



## **BSSSC Resolution**

**of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) in Jūrmala,  
Latvia on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

### **BSSSC Annual Conference 2014**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> BSSSC Annual Conference shows that the subregions in the Baltic Sea Region are strong, active and contributing players in the development of the region. The prosperity of the subregions strongly depends on the wider development of the region, which is why international and inter-regional co-operation is of great importance. Once again the BSSSC Annual Conference has gathered many Baltic Sea policy formulating organizations such as the CBSS, BDF, B7, UBC, BSPC, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, HELCOM, ERB and the NSPA to discuss the future of the area. The BSSSC and CBSS Chairmanships have agreed to intensify the cooperation between Baltic Sea organizations.

The BSSSC invites the European parties and new elected MEP's to a dialogue on the future of the Baltic Sea Region and its subregions and to participate in the European co-operation. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference has brought up the main issues that are on the BSSSC agenda. The Baltic Europe Intergroup is the BSSSC's most important link to the European Parliament. The BSSSC wishes for a strong and intense cooperation with the new Intergroup. Furthermore, new members of the Committee of Regions will be elected this year and the BSSSC stresses the importance of the Baltic Sea Intergroup as a cooperation platform in future, too. The BSSSC also hopes that the new European Commission would support the European Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.



**With regard to macro-regional strategies and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the BSSSC**

- supports the Commission's paper on governance of macro-regional strategies.
- regrets that the driving role of regional and local governments is not highlighted in the implementation of macro-regional strategies – both regarding political leadership and ownership.
- welcomes the proposal to improve mechanisms to ensure full engagement of non-EU countries, such as Norway and Russia - at all levels, as well as the better use of the work of existing regional organisations at the appropriate level.
- calls on the European Commission and National Governments to have a stronger emphasis on the specificities of the Baltic Sea Straits – as stated also in the cross-border and transnational Interreg programmes of the Baltic Sea Region for 2014-2020 as well as in the results of the NOSTRA (Network Of STRAits) INTERREG IV C project (2012-2014) – in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, particularly regarding the field of maritime transport, which constitutes an important backbone for trade. The current heavy traffic flows within narrow straits and in shallow waters, covered with ice for a long period of the year, making the Baltic Sea difficult to navigate and increasing the risk of shipping incidents, as well as the vulnerability to pollution. Baltic Sea Straits are also specific territories where marine cross-border cooperation is especially needed and where an integrated approach is the key to allow an harmonious development of all the activities to take place there – economy, marine transport, tourism, environment, culture.
- encourages the Members States to involve the regional level in the implementation of the new European directive for Maritime Spatial Planning which was approved last summer. The approving process with many amendments was followed by the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Working Group on Maritime Issues. The BSSSC cooperated with this working group and follows now the implementation of this directive, too.



### **With regard to the programming period 2014-2020, the BSSSC**

- supports cross border, transnational and interregional cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region and is pleased to see more money being dedicated to this during the Interreg V period.
- welcomes the new Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme - focusing on capacity for innovation, management of natural resources, sustainable transport and support for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.
- fully supports the programme's efforts to bring private actors into the project work and to open up for private sector as eligible partners in future projects.
- urges the Russian Federation and the European Commission to agree on solutions and commit funds to allow for active cooperation of Russian regions and cities on issues important for the Baltic Sea Region.
- will continue to support Baltic Sea Region projects of political importance and in line with BSSSC priorities.
- will as far as possible, seek to arrange partner search events at its Annual Conferences to facilitate a practical cooperation between local and regional actors in the Baltic Sea Region.

### **With regard to the policy sectors**

#### **1. Culture as a driver for social innovation**

- The BSSSC strongly supports the objectives and activities in the context of the EUSBSR Priority Area Culture. The Baltic Sea Region's diverse culture and rich cultural heritage are assets of particular value for the identity and cohesion of the region. The strengthening, promoting and visualizing of culture contributes to the attractiveness of the region and its sound social and economic development.
- Culture and creative industries are not only decisive factors for innovation and economic growth, but also a valuable means for solving social problems and imbalances on the urban and regional level. Culture also promotes democratic values, tolerance and social cohesion. The BSSSC appreciates the Baltic Sea Region Cultural Dialogue which was initiated by the Priority Areas Culture coordinators from Schleswig-Holstein and Poland on the occasion of the EUSBSR Annual Forum in June 2014 in Turku. This dialogue provides an opportunity for defining topics of common concern, such as social inclusion, and agreeing on joint projects and strategies in the field of culture. The BSSSC will continue



to be involved in the upcoming BSR Cultural Dialogue, thus emphasizing its value for cultural cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.

