



Baltic Sea States
Sub-regional
Co-operation

BSSSC Resolution

At the 15 Annual Conference of the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC) in Turku, Finland, 13 - 14 September 2007

The BSSSC Board has agreed on the following resolution:

1. BSSSC Annual Conference 2007

Sustainable energy - contribution to meet the threats of Climate Change

Global warming is already threatening many vital interests of people all over the world. The consequences of the rapidly changing climate conditions have also become a major concern for the inhabitants of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

BSSSC

1. acknowledges the statement of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which leaves no doubt that climate change can no longer be ignored.
2. welcomes the decision taken by the European Council in March, to undertake major efforts in Europe to cope with climate change until the year 2020, and
3. underlines that the necessary changes will not occur by themselves but must be addressed at a political level. Engagement on a European as well as a national and sub-national level is crucial.

Concerning sustainable energy in particular, BSSSC would like to point out the importance of the role of the regions as partners in national and EU energy policies. 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.

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4. points out the fact that existing and environmentally compatible technologies, if properly applied, offer the possibility to meet the objectives of security of supply, reduced environmental impact and of improved competitiveness.

5. calls for close co-operation between BSR organizations to address the issues of sustainable energy and the threats posed by climate change and intends to arrange a coordination meeting, and
6. encourages national, regional and local authorities in the BSR to become engaged in projects that contribute to better energy efficiency, greater use of renewable energy and reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

2. BSSSC guiding principles

Regional democracy – basis for BSSSC engagement

The core issue for BSSSC, as spokesman for the Baltic Sea Regions, is how citizens of the regions relate to their administrations – on a regional, national and European level. BSSSC recognises all elements, to strengthen the relationship between the citizens in the BSR and the European Union.

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7. calls for securing the territorial aspects of the draft constitutional treaty and the recognition of the role of regions in European integration in the Reform Treaty,
8. recognises the integration of the Charter of Human Rights as a binding element in the new treaty, to demonstrate the firm commitment of the European society to securing these values in a world with increasing inhumanity,
9. encourages the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe to continue its work on a charter for regional democracy. The charter must focus on the core principles of regional self-government, which are (1) directly elected regional assemblies, (2) appropriate regional finances, (3) the right of regional assemblies to freely dispose and make priorities in the execution of their tasks and in the use of allocated financial resources, and
10. invites the European ministers to engage in a constructive dialogue on this issue during the *Conference of European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Democracy* in Valencia on October 15-16, 2007.

Youth participation – prerequisite for the future

BSSSC strives to involve young people in all aspects of the organisation's activities. The BSSSC Youth network and Youth policy Working Group are important elements in the BSSSC working structure.

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11. recommends focus on youth issues by the European institutions as well as national, regional and local authorities in the Baltic Sea Region, and
12. encourages all sub-regions in the Baltic Sea Region to appoint members to the BSSSC Youth network and to involve young people in the inter-regional and trans-national cooperation in the Baltic Sea area.

Territorial cohesion – objective and concept for BSR development

BSSSC regards territorial cohesion as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic growth and for implementing social and economic cohesion. Territorial cohesion in the

Baltic Sea Region can only be achieved through territorial governance involving all parties – including neighbouring, non-EU member countries.

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13. welcomes the European Territorial Agenda presented by the EU Ministers responsible for spatial planning and development in May 2007 in Leipzig, under the German EU Presidency.

3. BSSSC cooperation and partners

BSR cooperation – adapting to changing conditions is paramount

The need for sustainable development, new European policies, further European integration and the consequences of globalization require new approaches to co-operation and partnership. All parties involved in the BSR should improve their co-operation in order to achieve better performance of the BSR as an integrated area.

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14. regards a much more involved and joint co-operation with the three other organisations representing local and regional governments in the BSR – UBC, B7 and BSC/CPMR - as a major challenge and objective for the near future. Creation of political coordination groups/joint WG in important policy areas for the BSR could stimulate this process.
15. seeks in all its efforts cooperation with other Baltic Sea and European organisations to avoid duplication of work, to stimulate synergy and to contribute to a strong political presentation of the Baltic Sea Region,
16. regards other BSR and European institutions and organisations (such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Assembly of European Regions (AER), the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the Baltic Intergroup of the European Parliament, the European Commission, HELCOM and Baltic Development Forum) as co-operating partners, and
17. uses the “Declaration of Common Interest” with CoR, to take part in CoR events, to initiate an Intergroup Baltic within the CoR and to organize a joint event in the Baltic Sea Region during the autumn 2008.

