

**20th BSSSC Annual Conference
17-19 September 2012, Lillestrøm**



BSSSC Resolution

of the 20th Annual Conference of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) in Lillestrøm, Norway 17-19th September 2012

The BSSSC Board has agreed upon the following resolution:

BSSSC Annual Conference 2012

The BSSSC expresses its thanks to the Eastern Norway County Network for hosting the Annual Conference 2012.

The BSSSC Annual Conference serves as a platform for creating new ideas and concrete proposals through interventions, political discussions and sharing best practices and thus constitutes a regional response to the current challenges which are included in this resolution:

with regard to the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

the BSSSC

1. welcomes the EU Council Conclusions on the review of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the endorsement of the EU Commission's proposals on improving the strategic focus, alignment of policies and funding, clarification of responsibilities of the different actors and better communication
2. recognizes the serious environmental state of the Baltic Sea, the necessity of further integration of the BSR transport system, energy infrastructure and the diversity of economic development of the regions around the Baltic Sea, and therefore approves the objectives of the revised Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - Save the Sea, Connect the Region, Increase Prosperity
3. calls for easy access to all information related to the further process of reviewing the EUSBSR and the updating of its Action Plan in order to make the process more transparent, which in turn will result in a better involvement of local and regional actors in developing and implementing the revised Strategy and Action Plan

4. expects that all actors of governance will be considered while facilitating the EUSBSR national coordination committees and local and regional levels will be encouraged to constructively contribute to the formulation of objectives and the actions needed to realise them in relation to the Strategy. Thus, the feeling of ownership of the Strategy will be improved
5. calls for more intensive involvement of the relevant regional partners from all BSR countries, in particular the Russian Federation and Norway, The establishment of cooperation with Russia as to the objectives of the Action Plan via the Northern Dimension, the Council of the Baltic Sea States or the Nordic Council of Ministers should be complemented by the practical activities of other actors, especially cities, – e.g. by taking advantage of existing twin – cities relations, regions, universities, NGO's and private business partners
6. supports the task of branding the Baltic Sea Region which should be continued and conducted both internally towards the “Baltic Sea Region citizen” and externally towards the outside world. This process should involve a variety of relevant actors, among others branding specialists and tourist organisations
7. welcomes the inclusion of a priority area for culture & regional identity within the EU Commission's proposal for the revised EUSBSR Action Plan (July 2012 version) and calls for maintaining it in the final version. The cultural diversity and the cultural heritage of the BSR are assets to be enhanced and visualized in order to contribute to the attractiveness of the region and to strengthen regional identity. Furthermore the cultural and creative industry is a growing economic sector contributing to the Europe 2020 objectives

with regard to the cohesion policy

the BSSSC

8. welcomes the legislative proposals for EU cohesion policy 2014-2020
9. supports focusing the future cohesion policy on the Europe 2020 strategy. A cohesion policy in which all regions and territories are covered, with the special attention to the less developed regions, can deliver an important contribution towards achieving the objectives of the strategy
10. underlines that transnational programmes should be programmed in a way that would support macro-regional strategies - for example the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the North Sea 2020 strategy
11. calls for ensuring more regional influence in the regulations of the ETC programmes as multi-level governance of the policy and the strategy of the Baltic Sea Region is a prerequisite for a successful implementation of the policy and the strategy

12. proposes to open up the ETC regulation concerning the transnational programmes for the functional meta-regions of the BSR e.g. the Barents Region, the South-Eastern Baltic Region, the STRING Region in the South-Western Baltic Sea and Pomerania. The funding eligibility of meta-regions could also be improved by adding meta-regions as special funding areas below the area of macro-regional co-operation in Article 6(b) of the draft ETC regulation
13. recognises the European Commission's effort to lower the administrative burden but would emphasize the need for further initiatives in this regard, e.g. common application forms, funding regulations or assessment criteria for project approvals
14. calls for the inclusion of the private sector as full project partners in all ETC programmes. The rules governing the inclusion of private partners should be the same in all programmes. The legal framework on European State Aid has to be clarified in this context in order to reach compliance and legal certainty
15. proposes to harmonise the implementation rules for the European Territorial Cooperation and the forthcoming European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) programmes, in order to facilitate the cooperation of partners from third countries with regard to the shared objectives. It should be stressed that the ENI regulations should be in accord with the ETC practices
16. calls for restoring the possibility of the lead beneficiaries to be located in non-EU BSR countries in order to continue the good experience from involving Norway as an equal partner in the Northern European B-programmes

