

REPORTS FROM THE CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

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WORKSHOP I

How to improve the environmental state of the Baltic Sea Region

Organizers: Commission on Environment and Commission on Energy

Moderator:

Stella Aaltonen, UBC Commission on Environment

Conclusions

The workshop focused on the possibilities offered by the Baltic Sea strategy to the Union of the Baltic Cities. 33 participants gathered from 8 different countries to discuss how the UBC could improve the environmental state of the Baltic Sea Region.

The co-chairman of the UBC Commission on Environment Mikko Jokinen, introduced the actions envisaged in the Baltic Sea Region and Co-chairman of the Commission on Energy Stefan Windh complimented the presentation with energy related issues in the Baltic Sea Strategy. The active discussion resulted in stressing the role of local commitment and stakeholder involvement as keys to success. Focus on implementation of the actions is needed. UBC has a role to play in coordinating actions related to the Baltic Sea strategy and in disseminating them. This is needed more than ever before. Municipalities themselves should be the lighthouses to do the practical actions and show good example and models! A common framework for the dialogue between the cities is needed. The focus should be on lifestyle changes through different measures especially on macrolevel. It was concluded that in many cases the money is a good excuse to be used.

Climate change and energy consumption are challenges that influence almost all aspects of our daily life. Global challenges regarding reduction of greenhouse gases, increase of renewable energies and energy efficiency, need to be tackled on all levels – private households, national, European and global levels. Often energy co-operation on regional or sub-regional levels can indeed provide very positive results that leave each country better off when implementing the EU's or the UN's targets on climate change and energy, as well as in ensuring greater security of energy supply.

Energy Perspectives for the Baltic Sea Region were presented by Anders Kofoed-Wiuff from EA Energy Analyses. He stressed that the solutions involving small technologies play a key role in creating an impact needed in the Baltic Sea Region. Measures, such as energy savings, district heating, biomass and wind, wave or solar energy can be the solutions. This can be enforced by energy issues related to transport, such as improved full economy, electric vehicles, modal-change and the use of new ICT solutions.

The presentation prepared by Dr Senior Manager Karl-Johan Lehtinen, Nordic Environmental Finance Corporation NEFCO was held by Björn Grönholm, UBC Commission on Environment Secretariat. It explained what are the development trends and how can we better use existing financial possibilities. The presentation showcased that good programmes do not automatically lead to implementation of projects with practical results. According to many funding authorities, such as NEFCO, the problem is not the money, it is lack of applications / projects. Also it is reality that the steps to get funding from different programmes takes often too long time.

The workshop was concluded by stating that win-win situations are possible in several fields. UBC should be actively linking activities to different ongoing processes on regional, national, BSR and EU level. The obstacles in the transformation of scientific data into local level actions should be eased up.

The knowledge to solve the problems is there to solve most of the problems. Dissemination of them is vital and a good tool for that is the UBC Good Practice Database www.ubcwheel.eu

WORKSHOP II

How to make the Baltic Sea Region a more prosperous place by supporting balanced economic development

Organizers: Commission on Business Cooperation and Commission on Information Society

Moderator:

Esa Kokkonen, Director, The Baltic Institute of Finland

Wolfgang Schmidt, Head of International Business Services, KiWi, Business Development Cooperation Kiel

Speakers:

- "The Baltic Sea Region and the Global Economic Crisis", Stefan Ehrstedt, Senior Research Associate, Pan-European Institute
- "The Baltic Sea Region in the Global Economy: Competitiveness Challenges for the Baltic Sea Region Cities", Paweł Warszycki, Hanseatic Institute for Entrepreneurship and Regional Development at the University of Rostock
- "The Economic Objectives and Actions of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: The Role of Baltic Sea Region Cities", David Sweet, Adviser to Director General DG Regional Policy Dirk Ahner, European Commission
- "Case Sophia Antipolis", Søren Kofoed, General Manager, Club Sophia Nordic Link

Report

The EU Strategy for the BSR and its priority "to make the BSR a prosperous place" was the main theme of the workshop. The aim was to discuss the role of cities in the development and implementation of various actions and flagship projects presented in the strategy's action plan. Furthermore, the impact of the economic crisis and competitiveness challenges of the BSR cities were discussed in the workshop.

