



BSSSC - Malmö Resolution 23 October 2004

Regional representatives, invited by the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC), who met during the 12th annual conference October 21-23 2004 in Malmö, Sweden, has agreed on the following resolution:

The BSSSC has existed for more than a decade. During those years the Baltic Sea Region has undergone significant changes. This very year, 2004, several important events have taken place: The accession of new member states to the European Union, election of a new European Parliament and a new European Commission, adoption of a new constitutional Treaty for the Union and preparations for new political guidelines and financial perspectives for the coming years. BSSSC also takes the note that a new argument about functions, competence and size of regions has started in several of the Baltic Sea States.

The Baltic Sea Region, as well as the rest of Europe, is now facing new challenges. New relations across the new internal and external EU-borders must be developed to assure a prosperous, democratic, peaceful and sustainable development. Coming years will bring tremendous opportunities as well as hard challenges that must be met in an active and strategic way.

We, the participants of the conference, will act to strengthen and develop the regional competence and our cooperation. Our aim is to support and promote a good quality of life, democracy and sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. The following topics will be given priority by the BSSSC.

The role of the Regions

The BSSSC expresses its satisfaction with the advances already made through the draft Constitutional Treaty, in recognizing the territorial dimension and that the regions are recognized in the tractate as they are cornerstones in the building of the future Baltic Sea Region and other parts of Europe.

Clearly active regions can assure and stimulate growth and create a stable economical base for society. The strong regions in the Baltic Sea area will continue to play a key role for further integration and development of the Baltic Sea Region. Solidarity among democratic and resourceful and prosperous regions in Europe will remain a key tool for a future European regional policy.

Economic development

There is a significant growth potential in the Baltic Sea Region. The BSSSC welcomes the initiatives already taken by the Baltic Sea Nations and the European

Union to secure the base of economic development in the region.

However, the BSSSC underlines the importance that the European Union and the national states will continue to support and develop an environment for business and sustainable economic growth throughout the Baltic Sea Region to secure regional development and a good quality of life for the citizens. This environment must be founded both on the Lisbon Agenda and on development of mature sectors of the economy.

The BSSSC wants further work to be done to:

- Change attitudes to the importance of trade as an important tool for economic development in the Baltic Sea Region
- Promote active involvement of the Russian Federation in Baltic Sea cooperation
- Strategically use the effect of the post-enlargement momentum
- Improve the infrastructure, in broad sense, in the BSR
- Hinder protectionism and promote free trade and free movement of goods, work force and capital

Transport infrastructure

High-capacity and effective transport corridors are necessary to link the regions of the Baltic Sea Region, connect them to European and neighborhood markets, and to utilise the area's potential to serve intercontinental trading routes of global importance.

The BSSSC calls for strategic cooperation and continued dialogue with the aim of establishing a common transport vision and a joint spatial development perspective for the Baltic Sea Region. The BSSSC stresses the importance of regions as a bridge between local, national and European level in this process.

Referring to the revision of "Transeuropean Networks - Transport" (April 2004), the new idea of "Motorways of the Sea" as well as to the recent Commission Communication on "Short Sea Shipping" (July 2004) the BSSSC calls on the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) to prepare and arrange a Baltic Sea transport conference aiming at enhanced coordination of Baltic Sea interests in multi-modal terms. Fixed links as well as enhanced sea and railway transport means shall be incorporated. It is important to promote education, research and development in logistics and transport. Transport related services and telematic solutions are also important.

Sustainable development and natural resources

The Baltic Sea Region has environmental problems that must be handled and solved. The BSSSC underlines that the expected increase in economic development, trade and cooperation both within the Baltic Sea Region and between this region and the rest of the world, must be based on sustainable principles.

There is a new important focus on sustainable urban development and the connection

between urban centers and the surrounding region. The urban centers are normally engines for the development of a region. Sustainable urban development is in coherence with the environmental priorities made by the European Union. The theme is of current interest and of great importance considering the transition going on in the BSR from a rural to an urban society.

BSSSC continues to consider as an important task its contribution to sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region in general and to the implementation of the Baltic 21 in particular. It is further of great importance of educating young people in the topics of environmental protection and sustainable development.