with regard to Renewable Energy and Energy efficiency solutions in the Baltic Sea Region,

the BSSSC

17. underlines that the efforts to realize Europe 2020 strategy's vision of a greener, more resource efficient, and low-carbon economy must be strengthened on a national, regional and local level
18. recognises that the implementation of innovative solutions especially in the field of green technologies, such as renewable energy and energy efficiency can boost the economy of the BSR regions, create jobs, and thus respond to challenges of the current financial crises
19. urges the European Union Institutions, Member States and Regions to place renewable energy at the centre of their policies, including measures fighting the EU financial crisis and beyond

20. calls for providing incentives for the development of technologies in the fields of energy efficiency and the production and storage of renewable energies, e.g. onshore and offshore wind energy, wave energy and other ocean energies, as a way to fight climate change, gain energy independence and make the Baltic Sea Region a leading EU renewable energy production area
21. appeals to national and regional authorities to strongly support the exchange of best practices concerning renewable energies and energy efficiency thus fully taking advantage of the potentials of the regions
22. underlines the importance of the earmarking of funding within the EU structural funds for the multiannual framework 2014-2020 for renewable energy and energy efficiency development
23. calls for establishing energy saving, energy efficiency and developing technologies for the use of renewable energies as objectives of the EUSBSR
24. encourages all stakeholders to further strengthen the financial support of renewable energy and energy efficiency issues in the upcoming Baltic Sea Region Programme
25. recognizes the need to increase energy efficiency in cities. Cities face a constant decrease in water supply therefore fresh water and sewer pipes have to be reduced in volume and treatment plants have to be reduced in capacity. Investment in new solutions in the area of water and waste treatment in cities is of utmost importance
26. encourages municipal authorities to develop strategies of saving resources and energy, especially in the field of stormwater management and wastewater management. Alternative technologies enabling the transfer of wastewater organic materials into biogas, electricity and heat and diverse charges for sewage and storm water services should be developed. Hamburg Water Cycle – can serve as an example

with regard to sustainable development and Baltic sea ecosystem protection

the BSSSC

27. strongly supports the efforts of HELCOM in implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan, as an integrated ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities and to the protection of the whole Baltic Sea area, and continues to call for action at the national level and for stronger involvement of sub-regions in the Action Plan
28. calls for broader involvement of coastal regions in maritime policy as they are strongly affected by the maritime dimension, so that they should include it in their own regional development strategies and plans. Their experience and their proximity to the problems and the people may make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the maritime policy
29. regards regions and local authorities as the major stakeholders in the governance of the seas. Therefore from a regional and democratic perspective, it is important that local

communities, and especially people living in coastal areas, are being invited to take an active part in the consultation and policy shaping process

30. states that collaboration between business and research is needed for a cleaner Baltic Sea. Different stakeholders have to work together for sustainable and creative solutions in cleaning water. Cooperation within Lahti Science Business Park LTD. LSB can serve as a good practice example.

The BSSSC

31. notes, with appreciation, the activities, contributions and input of young people within the framework of the Youth Event GREEN and the BSSSC Annual Conference
32. underlines the importance of cooperation with the BSSSC Youth Network and stands behind their goal of making the regions of the Baltic Sea more energy efficient in the future
33. shares the demand, expressed by the youth participants, to inherit from earlier generations the Earth –a green, healthy, sustainable place for living.
34. Supports the youth in its will to participate actively in the decision making process and recognizes the importance of innovativeness, flexibility and sustainability within the political dialog in the BSR

The BSSSC Annual Conference 2013.

The BSSSC

welcomes with gratitude the kind offer of the region Helsinki-Uusimaa to host the 21st BSSSC Annual Conference on the 16-18th of October 2012.

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The Chairmanship of the
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Region 2011-2012**
in BSSSC