



Conference Resolution

Adopted by the 21st Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

The participants, elected legislators from the Baltic Sea States*, assembling in St Petersburg, Russian Federation, 26-28 August 2012,

discussing co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region, environmental health and energy cooperation, a safe and healthy Baltic Sea, and health, social welfare and economic development,

- A. stressing that parliamentary cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) contributes to democratic, transparent and inclusive political processes, as well as to practical and positive results in people's everyday life;
- B. commending the close, pragmatic and productive interaction between the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and BSPC, including a far-reaching synchronization of political priorities and a continuous exchange at all levels;
- C. appreciate the organization of a first Youth Parliament called "Baltic Sea Youth Session" in Berlin in April 2012 within the framework of the German CBSS Presidency; encourage the following CBSS Presidencies to continue with the organization of those Baltic Sea Youth Sessions and to support a participation of five delegates of this Youth Parliament in the annual BSPC Conferences to include young people into the parliamentary discussion about the future of the Baltic Sea Region,

call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU, as well as other organizations, civil society, private sector, communities and NGOs,

Regarding Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region,

1. to promote interaction and cooperation in the implementation of implementation of the North-West Russia Socio-Economic Development Strategy by the Russian Federation and other overall policies of the Baltic Sea Region, such as the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Northern Dimension
2. to provide continued support to the Northern Dimension policy and its further diversification into new operational branches to involve all stakeholders in the Region on an equal footing and to ensure access to EU projects for all relevant stakeholders where appropriate;
3. to provide stable and long-term resources to CBSS, and to continue to support an ongoing dialogue with BSPC on political priorities as well as operational activities;
4. to provide in due course resources for the full implementation of the SEBA project (Modernization Partnership for the South Eastern Baltic Area), aiming at enhancing cooperation in fields such sustainable development, tourism, public-private partnerships and youth;

5. to encourage a deliberate division of labour between stakeholders in the Region, aiming at strengthening their comparative advantages, synchronizing their priorities, and complementing each other's competencies; cooperative initiatives such as the "*Maritime Joint Event*" in 2011 and 2012 should be promoted as a role model for other subject areas;
6. to promote and protect tolerance, mutual respect and freedom of expression, and to strengthen the human rights throughout the entire Baltic Sea Region and its neighbourhood;
7. to continue efforts towards gradual elimination of obstacles for the movement of persons in the Region in accordance with outcomes of the EU-Russia cooperation in the framework of a visa dialogue, and to pursue the efforts for a gradual phasing out of the visa regime between the EU and Russia, while facilitating as much and as quick as possible visa facilitation for instance for academics, students, researchers, sportsmen, trainees and youth;

Regarding Environmental Health, Energy Cooperation and Energy-Efficient Economy,

8. to ratify, for those states that have not already done so, the Espoo Convention (the EU Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context);
9. to ratify, for those states that have not already done so, the Convention on Ballast waters (International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments of 2004);
10. to fulfill all commitments under the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, adopted by the Governments of the Baltic Sea Region in Krakow in 2007, aimed at restoring a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea by 2021; to further raising the level of ambition at the HELCOM ministerial meeting at fall 2013 in reducing the outlet of phosphorous and nitrates into the Baltic Sea; and to carry out active efforts to coordinate activities with OSPAR in regard of promoting initiatives to decrease waste from vessels in the Baltic Sea regions and in the North-West Atlantic Ocean and the English Channel;
11. within the framework of improving health and rehabilitating the ecosystem of the Baltic Sea, to carry out work aimed at removing the sewage waste pollution sources in the drainage basin of the Baltic Sea, including the modernization of sewage systems and municipal sewage treatment facilities;
12. to contribute to the introduction of best agricultural practices and technologies in animal waste conversion and poultry farming;
13. to promote the decrease of influx of biogenic substances into the Baltic Sea by means of introducing best agricultural practices and technologies to manage waste from animal farming, including poultry farming, and by gradually decreasing use of polyphosphates in synthetic detergents.
14. to promote better health and rehabilitation of the Baltic Sea ecosystem by improving recycling, creating new landfills for municipal and industrial waste with consequent reclamation of land, and by removing obsolete pesticide storages;
15. to welcome work within the trilateral Project of the Year of the Gulf of Finland, aimed at implementation of a set of measures to improve environmental health of the Baltic Sea, namely through research and environmental protection efforts that promote better environmental status of the Baltic Sea ecosystem;

16. to make sustained efforts to promote and develop green growth, energy efficiency and renewable energy, and to adopt nationally adapted binding targets for energy efficiency;
17. to work actively within the IMO to improve the technical requirements, adopted earlier, in respect of the energy efficiency of new sea vessels and development of globally binding technical and/or operational regulations in order to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases from the existing vessels;
18. to support BASREC (Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation) and implement the commitments for 2012-2015 made by the BASREC Ministerial Meeting 14-15 May 2012, in order to develop sustainable energy systems in the region and to integrate energy markets and energy infrastructure;
19. to lessen the dependence on fossilized fuel by exploring renewable energy sources;
20. to promote education, research and development on green growth and energy efficiency, and to take action to disseminate information, exchange best practices and raise awareness of both environmental and economic gains and ways of saving energy;
21. to support activities of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21, focused on four strategic areas: climate change, sustainable consumption and production, innovation and education for sustainable development, sustainable urban and rural development;
22. to provide political incentives and innovative financial schemes to initiate pilot projects and investments in energy efficiency measures;
22. to promote green public procurement (GPP) at all levels of public administration, ensuring that GPP standards provide a level playing field for businesses and do not lead to competitive disadvantages for small and medium-sized enterprises;

