Baltic Regional Programme

BALTIC REGIONAL PROGRAMME: THIRD ANNUAL EVALUATION MEETING
11 JUNE 2001
DRAFT AGENDA
Chairman: Ambassador Anders FERM, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OECD, and Chair of the OECD Committee on Co-operation with Non-Members

Venue: Raimonds Pauls Musical Centre, Terbatas Street 2, Riga

I. Morning session (9.00-12.45)

Item 1. Opening of meeting (9.00-9.30)

- Opening Address by Mr. Aigars Kavitis, Minister, Ministry of Economics, Latvia
- Welcoming Remarks by Ambassador Anders Ferm, Chairman

Item 2. Adoption of the Agenda

Item 3. Baltic Regional Programme implementation: Presentation and discussion of Implementation Notes (9.30-10.45)

- Mr. Eric Burgeat, Director, CCNM, OECD: Brief overview of the Programme Implementation
- Mr. Uldis Vitolins, Director, Foreign Economic Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvia
- Mr. Peeter Restinski, Ambassador, Director of Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia
- Ms. Dalia Grybautskaite, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania

Coffee break (10:45-11:00)

Item 4. Review of selected Baltic Regional Programme activities (11.00-12.45)

a. Forum for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development
   - Panel presentation and discussion

b. Social and Labour Policies
   - Panel presentation and discussion

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1 The meeting will start at 9.00. The timing for the items is indicative.
II. Afternoon session (15.00-17.30)

Item 5. Participation in OECD instruments and bodies (15.00-16.15)

a. Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions: Update by the OECD Secretariat

b. Examination of FDI policies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania: Update by the OECD Secretariat

c. Observership in the OECD Committee on Competition Law and Policy: The Experience of Lithuania

Pause (16.15-16.30)

Item 6. The Baltic Regional Programme – looking ahead (16.30-17.30)

Discussion items:

- Brief review of medium-term objectives 2001-2003
- Looking ahead
- Status report on Programme funding

Item 7. Other business

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A Press Briefing will be held immediately following the morning session in the meeting venue, Raimonds Pauls Musical Centre, Terbatas Street 2, Riga

The OECD Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members invites all participants to a reception immediately following the meeting (location to be announced)

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Annotations to the Agenda

Background and objective of the meeting

1. The governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania issued, on 22 October 1996, a joint declaration appealing to the Council of the OECD to examine the possibility of establishing a Special Regional Programme for the Baltic countries. The OECD Council agreed to establish the Baltic Regional Programme (BRP) on 12 March 1998 [C/M998)6/PROV]. This agreement was part of an overall consensus reached on an integrated Programme of Work with Non-Members. The Programme was established on the condition that at least 75 per cent of its funding would come from voluntary contributions.

2. The Baltic Regional Programme has been developed in close co-operation and consultation with the Baltic countries. The Programme has three main objectives: i) to assist in the completion of the transition to market economies; ii) to promote the stable integration of the Baltic region into the global economy; and iii) to encourage the use of best practices of the OECD in developing policies and strategies in the Baltic region, in order to promote long-term sustainable economic growth and political stability.

3. The Baltic Regional Programme is “demand driven” in order to find the most effective ways in which to assist the Baltic countries in their challenge to reform their legislation and administration. In each of the Baltic capitals, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-ordinates a working group on the implementation of the Baltic Regional Programme activities. The members of the working groups represent different ministries, government organisations and institutions. The size of these working groups varies from 15-19 members. The members of these groups are also involved in the co-operation with other international organisations such as the EU.

4. The sponsoring countries have stressed the importance of a thorough evaluation of the Programme. During the evaluation meetings the Baltic countries and donors, together with other Member countries, meet to assess the Programme of Work and have an open, transparent dialogue on the Baltic countries progress in the transition process and integration into a global economy. The previous Baltic Regional Programme evaluation meetings were organised, in Paris, on 23 April 1999 and 5 May 2000, respectively.

Item 1. Opening of the meeting

5. The Third Evaluation Meeting will be held for the first time in the Baltic region, in Riga, Latvia. Representatives of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, donor countries (which includes the three Baltic countries), all other OECD Member countries and relevant intergovernmental organisations in the region have been invited. The meeting will be chaired by Ambassador Anders Ferm, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OECD and Chair of the OECD Committee on Co-operation with Non-Members. The opening addresses will be given by the Latvian Minister of Economics, Mr. Aigars Kavatis, and by Ambassador Ferm.