Maritime safety

The area of Maritime safety is of great importance, referring to the risk for major environmental damage in the sea and in coastal areas. The Baltic Sea is extremely vulnerable to environmental damage. Shipping has steadily increased in the Baltic Sea during the last decade and continued growth is predicted. The BSSSC demands that measures must be taken to make the sea transport safe and to minimize risks of damage caused by accidents and discharges to air and water. The need for integrated cooperation and coordination in the Baltic Sea is urgent.

Referring to efforts and conferences recently carried through by sub-national bodies, as in Kiel and Trelleborg this year, the BSSSC calls on all international, EU and national actors to fully respect and consider suggestions raised by those bodies as well as their needs, capacities and expertise.

Coordination of EU Maritime Policy

The BSSSC strongly welcomes the initiative taken by the incoming Presidency of the EU Commission to task one Member of the Commission with the portfolio of “coordination of maritime affairs” including a Commission Task force and the elaboration of a “Green Paper” on EU Maritime Policy. This response to an initiative raised among others by regions of the Baltic Sea will lend additional support to the worldwide competitiveness of Europe. It is welcomed by the BSSSC as a unique opportunity to strengthen regional development in the whole Baltic Sea Region.

Territorial cohesion

The BSSSC is satisfied to note the inclusion of the principle of territorial cohesion in the constitutional draft Treaty. This opportunity remains to be put in practice, parallel with the application of the financial perspectives for the next period.

BSSSC recognises the tremendous support EU regional policy and the pre-accession strategies have had on regional development in old and new member states. BSSSC strongly support the further development of EU regional policies. It is our firm belief that the EU cohesion policy provides significantly added value and has contributed to a balanced development of the regions in the Baltic Sea Region.

The cohesion policies will be of outmost importance to the Baltic Sea Region and to its regions. The BSSSC will closely follow the continued process with focus on the principle of public-private partnership (PPP), the implementation of the Europe Grouping of cross-border cooperation (EGCC), the European Neighborhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI), and terms for cross-border cooperation across natural maritime borders instead of the proposed 150 km limit. It is very important that the Baltic Sea Region is treated as one cooperation zone under the trans-national programs — as it is today.

A central theme is the coordination between EU cohesion and national policies, EU sector policies, and between those and corresponding sectors in the national policies. BSSSC recommends in general the acceptance of the new regional policy as outlined in the Third Cohesion Report and the draft regulations.

Human resources

BSSSC is aware that the future Baltic Sea Region will be the responsibility for our children and young people. Therefore, youth participation, especially in decision-making structures, will be a necessary contribution to the development of democratic societies in the region.

BSSSC fully recognises and supports the increasing participation of young people in the work of the organisations internal activities but stress the ~~A~~ importance for our common future in the Baltic Sea Region to engage young people in the political decision processes on all levels of society.

Higher education and lifelong learning are of crucial importance to the development in the Baltic Sea Region. Substantial national and EU resources must therefore be invested. This is one of the most important conditions for the realisation of the Lisbon Agenda in the regions and municipalities.

Social issues and crime prevention

The BSSSC regard the diversity and pluralism in the Baltic Sea Area as a comparative advantage and not as an obstacle. The dynamic of change creates many opportunities but also problems that need to be addressed.

Organized crime in various forms such as violence, trafficking and smuggling is a serious challenge to the entire Baltic Sea Region. It has to be fought on every level of society, individually and jointly.

BSSSC strives to contribute to this necessary work by enhancing forms and means of Crime prevention on the regional and local level.

Quality of life and diversity as an competitive advantage

BSSSC is aware that problems related to the social exclusion, unemployment and segregation, are obstacles to a desirable future for the citizens in the Baltic Sea Region.

Baltic Sea Region is one of the most prosperous regions in the world and BSSSC therefore wants to address and promote social inclusion, employment and non-segregation. The regional representatives have an important role to play to obtain this and to provide a good quality of life in the Baltic Sea Region.

There is also a need for a more institutionalised integration in the Baltic Sea Region as well as a need for integration between citizens and public and private organisations.