MANAGING COMPLEXITY: ADDRESSING SOCIETAL SECURIT CHALLENGES IN THE BA LTIC SEA REGION

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CONFERENCE REPORT

PREFACE

More than 150 policymakers, researchers and practitioners gathered at Fotografiska in Stockholm on 11–12 June 2018 for the international conference 'Managing complexity: Addressing societal security challenges in the Baltic Sea region' co-hosted by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. The conference discussed strategies for protecting the safety of people and building effective resilience in the face of various contingencies, ranging from climate change to terrorism and major infrastructural disruption. The transnational nature of many societal security challenges requires regional cooperation. Regional cooperation is not only more effective than the efforts of a single state, but also a necessary aspect of national preparedness. Cooperation in the Baltic Sea region has evolved to include the societal safety and security issues on the agenda of regional institutions such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Through three plenary sessions and six breakout sessions the conference explored best practices and lessons learned from national and regional approaches to dealing with societal security challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SOCIETAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEMS

Moderator

Dan Smith, SIPRI Director

Speakers

- Ambassador Maira Mora, Director General, CBSS Secretariat
- Rainer Saks, Secretary General, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Estonia
- Professor Bengt Sundelius, Strategic Advisor, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
- Igor Neverov, Director, Second European Department, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Russia

Rapporteur

Emma Fredriksson, SIPRI

Overview

Academic research has led to the emergence of societal security as an increasingly important focus for security policy. More actors recognize that societal security is fundamental to the ability of governments to protect their citizens and the vital functions of society.

The Baltic Sea region is one of the safest regions in the world. Nonetheless, the region faces many challenges. Migration, climate change, organized crime, trafficking and cybersecurity are just some of the societal security challenges that have a clear regional dimension. Cross-border security risks require new, inventive and cooperative solutions. The countries of the Baltic Sea region all have well-functioning institutions in place and, with the right resources and framework, they will have the capacity to jointly address common challenges and enhance regional security.

The session set out the scope of current problems by addressing the dimensions of the societal security challenges the region currently faces and how are they understood, as well as on which issues the Baltic Sea region can, and does, cooperate when facing such challenges.

Key takeaways

Societal security is a broad concept that incorporates risks at all levels of society. Many of the risks faced by the region are common challenges but even though the region is becoming increasingly interdependent, this does not mean that the threat perceptions of states—and ideas on how to address these threats—are uniform. Building resilience and security starts at the individual level and one of the great values of the Council of the Baltic Sea States is that it reaches out to, and connects with, people and NGOs at the local level. It sees that initiatives that aim to facilitate and strengthen peopleto-people contact—be they in politics, culture, education, sport or other areas—have a positive effect on building a sense of trust and commonality, which in turn further facilitates transnational exchange of information from which regional cooperation can be encouraged.

Largely resulting from the removal of national borders, the region is currently experiencing an increase in—negative and positive—cross-border flows. These flows consist of everything from people and goods to information, technology and environmental degradation, and each exhibits common challenges. To address these and avoid falling into a vulnerability trap, it is necessary to put resources into risk mapping—work already begun by the European Union. Identifying the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of our regional capacities will be necessary if regional institutions are to be robust and prepared for both expected and unexpected risks. Progress is currently being made when it comes to cross-border cooperation between local government institutions and local NGOs, but more effort and

resources should be put into expanding joint training and education. A useful example is scenariobased training, which has proved to be one of the most successful methods of prevention.

In addition, regional stability is dependent on domestic stability. It remains critically important that all countries address national security challenges such as social, economic and gender inequality. These are all areas that benefit from cooperation and in which domestic security affects security—and perceptions of security—across borders.

It is well known that environmental security has emerged as one of the most crucial and imminent security risks in the region and beyond. The nature of climate change is global, making the need for common security obvious. Increased cooperation is needed in areas of prevention, mitigation, adaptation and risk management, and the gravity of the situation places high demands on our ability to act.