The workshop was co-organized by the UBC commissions on information society and business cooperation. The workshop included four expert presentations on the above topics, each of them followed by Q&A, and the final discussion. The workshop gathered some 40 participants.

In his presentation, Stefan Ehrstedt from Pan-European Institute presented the current outlook of the Baltic Sea Region as an economic area, its recent economic development, as well as future challenges and possibilities. The Baltic Sea Region countries are strongly connected to each other in their foreign trade - with the share of country exports and imports to and from the Baltic Sea Region varying between as high as over 60-70% in case of the Baltic States, to approximately 11% in case of Germany. In FDI, the connection is even stronger.

Mr. Ehrstedt reviewed how the Baltic Sea countries have been hit differently by the economic crisis. Poland is of the least affected countries in Europe, expecting even growth in 2009. Germany and the Nordic countries have experienced steep downturn, plummeting exports and rising unemployment. However, there are already some signs of recovery especially in Germany. Russia has faced even steeper downturn mainly caused by decreasing energy prices. However, compared to the 1998 crisis, Russia is in much stronger position. The Baltic States' situation is among the worst in the European

Union. Credit-led growth in recent years has led to a large foreign currency share of debt. To devalue or cut is the big question in the Baltic States' economic policies.

As regards the future possibilities for the Baltic Sea Region, Mr. Ehrstedt listed the following: Increased Baltic Sea Region market integration supporting the growth; good competitiveness and high production in the region; and good innovation capabilities. Concerning the future challenges, Mr. Ehrstedt pointed out that the Baltic Sea region markets are still very national. Furthermore, Mr. Ehrstedt reminded about the asymmetry of the Region: There are major differences between the old and new EU member countries in the region, and more convergence is needed. Finally, Mr. Ehrstedt raised the region's demographic challenges, i.e. aging population and needs to promote migration outside the region.

The second speaker, Paweł Warszycki from Hanseatic Institute for Entrepreneurship and Regional Development at the University of Rostock discussed competitiveness challenges for the Baltic Sea Region cities. Globalisation, demographic change and knowledge economy have led to increased competition, new international hierarchy of regions and new kind of competition about talents and human capital. Mr. Warszycki compared the Baltic Sea Region to other three European macro regions (British Isles, Iberian Peninsula and Central Europe). As regards innovative capacity, the Baltic Sea Region is in the second place after British Isles. Mr. Warszycki described the Baltic Sea Region quality triangle – the area where ecology, economy and social development meet – and presented concepts and strategies for the Baltic Sea regional development in which e.g. human capital and education, entrepreneurship and innovation, attractive work and R&D, and related networking should play a key role.

Concerning the economic pillar of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Mr. Warszycki saw opportunities for the Baltic Sea Region cities in the priorities “To exploit the full potential of the region in research and innovation”, and “Implementing the Small Business Act: to promote entrepreneurship, strengthen SMEs and increase the efficient use of human resources”. Concluding his presentation, Mr. Warszycki presented the following three regional adjusted development strategies for the Baltic Sea Region cities: Innovation strategies for metropolitan areas (e.g. Helsinki, Stockholm, Hamburg, Gdańsk); growth strategies for regiopolitan areas (e.g. Tampere, Århus, Gothenburg, Rostock); and adaptation strategies for rural peripheries (in cities with less than 20 000 inhabitants e.g. in thinly populated areas in Northern Sweden, Eastern Finland and Eastern Poland).

Mr. David Sweet from the DG REGIO of the European Commission outlined the economic objectives and actions of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, and discussed the strategy's priority areas and projects where the Baltic Sea Region cities can have an important role. Mr. Sweet described the strategy as “a new kind of beast”, being different from earlier initiatives because it is based on consensus (“there is no legal compulsion or even strong financial incentive to participate”), evolution (“we do not know all the answers, and anyway the questions will change”), and adaptation (“we are encouraging partners to do what they would do anyway but to take account of the Strategy when they do it”).