Regarding Integrated Maritime Policy,

23. to expand information exchange, joint planning and dissemination of best practices between maritime authorities in order to manage the growing vessel traffic in the Baltic Sea;
24. to develop real-time maritime surveillance information and e-navigation technologies in order to improve vessel traffic management and augment the joint preparedness against accidents;
25. to strengthen the competitiveness of clean shipping in the Baltic Sea Region by using appropriate targeted incentives;
26. to promote research and innovation in order to develop competencies in the areas of shipping safety, energy efficiency, emission reductions, alternative propulsion technologies and renewable energies in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region in the global competition;
27. to carry on further actions aiming at developing a joint macro-regional prevention and preparedness approach towards major hazards and emergencies at sea and on land, and to promote research and to develop technologies aimed at oil spills response in ice conditions, as well as in bad weather and visibility conditions

28. to strengthen the cooperation with the shipping companies to further prevent and minimize the risk of accidents and groundings;
29. to support the implementation of the tripartite project "The Gulf of Finland Year 2014", with the purpose of consolidating joint research and conservation efforts of Finland, Estonia and Russia in order to strengthen the maritime ecosystems of the Baltic Sea;
30. to support the build-up of a more integrated marine and maritime knowledge network (environment, fisheries, regional planning, shipping etc.);
31. to promote artisanal fishery and to enhance the opportunities for investing in environmentally friendly kinds of marine tourism;
32. to draft joint objectives in maritime spatial planning policy (taking the VASAB guidelines into account);
33. to promote the development and strengthening cross-border cooperation of the Baltic Sea region in order to counter cross-border crime and security threats at sea;

Regarding Health, Labour Market and Economic Development,

34. to raise the profile of health and social well-being on the regional cooperation agenda; to support the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being, in order to pursue persistent efforts for improving health and social well-being taking into account ageing society, high burden of non-communicable diseases and antimicrobial resistance;
35. to take the resources of the elderly population into consideration, to allow them to stay on the labour market, and make use of their abilities in general;
36. to develop a medium- to long-term strategy equipped with powerful measures to tackle youth unemployment, and to ensure that existing programmes with this aim are better coordinated; the aim should be to offer each young person a job, an apprenticeship, additional continuing education or a combination of employment and vocational training after a maximum of four months of unemployment. Working life must not begin with a longer period of unemployment;
37. to encourage an intensified cooperation between schools and businesses at local level, in order to develop initiatives for facilitating the transition from school to working life for young people;
38. to further develop measures to foster education, vocational training, skills development and life-long learning, with the aim of meeting the demand for skilled workers and creating new employment opportunities, and in this respect intensify the use of the concept of dual education, and launch initiatives to improve the prospects of long-term employment to unqualified and unemployed young people;
39. to work towards mutual recognition of vocational training in the Baltic Sea Region countries, and to develop the quality of vocational training in the region according to best practices, research results and society's future needs;

40. to reduce as far as possible obstacles to the mobility of labour and enterprises by actively supporting cooperation between the border regions and between the existing cross border information centres;
41. to support and encourage the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF) as a platform for exchange of experience and communication between the key labour market actors in the BSR, including helping the BSLF in promoting social dialogue, tripartite structures and cooperation as crucial elements of sustainable economic growth and social development;
42. to promote cooperation on modernization and innovation with a focus on cluster growth and, in the long term, on the establishment of regional partnerships particularly on environment and sustainable development;
43. to create a public-private partnership (PPP) network aimed at developing a "Baltic PPP" as a sustainable growth platform with a regional direct investment funds and active educational involvement;
44. to support the development of sustainable tourism on land and at sea, including the improvement of mobility and accessibility by other means than motorized private transports, and a strict regulation of the use of conservation areas;
45. to develop concepts that offer age-friendly conditions at the workplace and better access to life-long learning programs also for the elderly population;
46. to develop concepts aiming to improve the access of particularly disadvantaged groups to the job market;
47. to support programs for municipalities in their strategies for coping with socio-demographic change;
48. to develop quality criteria as indicators of a sustainable employment policy;
49. promote efforts to gain more extensive knowledge of the nature and scope of new forms of trafficking in human beings such as trafficking for begging, trafficking for criminal activities like theft and fraud, and trafficking for identity theft, and to strengthen legislative and operational means of identifying and combating these forms for trafficking in human beings;

Furthermore the Conference Decides to

50. adopt the BSPC Work Programme for 2012-2013;
51. grant Observer status to **Skåne Regional County Council**;
52. welcome with gratitude the kind offer of the Parliament of Estonia to host the 22nd Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Pärnu on 25-27 August 2013.

*Parliaments of Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, Denmark, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Republic of Karelia, Latvia, Leningrad, Lithuania, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Poland, Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, City of St. Petersburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Sweden, Åland Islands, Baltic Assembly, European Parliament, Nordic Council.