Regional capacities to manage these risks will be dependent on long-term investment in people, knowledge, technology and institutions. This requires a strengthened transboundary partnership aimed at bridging gaps, both mentally and professionally, as well as between public and private sector thinking and organizations. To create long-term ties in the region, common projects and solutions must be translated into practical cooperation. In sum, common security is not a zero-sum game. Instead, with mutual trust and cooperation, regional security can be enhanced with benefits for all.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND CIVIL PROTECTION: BUILDING THE SYNERGIES

Moderator

Dan Smith, SIPRI Director

Speakers

- Paola Albrito, Regional Coordinator, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Cecilie Daae, Director, Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB)
- Andre Jol, Head of Group, Climate Change impacts, vulnerability and adaption, European Environment Agency
- Professor Björn-Ola Linnér, Professor, Linköping University

Rapporteur

Emma Fredriksson, SIPRI

Overview

The effects of climate change are becoming increasingly apparent in the region and beyond. In recent years, the countries that make up the Baltic Sea region have experienced an increase in the number of climate-related disasters, such as forest fires, heatwaves, drought, storms, water shortages and eutrophication of the Baltic Sea itself.

In 2015, the international community took a major step forward by adopting four agreements that address future sustainability: (*a*) the Paris Agreement; (*b*) the UN Sustainable Development Goals; (*c*) the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and (*d*) the New Urban Agenda. In addition, the European Commission is currently evaluating the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change and has made a proposal on sustainable financing for the area of climate change. This international progress has been a major success story. That said, the at best ambivalent policies of countries such as the USA and Russia make the future of the Paris Agreement uncertain.

In order to address the issues of climate change adaptation and civil protection in the Baltic Sea region, strategies must take account of the different aspects of impact mitigation, adaptation and emission removal strategies. Of these, adaptation is the most important policy area for cooperation. The strategies exist but their implementation remains a challenge.

The session set out to provide an overview of the climate change- and civil protection-related challenges in the Baltic Sea region. The panellists were asked to respond to how climate change-related challenges, and their responses, fit into the wider concept of societal security challenges. They also discussed the synergies between climate change adaptation and the broader agenda of civil protection and the practical implications of the Sendai Framework for the Baltic Sea region.

Key takeaways

The transboundary nature of many of the risks the region faces requires a holistic approach to adaptation, at both the societal and the geographical level. To ensure resilience, an interdisciplinary approach to both research and policy is needed that is capable of grasping the interlinkages between climate change and other societal risks. The Sendai Framework offers an opportunity for the region to build resilience at the community level by reducing vulnerabilities at the local level. This is part of taking a holistic approach that includes breaking down silos, working across sectors and between different levels of society, and involving a wide variety of actors in order to reduce the negative implications of regional risks.

The complexity of such risks poses difficulties for the implementation of adaptation strategies and there are many uncertainties regarding who has responsibility or who will cover the costs. For example, the agricultural sector often suffers high costs after a natural disaster with little chance of compensation. This is a major disadvantage in a period of rapid climate change. A holistic approach would prepare the region for mitigating and adapting to not only the direct impacts of climate change, but also the indirect impacts, such as the effects on trade, and local and national economies, as well as other security aspects that to a large extent have been ignored.

Climate change is a risk multiplier. It exacerbates existing risks such as economic inequality and social insecurity. To avoid doing harm, strategies must take account of the political economy of adaptation. This requires an awareness of the unintended consequences of any strategies that are implemented. A socially just adaptation must ensure that all citizens can benefit from its implementation regardless of socio-economic status.

Information is key when building resilience but information alone is not enough. Many areas already have access to the necessary information but lack efficient platforms for dialogue through which research-based strategies can be put into practice. Dialogue, in turn, helps to develop mutual understanding among people, thereby increasing opportunities for citizens to become and keep themselves informed and to contribute positively to risk mitigation. Resilience is about being able to receive, understand and act on information. To move from strategy to implementation, effective forums for dialogue are needed where risks can be contextualized and acted on. Information sharing in terms of disaster risk reduction is a way to build regional platforms for the further cooperation necessary to face future climate change disasters.

Mitigation and adaptation are intertwined and should usually be addressed together. For political reasons, however, they sometimes have to be separated. Prevention remains the most effective strategy but consequences still have to be prepared for. Crucially, adaptation strategies must address future consequences, taking into account the risk multiplier effects of climate change.

The future should not be painted too optimistically. Instead, it is important to base regional adaptation strategies on existing information and comprehensive risk analyses. Baltic societies are currently experiencing major transformations in many sectors. Nonetheless, it is likely that before the green transformation can be put in place the planet will already have gone beyond 2 degrees of global warming. The Baltic Sea is likely to experience increased eutrophication, an increased level of salinity and, as a result, many changes in the surrounding ecosystems. All this will be exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. Effective adaptation needs to address these discouraging but significant facts.