- The financing of cultural projects remains a challenge also in the new EU funding period. The BSSSC regrets that the innovative potential of culture, its significance as a location factor and its growing economic importance are not adequately reflected in the EU funding schemes, and calls on the EU Commission and governing programme bodies to recognize the contribution culture and creativity in the implementation of relevant programmes.

## 2. Low Carbon Economies – smart regional development

- The BSSSC sees the Baltic Sea Region as a model region for low carbon economy, and to be world leading when it comes to the development of knowledge-intensive products and services, eco-innovations, as well as environmental technology. Such products and services can increase competitiveness and create new business opportunities that at the same time reduce negative environmental impacts. During the last decade, many Baltic Sea Region countries acquired considerable experience in the development of sustainable solutions and environmentally friendly technologies in various fields, fostering renewable energies, energy efficiency and natural resource management. However, great diversity remains with respect to both socio-economic developments and the implementation of sustainable practices in the region.
- The BSSSC believes that bioeconomy generates more prosperity in a sustainable way in the Baltic Sea Region.
- Rural areas can play a more important role as producers and care-takers of bioresources.
- The BSSSC sees the need for R&D and innovative projects. Such projects will promote bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region.



### 3. Innovative approach to green transport

- The EU Member States should allow an adequate regional representation in relevant stakeholder forums which the Commission and Member States have established for the implementation of the TEN-T core network, in particular for the North Sea - Baltic Corridor and for the Baltic - Adriatic Corridor.
- The European Commission and EU Member States are requested to take into consideration the recommendations from the TransGovernance project on multi-level governance in the implementation of transnational transport corridors.
- The BSSSC calls for the establishment of uniform European standards, e.g. plug-in technologies and charging/filling infrastructure for vehicles, for the uptake of alternative fuels in the transport sector.
- The BSSSC encourages Regional Authorities in the Baltic Sea Region to actively use the Horizon 2020 Work Programme on green, efficient and integrated transport, in synergy with the relevant objectives of the Baltic Sea Region Interreg programme.
- The BSSSC supports the establishment of a European funding scheme for sustainable and efficient freight transport services (cf. a recent consultation by DG Move) in continuation of the Marco Polo programmes.
- The EU should introduce necessary European support schemes to ease the costs of complying with the EU Directive on reduction of Sulphur emissions from shipping.

### 4. BSSSC advocates for sub-regional participation in Northern Dimension

The cooperation between EU Member States, Russia, Norway and Iceland – on the subregional level – can give a substantial contribution to the success of the Northern Dimension (ND) policy framework. The BSSSC recommends the EU and the states to make full use of the knowledge, experience and capacity of regional and local authorities in the ND cooperation.

At its meeting in Oslo on April 8<sup>th</sup>, the ND Senior Official Group acknowledged the importance of subregional cooperation and asked the Steering Group to reflect on how cooperation with organisations representing the subregional level in the ND area could be further developed.



- The BSSSC will continue to work towards the ND partners to promote a subregional participation. The BSSSC offers itself as a platform for involvement of regional and local authorities, and to act as a subregional observer at ND meetings - and will cooperate closely with other Baltic Sea Region organisations while doing so.
- Furthermore, the BSSSC will also continue to actively follow the cooperation on the Arctic Dimension. The prospects of new transport corridors along the Northern Sea Route are in the interest of the whole Baltic Sea Region, not only of the northernmost regions.

#### 5. With regard to youth involvement, the BSSSC

- appreciates the activities, contributions and input of young people within the framework of the BSSSC on regular basis and underlines the necessity to enable the delegates of the BSSSC Youth Team to participate in and contribute to the BSSSC Annual Conferences.
- supports the youth in the Baltic Sea Region in its will to participate actively in the decision making process and recognizes the importance of innovative and sustainable approach to the dialogue with the young generation.
- underlines the importance of cooperation with the BSSSC Youth Team and stands behind their wish to transform the Baltic Sea Region into the macroregion of high technologies, innovative solutions in energy, transport and culture and thus become a desirable location for training and work and at the same time a green, healthy, sustainable place for living.
- calls on the EU governments, regional and local authorities to fully and effectively implement the EU measures, such as the Youth Employment Initiative, the Youth Employment Package and the Youth Guarantee and calls on the EU governments, regional and local authorities to develop and implement innovative solutions in the field of youth employment.
- the BSSSC supports all efforts to keep up the activities of the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs running, and in particular supports the plan to constitute a Baltic Sea Youth Forum.

#### BSSSC Annual Conference 2015

The BSSSC thanks for the kind invitation from the Gotland Region to convene for the Annual Conference in Autumn 2015 in Visby, Gotland.