

The OPC meeting was held in Petrozavodsk where the problems of combating organized crime were discussed.

The BSTF was created in 1996 and aimed at assisting Member States of the forum, governments and law enforcement agencies to form a unified vision of combating organized crime and customs violations in the Baltic Sea region. The Russian Federation has the Chairmanship in the Task Force from January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2016.

The meeting was opened by Major General Petr Popov, Coordinator of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, and Major General Vasily Kukushkin, Minister of Internal Affairs in the Republic of Karelia.

The participants of the meeting stressed the necessity to pay close attention to elements of extremism, terrorism and radicalization in the organized crime manifestations. Moreover, they discussed issues of the customs cooperation, combating illegal drug trafficking (in the framework of Working Group on Illicit Drug Trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region) and illegal migration in the Baltic Sea region. It was pointed out that it is of great importance for combating international crime to join efforts of all the Member States of the BSTF and continue working to facilitate the exchange of information between the law enforcement agencies of the European countries.

During the event the software was demonstrated that had been developed by the UNODC and was meant for secure information sharing between countries, organizations and agencies.

Besides, several expert meetings were held where national coordinators shared relevant information about current operational activities in the Baltic Sea region and suggested a number of specific initiatives to be discussed.

The decisions made after the meeting will be taken as a basis for guidelines in the law enforcement sphere aimed at providing security in the Baltic States.

Next scheduled meetings under the Russian Chairmanship in the BSTF will be the BSTF 20th anniversary conference and the OPC meeting to be held in Saint-Petersburg on May 3-6, 2016.