



DET KONGELIGE
UTENRIKSDEPARTEMENT

Utenriksministeren

Storingsrepresentant Torfinn Opheim
Stortinget

Oslo, 2. mai 2013

Jeg takker for brevet av 3. april d.å. om oppfølging av resolusjonen fra den 21. parlamentariske forsamlingens østersjøkonferanse (BSPC) i 2012.

Jeg er som utenriksminister glad for at Stortinget år etter år er godt representert på disse årlige konferansene i BSPC, og jeg vet at de norske stortingsrepresentantene som deltar, er aktivt med både i debatten og i arbeidet med resolusjonen. Det er viktig for meg å vite at dere fra den parlamentariske siden slik støtter, og skjerper, regjeringssiden i det arbeidet vi er med i, i østersjøregionen. Den parlamentariske dimensjonen hører naturlig med i det samarbeidet som pågår. Den støtten vi får fra dere, bidra til å bekrefte at vi er på rett vei. Og jeg konstaterer at det de senere år har vært stort sammenfall i BSPC's og regjeringssidens prioriteringer.

I likhet med min forgjenger i utenriksministerstolen legger jeg derfor vekt på at vi ikke bare studerer nøye, men også gjør aktiv bruk av den årlige resolusjonen i BSPC i vår politikktutforming; den gir oss også inspirasjon. Jeg er klar over at BSPC har uttrykt ønske om en samlet tilbakemelding fra Østersjørådet om oppfølgingen av den årlige resolusjonen. Norge har støttet dette, blant annet sammen med Island, men det har ikke vært mulig å få konsensus om det. Det er derfor desto viktigere at vi fortsetter tradisjonen med å gi en egen nasjonal tilbakemelding til BSPC, slik vi her gjør det ved vedlegget til mitt brev. Det har vært nær kontakt med diverse fagdepartement om bidraget.

Jeg ønsker dere lykke til med årets konferanse i BSPC. Jeg forstår at arbeidet med resolusjonsteksten allerede er i gang; det lover godt for enda en ny, relevant resolusjon.

Med vennlig hilsen

Espen Barth Eide

Norwegian follow-up of the conference resolution adopted by the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), St. Petersburg 26-28 August 2012.

Norway attaches importance to the annual resolutions adopted by the BSPC and considers them to contain most central input and advice to governments in their policymaking for the co-operation in the Baltic region and in the implementation of the priorities of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), other regional councils and structures and the Northern Dimension with its partnerships.

Norway actively seeks to follow up the resolutions first of all through its membership in the CBSS but also through the Nordic Council of Ministers, through all the four Northern Dimension partnerships and by supporting the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Norway is not a member of HELCOM and not a part to its Baltic Sea Action Plan. However, Norway follows closely and supports the significant work carried out by HELCOM, both bilaterally and multilaterally, and encourages the CBSS, first of all through its Baltic 21 structure for sustainability, to build synergy between them and avoid overlap. Norway, as a partner to the Northern Dimension and member of the Northern Dimension environmental partnership supports financially first of all the nuclear window of this partnership but contributes also to its environmental work with strong focus on cleaning the Baltic Sea and reducing the loads of nutrients running into it from agriculture, industry and households. It was natural for Norway's prime minister to participate in the heads of government meeting in St. Petersburg on the 5th of April this year on invitation from the Russian prime minister. This high-level conference had its focus on the serious environmental situation in the Baltic Sea and was a follow-up to the Finnish initiative of 2010 under the name "Baltic Sea Action Summit". The lack of ecological balance in the Baltic Sea, due mostly to eutrophication, is the primary responsibility of the states with direct access to this sea. However, Norway is also exposed to the negative effects of the environmental degradation of the sea and it is therefore also in Norway's interest to contribute.