NUCLEAR SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: DEVELOPING REGIONAL MECHANISMS TO COMBAT NUCLEAR SMUGGLING

Moderator

Dr Anita Nilsson, AN & Associates, former Director, Office of Nuclear Security, IAEA

Speakers

- Lars van Dassen, Director, Office for International Relations, Swedish Radiation Safety Authority
- Ambassador Kestutis Kudzmanas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania
- Oleg Kravchenko, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Belarus
- Aleksejus Livšic, Head, Nuclear Security Centre of Excellence, Border Control Management Board, State Border Guard Service, Ministry of the Interior, Lithuania

Rapporteur

Vitaly Fedchenko, SIPRI

Overview

The Baltic Sea states agree on the importance of developing nuclear security regimes and combating nuclear smuggling. All the CBSS states are active partners in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), and the CBSS has been advancing the regional nuclear security agenda within the framework of its 'Safe and Secure Region' long-term priority. Nonetheless, the regional nuclear security regime needs further development in three dimensions. First, the legal and regulatory documents specifying response to a nuclear security event could be improved in all the CBSS states. Second, there is a need to enhance the nuclear security infrastructure in many CBSS states, including installation of new border control equipment. Third, there is a relative lack of cohesion in terms of nuclear security cooperation or joint action among the CBSS states. Regional cooperation mechanisms could therefore be consolidated and tested through regular exercises. In addition, nuclear security response plans could be harmonized across the region and with EU regulations.

In the light of the above, this breakout session gathered together senior nuclear security professionals and key foreign policy decision makers in order to discuss regional nuclear security needs and the way to address them through regional cooperation mechanisms.

In particular, the panel addressed the following questions. What is the current state of the nuclear security infrastructure and regimes in the countries of the region? What is the current status of national planning for response to a nuclear security event in the countries of the region? How many of these national response plans have been adopted and how often are they exercised? What are the prospects for future use of the CBSS cooperation mechanisms on nuclear security? What are the options for the CBSS countries to harmonize their national response plans in order to be better prepared for a nuclear security event?

Key takeaways

The panel recognized the complexity of nuclear security issues in the Baltic Sea region, as well as the progress made over the years to strengthen nuclear security regimes in the region. The tremendous momentum given to nuclear security by the Nuclear Security Summits (NSS) process was also noted. This work will now continue through other channels, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and GICNT.

The panel addressed the illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials (nuclear smuggling) as both a national and a regional problem. The panel agreed that 'security starts at home', and that there is therefore a special need for a new political impetus to further improve nuclear security systems and measures in all CBSS states. In addition, the panel insisted that achieving robust security would require significantly expanded bilateral, regional and international cooperation. Such cooperation is most helpful when it is pragmatic and depoliticized.

Nuclear security cooperation in the Baltic Sea region could be enhanced, inter alia, through the mechanisms of the CBSS. The panel sought to encourage future development of greater opportunities for joint leverage of regional resources to combat nuclear smuggling. The need to expand the practice of joint nuclear security exercises, possibly facilitated by CBSS structures, was particularly underscored.

- The CBSS should be encouraged to provide additional impetus to the nuclear security cooperation among its member states. The mechanisms that already exist within the framework of the CBSS long-term priority 'Safe and Secure Region' could be used to that end, such as the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC), the Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (EGNRS) and the Network of Prosecutors General of the Baltic Sea States.
- Building on the principle that 'security starts at home', endorsed by the panel, the CBSS should encourage its member states to invest in upgrades of their nuclear security regimes; to facilitate sharing of existing good nuclear security practices in the region; and to facilitate sharing of experience and the benefits of implementation of the nuclear security guidance documents developed by the IAEA, including those which recommend the development, implementation and testing in exercises of national nuclear security response plans.
- The CBSS should be encouraged to serve as a focal point for the identification and pursuit
 of opportunities for joint leveraging of regional resources to combat nuclear smuggling.
 Coordination and, where appropriate, harmonization of as well as joint exercises on the
 above-mentioned nuclear security response plans could lead to the identification of resources
 suitable for joint use and maintenance for the purposes of combating the illicit trafficking of
 nuclear and other radioactive materials in the region.

STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE AGAINST EXTREMISM: THE CASE OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Moderator

Dr Ian Anthony, SIPRI

Speakers

- Dr Amanda Alencar, Assistant Professor, Erasmus University, Rotterdam
- Dr Tina Christensen, University of Roskilde, Denmark
- Dr Anne Kaun, Associate Professor, Södertörn University
- Ayman Mhanna, Executive Director, Center for Media and Cultural Freedom, Samir Kassir Foundation

Rapporteur

Dr Ian Anthony, SIPRI

Overview

Rapid developments in the field of information and communications technology (ICT), including the internet, have enabled the emergence of an information society, in which economic, political and social engagement are separate from physical location. Daily contact with people in remote locations may be richer and more frequent than contact with those who share the same physical space. People may receive most of the information about the place in which they live from remote sources such as global or foreign language media outlets or through social media, while national and local news sources might play a lesser role.

While innovations in technology are felt everywhere, the specific character of the information society is not the same across all the Baltic Sea states. Each faces its own specific risks and opportunities in terms of fragmentation, division in society, integration and cohesion.

The panellists in this session considered the impact of the rapid changes in the information society and the extent to which they create opportunities that can be exploited by actors promoting extremist agendas, while also providing instruments capable of promoting cohesion and inclusive societies.

Key takeaways

The information society is undoubtedly a place where security risks can arise. It has been exploited by malicious actors and can be a place where radical ideas, including those which promote violent extremism, can spread and take root. However, the information society has also become a factor promoting integration and inclusion. Finding and making practical use of official information has become easier, and informal networks have been important in helping people to find employment, education and training in new and unfamiliar environments.

One conclusion of the panel was that paradigms such as information warfare, which are increasingly being used in the interstate context, are not helpful in addressing societal security problems. Confronting society with this language risks expanding existing fissures and perhaps creating new ones.

To make positive use of the information society and reduce risk there should be a greater emphasis on digital education at the earliest possible opportunity, perhaps even in pre-school. Teaching the skills needed to make an informed and critical analysis of online content should be an important part of the curriculum. The development of digital media education is an important priority for the Baltic Sea states, which intend to remain at the leading edge of ICT. The economic crisis in the media sector complicates the development of an information society based on respect for facts, impartial analysis and unbiased communication. The economic model that has dominated the development of digital media has not taken sufficient account of the societal and political impact of driving content by clicks and page views. The governments in the Baltic Sea region should consider how an independent and responsible media can be made economically viable and sustainable.

- Make a common assessment of how an information society can promote societal cohesion, integration and inclusion in the countries of the Baltic Sea region.
- Develop the concept, design the curriculum and produce relevant teaching materials to promote critical analysis of online information at an early age.
- Make a joint assessment of how a sustainable economic model can be promoted that supports a free, independent and responsible media.

BALTIC SEA ACTION PLAN: EFFORTS FOR A HEALTHY BALTIC SEA

Moderator

Gun Rudquist, Stockholm University

Speakers

- Jannica Haldin, HELCOM Secretariat
- Ottilia Thoreson, Director, WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme
- Olli-Pekka Mäki, Director of Environmental Protection, Environmental Division, City of Turku
- Jari-Pekka Pääkkönen, Head of Environmental Research, Environmental Services, City of Helsinki
- Lotta Samuelson, Stockholm International Water Institute

Rapporteur

Ekaterina Klimenko, SIPRI

Overview

The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission, HELCOM) Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) is an ambitious programme to restore the ecological status of the marine environment by 2021. The programme focuses on four areas: eutrophication, pollution caused by hazardous substances, biodiversity and maritime activities. A number of goals, objectives and activities have been identified in each area.

Progress on the BSAP can be measured either by the number of actions that have been implemented or by whether the actions are sufficient and have had the effect on the state of the environment required to achieve the goals and objectives. With only three years to go before 2021, the session discussed current progress, areas of concern where progress has been the slowest, and the main success stories and lessons learned from implementing the BSAP at the local level.

Key takeaways

There have been some achievements when it comes to improving the health of the Baltic Sea: inputs of nutrients are lower than for many years, smaller amounts of certain hazardous substances are ending up in the sea and oil spills have been fewer and smaller than in previous years.

Eutrophication is the area in which the most has been accomplished. Improving biodiversity is the area where the highest number of actions remain unimplemented.

Overall, the improvements made so far are not sufficient to enable the Baltic Sea to recover. At the current rate it is unlikely that the goals of the BSAP will be achieved by 2021. Around 80 per cent of the actions implemented so far have been carried out at the regional level. Only 24 per cent of the goals achieved have been implemented at the national level, which demonstrates the lack of priority for delivering the BSAP at the national level.

The HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in March 2018 decided to improve implementation of the current BSAP to try to achieve as many goals as possible. The meeting also agreed to update the BSAP by 2021. The aim of the update is not to reduce any current plans but to update them based on the most up-to-date science and taking account of emerging threats, such as climate change, new pharmaceuticals, new substances, marine litter and underwater noise.

Involvement at the local level is important. Helsinki and Turku prepared a joint Baltic Sea Action Plan and set up the Baltic Sea Challenge network. There are only a few such examples of positive engagement at the local level. Helsinki and Turku will update their local BSAP for the third period, 2019–2023. The new version will take more account of emerging issues such as climate change and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The cities and municipalities around the Baltic Sea are currently rather poorly included in implementing the BSAP. It is important to involve the municipalities in the implementation process as they are the closest authorities to the people. There is clear intent and interest among the municipalities in becoming more engaged in the implementation of the plan at both the regional level and the local level as this would create better opportunities to engage citizens. This would also attract local politicians, which is important in order to secure long-term commitment to the environmental work. Participation by municipalities is also considered important by HELCOM as this would create opportunities to measure the effects of BSAP implementation at the local level, which is currently not included in the reporting at the national level.

Recommendations

- The Baltic Sea is still in a bad state but improvements in eutrophication status are slowly taking place. Current actions to reduce nitrogen and phosphorous loads must continue and be intensified.
- There are still some 'low-hanging fruit', such as adopting some of the conventions, including the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and in the field of nutrients.
- In the longer term, better dialogue is needed between the regional and the local levels of government in order to implement the BSAP.
- As new environmental problems arise, new working methods will be needed to address them.
- There needs to be a strengthening of the coordination and implementation side of the BSAP.
- Implementation of the BSAP must continue and improve.

In order to achieve this:

- Budget allocations must be increased.
- Collaboration between different stakeholders must be enhanced with an increased role for the municipalities. Not all the relevant actors are on board and business should take on a larger role.
- Better data is needed. Current monitoring is inadequate, and methods and transparency vary. Access to data is limited, which hampers research and decision making. A better governance structure is needed for the reporting of the municipalities and a more local approach to measurement is needed. Having the same progress indicators for all the local municipalities is not effective as problems vary significantly between them.

MAKING CITIES SAFE IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 11

Moderator

Dr Ian Anthony, SIPRI

Speakers

- Eugenio Benincasa, Crime Analyst, Office of Crime Control Strategies, New York Police Department
- Anders Fridborg, Chief Security Officer, Uppsala municipality
- Professor Dr Klaus Boehnke, Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences, Jacobs University, Bremen
- Matti Koskinen, Head of Unit, Safety and Preparedness, City of Helsinki

Rapporteur

Dr Ian Anthony, SIPRI

Overview

Urban violence can take different forms, such as criminal violence, violence used to further political objectives or uncoordinated social violence in the form of hate crime. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) aims to renew and plan cities and other human settlements in a way that fosters community cohesion and personal security while stimulating innovation and employment.

Key takeaways

While the safety and security problems that cities face in the Baltic Sea region are real, they must be put into proper perspective. Most cities in the region are successful and dynamic communities. Where there are significant problems of safety and security, these are often confined to specific areas within otherwise thriving cities.

A significant gap is emerging between perception and reality among the public about the true state of city security in the Baltic Sea region. Public perceptions are driven by dominant media narratives and do not seem to be affected by empirical information such as trends in crime statistics.

Compared with other parts of Europe, and certainly in global comparisons, cities in the region are safe and secure. However, given the continued growth and increasing diversity of cities, it will be important to maintain a focus on risks and to design strategies to reduce these so that the high level of safety and security can be sustained. Warning signs of future problems must be detected in a timely manner and acted on.

Proactive data-driven strategies are being developed to address a spectrum of urban challenges, such as managing traffic, improving the environment, reducing carbon emissions, planning construction and installing digital communications networks. The same approach should be applied to reducing urban crime, including violent crimes of different kinds.

Compiling detailed information about the safety and security environment in different parts of cities is a precondition for developing effective preventive strategies. Information from multiple streams must be collected and combined across the 'stovepipes' created by the different responsibilities and rules that exist within city governments and between city government and other relevant actors. The collection and use of data must respect existing legal frameworks, including those on data protection and individual privacy.

The Nordic countries have established networks for discussing issues related to safety and security in cities. For example, the Nordic Safe Cities initiative is already bringing together practitioners to share relevant knowledge, tools and experiences to strengthen urban safety and security. The Nordic discussion could be enriched by greater interaction with cities in, for example, northern Germany that have similar profiles and face similar challenges.

