offered to lead this commission, bringing together the experience and best practices it has acquired over the years in the implementation of European projects.

The first meeting will take place on 7 November 2009 in Thessaloniki, at which there will be a presentation of all existing financial instruments for the Balkan and Black Sea area coming either from the European Union or other international organisations, BSEC, UNDP, etc. The target will be to foster cooperation between the member regions of the BBSRC for participating in cooperation programs, to share experience in order to have positive results in territorial cooperation and to make good use of existing funds for the area. The concrete result of the 1st BBSRC Technical Commission will be to prepare 1 or 2 concrete proposals to be submitted for co-financing by financial instruments involved in the area and to start a distance cooperation between the technical experts from the member regions. The T.C. will meet once or twice a year. Among other goals, it will also share experience and information.

The practical details and the Agenda of the Thessaloniki meeting will be sent to member regions in the near future.

On the same issue, Patrick Anvroin, Director at the CPMR Secretariat, said that the creation of the Technical Commission is an important step for the development of the BBSRC and he referred to existing similar Commissions, especially within the CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission which has become a network of experienced experts from the member regions.

BBSRC Executive Secretary Anthony Papadimitriou asked the participating regions to nominate their representatives to the BBSRC T.C. by filling out the specific form which had been distributed, in order to provide a permanent contact with the nominated person for the better coordination of the work of the T.C.

Amendment of the CPMR statutes - Initial debate

In relation to the issue, President Tsiotras said that the experiences gained in recent years, in terms of BBSRC functioning in practice, have led us to the conclusion that current BBSRC Statutes are not fully in line with the Commission's functions and its particularities. This has the result that some provisions of its Statutes have remained inactive and some others apply differently. The BBSRC needs its Statutes to be a flexible instrument, tailored to its actual needs, in line with the CPMR's context and rules. Some of the points included in the Statutes which need to be amended are as follows:

1. The current Statutes do not make any explicit reference to whether the BBSRC has an autonomous legal personality by itself or whether it "borrows" its personality from the CPMR, even though article 1, paragraph 4 of the current Statutes mentions that the BBSRC shall participate in cooperation projects organized by third parties. In practice, the BBSRC does not actually have an autonomous legal personality by itself: the BBSRC "gets" its personality from the central organization (the CPMR). In case the BBSRC participates in joint projects, together with member regions, its participation should mainly have a consultative and coordinating character.

2. Article 2, which deals with member regions and the admission conditions for new members, provides for a complicated procedure which does not, and there is no reason to, apply in practice. The same stands for observer organizations, the admission of which should require certain criteria, and their participation should be for an indefinite time and not only for a 2-year period. We recommend that new members and observers should be admitted by the General Assembly upon a proposal made by the BBSRC's President and Executive Secretary.

3. The current Statutes provide for two important bodies: the General Assembly and the Political Bureau, having different Presidents and Vice Presidents. In practice, the Political Bureau is nonexistent: it is not actually possible for the Political Bureau to exist, under the current structure, functioning and organization of the BBSRC. Such a Bureau also would not be necessary in the future, given the particularities of the Balkan and the Black Sea area (communication difficulties because of a plurality of languages, difficulties in respect to distance and need for traveling, the fact that in most states there are no elected President of regions and do not hold office for a specified period of time, etc). It would be possible instead to proceed to the establishment of two meetings of the General Assembly per annum: a regular General Assembly to be held in June and a mini General Assembly, of shorter duration, to be held on the occasion and before the annual CPMR General Assembly Meeting in October. Their realization is absolutely feasible in practice.

4. The existence of a BBSRC President and two Vice Presidents should be also introduced, as is the case in practice. Both have already been elected by the General Assembly, to hold their office for a 2-year period, and they are the ones who direct the BBSRC. Furthermore, any President and Vice President who has served in the past and has particularly contributed to the organization's objectives may be designated as Honorary President and Vice President of the CPMR BBSRC following a relevant decision of the General Assembly.

5. The *de facto* role of the BBSRC's Executive Secretary in the functioning of the BBSRC is of particular importance, in political and administrative terms. However, this is not reflected in the current Statutes. The Executive Secretary's role and selection procedure should be in line with what applies to other CPMR Regional Commissions, e.g. the Inter-Mediterranean Commission, the Islands Commission, etc.

6. The BBSRC Technical Commission, which according to all its member regions shall mostly improve the functioning of our Commission's works at the level of inter-regional cooperation, is not provided for in the Statutes. It must be institutionalized in order to enjoy institutional status as well.

7. The amendment procedure of the Statutes is very rigid. We would propose that their amendment be subject to a more flexible procedure. Furthermore, no provision is made on who manages finances. In practice, this is the CPMR General Secretariat.

President Tsiotras then propose that all the above points be incorporated in a draft version of the BBSRC Statutes, in order to include all the above mentioned points. The Draft statutes shall be prepared by the BBSRC Executive Secretary Anthony Papadimitriou in cooperation with the BBSRC President, and shall be communicated to each member region, the aim being that new Statutes be adopted by the General Assembly which will be held in Odessa on 11 June 2009.