Item 2. Adoption of the Agenda

6. The evaluation meeting will consist of a morning and an afternoon session on 11 June 2001. Five agenda items are proposed.
Item 3. Baltic Regional Programme implementation: Presentation and discussion of Implementation Notes

7. The Head of the Baltic country delegations will present their Implementation Notes [CCNM/BALT(2001)3-5]. The notes have been prepared in consultation with the Baltic Regional Programme working groups, co-ordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Delegates are referred to the following general documentation for more background information:

- The Baltic Regional Programme Annual Report 2000 [CCNM/BALT(2001)1];
- The Baltic Regional Programme of Work 2001 [CCNM/BALT(2001)7];
- The CCNM 2001 Timetable of Events [CCNM(2001)6].

• Mr. Eric Burgeat, Director, CCNM, OECD, will provide a brief overview of the scope of the Programme, as well as the method for activity implementation.

• The Presentations of the Implementation Notes are scheduled for about 10 minute each. After each presentation there is a brief opportunity for questions for clarification purposes. A general discussion will follow the presentations.

The aim of the discussion is to focus on several questions:

• The results of the various activities undertaken in the Baltic Regional Programme, emphasising their impact on policy making in each country;
• Governments’ priorities with respect to the Programme and how the Baltic Regional Programme should respond to them;
• The relationship of the Baltic Regional Programme to the EU programmes and, where relevant, the work of other intergovernmental organisations;
• The benefits and added value of a regional Programme covering three Baltic countries and the lessons learned from this regional approach.

Item 4. Review of selected Baltic Regional Programme activities

8. The Baltic Regional Programme contains many activities on a wide range of themes. At each Evaluation Meeting, a selection of themes is chosen for review. This year, three different presentations will be made on the Forum for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (FEED), Social and Labour Policies, and Financial Markets.

• A panel has been organised for each theme, comprised of Baltic experts and the OECD Secretariat activity managers. The aim of the panels is to focus on the main findings, policy impacts and lessons of the activities. The panels begin with an OECD Secretariat presentation of the work and the issues it addresses, followed by a discussion by the Baltic experts of the specific situations in their respective countries. Participants will then be invited to comment.

• The Secretariat has prepared brief information notes for the evaluation meeting on the Baltic Forum for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (FEED), Social and Labour Policies, and Financial Markets. Several publications are under preparation on the selected activities.
Item 5. Participation in OECD instruments and bodies

9. The Baltic countries have each requested to be admitted as a full participant in the OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions and to accede to the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. These requests are being reviewed in accordance with the Organisation’s procedures.

- The Secretariat will provide a status report.

10. In February 2001 the OECD Council agreed that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania should be invited to adhere to the 1976 Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises and related Decisions by the Council, subject to a full examination of their respective FDI policies. Preparation for these examinations is underway.

- The Secretariat will provide a status report.

11. The OECD Council decided, on 23 November 2000, to invite Lithuania as an observer in the Committee on Competition Law and Policy.

- The Lithuanian Delegation members will share their experience.

Item 6. The Baltic Regional Programme—looking ahead

12. The Baltic countries endorsed the medium-term objectives for 2001-2003 at the beginning of year 2001. These medium-term objectives should be seen as voluntary commitments or benchmarks, developed and agreed among the OECD and Baltic countries. The medium-term objectives are set out by activity. The common thread of the medium-term objectives is to achieve Baltic countries’ closer association with OECD standards and legal instruments. The objectives will also help to strengthen the long-term planning and evaluation mechanisms of the Programme and avoid duplication of activities with other international organisations, in particular with the EU. It was foreseen that the objectives should be adaptable in the light of the changing circumstances and that assessments at future evaluation meetings should indicate whether any adaptations are called for.

- This item will begin with a Review of the Medium-Term Objectives 2001-2003. The discussion could address the following issues:

  -- Should the objectives be prioritised? Do participants see any top priorities emerging?

  -- Are there any objectives that participants expect to be completed before the end of the medium-term horizon, i.e. before 2003?

  -- Should any additional objective(s) be added, on issues that are emerging as important, or is the list comprehensive enough as it stands?

  -- Is there a need to establish a specific process for reviewing and adapting, as appropriate, the medium-term objectives as the programme is implemented?
• **Looking ahead -- discussion on the future of the Programme.** Possible issues for discussion include:
  
  -- What topics should be on the agenda of future evaluation meetings?

  -- Do participants see a future for the programme beyond 2003? If so, is it possible to identify what should likely be its main focus and most appropriate format?

• **Financing of the Programme:** The Secretariat will provide a status report on the financing of the Programme for 2000-2001, and delegations will be invited to indicate how they intend to ensure the continuing funding of the programme at the level required.

**Item 7. Other business**

13. Under this item, Delegations may wish to raise any other question not covered under previous items.

14. The Chairman will conclude the meeting.

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