- Findings from existing data-driven crime prevention strategies outside the Baltic Sea region should be brought into the regional networks where urban safety and security are discussed, and briefed to relevant national and city authorities. These should include, for example, cases where data-driven approaches to crime prevention and the future of policing are being implemented.
- To create the most balanced and accurate picture of urban safety and security challenges, a specific project should be established to collect crime statistics and social cohesion research results at the city level across the Baltic Sea region. These results should be briefed through a dedicated media and public outreach programme.
- An appropriate Baltic Sea forum should be used to assess the potential advantages and disadvantages of opening up existing networks that link cities to discuss safety and security issues to wider participation by countries from the southern side of the Baltic Sea. Opening a discussion with cities in northern Germany would be a practical way to launch this assessment.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: ENHANCING REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND LOCAL CAPACITY

Moderator

Amiera Sawas, SIPRI

Speakers

- Mandy Sanghera, Human Rights Activist, Mandy Sanghera Foundation, UK
- Endrit Mujaj, Project Officer, Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings, Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, Sweden
- Rosa Logar, President of the Board, Women Against Violence in Europe, and Executive Director of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Programme, Vienna
- Jurgita Pečiūriene, Programme Manager, Gender Based Violence, European Institute for Gender Equality, Lithuania

Rapporteurs

- Jose Alvarado, SIPRI
- Amiera Sawas, SIPRI

Overview

This session discussed the issue of GBV in the Baltic Sea region, prevalence trends, best practice in documenting and responding to GBV across the region and the current barriers to addressing and prioritizing GBV in the region.

Key takeaways

Gender inequality remains an evolving challenge in the states of the former Soviet Union, four of which are now CBSS members. After the break-up of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, marketoriented reforms were introduced which shifted gender norms to emphasize the differences between men and women and supported the revival of patriarchal gender ideologies in the public sphere. The uneven treatment of men and women became more apparent. For example, statistics show that women's labour force participation was lower in 1997 than in 1985 in all the transition countries in Europe. Nonetheless, for the Baltic states wishing to accede to the EU, the rules of accession, as well as provisions on gender equality in the Treaty of Amsterdam, required the mainstreaming of gender equality.

During the session, various types of gender-based violence (GBV) prevalent in the Baltic Sea region were discussed: sexual violence, including harassment, abuse, assault and rape; domestic and intimate partner violence; forced marriage; female genital cutting; violence and discrimination towards LGBTQI persons; stalking; and human trafficking. The region is being used to facilitate trafficking of Baltic Sea state citizens to EU member states by EU or third country nationals. Trends are affected by the legislation in these countries, the economic context and demography.

More recently, the most important factor has been the migration crisis. Newly arrived refugees and migrants are especially vulnerable to trafficking, particularly for sexual exploitation. Indicators show that trafficking of young men and boys, mainly unaccompanied minors, is now also a growing concern. Nonetheless, conviction rates of perpetrators remain low.

The panel noted that multiple forms of exploitation are increasing in the region, such as forced begging during the day and prostitution at night. In some communities, girls are at risk of genital cutting but the statistics are sparse and uncertain. Online violence is also a growing concern. Some women have been victims of cyber-stalking. New phenomena such as recording violence against women and the LBGTQI community on Facebook are also increasing. These are large blind spots from a policy perspective and panellists felt that more needed to be done. Denmark has been a pioneer in this field, and a new law now addresses digital sexual violence and prohibits the non-consensual sharing of images online.

The panel noted that the Istanbul Convention is an effective mechanism to combat violence against women and domestic violence. Eight countries in the Baltic Sea region have ratified it. Finland, Denmark and Sweden have undertaken an evaluation of the state of violence against women and domestic violence in their countries, and devised strategies and action plans to address these issues. Nonetheless, according to submissions by Sweden to the Council of Europe, implementation remains a challenge due to the limitations of the available data and of follow-up services for women and girls. There is also only a limited range of programmes in the former-Soviet states in the Baltic Sea region. Most of these focus on treating substance abuse and providing survivor services for women and children. Poland stands out for implementing over 200 projects with perpetrators. Experts argue that societal factors are the main reasons why such programmes are limited in this part of the region.

