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Conference Resolution

Adopted by the 30th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

The participants, elected representatives from the Baltic Sea Region States, assembling in digital form on 30 August 2021,

- renew again – amidst the current process of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and coping with its consequences – the urgent need and the expectation that all Baltic Sea States endure to make every effort to ensure the Baltic Sea Region continues to be a region of peaceful and close neighbourliness as well as intense cooperation;
- underline that democratic values, the rule of law, human rights, free media, a strong civil society and robust NGOs as well as equal opportunities for all are the foundation of our cooperation;
- use all means at our disposal to communicate with the government of Belarus to sustainably ensure human rights, peace and democracy in Belarus as an important part of the Baltic Sea Region and Europe;
- point out that close and intensive people-to-people contacts on all levels – parliaments, governments and civil society – are the backbone for peace, prosperity and protection of the environment in the Region;
- highlight that the exchange among and the inclusion of the youth and young people are the prerequisite for guaranteeing and securing these foundations of the Baltic Sea Region for future generations as well;
- welcome the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum held on 28 August 2021, take the conclusions from the forum into account in the upcoming work and continue to promote involving young people in the work of the BSPC;
- welcome the renewed strategic vision – the Vilnius II Declaration „A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2030” – and the subsequent CBSS Action Plan, which were adopted during the CBSS Ministerial Meeting on 1 June 2021 as well as renewed

„EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Action Plan“ and „Council conclusions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies“ as of December 3, 2020;

- establish that the ecological system of the Baltic Sea as well as the general environment on land and sea should no longer be regarded as separate items in relation to other factors, such as the economy. That is necessary because the conditions for life for the population around the Baltic Sea will be fully dependent on whether we succeed in maintaining and improving the ecological system in the Baltic Sea.

call on the Governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU,

Regarding Cooperation in the Region to

use the restart after the pandemic and the current decade to

1. be committed to building, expanding and deepening trust between its nations and in all its collaborations;
2. strengthen prosperity, safety, security and regional identity for all people in the Baltic Sea Region;
3. focus on sustainability in its economic growth, development and innovation and to reach a good ecological status of the Baltic Sea and a sound and sustainable status for its environment;
4. strive for better inclusion, prosperity, public health and social cohesion while also decreasing existing gaps between BSR countries by joint efforts;
5. tackle current and future challenges and crises through increased joint action;
6. promote elements of a common regional identity and shared values through culture, research, education and science;
7. be committed to pursuing vibrant and enhanced exchanges between its people and facilitate, broaden and deepen personal contacts and the face-to-face interaction of ideas, experiences and views based on active civil societies;
8. pursue continuity in the participation of young people, promote meaningful exchange of views and ideas with, and among, young people based on dialogue and real influence and involve the youth in decision-making processes;
9. use and fundamentally improve the possibilities of digitalisation for communication, accessible for all people, and close the digital gaps across the Region;
10. protect the vulnerable and optimally integrate those who legitimately seek protection from persecution in the Region;
11. consider the prosperity and an ecologically stable and sound environmental condition for future generations as a fundamental right in today's decision-making processes;
12. foster regional cooperation in civil protection, including the prevention of, preparedness against and response to natural disasters and industrial accidents,

the protection of the population of the Baltic Sea States from natural and man-made emergencies which remain important issues for the BSPPC;

13. continue to protect children at risk, fight organised crime and manage migratory flows as fields of intense cooperation between the Baltic Sea States;
14. promote sustainable tourism, inter alia by improving cross-border rail transport to enable more climate-friendly travel and reduce travel barriers in the Region, for example, by easing the existing visa restrictions;
15. identify options for developing medical tourism – to help people in the region to receive health treatment throughout the Baltic Sea region, not least in the context of the COVID19 pandemic;
16. strive for a joint solution for the mutual recognition of approved vaccination and testing certificates that are validated and recognised by our countries to aid in the prevention of a new coronavirus infection (COVID-19), not least because border regions are particularly impacted on due to cross-border traffic;
17. reconsider a resumption of the Baltic Sea States Summits of the heads of governments if possible;
18. strengthen the link between national, regional and municipal levels of Baltic cooperation by means of further encouraging collaboration between the CBSS, the BSSSC, the CPMR BSC and the UBC and inviting a wider range of territories and cities to participate in it;
19. reinforce the financial basis of practical cooperation in the Region by enlarging the scope of the CBSS Project Support Facility, inter alia, by using public-private partnership mechanisms;
20. cooperate in order to strengthen the Baltic Sea Region as an important competitive knowledge region with an excellent higher education and research infrastructure;
21. foster collaboration in healthcare in the Baltic Sea Region in order to better handle situations like the current COVID-19 pandemic as well as to exchange experience and best practices in this area;
22. facilitate better alignment of funds and regulations among EU mainstream funds and regional and national funds for cross-border and transnational cooperation projects tackling with macro-regional challenges in social and economic dimensions;
23. support the synchronisation of the Chairmanship in the Group of Personal Representatives of the Baltic States' Heads of Government on countering organised crime with the Presidency in the CBSS, which started on 1 July 2021, the incumbent Chair of both structures being Norway;
24. support the project development process and concept with the title "Baltic Sea Cultural Cities and Regions (BSCCR)" under the motto "Water connects us, but culture unites us" with the CBSS as Lead Partner aimed at connecting cities and regions, people, cultural organisations and professionals by increasing the visibility of the cultural diversity within the Baltic Sea Region.