Mr. Sweet presented an overview of the strategy, its economic pillar and its four priority areas, as well as some examples of flagship projects. He also presented the planned organization structure and preparation process of the flagships. He emphasized the role of regional project leaders, and urged the Baltic Sea Region cities to be pro-active now in engaging with the project leaders. Finally, Mr. Sweet listed the following actions and flagship projects that the Baltic Sea Region cities should especially be aware of: Create a network of sustainable cities and villages; Provide information to jobseekers on job offers; Alcohol and drug prevention among youth; Sustainable Production through Innovation in Small and Medium sized Enterprises; Set up a Baltic Science Link; Develop a Baltic Sea Region Programme for Innovation, Clusters and SME-Networks; and Implement European space for maritime transport without barriers in the Baltic Sea Region.

The fourth speaker, Mr. Søren Kofoed from Club Sophia Nordic Link, represented an external and inter-macro-regional dimension of the Baltic Sea cooperation by presenting a proposal to support cooperation between the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea regions especially in the field of technology and

innovation environments. Mr. Kofoed underlined that that Baltic-Mediterranean cooperation could bring various benefits to the Baltic Sea Region cities - e.g. new market opportunities in the Mediterranean markets and Northern Africa, exchange of good practices on macro-regional cooperation, and new tourism promotion opportunities.

The expert presentations were followed by a lively discussion on the impact of the economic crisis in the Baltic Sea Region and Baltic Sea cooperation, the role of cities in the economic pillar of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, as well as on the opportunities for Baltic-Mediterranean cooperation.

WORKSHOP III

How to make the Baltic Sea Region more accessible and attractive?

Organizers: Commission on Tourism (CoT) and contributing commissions (Sport, Transportation, Urban Planning, Culture)

*Moderator:
Ewa Kurjata, UBC Commission on Tourism*

Introduction

The goal of the workshop on “How to make the Baltic Sea Region more accessible and attractive?” was to contribute to the betterment of the BSR and UBC action plans in particular. Additionally, the workshop was to practically contribute to the EU Strategy for the BSR development and implementation. It further aimed at staging the question of the UBC and BSR branding through an interactive session with UBC member cities on the UBC and BSR brands. This brainstorming activity was to assist the participants in finding the answer to the key questions and to work out a joint conclusion on what should and could be done to make the BSR more accessible and attractive.

CoT co-chair opened the workshop by welcoming all the participants and introducing the workshop’s agenda. 60 participants of the X UBC GC registered for the workshop and actively worked during the session. The key theme was introduced by offering some questions to ponder upon. These were:

- How can UBC lobby for better accessibility in the region?
- How to brand BSR?
- How to creatively highlight the Baltic identity?
- How to develop an information exchange system in the BSR?
- How to support the multi-modal transportation system development in the BSR?
- How to make the BSR a better tourist destination
- How to "avoid" the borders? (physical and mental)

Then, the presentations by the contributing UBC Commissions followed up. **The Commission on Urban Planning** highlighted the questions of urban attractiveness. It was stressed that it was necessary to improve the image of a city. Family-oriented actions, and not only tourist-oriented ones, should be carried out. Accordingly, citizens need inhabitant-friendly environment to live in. Yet it still needs some betterment. It was added that Baltic cities were all distinctive. Having said that, it must be remembered

that creativity of inhabitants is the greatest asset and should not be neglected. Additionally, urban-rural relationship should be developed and strengthened. Business comes second. It's the citizens who count, concluded the CoUP representative.

The Commission on Transportation's representative highlighted the following points: Everyday actions speak louder than visions only. Accessibility is not only about cars, especially as there are other modes of transportation (e.g. bicycles). People's needs (green areas, good living standards) count, too. The UBC member cities should promote citizen-friendly environment and user-friendly transportation. Mobility management is a modern must and that is why a segmentation approach is recommended. Citizens should change their travel habits to help obtain safer, greener and decongested cities.

The Commission on Culture's representative drew the workshop participants' attention to hospitality, diversity, tolerance, which remained attractive yardsticks of modern urban society. It was stressed that professional musicians, actors, painters per capita were most attractive ones and made the city visible outside. Further, it is a must that all cities have to have cultural identities. It is also believed that creative, communicative, distinctive and authentic cultural identity will attract international attention. As **Art** is a universal language, UBC should give priority for extensive exchange of artists between member cities and take actions to attract younger generation to choose to live in cities.

