

Welcoming words from Bernd Hemingway

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Dear Participants of the BSSSC Annual Conference,

It is my great pleasure to address you on behalf of the Council of the Baltic Sea States!

First, I would like to take the chance to inform you about the Ministerial Meeting held on 3 June in Jurmala, Latvia.

The main outcome was the Jurmala declaration and a roadmap for the future of the CBSS.

The declaration emphasizes the unique role of the CBSS for the development of the Baltic Sea Region, through intergovernmental dialogue and practical cooperation between all countries in the region, by fostering mutual understanding, building trust, ensuring stability and promoting people to people contacts.

The Roadmap enables the necessary flexibility of the Council, higher adaptability, preparedness and effectiveness of the CBSS and increases the focus on synergies between cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region and, furthermore, promotes the facilitating role of the CBSS in this regard.

The implementation of the Roadmap is the focus of the Danish Presidency that started on 1st of July.

It is aimed to have more focused discussions on topical issues and using the unique role of the CBSS to facilitate discussions amongst members and the Observer States.

Last but certainly not least, the CBSS Project Support Facility will also be prolonged for the next financing period of 2020-2022 to support the priorities of the CBSS, namely Regional Identity, Sustainable and Prosperous Region and Safe and Secure Region.

Ladies and Gentlemen allow me to provide some reflections about the BSSSC – CBSS cooperation.

Let me congratulate you to the chosen topic of the Conference dedicated to the Sustainable Maritime Economy is highly relevant for all countries around the Baltic Sea and I'm happy to see so many stakeholders among the participants of the Event today!

This topic is crucial for the activity of CBSS as well, especially, for its long-term priority Sustainable and Prosperous Region.

This is another good example why the BSSSC is for the CBSS one of the most valuable cooperation partners in promoting policies in the Baltic Sea Region, involving the multi-level cross-sectorial key actors and partnerships.

The BSSSC makes the voice of the regions heard in macro-regional policy-making, and at the same time helps translating policies into concrete actions.

I would like to highlight some examples where the contribution of your regions is of particular added value within the implementation of the priority “Sustainable and Prosperous Region” -

- BSSSC is a strategic partner to CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy; its rapporteur on maritime affairs Janne Tamminen takes part in the Expert Groups events, ensuring the information exchange between our cooperation formats on this issue. More information about the Group will be delivered tomorrow by Senior Advisor for Sustainable and Prosperous Region, Ms. Daria Akhutina
- Another good example is the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development, where the BSSSC, together with other pan-Baltic organisations, has contributed a lot to the drafting process of the updated version of the Expert Groups mandate, (recently adopted), as well as to developing the Baltic 2030 Action Plan, highlighting the role of regions and youth in the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda. The Action Plan was adopted in June 2017 by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and High Representatives of the CBSS Member States and the EU and serves now as a framework for common action to bring sustainable development in the BSR.
- I am very glad to see that the BSSSC has taken forward the message, having translated the words, stated in resolutions, into concrete actions through your engagement in the leadership program on 2030 Agenda, in advocating for more SDGs in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and its Annual Forum 2019, and in engaging the younger generations at the Youth Camp.
Both BSSSC and CBSS should join forces continue promoting SDGs localization and coordination of youth activities following the guidance of the 2030 Agenda and the Baltic 2030 Action Plan.
- Another important cross-cutting field of cooperation is Climate change. Climate change and energy security are among the top ten priorities highlighted by the new EU Commission. Global warming, well recorded also in the BSR, holds negative consequences not only to biodiversity of flora and fauna species, but also to the people’s health and economies, which strongly depend on ecosystem services. The impacts of climate change will be more severe in the near future if we do not take adequate counter measures and tackle the causes at the roots of the problem. The BSR

has developed a lot of knowledge to address these questions; however, we need all levels of governance to take strong political commitment, and to promote action to address both climate mitigation and adaptation. The BSSSC and its member regions can do a lot, for example by strategically addressing multimodal transport systems, and by better focusing on the synergies between mitigation and adaptation measures, also in maritime questions.

- Another important cooperation the BSSSC and CBSS have is in the field of youth. Already in the Youth Dialogue 2018 the BSSSC contributed with a great workshop on writing a common youth declaration, where young people developed innovative projects, such as a floating university and expressed their opinion on topical issues and how to address policy makers.

The BSSSC youth board initiated the Youth Camp in Gdansk and CBSS is glad to see the very meaningful use of money from the CBSS Project Support Facility.

The Youth Camp participants developed their own vision of the Baltic Sea Region and brought their input to the EUSBSR Annual Forum. This shows the intergenerational exchange is happening and vivid in our region.

The BSSSC is an important and reliable partner in the field of youth, and we are thankful for the extraordinary initiative to create a youth platform coordinated by the CBSS Secretariat, which was also discussed in both formats mentioned.

The CBSS Secretariat is working on this project across different units and with an emphasize on creating a regional identity and a sustainable platform. A platform that connects youth across borders and organisations. Empowers young people in the BSR to involve in policy-making. And strengthens the connection between BSSSC and CBSS. We hope to establish it as soon as possible, maybe already in the first half of 2020. As we are progressing fast with the concept and involved many other partner organisations to make it a durable and long-lasting platform.

Giving youth a strong voice in all parts of the organization and in all policy fields in the BSR is important to achieve our common goals and create a sustainable BSR.

It clearly follows from my speech that we have a good framework for cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, but still there is a space for improvement.

We need good integrated strategies that tackle problems horizontally across sectors, and we need bold actions that promote concrete impact to reverse damaging effects on our environment while at the same time supporting our economies and societies. The only way to do this effectively is by putting joint efforts, exchanging knowledge and co-creating innovative solutions.

I wish you to use the excellent occasion of this Conference for fruitful discussions, paving the way to continued cooperation, new joint initiatives and projects bringing sustainability and prosperity to your regions for the sake of welfare in our common Baltic Sea!

Thank you.