The Russian Federation has during its Presidency of the CBSS 2012/13 had strong priority on developing the South Eastern Baltic Area (SEBA) including the oblast Kaliningrad and adjacent regions in Poland and Lithuania. Norway has supported this priority recognizing that this area is facing some demanding challenges with regard to demographic developments and unemployment. The CBSS has established a small project development fund in the amount of one million euro to help finance projects in this area but it is also open for projects in all CBSS states and within all the long-term priorities of the organisation. Norway has actively supported the establishment of such a fund. The Modernization Partnership for the South Eastern Baltic Area is promising for

both the social and economic progress cutting across national border lines and involving regions in three countries. This is a good example of cross-border and cross-regional co-operation and has the potential of developing into a good lessons learnt initiative for other parts of the Baltic Sea region. To help this partnership forward the CBSS has its own project officer in the office of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Kaliningrad, showing how regional councils can cooperate in the field. Norway has contributed to facilitating this cooperation through the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials.

Norway had during its CBSS 2010/11 presidency, maritime policy and fight against trafficking in human beings including exploitation in the labour market as its two main priorities. These priorities have been followed up by both the German CBSS presidency 2011/12 and the Russian presidency 2012/13. During the German presidency energy issues also had a central place. These focus areas also figure prominently in the BSPC resolution of 2012. In the following we will concentrate on Norway's participation in the co-operation in these fields:

Integrated maritime policy

Clean and competitive shipping has a high priority for the Norwegian government in relation to the follow up of the measures contained in the Norwegian Maritime Strategy adopted by the government in 2007. This Strategy will be renewed in May 2013.

Norway supports technological solutions to meet the new requirements for the maritime industry in the Baltic Sea, including the timely implementation of the 0,1% sulphur content of emissions from ships in SECA areas in the North Sea and Baltic Sea from 2015.

At the High Level Conference on the Protection of the Environment of the Baltic Sea Region in St. Petersburg on the 5th of April this year, the Norwegian Prime Minister in particular focused on the potential of the Baltic Sea to become a pilot area for the use of LNG in Europe, based on the strong and innovative maritime industries and traditions in the region.

The Norwegian government will continue to support measures which will strengthen the use of LNG in shipping. We take active part in the ongoing work in the International Maritime Organization on safety rules for gas-fuelled vessels. We also involve relevant stakeholders and authorities in order to examine how to deal with economic, safety and other practical obstacles related to use of LNG vessels. This work is of relevance also for the Baltic Sea.

Furthermore the Norwegian NOx fund will continue to part-finance maritime projects reducing NOx-emissions, including LNG-fuelled vessels. So far 38 LNG-fuelled vessels have been delivered and another 36 vessels have been ordered. The NOx fund has so far been involved in financing 49 of these vessels. Such a fund could be a model for other countries, including Baltic Sea countries, to help speed up the transition to the use of more environmentally friendly fuels in shipping.

Norway participates actively in the CBSS Expert Group on Maritime Policy and seeks to continue to follow up on the priority work on maritime policy initiated during the Norwegian CBSS Presidency 2010/11. The Expert Group has held 3 meetings during the present Russian chairmanship. In the meetings the main focus has been on the implementation of various international environmental rules and regulations in the Baltic Sea Region. Sustainable maritime transport, including coordination and linkage of efforts with other organizations will continue to be a priority area for the work of Expert Group during the upcoming Finnish Presidency.

The main event in the maritime area during the Russian CBSS Presidency was the meeting of CBSS Transport Ministers that took place in Moscow on the 5th of December 2012. In the declaration issued from that meeting ministers in particular focused on the importance of maritime environmental issues and on maritime economy and maritime transport for sustainable growth, jobs and competitiveness in the Baltic Sea region.

Energy Cooperation including energy efficiency

Norway takes an active part in the Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC).

BASREC supports the development of competitive, efficient and well-functioning energy markets to promote sustainable growth, security and prosperity in the region. BASREC pursues energy efficiency and renewable energy measures as well as clean-tech solutions in order to support green growth.