The Commission on Sport stressed the importance of being active all the year round. Diversity of actions are necessary and taking up sports should be made our regular pastime. The BSR cities need a citizen-friendly and disabled-friendly environment.

The workshop was joined by a **special guest** from the **Hanseatic City of Rostock**, namely Mr. Holger Bellgardt who represented the Hanse Sail, who came to the X GC with the proposition which might fit well into the UBC's new branding policy. In particular, it was proposed that UBC should promote maritime events and perhaps one of the Baltic Sail's ships could serve as the UBC's ambassador in the region.

Other remarks expressed by the participants were related to the UBC's future activities. It was suggested that the organisation should become more project-oriented. Many participants expressed their interest in the Commission on Tourism's initiative to develop the UBC Member City Marketing guideline.

The participants of the workshop were offered to take part in the brainstorming activity which consisted in developing **the concepts of BSR and UBC brands**. As a result, the participants pointed out the urgent need to improve the UBC's international image. This, in particular, refers to its working relations with the Baltic international organisations and being an active actor on the European scene.

Conclusion

The key points from the participating commissions' presentations are summarised in the table below.

No	Commission	Main points
1.	Commission on Urban Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the image of city. • Family-oriented actions (not only tourist-oriented) • Inhabitant-friendly environment. • Living environment needs betterment. • Distinctive cities. • Urban-rural relationship to be developed and strengthened.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity of inhabitants is the greatest asset. • Business comes second.
2.	Commission on Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday actions speak louder than visions only. • Accessibility is not only about cars. There are other modes of transportation. • People's needs (green areas, good living standards) count too. • Fight stereotypes – bicycles are important too. • Promote citizens-friendly environment and user-friendly transportation in cities. • Mobility management (change travel habits, recommended segmentation approach). • Safer, greener and decongested city.
3.	Commission on Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitality, diversity, tolerance – attractive yardsticks of modern urban society. • Professional musicians, actors, painters per capita are most attractive ones and make the city visible outside. • Cities have to have cultural identities. • Creative, communicative and authentic cultural identity will attract international attention. • Art as a universal language. • UBC should give priority for extensive exchange of artists between member cities. • Attract younger generation to choose to live in cities.
4.	Commission on Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen-friendly and disabled-friendly environment. • Being Active all the year round. • Diversity of actions; sport to be made regular pastime.
5.	Hanseatic City of Rostock – Holger Bellgart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maritime events should be the main focus. Miss Hanse Sail = Miss UBC. • A ship should be UBC's ambassador (a flagship).
6.	Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UBC should be project-oriented. • UBC should be more active in cooperating with other Baltic and European organisations. • UBC should rapidly improve its international image (Brand)!

The workshop ended with a joint **conclusion** which reads as below.

UBC is working through active networking and based on the principle of sustainable urban development to support its member cities in their development to achieve a high quality of life for their inhabitants and to promote the BSR as a dynamic, competitive and prosperous region. As UBC is inseparable from the BSR, it's our ambition to contribute to creation of the positive branding of the Region.

UBC member cities wish to adopt a high but realistic ambition and select a collection of areas of joint actions. To make it attractive and accessible, the UBC Commissions wish to propose the following steps to be taken:

- to develop Baltic city integrated policies on sustainable development;

- to work on elaborating the UBC Member City Marketing Guideline and in this way to contribute to BSR branding, based on maritime traditions and unique urban development pattern;
- to work together with other member cities on the EU projects concerning the development of tourism and infrastructure of the BSR cities;
- to promote the healthy style of living and disabled-friendly environment;
- to consider the Baltic culture's pivotal role in making the region attractive;
- to highlight the spirit of the Baltic community;
- to improve infrastructure between the cities (incl. railway connections) to guarantee better universal accessibility;
- to make our cities user-friendly, family-oriented, disabled- friendly and safe for living;
- to take more effective action aiming at protecting our environment;
- to make use of our citizens' creativity and not to forget about citizens' needs in the planning process (safer, greener and decongested cities);
- to use a universal language of art to attract young people to the Baltic cities;
- to promote projects which would serve as UBC's ambassadors and contribute to creating its recognisable image on the European stage.

It is recommended that UBC become more project-oriented.

