

Resolution

The 8th Conference on
Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation

Pärnu, 26-28th October 2000

I

The 8th annual Conference of the BSSSC convened in Pärnu, Estonia, on October 26 to 28, 2000 on the invitation of the Governor of Pärnu County together with the Mayor of Pärnu City.

Under the general Conference Theme, "Turning point in Pärnu: Meeting Social Challenges of the Millennium" the representatives from the subregions of the Baltic Sea states - Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Norway, Russia and Sweden - discussed progress and further perspectives of Baltic Sea co-operation and in particular subregional contributions as well as subregional requests to the overall political strategies in the area, namely the, "Northern Dimension" and the, "Pre-Accession Strategy".

As guests the Conference welcomed Mr. Toivo Asmer, Minister of Regional Affairs of Estonia, Mr. Tunne Kelam, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Estonia, Ambassador Hans-Juergen Heimsoeth, Chairman of CBSS Committee of Senior Officials, Mr. Andres Tarand, Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Parliament of Estonia, and representatives of governments of Baltic Sea States as well as of i.a. the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA) and the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BTUN).

II

The Conference recalling

* the Conclusions of the 3rd Baltic Sea Summit of Heads of Government in Kolding (2000), and in particular its decision that CBSS shall act as an overall co-ordinator of governmental co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region as well as the emphasis given to subregional and cross-border co-operation as complementing to coming enlargement of the EU and to the development of the EU's Northern Dimension.

welcomed

* the Communiqué of the 9th CBSS Ministerial Session in Bergen (2000), and in particular its intention to play an active role in further

development and implementation of the Action Plan for the Northern Dimension in key areas and its stated readiness to, act as a channel of co-operation with sub-regional actors".

- * the Resolution of the 9th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) in Malmö (2000), namely its call to create the Baltic Youth Fund and its call to, further strengthen the possibilities and conditions for regional and sub-regional co-operation" as well as to, facilitate cross-border co-operation and establish new and effective Trans-European Networks in addition to consolidating existing ones",

- * the opening of the Eurofaculty in Kaliningrad funded by the CBSS,
- * the decision of the CBSS Ministerial Session to in principle agree on a financial facility for subregional co-operation as a complement to existing national and EU mechanisms.

III

Recalling the decision of the European Council in Feira (2000) on the, Action Plan for the Northern Dimension with external and cross-border policies of the European Union 2000-2003", the Conference

- * reiterated the call on the EU done by the 7th Conference on Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) in Kaunas (1999), to further develop the concept of Northern Dimension towards a strategy for stability and co-operation comprising as a core element the whole Baltic Sea Region including the acceding countries and Russia as well as the Member States and the EU partner countries in this area, as well as the Barents Sea region and the Arctic Sea region".

- * reiterated the perspective of Northern Dimension to be developed as well towards a regional contribution to the main EU strategies working in the region (Common Strategy on Russia and the Pre-Accession Strategy) as taking into account that the Baltic Sea Region is the only European region with direct borders to and already existing co-operation networks with acceding countries as well as Russia.

- * called upon the European Commission to enhance its own commitment and engagement to the necessary implementation of the Action Plan adopted by the European Council in Feira and to intensify respective co-operation with existing bodies of regional co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region.

- * declares the readiness of BSSSC and the subregions of the area to contribute actively to the, short list of projects" to be drawn up by CBSS and welcomes the decision of the Board to establish a BSSSC ad-hoc Working Group on, Northern Dimension".

- * called upon the forthcoming Ministerial Conference on Northern Dimension (Luxemburg, April 9, 2001) to consider subregional co-operation as an important element for implementation procedures and to incorporate subregional co-operation projects and networks as well as subregional needs and capacities in the Chairman's conclusions of the Conference.

- * called upon the national governments participating in this Ministerial Conference to include representatives of the subregions in their respective national delegations

* called upon the European Commission and the respective governments to further develop the Transeuropean Networks within the framework of Northern Dimension towards a strategy overcoming existing lacks of interlinking infrastructural networks and of the still existing transport bottlenecks in the Baltic Sea Region; defining the Baltic Sea Region as a "European transport zone" according to the regulations of Transeuropean Networks could pave the way ahead.

* called upon the European Union to intensify regional co-operation with Northwest Russian regions, and in particular reiterated the need to develop a comprehensive European strategy for future perspectives of the region of Kaliningrad.

With reference to the Conference on "The Northern Dimension and Kaliningrad Region: European and Regional Integration" held in Copenhagen (2000) and considering the coming situation of Kaliningrad region as a "Russian exclave midst the EU", the Conference suggested in particular to open up ways for Kaliningrad region towards the EU Common Market and to ensure favourable cross-border travel conditions with the neighbouring countries of Kaliningrad region even after the coming EU enlargement.

* reiterated its call upon the European Union to further enhance respective funding for cross-border co-operation between subregions in the acceding countries and the subregions in North-West Russia in order to enable close cross-border links across future external borderlines of the EU at an early state of development.

* reiterated its call upon the European Union to further improve conditions for joint accessibility and use of EU funding instruments available in the region, in particular to overcome existing and forthcoming lacks of interoperability between INTERREG III, PHARE and TACIS as amended by the Resolution of the 7th BSSSC Conference in Kaunas (1999).

