



BSSSC Annual Conference Resolution 2019

Adopted by the Board 18.09.19

The Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) met in Klaipeda, Lithuania 18 – 20 September to discuss the shaping of a future sustainable Blue economy in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

Main Messages

- BSSSC shares HELCOM's vision on a healthy Baltic Sea environment connected with a wide range of sustainable economic and social activities, and supports the Baltic Maritime Dialogue - initiated by CBSS - and the ambitions to develop the BSR into a model region for maritime best practise.
- BSSSC focuses its work on the need to further mainstream the SDGs at all levels and urges the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament to mainstream the SDGs in all policy fields and believes that implementation of the SDGs should be set in a mix of bottom-up and top-down approach, involving all levels of government and relevant stakeholders. BSSSC stresses that all EU programmes and instruments should be in line with and support the SDG implementation.
- BSSSC is aware of the conflict between lower revenue due to Brexit and additional expenditure arising from new tasks of the EU but urges the EU Member States not to reduce Cohesion Policy's share of the MFF compared to the current budget.
- BSSSC appreciates the proposal to fully incorporate former ENI programmes into the INTERREG framework and to treat member states, third countries and partner countries on equal footing in the new INTERREG programmes. BSSSC supports the position of the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions to significantly increase the budget for INTERREG in the MFF 2021-2027.
- BSSSC welcomes the Roadmap of the CBSS Reforms, and especially appreciates the emphasis on CBSS as a key actor to bring together relevant organisations and actors to ensure common knowledge and highlight potentials of cooperation.
- In light of the ongoing revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan, BSSSC urges the Member States and the EU Commission to better involve local and regional authorities in the governance of relevant Policy Areas and Horizontal Actions, and to strive for better and more continuous involvement of young people in the strategy based on stable and enabling platforms.
- BSSSC supports the Baltic Sea Youth Declaration demanding a single youth platform located at the CBSS to connect young people virtually and physically and interact to implement their ideas in the future. BSSSC commits itself to contribute to the platform work.



- BSSSC strongly supports the concrete work of the Northern Dimension Partnerships and recalls the better involvement of the sub-regions in the cooperation.
- BSSSC stresses the need for a stronger connection between the maritime policy and the climate policy. The Arctic area is close to the BSR and Arctic issues should play a significant role in the European Maritime Policy in future.
- BSSSC believes that the revised TEN-T network should more efficiently facilitate modal shift towards maritime transport. Motorways of the Sea (MoS) must be better integrated in the network, thus BSSSC invites the European Commission to include MoS in the TEN-T maps.
- BSSSC appeals to the decision-making bodies at all levels to integrate the protection of the maritime cultural heritage into the planning stage of maritime projects.

The Blue Economy has a significant importance for the whole BSR, and BSSSC shares HELCOM's vision on a healthy Baltic Sea environment connected with a wide range of sustainable economic and social activities. Clear water free from pollution of any kind, safe maritime traffic and healthy wildlife are of outmost importance for the sub-regions and their ability to promote sustainable development. BSSSC supports the Baltic Maritime Dialogue¹ and the ambitions to develop the BSR into a model region for maritime best practise.

BSSSC welcomes the strong contribution of youth in this conference and supports the project ideas and recommendations concerning sustainable and youth adequate tourism as well as plastic waste reduction developed by the successful Baltic Sea Youth Camp in Gdansk in June 2019 and during the BSSSC Autumn Youth Event in Klaipeda 17 and 18 September 2019.

Regarding sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute our joint global action plan for a better future. Together they are a framework for political actions on all levels to face multiple challenges. A sustainable future in Europe and globally can only be realised if we all work together. BSSSC focuses its work on the need to further mainstream the SDGs at all levels, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognising their inter-linkages - to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions. BSSSC underlines the role of local and regional authorities in the implementation of the SDGs and urges all BSR regions to be ambitious in their implementation of the SDGs.

BSSSC urges the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament to mainstream the SDGs in all policy fields and believes that implementation of the SDGs should be set in a mix of bottom-up and top-down approach, involving all

¹ <https://www.cbss.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Expert-Group-on-Sustainable-Maritime-Economy-ToR-2018.pdf>



levels of government and relevant stakeholders. BSSSC stresses that all EU programmes and instruments should be in line with and support the SDG implementation.

BSSSC underlines the need to bring countries of the BSR closer to their citizens and finds the SDGs a good basis for this approach. The involvement and empowerment of youth should be a key element in this regard.