BASREC has contributed to tackling many of the energy issues on the political agenda during the time-span of the resolution up until present. Several concrete regional energy projects and activities have been initiated and decided upon whereas others are being implemented:

- **Baltic Rotating Energy Planning Academy.** BALREPA is a dynamic forum for exchange of knowledge and expertise among energy planners in the Baltic region. Through joint training activities and formulation of concrete projects, it aims at furthering a macro-economic approach to energy planning, strengthening capacities and developing a common understanding of the planning process for sustainable energy. The initiative will continue with sessions at least once a year so as to keep the momentum of the established professional networks.
- **Carbon Transportation and Storage.** This carbon capture and storage (CCS) project is based on a three-step approach: First, a study on transport and storage solutions, second, a conference for presentations and discussions, and third, on the basis of the findings and conclusions thereof, to establish a regional expert network to exchange information and best practices on regional CCS transport and storage challenges and solutions.
- **Energy Policy Strategies of the Baltic Sea Region for the post-Kyoto Period.** The challenges in reaching a common global climate agreement have increased the importance of regional energy and climate policy initiatives and the demand to develop strategies at this level. This study presents a comprehensive analysis of energy policy strategies for the Baltic Sea region towards 2050. It demonstrates that CO₂ emissions could almost be eliminated by 2050 and points to significant benefits by aligning national support schemes for sustainable energy.
- **Analysis of Conditions for Wind Power in the Baltic Sea Region.** The BASREC wind project aims at providing a strategic outline for integrated economic promotion of wind power in the region. The findings show that the potential is sufficient to meet and in some countries surpass the targets set and bring the Baltic Sea Region among the world's leading regions for offshore and onshore wind power.
- **Energy Efficiency Investments for Street and Other Public Outside Lighting.** The Street Lighting project is a joint venture between the Nordic Investment Bank and BASREC comprising two surveys and a seminar. The objective is to provide an overview of the present state and prospects of street and other public outside lighting, promote contacts among relevant stakeholders and evaluate the need for further studies and cooperation. Based on the findings, the project will produce guidelines for decision makers needing to balance different alternatives and solutions.
- **Partnership of the BASREC Countries on Clean Energy.** The purpose of this partnership is to provide a communication platform for enhancing cooperation and exchange best practices on clean energy within the region and define key practical steps to be taken by BASREC. The work centres

around four priority areas: Combined heat and power, carbon capture and storage, renewable energy and clean energy infrastructure.

In the BASREC cooperation period 2012-2015 further project activities will be launched.

Fight against trafficking in human beings including exploitation in the labour market.

Norway is participating in the Adstringo project, initiated by the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking.

The project addresses trafficking for labour exploitation in 11 countries in the Baltic Sea region. Adstringo's main objective is to prevent trafficking for forced labour through enhanced national and regional partnerships and through improved understanding of the mechanisms that facilitate such exploitation. The participating countries must gather all relevant stakeholders and conduct national seminars.

The first Adstringo meeting in Norway, organised by the National Coordinating Unit for victims of trafficking (KOM) in March 2013 was attended by 34 participants. The group was composed of representatives from both the public and the private sector. This included the Ministry of Justice, relevant directorates (the Directorate of Immigration, and the National Police Directorate), labour unions, employers' associations, members of different police districts, the National Criminal Investigation Service, The National Authority for the Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental crime, the higher prosecution authorities, the National Labour Inspection Authority, the Norwegian Tax Administration, various victims service providers such as IOM, Caritas, the ROSA project, the Norwegian Red Cross, representative from legal aid and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service.

The level of awareness of trafficking for forced labour among the participants varied. Some possessed extensive experience working directly with the subject matter, while others had less experience. All participants had, however, experience with labour exploitation in general and wanted to learn more about how to prevent trafficking for forced labour, how to differentiate it from other labour exploitation and how to detect and identify situations of trafficking for forced labour.

All representatives are through their work either directly or indirectly affected by the issues of trafficking for forced labour and/or labour exploitation. The participants were open to discuss the challenges they face. Further they

recognised that trafficking for forced labour is a risk factor within the sectors they represent, especially in lieu of the current economic situation in other parts of Europe and the increased use of foreign workers in Norway.