Regarding Democracy in a Changing Media Landscape:

Digitalisation, Combating Disinformation, Misinformation and “Fake News” as well as Protecting Free Media and Freedom of Speech, to

25. enforce constant engagement and commitment as well as strong efforts and support to strengthen confidence in democratic structures and values, to promote tolerance and open-mindedness, freedom of media and expression as well as robust NGOs as cornerstones of the democracies in the Baltic Sea Region;
26. expand the promotion of media literacy among young people in order to enable them to think critically and evaluate information;
27. use the potential of social media to motivate young people to participate in political discussions and decision-making processes;
28. adopt legal regulations and national strategies – including areas such as the judiciary, defence, schools, research, public education, the library system, cultural institutions, media, civil society, NGOs and business – to strengthen democratic resilience against digital violence and criminal offences via the Internet and to prevent and combat online hate speech;
29. debate, develop and adopt an International Code of Ethics for the digital transformation;
30. introduce further practical support measures to strengthen pluralistic independent media in the Baltic Sea Region and to ensure their sustainability in the digital age;
31. support the promotion and implementation of international norms, democratic values and human rights principles in the global information and communicative space;
32. take measures against the aggressive misuse of social media as a form of digital violence and put a victim-centred approach into the focus of action whilst protecting freedom of speech and recognizing social media as an important tool for democratic action;
33. initiate measures for the implementation of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 under the aspect of access to free information and freedom of expression;
34. support national, European and global steps to foster information and media literacy, including the implementation of the UN Resolution 75/267 on Global Media and Information Literacy Week adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 March 2021.

Regarding Safeguarding the Baltic Sea and our Environment for Future Generations, halting Climate Change and the Loss of Biodiversity to

35. send a powerful and determined signal by adopting an ambitious update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan through the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting on 20 October 2021 under the current German chairmanship and to ensure – through regular monitoring of its implementation – that its objectives are implemented in all countries of the Baltic Sea Region more quickly and consistently than before to achieve a good ecological status of the Baltic Sea and its environment by the end of the decade;

36. focus on ecological sustainability of the Baltic Sea, with increased joint structured efforts to reduce all intentional and unintentional nutrient influx into the Sea;
37. take significant steps in line with the UN Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement and the Baltic 2030 Action Plan to reduce emissions and to reach climate resilience of key economic sectors, including industry, transport and construction, as well as enhancement of natural carbon sinks, such as forests;
38. acknowledge that global action and cross-border cooperation are needed to mitigate the effects of climate change, preserve and protect biodiversity and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a focus on climate (SDG13), oceans (SDG14) and biodiversity (SDG15);
39. promote and financially support both regional and local projects that, based on research, aim to improve and preserve the marine as well as the land-based environment and ecosystems in the Baltic Sea as well as in their catchment areas;
40. further involve and inform the local communities in the current situation to gain support and commitment in all parts of society, including businesses and civil society in long-term work to regain a good ecological status in coastal areas and beyond;
41. strive for further reduction of nutrient influx into the Baltic Sea and support the development of technology and innovations that will reduce the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea;
42. take further actions in order to reduce ship emissions in the Baltic Sea;
43. continue to support investments in green hydrogen technologies in order to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide;
44. cooperate and exchange information with regard to risk assessment and necessary coastal protection measures due to the rising sea levels;
45. concerning the impacts of plastics on the environment, climate change and biodiversity, to
 - a. consider that, due to the transboundary nature of marine litter and the particular vulnerability of the enclosed Baltic Sea area, prevention of plastics entering the environment by reduction of unnecessary plastics at the source and the sustainable management of plastic waste is of mutual interest;
 - b. therefore, commit to support activation of the HELCOM Regional Action Plan against Marine Litter and measures contained therein, being part of the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan, at the regional level and
 - c. support the start of negotiations on a new ambitious global agreement at UNEA 5.2 to take the next decisive step at the international level;
46. concerning the impacts of increased shipping and cruise-ship tourism on climate change and loss of biodiversity in the Baltic Sea, to
 - a. recognize that the Baltic Sea is the sea with the highest shipping levels and consists of inland water with low water exchange;
 - b. acknowledge that global action and cross-border cooperation are needed to mitigate the emissions of increasing cruise-ship tourism and other shipping in the Baltic Sea;

- c. promote and accelerate the transition of ships and in particular cruise-ships away from fossil fuels towards sustainable renewable fuels in order to make shipping climate-neutral, and less polluting;
- d. take further actions in order to reduce black carbon ship emissions in the Baltic Sea, including support in technologies and infrastructure on shore power supply of harbours;
- e. support the development of technology and innovations that will further reduce the discharge of waste from ships to the Baltic Sea;
- f. support the prevention of introduction of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in ballast water by supporting further development of technology and innovations and by stringent application of the BWM Convention and actively contributing to the experience-building phase;
- g. aim to improve and preserve the marine as well as the land-based environment and ecosystems in the Baltic Sea;

47. concerning sea-dumped munitions, to

- a. strengthen efforts to recover and neutralise explosive ordnance in the Baltic Sea with concrete measures through multinational cooperation according to the 28th and 29th BSPC Resolutions as well as the interim and final BSPC rapporteur's reports on sea-dumped munitions;
- b. bring together the different national findings, research results and data in an expert group - if possible, at HELCOM - and, on this basis, prepare concrete actions for the removal of explosive ordnance in the Baltic Sea;
- c. strive for an international donor fund in the concretisation of the financial instrument mentioned in the 28th BSPC Resolution and consider whether HELCOM could manage such funds;
- d. establish the Baltic Sea Region as a global model region for the environmentally sound, rapid and affordable salvage and decontamination and removal of explosive ordnance dumped in the sea;
- e. take all necessary measures aiming to complete the disposal and rendering harmless of explosive ordnance and other hazardous products in the Baltic Sea within the next 20 years;
- f. look at the option of including this task as a long-term ecological priority explicitly in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.

Furthermore, the Conference Decides to

48. welcome with gratitude the kind offer by the Parliament of Sweden to host the 31st Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Stockholm on 12-14 June 2022.