BSSSC recalls the 10th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) in Gdansk in June 2019², focusing on circular and sharing economy as an answer to demographic changes and environmental challenges in the BSR. BSSSC highlights the need to stimulate peer reviews, exchange of good practises and mutual learning between regions and cities/municipalities in the BSR and beyond.

Regarding the EU-budget (MFF) and Cohesion policy 2021 – 2027

BSSSC is aware of the conflict between lower revenue due to Brexit and additional expenditure arising from new tasks of the EU. However, BSSSC underlines the important contribution of Cohesion Policy to the Treaty objectives of the EU, as well as to the future challenges. In view of its high European added value, BSSSC urges the EU member states not to reduce Cohesion Policy`s share of the MFF compared to the current budget.

In times of EU-scepticism and nationalism, the feeling of togetherness in Europe and in the BSR needs urgent support. Major instruments of European policies to contribute to this are the INTERREG programmes for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation as well as ENI programmes supporting cooperation at external borders. The INTERREG/ENI programmes make a significant contribution to European integration and to fostering good neighbourly coexistence in the BSR.

BSSSC appreciates the proposal to fully incorporate former ENI programmes into the INTERREG framework and to treat member states, third countries and partner countries on equal footing in the new INTERREG programmes. BSSSC supports the position of the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions to significantly increase the budget for INTERREG in the MFF 2021-2027.

Regarding the role of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)

BSSSC welcomes the Roadmap of the CBSS Reforms³, endorsed by the Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives in Jurmala 3 June, and especially appreciates the emphasis on CBSS as a key actor to bring together relevant organisations and actors to ensure common knowledge and highlight potentials of cooperation. BSSSC is committed to its role as a strategic partner to the CBSS and will be happy to contribute to the proposed regional structured dialogue.

² <https://strategyforum2019.eu/10th-annual-forum-of-the-eusbsr>

³ https://www.cbss.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Roadmap_CBSS-reforms_FINAL_29.05.2019.pdf



BSSSC recalls the Baltic 2030 Action Plan⁴ and supports the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD) as a joint platform for implementing the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement in the BSR at all levels.

Regarding the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

The EUSBSR constitutes an important basis for the actions of BSSSC and its regions. In light of the ongoing revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan, BSSSC uses this momentum to urge the Member States and the EU Commission to better involve local and regional authorities in the governance of relevant Policy Areas and Horizontal Actions. A broader ownership of the EUSBSR among all actors is vital for the acceptance and future of the strategy. BSSSC therefore highlights the need to ensure that the EUSBSR becomes an even better framework for cooperation with more vivid engagement of all political levels suitable to deliver more concrete and tangible results. BSSSC works in close cooperation with the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) and the EuroRegion Baltic (ERB) to raise the voice of youth in the EUSBSR. BSSSC will continue to strive for better and more continuous involvement of young people in the strategy based on stable and enabling platforms.

Regarding youth involvement and empowerment

BSSSC acknowledges the youth of the BSR as important stakeholders when discussing the BSR today and tomorrow.

BSSSC recalls the successful Baltic Sea Youth Camp in Gdansk in June in the days ahead of the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2019 and calls on the National Coordinator Group of the EUSBSR to urge future forum hosts to include a similar youth event.

BSSSC supports the Baltic Sea Youth Declaration⁵ demanding a single youth platform located at the CBSS to connect young people virtually and physically and interact to implement their ideas in the future. BSSSC commits itself to contribute to the platform work.

BSSSC acknowledges the [ReGeneration 2030](#) movement for change and their efforts to promote the SDGs and the need for us all to act now.

Regarding the Northern Dimension (ND) and cooperation with neighbouring countries

BSSSC gives a sub-regional contribution and perspective to the ND work and stresses the importance of dialogue and cooperation with neighbouring countries and their regions.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2019, the ND has proven its importance as a platform of cooperation in several policy areas. The joint work on both BSR and Euro-Arctic matters has a crucial importance for Northern Europe. BSSSC strongly supports the concrete work of the ND Partnerships and recalls the better involvement of the sub-regions in the cooperation.