IV

Considering the progress achieved so far in implementing the Pre-Accession Strategy of the EU, the Conference

* in particular welcomed the decision of the EU Helsinki Summit (1999) to enter into accession negotiations as well with Lithuania and Latvia

* welcomed the announcement of the EU to widen the prospects of pre-accession projects under PHARE Institution building to the regional level in the acceding countries.

* called upon the European Union to further enhance efforts on negotiations on EU Membership and on implementing the EU Pre-accession strategy in particular with a view to the acceding countries of the Baltic Sea Region.

* called upon the EU and the national governments to better respect needs and capacities of the regional levels in the acceding countries as well as in the Member states of the region within the pre-accession

strategy, and in particular to emphasize twinning between regional and local authorities in Member States and candidate countries within the framework of institutional twinning (PHARE Institution building)

* called upon the EU to provide as well projects on the regional level where appropriate by implementing the new funds ISPA and SAPARD available to the acceding countries.

V

With a view to the fact that by the coming EU enlargement the Baltic Sea Region merely will become an, internal EU sea", the Conference

* pointed out that within the coming greater, Europe of the Regions" the Baltic Sea Region is gaining the unique opportunity to become a European model region with a view to its economic perspectives as well as to the incoming, knowledge-based society"

* thus stressed the need to strengthen the potentials and perspectives of the Baltic Sea Region and to further develop Baltic Sea co-operation in itself

* called upon all respective actors of Baltic Sea co-operation to improve joint efforts on, region building" under the umbrella of CBSS

* called upon the CBSS to further develop its co-ordinating role towards a focal point of Baltic Sea politics as well with a view to new initiatives and additional fields of co-operation

* called upon the CBSS to arrange the joint presentation of common interests with one voice towards the EU in Brussels;

* called upon CBSS to elaborate a follow-up report on the implementation of the CBSS Action Programmes adopted in Kalmar (1996) based upon a stock-taking of already running projects and contributions to the implementation of the Kalmar Action Programmes as well by involving other relevant bodies and actors of Baltic Sea co-operation

* called upon CBSS to further develop the work and role of the CBSS Secretariat allocated in Stockholm towards a central point of information for the whole of Baltic Sea co-operation,

* emphasized the need to strengthen implementation of Agenda 21 in the Baltic Sea Area. During implementation more focus should be given to the social aspects,

* called upon all respective actors to further intensify cultural co-operation and exchange of young and senior citizens as a pre-requisite for, region building" with a view to the people-to-people approach

* called upon all respective actors to promote and to contribute actively to the vision of the Baltic Sea Region as a front runner in the knowledge-based society by joint and co-ordinated efforts to be undertaken in the fields of IS/IT, university co-operation, education and training,

* emphasized the work of VASAB 2010 as a pre-requisite for further elaboration of multilateral regional development projects to be run under INTERREG III B and called upon all actors to contribute to the work of VASAB.

VI

The Conference

* once again thanked the former Chairman of BSSSC, Mr. Knud Andersen (Bornholm), for his successful work on further developing BSSSC as a recognised political organisation and the Association of County Councils in Denmark for hosting and building up the BSSSC Secretariat

* with utmost regret took note that the Chairman appointed by the Conference in Kaunas, Mr. Edmund Wittbrodt (Gdansk), has seen the necessity to retreat from this responsibility due to his new obligations as Minister of Education in the Government of Poland and thanked Mr. Wittbrodt for his encouraging work over the recent months

* welcomed the new Chairman, Mr. Brunon Synak (Gdansk), and the work of the Secretariat provided by the Voivodship Pomerania (Poland) since May 2000

* recognised with great satisfaction the work of BSSSC on
, Quality of Life - a subregional contribution to the implementation of the Northern Dimension" as well as on
, Baltic Sea co-operation beyond 2000 - vision and strategies on the local and regional level",

both adopted by the BSSSC Board meeting in Bornholm (April 2000).

* asked the Members of the Board to further improve the BSSSC working structure by enhancing the work of, National Platforms" in all respective countries in addition to the work of the bodies of BSSSC (Chairman, Board, Working Groups)

* welcomed the aims of the BSSSC Conference on further perspectives of Kaliningrad region with a view both to Northern Dimension and subregional co-operation to be held on March 21-23, 2001, in Kaliningrad and announced by the representatives of Kaliningrad region, Schleswig-Holstein and Eastern Norway County Network

* accepted with gratitude the aims and objectives of the Seminar on co-operation with North-Western Russian regions envisaged to be held late spring 2001 and arranged on behalf of BSSSC by the Association of County Councils in Denmark

* welcomed the aims of seminar on Youth Work and Youth Policy to be held on December 8-10, 2000 in Mözen, Germany organised by the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth

* thanked the Governor of Pärnu County and the Mayor of Pärnu City for hosting this year's annual BSSSC Conference and the sponsors and donors of this Conference for their financial contributions

* gratefully accepted the invitation of Riga (Latvia) to host and to arrange the 9th BSSSC Conference to be held on October 25-27th 2001. The 2002 Conference will be hosted by Eastern Norway with the exact place to be confirmed.