

## B7 Åland Chairmanship

The events of 2006 started with a Board Meeting in Helsinki in January but I think most would agree when I say that the real kick-off for the B7 year was in Brussels in the end of March.

The theme for this Chairmanship year is Sustainable Islands in the Baltic Sea

- Environment - Energy - Economy –

and as far as the programme goes, it shows!

## B7 in Helsinki

In Helsinki in January the Board met with Helcom ([www.helcom.fi](http://www.helcom.fi)), the Bonus project ([www.bonusportal.org](http://www.bonusportal.org)) and got a presentation of the finish approach for the Maritime Policy.

## B7 in Brussels

During the two day programme in Brussels the B7 met with the Parliaments' Baltic Europe Intergroup, a representative from the Commissions' Maritime Policy Task Force, a representative from the Council of Ministers and the lobby organisation CPMR.

There were discussions on BEIs "Europes Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region", the Maritime Policy (and the up-coming greenbook), the thematic Marine environment as well as lobbying and how to influence the different parts of the European Union.



B7 in Helsinki

Board Meeting and meetings with Helcom and the Bonus project.



B7 in Brussels

Lobbying for sustainable islands in the Baltic Sea.

## Position Papers

In Brussels the Board and the Steering Committee decided that the B7 will contribute with position papers on all the issues discussed during the two day programme. The position papers should especially put focus on island issues and issues concerning the Baltic Sea.

In Brussels the B7 met with Members of Parliament from the Baltic Europe Intergroup: Henrik Lax (Fin), Satu Hassi (Fin), Anneli Jäättemäki (Fin) and Alfred Gomolka (Ger). As last year the Baltic Europe Intergroup stated that they want to hear our opinions.

Already on 18 April the B7 put forward a position paper commenting the BEI "Europe's Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region".

During the year the B7 also plans to work on position papers and comment both the Maritime Policy Greenbook and the Marine environmental strategy (of the thematic strategy frame work directive).

*Next event, 26 – 28 April*

## BEN Conference in Hiiumaa

The next B7 event on this years programme is the BEN conference that is being held on Hiiumaa. The B7 supports the BEN, Baltic Euroregional Network, project and the B7 Board will participate in the conference.

The B7 will also hold a Board Meeting during the stay in Hiiumaa.



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18 April 2006

### B7 Position: Europe's Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, proposed by the Baltic Europe Intergroup of the European Parliament

After the meeting between the Baltic Europe Intergroup (BEI) and the Baltic Islands Network (B7) on March 29 at the European Parliament, the members of the B7 have discussed the strategy for the Baltic Sea Region proposed by Baltic Europe Intergroup. The B7 submits its input:

#### Key sectors and topics of strategy

The B7 welcomes the strategy document for the Baltic Sea Region and its focus on 1, environment; 2, economics; 3, culture and education; and 4, security. The B7 also appreciates the simple straightforward presentation of the key points of the strategy. The strategy is sector based. The strategy provides the essential framework for further action.

#### Island dimension

The strategy contains no island dimension. Neither is there an urban dimension and reference to polycentric development. The B7 feels that the strategy could benefit from a more regionally nuanced perspective. As an example, the B7 would like to see the cost of travel across and within the Baltic Sea region at levels similar to travelling from the main centres out of the region.

#### Environment

##### Maritime and marine security

The responsibility for maritime and marine safety and security is often at the state level whereas the consequences are at the regional level. With the greater emphasis on tourism islands are at economic and environmental risk from oil and other forms of pollution often without the framework and finances to deal with the consequences. The B7 hopes that these kind of issues could be more thoroughly dealt with in the implementation of the strategy.

##### The Marine Thematic Strategy and the proposal for a Marine Strategy Directive.

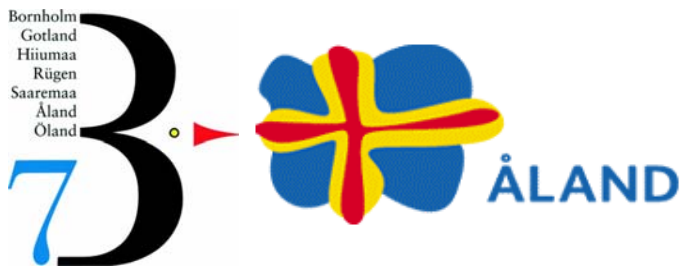
In the Baltic Europe Intergroup strategy it is stated that "The EU needs a more coherent action plan to protect the environment of the Baltic Sea". The B7 support this objective, but miss a standpoint about the Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment and the proposal for a Marine Strategy Directive.

In the proposal for the directive, the pace of implementation is too slow. It would be logical and appropriate to adjust the timetable of the marine directive to the timetable of the water framework directive (2000/60/EG). The water framework directive, stating that good

Islands of the B7 Co-operation Network: Bornholm (Denmark), Gotland (Sweden), Hiiumaa (Estonia), Rügen (Germany), Saaremaa (Estonia), Åland (Finland) and Öland (Sweden).



[www.benproject.org](http://www.benproject.org)



## Energy Conference in June

The B7 Islands will gather for an energy conference in Åland in June. The objective is to answer the question everybody is asking right now:

***- Can we manage without oil in the future?***

Representatives from all the islands, guest speakers and a representative from managenergy ([www.managenergy.net](http://www.managenergy.net)) will work together for sustainable islands in the Baltic Sea.

The Chairmanship and the Work Group Environment believes that the conference will get the islands to co-operate in finding solutions for this difficult but important question.

The Conference is held on Åland 7 – 8 June 2006.



Welcome to the  
B7 Energy Conference 2006,  
7-8th June  
Mariehamn, Åland



## Also coming up...

The CPMR and the Baltic Sea Commission

A co-ordination meeting for Heads and Secretariats of the Baltic Sea organisations is held on 31 May 2006 in Karlskrona, Blekinge (S). On the 1 of June there is also a Conference on "How to improve sustainable accessibility in the Baltic Sea Region?" and on the 2 June the 11th General Assembly of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission is organised. Representatives from the B7 will attend.

## B7 Åland Chairmanship 2006



**Ann Wallskog**

B7 Secretariat

**Britt Lundberg**

B7 President

**Susanne Andersson**

B7 Chairperson

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Until next time, please look in to our website.  
[www.b7.org](http://www.b7.org)

*Ann Wallskog*

B7 Secretariat