Addressing GBV remains a challenge in the region, despite international conventions that all states must adhere to. The panel noted sometimes that judges raise the issue of consent with victims of human trafficking even though it is not a valid question in such circumstances. The CBSS is currently conducting training with judges to make them more aware of trauma and how to assist victims more effectively. The Istanbul Convention contains a clause stating that any discrimination based on gender identity is strictly prohibited. Implementation of this clause presents challenges. Various groups within the CBSS member states are highly resistant, arguing that the convention promotes gender insecurity. There is still far from total acceptance, even in Europe, of people who do not follow traditional gender constructs. Conviction rates for traffickers remain low in the region, even though the number of victims is increasing year on year. Migration flows have increased the number of migrants and refugees who become victims of people trafficking. Tackling this will require greater regional and EU-level cooperation.

- Proceed with ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention across the Baltic Sea region and increase data collection on violence against women and domestic violence. Finland, Denmark and Sweden have undertaken an evaluation of the state of violence against women and domestic violence in their countries in order to devise strategies and action plans to address the issue. More countries in the region should follow suit.
- Address the societal factors that frame domestic violence and broader gender-based violence as a private, individual or family matter rather than a broader gender-related issue.
- Greater regional and EU cooperation is needed to tackle the increasing number of migrants who become victims of trafficking. This includes increasing the conviction rate for traffickers.

A NEW STRATEGY FOR THE ARCTIC COUNCIL: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Moderator

Dorothea Wehrmann, German Development Institute

Speakers

- Ambassador Harri Mäki-Reinikka, Secretary General of Finland's Arctic Advisory Board
- Professor Timo Koivurova, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland
- Dr Jenifer Spence, Carleton University, Canada
- Professor Douglas Nord, Umeå University

Rapporteur

Ekaterina Klimenko, SIPRI

Overview

The Arctic Council (AC) has undergone significant changes over the past ten years. The AC strengthened its capacity with the establishment of a permanent secretariat, which provides continuity and institutional memory. The AC has also expanded its number of observers to include states outside the Arctic region, such as China, Singapore, South Korea, Japan and India.

Significant changes in the Arctic region spurred the AC states to initiate a reassessment of their key strategic priorities in order to enhance the ability of the AC and its subsidiary bodies to work together, and to guide the subsidiary AC bodies in setting priorities. At the Fairbanks Ministerial Meeting in May 2017 the Senior Arctic Officials were asked to develop a strategic plan for the future work of the AC. This long-term plan will be adopted at the Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi in May 2019. This session aimed to develop policy recommendations to inform this process.

Key takeaways

There has not been any real progress in discussions on the best structure for the Arctic Council. Development of the Arctic Council's structures was shaped in an ad hoc way by working groups deciding their programmes and working strategies, as well as by various chairmanships seeking to have their priorities advanced. Although this has been a 'wild' development and poorly coordinated, it has also been creative and responsive to a number of challenges.

The current strategic review process is crucial to the future of the AC, especially now that it has an increasing number of actors. The AC has often been described as the pre-eminent forum in the Arctic but what this means has never been defined. The question is important as different interpretations by observers and permanent participants could have implications for what it does and how it should be organized, as well as what it would be able to achieve.

There can also be confusion and frustration among various actors because there is no single understanding of what the AC should be, what it should achieve and what it actually delivers at the moment. If consensus cannot be achieved, this could damage the credibility and legitimacy of the AC. The AC cannot continue to be all things to all people. It must prioritize and have a clear vision. A decision is needed on whether the AC should be a policy-shaping or a policymaking organization. It could remain a forum for dialogue, which is an important function due to the presence of the permanent participants, or become a decision-making body, which would require some substantial changes to the organization.

During the process of strategic review it will be important not to lose the unique qualities of the AC when it comes to inclusion and representation, particularly of the peoples of the North and the

communities of the Arctic. The separate status of the indigenous communities, which is not at the same level as the member states, has caused concern on the part of indigenous groups because there is a feeling that their voices are not being heard at the same volume as the voices of the member states. This anxiety has increased as more non-Arctic states have been admitted to the AC as observers. Some effort is needed to work out how to maintain the voice of indigenous peoples and give them more opportunity to participate in the organization. Twinning permanent participants with individual states or Chairs could be one possibility.

The current structure is rather unclear. The AC is trying to do too much and its institutional design reflects this. There are 80 projects, a number of subsidiary bodies and a number of agreements outside the AC. There is significant overlap in these activities and no clear understanding of how they complement each other. Most of the working groups are focused on environmental protection. There is only one working group dealing with sustainable development issues. It will be necessary to examine how many working groups are needed and what their work should be, as well as whether the existing working groups are the right ones for the AC at this time and whether more should be done to address sustainable development and other concerns.