WORKSHOP IV

How to make the Baltic Sea Region a safer and more secure place

Organisers: The Commission on Health and Social Affairs together with Commission on Gender Equality and Commission on Education

Moderator: Børge Røssaak Nilsen, Commission on Health and Social Affairs

Method

The organisers chose to use a method called "Dialogue café". It is based on giving all the participants the opportunity to participate and make their views known on an equal basis. It is a method based on democratic and equal principles. All participants are seated by a round table and are asked questions significant to the theme. They all give their opinions or answers in turn, insuring that everybody's viewpoints are given equal importance and everybody at the table will hear what is said. A secretary keeps records and takes notes. There is also a chairperson in charge of each table. In our case the chairpersons were representatives from the Youth Conference. These young representatives also participated with their opinions and viewpoints.

There were presentations by speakers on different themes. After the speakers, the participants were given questions to work on in the dialogue café.

Cooperation with Youth Conference

Commission on Health and Social Affairs and Commission on Gender Equality participated at the Youth Conference at their workshop covering the same theme. They highlighted among other things

important questions regarding sexual rights, violations of human rights, and discrimination of gay and lesbian people in the Baltic Sea Area. We related the theme to a new survey on the situation of gender equality in the UBC area. Through the cooperation with the Commission on Youth Issues, we were also able to get young people in central positions in our workshop.

Summary of the presentations

“ Safety and security in the Baltic Sea Strategy”, by Sabine Meyer, Senior Adviser in European Affairs, North Sweden Office, Umeå

The first speaker of the workshop, Sabine Mayer, gave a brief description on the Baltic Sea Strategy. Her focus was the fourth cornerstone of the Strategy, safe and secure, which is related to maritime safety and security. It aims to improve accident response and prevent dangerous situations, but also to address the increasing levels of transnational crime. Ms Meyer described the strategy as a framework for addressing problems through better coordination and joint action. She went on to present the concept of flagship projects and fast tracks. Ms Meyer noted that the strategy is not a funding tool: projects need funding from existing resources.

“The economic crisis: A threat against health, social welfare and including societies. How to secure better opportunities for groups at risk?” by Vladimir Sókman, Deputy Mayor, the city of Tartu, Estonia

This is a presentation on how to prevent and solve problems enhanced by the serious economic situation in the Baltic states. The presentation deals with UBCs’ role in this situation, and analyses the possibilities to act on a local, state and international level to help vulnerable groups. He sees the main areas for action as social welfare, health care, education, children and young people, culture and activities and finally economy. He identifies groups in special risk, and describes actions that can be taken on different levels to prevent further exclusion and development of poverty.

“How to prevent unemployment among young people” by Mare Aasma, Vice-Chairman of Commission on Education

Ms Aasma talked about five important factors that must be addressed for successful prevention of drop out from school and future unemployment: Good health (physical, psychological and mental). Good knowledge (both formal and informal). Good skills (how to use the skills to achieve desired goals). Good relationship skills and character strength/characteristics that can contribute to adaptation. In particular, she emphasized the importance of creativity and participation in hobby education/informal education. In this way, talents and special interests come out early and will become an important driving force for the individual. The ability to find creative solutions is becoming increasingly important in school and job situations. School and job situations require more and more flexibility and ability to rapid change.

“A survey on the situation of gender equality in the UBC area”, by Helene Brewer, gender equality officer, Umeå, Sweden

Helene Brewer presented the report Women and men in the Union of the Baltic Cities, issued by the UBC Commission on Gender Equality. The publication describes the living conditions of women and men in the UBC-area. The report includes statistics on persisting gender related inequalities in political decision-making as well as in economic, social and civil life, and it also provides a framework for the concept of gender equality. Ms Brewer described the publication as a tool for promoting gender equality within the region and said that it covers issues useful for those involved in gender mainstreaming. She presented facts and figures from the report that revealed gender inequalities regarding political and economic decision-making, showing among other things the different income levels of women and men. Ms Brewer addressed the issue of human trafficking and the impact it has on the safety and security of not only individual victims but also the society as a whole.

