



## BSSSC Resolution

### of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) in Helsinki, Finland 17-18th October 2013

#### BSSSC Annual Conference 2013

The 21<sup>st</sup> BSSSC Annual Conference has celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BSSSC, which 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 heavily 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 cooperation between Baltic Sea organizations.

BSSSC notes that the next European elections will take place in May 2014. BSSSC invites the European parties and candidates to a dialogue on the future of the Baltic Sea Region and its subregions and their participation in the European co-operation. The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference has brought up the main issues that are on the BSSSC agenda. The Baltic Europe Intergroup is BSSSC's most important link to European Parliament.

#### with regard to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

A successful implementation of the strategy increases the competitiveness of the whole region. The strategy offers substantial co-operation tools, which subregions should take into consideration and more actively make use of, in order to enhance the implementation on the ground. This way the subregions in the whole BSR including Russia and Norway can benefit from the achievements of the strategy. BSSSC participates as a key stakeholder in the planning and implementation of the strategy and continues to promote and support the strategy in the future.

- The BSSSC calls on the EC and national governments to decide on financial instruments and sufficient budgets to be ready as soon as possible to allow for effective implementation of the Baltic Sea Strategy and its action plan.
- Appreciates the fact that some regions have been given the role as Priority Area coordinators, the BSSSC pleads to National Contact Points, Priority Area Coordinators and Horizontal Action Leaders to open more space to regional actors. It is also vital that national authorities support regions in their efforts to take part in implementation the strategy.



## with regard to the cooperation with Russia

It is of utmost importance to involve Russia in the cross-border and transnational co-operation in order to develop the Baltic Sea Region and fully benefit from its potential. The strong economic development in Russia will benefit all the Baltic Sea Area. BSSSC has therefore actively invited Russian subregions and actors in the Baltic Sea Region to take part in the work of the network. These subregions are participating in the funding of the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI).

- The BSSSC addresses the Russian Federation and the European Commission to agree on solutions and funds to allow for active cooperation of Russian regions and cities on issues important for the Baltic Sea Region.

## with regard to the policy sectors after 2013

### 1. Maritime Issues

“Saving the Sea” is the focus of Maritime Issues. BSSSC will especially support HELCOM and its activities in protecting the Baltic Sea. The BSSSC will continue dialogue and cooperation with other Baltic Sea Organizations formulating BSR maritime policy in order to join forces and reach synergy effects for an integrated maritime policy in the Baltic Sea Region.

### 2. Energy and Climate

The renewable energy sources in the sub-regions of the Baltic Sea provide enormous potential in terms of the production of bio-energy and bio-electricity from water, wind power, solar energy, wave power and other sources.

BSSSC promotes regulation that supports the production and usage of renewable energies. BSSSC supports cleantech as a growing sector of business and market creator for companies in the Baltic Sea Region. Energy efficiency is also an important factor and should be taken into account in housing and office buildings.

- BSSSC urges the nation states as well as the European Union to step up their efforts at the highest political level to reach a success at the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in Warsaw (COP 19).
- BSSSC 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.
- BSSSC calls for close co-operation between BSR organizations to address the issues of sustainable energy and the threats posed by climate change.



### 3. Culture

Culture plays a crucial role in integrating, developing and strengthening the Baltic Sea Region. Culture and creative industries are of growing importance for the European economy as the sector produces a growing share of the GDP in the EU. Furthermore, culture and creativity are important drivers for social and economic innovation, which are extremely important in tough economic times. The BSSSC strongly supports objectives and projects of PA Culture of the EUSBSR and will support activities to intensify the cultural dialogue between the different stakeholders in the region.

### 4. Youth

The BSSSC

- acknowledges the threat that youth unemployment has posed to the future of Europe
- appreciates the results of work presented by the youth representatives gathered at the BSSSC Youth Event in order to discuss schemes promoting youth employment. The BSSSC welcomes the measures the EU institutions have put forward such as the Youth Employment Initiative, Youth Employment Package and the Youth Guarantee and calls for the EU, governments, regional and local authorities to develop and implement innovative solutions for tackling youth unemployment.
- acknowledges youth participation in decision making process and supports the idea to constitute Baltic Sea Youth Forum, which should help the voice of the Baltic Sea Region youth to be heard
- sees the need for the work of the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs to be continued. BSSSC therefore calls on the CBSS and local and regional authorities to support youth work and youth participation in the Baltic Sea Region.
- pleas to the CBSS and national governments to continue supporting the youth cooperation and providing funds for a permanent youth secretariat.

### BSSSC Annual Conference 2014

The next BSSSC Annual Conference will convene in autumn 2014 in Latvia.