It is important to think about possible sources of permanent funding for the AC. This is essential to ensure that worthwhile projects are not interrupted due to lack of funds when moving from one chairmanship to another.

- It is crucial that the Arctic Council has a clear vision of what the institution represents and is able to communicate this vision to its participants.
- It will be important for the AC to 'put its house in order' and define the relationship between its various working groups, as well as its relationship with neighbouring institutions and external treaties and bodies.
- If the AC wants to be more effective it needs to sharpen its profile rather than duplicate existing efforts. The strategy document should make this a priority
- It is important to discuss the long-term strategy because the effectiveness of the AC must be maintained and improved. It is important to understand, however, that the long-term strategy is only the first step.
- The strategic plan cannot be a static document; it must be contextualized in the changing environment. It should give a clear indication that it is interactive, that work needs to continue and that it is part of an ongoing process. It should not be a document that people refer back to but a living document that has implications in the short term while more needs to happen in the longer term.

THE WAY AHEAD: HOW TO MANAGE COMPLEX SOCIETAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Moderator

Dan Smith, SIPRI Director

Speakers

- Cyryl Kozaczewski, Political Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland
- Karin Enström, Senior Member of the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament)
- Audun Halvorsen, State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Norway
- Ulrik Vestergaard Knudsen, State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Denmark
- Annika Söder, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Rapporteur

Emma Fredriksson, SIPRI

Overview

Some major transformative events have taken place in a European as well as a global context in recent years. Despite what some expected, we are now seeing a renaissance of European cooperation. There is a general agreement that effective regional and international cooperation is crucial to meeting the security challenges facing the region, in which the CBSS plays an important role. Seen from a global context, the Baltic Sea region is strategically located, has the capacity to take forward the international agreements of 2015 and should strive to set a positive example in their implementation.

The closing plenary focused on broad societal security challenges and regional responses. A panel of high-level political leaders from the region was asked to respond to the following questions: What societal security challenges can be seen in the Baltic Sea region and what are the visions to best respond to them? Within the broad range of issues, what are the serious challenges and what are the successes of regional cooperation? How will societal security cooperation and regional responses develop in future in the region?

Key takeaways

Obviously, the sea plays an important role in the Baltic Sea region and the many challenges it faces—such as ensuring food security, energy security, economic security and military security—are dependent on the status of the sea. Hence, the prospects for prosperity and stability in the region depend on our ability to manage the sea in a sustainable way. At the same time, it is arguable that the maritime domain has re-emerged as an arena for strategic competition and there are concerns about a future militarization of the Baltic Sea.

In addition, there is the rapidly growing threat of cyberattacks. As the most digitalized region in the world, cybersecurity has emerged as one of today's biggest regional challenges and vulnerabilities. Cybersecurity has also involved a blurring of the distinction between war and peace, and the true scope of the problem is still to a large extent unknown. To address these challenges in full requires new forms of cooperation and diplomacy, as well as a clearer definition of where and how these issues should be addressed.

Regional cooperation remains central to building the capacity to address the societal risks facing the region. While regional tension is on the rise in some areas, cooperation continues to be successful in others. The Arctic Council is one such example and remains an arena for pragmatic discussion

and stability. Together with other forums for successful cooperation it increases regional trust and a sense of commonality, helping to reduce the tensions around more conflictual issues.

Trust within and between citizens, communities and countries is identified as key to achieving regional stability. Its achievement necessitates a clear focus on inclusion, particularly of youth and non-elite groups. Social cohesion is essential not only to countering the challenges of disinformation but also to strengthening the ability and will of societies to act on existing information. The ability to act necessitates mutual understanding. If it is possible to map out the risks, and build trust at all levels of society, there can be confidence that people will be able to absorb, validate and act on complex information.

The Baltic Sea region has a rich institutional framework with the capacity to address the security risks of today. The challenge lies in finding common ground on which to act and ensuring that preventative efforts are implemented from a long-term perspective. Effective resilience can only be achieved through broad cooperation, mutual trust and long-term institutional stability.

In discussions on security, military threats—or the so-called 'hard' security agenda—are often given priority over that which is treated as 'soft' security. This conference has made clear that such a perspective is flawed. Instead, understanding the interlinkages between various security challenges and how they intersect will be central to achieving sustainable and long-term regional security.



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