Decision on the main political theme of the 2009 ODESSA BBSRC General Assembly

President Tsiotras suggested that this decision can be taken at a later stage as it can also be discussed at the forthcoming Technical Commission meeting, saying also that following the intervention of Mr Yakis, crucial matters are Energy and Transport. The president has been authorised to take such a decision following consultation at a later stage.

Recent Developments on ENPI Cross-Border Cooperation in the Black Sea Basin for 2007-2014 by Mr Patrick Anvroin, CPMR Director

Patrick Anvroin, following information received from the Joint Managing Authority of the ENPI CBC Black Sea in Bucharest and its Director Mrs. Sorina Canea, presented the actual progress of the program, saying that the Monitor Committee could approve the guidelines of the program by November 2008, which means that the first Call of Proposals could be launched around February-March 2009, provided that Russia and Georgia and other partner countries would have signed the financial agreement with the European Commission, which means that the evolution of the program is also dependent on the political situation in the area. The BBSRC will monitor developments and will inform member regions.

Implementation of the Black Sea Synergy (BSS)

President Tsiotras made a summary of the EC Report on the first year of the implementation of the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) which was launched in April 2007 and was presented in Brussels on 19 June 2008, saying that the initial results show the practical benefits this new approach can bring and its potential for the future. The BSS is complementary to the European Neighbourhood policy and other EU policies applied to the Black Sea region. During the past year the BSS Initiative has enlarged contacts with governments, local and regional society actors, as well as regional organisations like the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC). The report sets out proposals for the next phase of the Black Sea Synergy, i.e.:

-Long-term measurable objectives could be set in areas such as the protection of the environment, transport (road and sea), energy, and maritime safety to mobilise efforts by BSS partners.

-Local countries or organisations could be selected to coordinate actions to meet these objectives.

-Several partnerships could be established to provide a framework for co-financing of projects involving some or all of the BSS partners.

-To increase the involvement of civil society and people-to-people contacts, a Black Sea Civil Society Forum and an Institute of European Studies in the Black Sea are proposed.

-The first meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union and the Countries of the Black Sea Region took place in Kiev on 14 February 2008. This meeting adopted a joint statement welcoming the greater involvement of the EU to the Black Sea regional cooperation.

President Tsiotras then called Francois DESRENTS, CPMR Director and coordinator of the Tourism Working Group, who referred to the Draft Resolution on sustainable tourism which is important and necessary to be adopted in order to initiate projects and cooperation programmes in the field. He went on to say that there is need for the BBSRC to appoint 2 representatives to the CPMR Working

Group on Tourism. He also said that any proposals or amendments to the Draft Resolution can be tabled until tomorrow at noon. On the same subject, Ms Avgoulidou reminded participants that the regions of Tulcea and Central Macedonia have actively participated in this Working Group, and she wondered if Odessa which submitted certain proposals on the subject during the Rhodes General Assembly is interested in joining forces in order to present the BBSRC proposals to the CPMR W.G. on tourism. The president of Tulcea County Council Mr Victor TARHON congratulated Francois Desrents for bringing up the issue of tourism, stressing its importance for the regions of the Black Sea, which have sites of considerable touristic importance and beauty, and asked whether the Draft Resolution will be adopted by the CPMR General Assembly. Francois Desrents explained that the Draft Resolution has been prepared with the participation of all the Geographical Commissions of the CPMR and after its adoption by the CPMR General Assembly will constitute the official position of CPMR on Tourism.

Future Events

BBSRC Executive Secretary Anthony Papadimitriou referred to the CPMR future activities, explained the procedure for the organisation of the next BBSRC General Assembly in Odessa, which will take place on 11 June 2009, and stressed the importance of contacting in advance of this occasion all the Maritime Regions of Ukraine, i.e.: Cherson, Mykolaiv, Crimea, Sebastopol, Donetsk and Zaporizhzhya in the form of a visit in order to introduce CPMR/BBSRC and eventually to invite them to assist in the Odessa General Assembly. In this, he asked the assistance of the Odessa State Regional Administration.

Mr Peter Khlytsov, Deputy Governor of the Odessa State Regional Administration, taking the floor, reaffirmed the will of Odessa to host the next BBSRC General Assembly and the CPMR Political Bureau and expressed the will to work together with the CPMR and the BBSRC in order to better prepare the two events, assuring that the organisation will be of a high level. He added that he is looking forward to receiving all in Odessa on 11 and 12 June 2009. President Tsiotras thanked Vice Governor Khlytsov for his words and assured him of a fruitful cooperation of both sides in order to have a successful General Assembly in Odessa.

Proposals and brainstorming on how inter-regional cooperation could be fostered in the Balkan and Black Sea area.

On this final but important point of the agenda, and due to lack of time, President Tsiotras suggested that member regions communicate with the secretariat and himself directly by sending proposals and ideas on how to foster inter-regional cooperation in the Balkan and Black Sea area and promote better and more active cooperation among BBSRC member regions, adding that for the success of the BBSRC the active participation of member regions is needed. Finally he said that he is looking forward to receiving as many ideas, proposals and suggestions as possible in the near future.

President G.Tsiotras, in closing the meeting, thanked all participants for their presence and expressed his hope to see all at the 1st meeting of the BBSRC Technical Commission which will take place in Thessaloniki on 7 November 2008.

At this point the meeting was adjourned.