“A case study of human trafficking in Kristiansand”, by Leif Vagle, Superintendent, Head of Organised Crime Unit, Agder Police District, Kristiansand

Mr Vagle began his presentation with an account of the relation between human trafficking, human smuggling and prostitution. He illustrated the major challenges in the work of exposing human trafficking related to prostitution with several examples. He stressed the importance of international cooperation. He points out that both receiving and sender countries need to interact to combat human trafficking and prostitution by developing knowledge and tools to expose and act as early as possible. The creation of formal and informal networks are important in this context. At the local level, one can also do a lot by alerting authorities about suspicions of trafficking. In Kristiansand between 20-30 prostitutes operate each week. They work mainly from hotels and apartments. On occasions of major conferences in the city, there inevitably is an increase in the number of advertisements of sexual services in Kristiansand.

Summary of the dialogue café

In the dialogue café the participants were asked four questions, and their answers varied greatly. The participants' background was also varied. The answers are preserved by the arrangers of the workshop, and the intention is that the participants can use these answers as a bank of ideas when dealing with the questions in their home municipalities.

1. Mention two ways to combat unemployment among young men and women in your local municipality

- National and local government internship programmes.
- Grants to support entrepreneurship among young people
- Education and training designed to combat growing unemployment. Academic and vocational education should be in close contact with the labour market.
- Municipal government mentoring programmes, involving both politicians and municipal staff, designed to give young people contacts and experiences.
- Mentoring programmes that provide support from adult people to young people by transferring experience and knowledge and help to develop specific capacities.
- Student internships to provide employment opportunities, both vocational and academic study-related work assignments, by building a network of contacts.
- Promote local innovation.
- Educate skilled workers to increase employment opportunities and promote local industries.
- Strengthen the links between the local labour market and the education system by promote a high level of contact between employers and students.
- Programmes of integrating entrepreneurship in the school system.
- Entrepreneurship training and education to promote self-employment.
- Motivate young people. It is important to find solutions to issues such as prestige.
- Safe local communities and support for families.
- Safe and lively local centres to create a place for meetings and interaction.
- Safety nets to catch school drop-outs.

2. What can be done to fight human trafficking and achieve zero tolerance in your municipality? Mention two steps that can be taken.

- Prevention through knowledge by awareness campaigns.
- Campaigns must address the demand for commercial sex, that is, the buyers.
- Dialogue and information in the local community.
- Training of local social workers, NGOs, police, prosecutors to create and enforce protection for victims and prosecution of those guilty of trafficking.
- Training of local social workers, NGOs, police and prosecutors to assist victims.
- Encourage victims to contact the police.
- Easy accessible information in public places in different languages.
- Provide secure and well paid employment for women involved
- Provide health care for women involved in prostitution and trafficking.

- Information about the risks of trafficking and about victim's rights.
- Cross border co-operation.
- More police in the local areas.
- Provide support to the origin countries.
- Eradication of poverty.

3. You wake up finding your home town completely gender equal. How do you notice that this change has happened during the night? Mention two things.

- Women and men participate in the labour market on equal terms.
- Equal access to and equal participation of women and men in higher education.
- Freedom from gender based violence.
- Women and men participate on equal terms in all areas of life; public, private, work
- New dress codes.
- More creativity.
- Marketing and advertising are not portraying women and men in an offensive and degrading manner.
- More women in high positions in the society.
- More men in care work.
- Women work full time.
- Fathers walk their children to and from school.
- Fathers participate in meetings at school.
- Mothers and fathers are equally involved in care for their children.
- Gender equal relations are stable and long lasting.

4. Give your local government one advice to make your municipality more safe and secure. What is your advice?

- Gender equal urban planning to create safe local areas.
- Crime prevention by urban planning. For example, parks and street lights.
- More police in the local area.
- Safety nets for economically vulnerable people.
- Involve young people in the local community.
- Support local entrepreneurship.
- Provide training and education for those who wish to be self-employed.
- Safety nets for young people.
- Good democratic governance.
- Motivate and inspire young people.
- Give all individuals, children and adults, equal opportunities to develop their individual abilities.
- Access to data on municipal issues such as crime and accidents.
- Creative solutions.
- Experience-based programmes addressing issues such as gender based violence.
- Emphasis on prevention.
- Integrated urban planning to create safe local areas.