4. BSSSC policy contributions to the BSR

Sustainable development – a major challenge for the future of the BSR

Sustainable development is one of the most demanding challenges for citizens in the BSR. To address this challenge, the economic, social, cultural and ecological dimensions have to be considered in parallel. It is the declared aim of BSSSC to foster sustainable development in the BSR and to encourage all ongoing activities at the regional and local level.

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18. welcomes the efforts of HELCOM in developing a 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,
19. calls for stronger involvement of sub-regions in the Action Plan, for example in respect to issues such as waste water treatment, agricultural practices, land-use patterns, coastal zone management and nature conservation. Regional authorities should contribute to the implementation and realisation according to their tasks and skills, and
20. supports the work of Baltic 21 with Lighthouse projects in the BSR.

Maritime Policy – opportunity and challenge for the BSR

BSSSC will continue its engagement in the framework of the European Maritime Policy and has established a Working Group (WG) to foster this commitment.

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21. welcomes the new European Maritime Policy as well as its environmental foundation (the forthcoming EC Marine Strategy Directive), which has stimulated considerable engagement at the regional and local level, not only in the BSR but all over Europe,
22. is looking forward to the EU Commission's action plan to implement a Maritime Policy in Europe in form of a "Blue Paper" to be presented in October 2007,
23. will assess the content of this "action plan" along with other Baltic Sea organizations and will contribute to its implementation in the BSR,
24. appreciates the intention of the CBSS in taking part in the development of a common vision to transform the BSR into a maritime 'best practice' region until 2015, and calls for CBSS to set up a political coordination group to follow up the intentions
25. encourages all parties at the regional level to use the framework of the EU Cohesion Policy and its BSR sub-programs to stimulate and partly finance promising maritime projects, and
26. will use its WG Maritime Policy to support the aim of developing BSR into a European 'best practices' region by 2015, by supporting visionary maritime projects such as the Baltic Master, Maritime Clusters, the initiatives for the implementation of ship-to-shore electricity supply in ports, the development of a Baltic Clean Ship concept and other projects and events.

Transport and infrastructure – indispensable for the BSR development

An effective and environmentally compatible transport system will contribute substantially to sustainable productivity improvements in the BSR. Trans-boundary co-operation is vital for the development of transport corridors, to overcome bottlenecks and to eliminate existing weak links. It is crucial that all the transport systems of the Baltic Sea Region develop into an integrated and efficient system.

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27. underlines the necessity of a structured dialogue between all decision-making levels including the business sector, to foster this strategy,

28. appreciates all efforts to strengthen the communication between the larger metropolitan districts and to interlink them to enable them to support a compatible Baltic Sea Region. Existing networks should be further developed, with the aim of a common vision for the development and growth of the whole region,
29. highlights the formation of a High Level Group in 2006 and expects that this High Level Group will promote the development of a transport strategy for the BSR, and
30. welcomes the initiative of the Region Skåne to prepare a joint trans-national project within the framework of the Baltic Sea Region Program 2007-2013, with the aim of improving the transport infrastructure in the Baltic Sea Region.

Territorial co-operation – a necessary instrument for the BSR

BSSSC appreciates the objective of the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007–2013, to strengthen the development of a sustainable, competitive and territorially integrated BSR by bringing together potential co-operation across the borders. BSSSC

31. welcomes the integrated approach of the BSR Programme, also involving parties from Norway, Russia and Belarus on equal terms,
32. underlines that the BSR Programme will be an important financial tool for implementing the Northern Dimension policy framework,
33. supports the efforts of regions to develop and implement concrete projects using the available financial instruments for inter-regional/trans-national cooperation in the BSR.

Northern Dimension - cooperation beyond the EU with Norway and Russia

Russia is a part of the Baltic Sea Region and an important partner in the Baltic Sea cooperation. The active involvement of Russian regional partners in the Baltic Sea Cooperation has been an objective of BSSSC's policies since its foundation. The new approach to the Northern Dimension opens a new chapter in this process.

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34. welcomes the “Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document” and the “Political Declaration on the Northern Dimension Policy” signed by the heads of states and governments in Helsinki in November 2006, and continues to support the partnership principles with EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland as equal partners,
35. favours concrete measures, including actions or projects at regional and local levels
36. notes the importance of ENPI programs as operational tools to implement regional development projects,
37. supports the involvement of Kaliningrad region into the BSR cooperation
38. calls upon the Northern Dimension institutions, especially the Steering Group, to create a "regional dimension" in the further development of the Northern Dimension by implementing a consultation process on how to integrate the regional/sub-national level into the Northern Dimension concept.

5. BSSSC Annual Conference 2008

The 16 BSSSC Annual Conference will convene in Kaunas, Lithuania from 17 to 19 September 2008.