⁴ <https://www.cbss.org/sustainable-prosperous-region/egsd-baltic-2030-2/>

⁵ https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/0d7ed5_5a4c1651b34f400c91a276665fd538bc.pdf



Regarding BSSSC policy areas and regions shaping the future of BSR blue economy

Maritime Policy and Baltic Sea Action Plan of HELCOM

Sustainable Blue Economy has a significant importance for the whole BSR. BSSSC wishes the EU to continue the funding of the Blue Economy also in the future. Blue Growth has a strong potential for sustainable business and innovations in many sub-regions in the BSR. Marine industries, clean tech, aquaculture, digitalisation and renewable energies, contribute positively to the prosperity of the whole area.

It is important to develop open innovation platforms also in the Blue Economy. The automation in the maritime traffic and the development of autonomous vessels should be promoted in the BSR. Fair global rules are crucial for innovative maritime industries, and BSSSC calls on the BSR states to work for this in relevant international fora. BSSSC stresses the need for a stronger connection between the maritime policy and the climate policy. The Arctic area is close to the BSR and Arctic issues should play a significant role in the European Maritime Policy in future.

BSSSC strongly supports the work of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME)⁶, and will continue its cooperation with CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Maritime Working Group.

The Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP)⁷ is the most important tool for improving the ecological status of the Baltic Sea. As an observer in HELCOM, BSSSC promotes the implementation of the BSAP especially on the sub-regional level. The state of the Baltic Sea marine environment has to be improved to secure the diversity of species and habitats. BSSSC welcomes the progress achieved and encourages to continue working on the implementation of the HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter by taking concrete regional actions as well as voluntary national ones to significantly reduce the influx and presence of marine litter by 2025 in the Baltic Sea.

Accessibility and green maritime transport

BSSSC believes that the revised TEN-T network should more efficiently facilitate modal shift towards maritime transport. This would entail that ports are considered as cross border infrastructure and that the definition of cross border links includes maritime sections. Motorways of the Sea (MoS) must be better integrated in the network, and in order to strengthen the visibility and political support to MoS, BSSSC invites the European Commission to include MoS in the TEN-T maps. We would furthermore suggest having the Helsinki-Tallinn maritime link in the North Sea-Baltic core network corridor to be marked as solid line to reflect the objective of having a fixed cross-border link in the future. The EU is furthermore requested to develop and promote dedicated incentive

⁶ <https://www.cbss.org/sustainable-prosperous-region/expert-group-sust-maritime-economy/>

⁷ <http://www.helcom.fi/baltic-sea-action-plan>



schemes in support of modal shift based upon the "Eco Bonus-concept" and relevant national incentive schemes.

There is an urgent need to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of shipping. A combination of stricter regulations, technology development and targeted investments in vessels and ports are needed to achieve that. As a contribution to cleaner shipping, BSSSC calls for the introduction of EU standards for the production of clean electricity and green hydrogen in ports, and international regulations for the use of shore side power in the cruise industry.

Culture, cultural heritage and costal tourism

Maritime culture is an integral part of the rich cultural diversity of the BSR. It forms part of our collective identity and merits our particular attention and concrete protection. BSSSC appeals to the decision-making bodies at all levels to integrate the protection of the maritime cultural heritage into the planning stage of maritime projects.

BSSSC supports the Interreg project Baltic RIM (BSR integrated maritime cultural heritage management), which is developing tools to integrate maritime cultural heritage concerns in decision-making processes such as maritime spatial planning. BSSSC requests political decision-makers to make use of these tools in the national maritime spatial plans required by the EU Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning by 2021. Appropriate planning contributes to safeguarding the BSR cultural heritage and at the same time supports the EU Blue Growth Initiative by facilitating maritime infrastructure planning.

Maritime and coastal tourism is considered one among five high potential sectors in the European blue economy. Transnational cooperation - to encourage and develop common understanding of responsible and sustainable tourism in the BSR, by sharing best practices, as well as joint development of new approaches and solutions - are of high importance. In order to tackle future challenges, BSSSC supports the work of the EUSBSR flagship project „Baltic Sea Tourism Center”⁸ and its position paper on Sustainable tourism development in the BSR post 2020.

BSSSC shares the conviction of the tourism stakeholders that sustainable tourism development at macro-regional level needs permanent cooperation patterns, stronger political support, and stable funding opportunities after 2020 to overcome patchwork structures, address common challenges, and increase the competitiveness on international scale.

BSSSC Annual Conference 2020

BSSSC thanks for the kind invitation from the Government of Kaliningrad Region to convene the 28th BSSSC Annual Conference in September 2020 in Kaliningrad.

⁸ <https://bstc.eu/>