



**Declaration
of the 16th CBSS Ministerial Session, Oslo, 7 June 2011**

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), consisting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation and Sweden and a member of the European Commission met for its 16th Session in Oslo at the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Reaffirming the core role of the CBSS as a forum for all multilateral intergovernmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region in areas agreed by its members;

Recalling the significance of the Riga Declaration on the reform of the CBSS and the Vilnius Declaration on A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020 and the guidance they provide for further action;

The Council:

notes with appreciation the effective measures taken by the Norwegian Presidency to make the Council more visible and action-oriented, and the work under its priority areas of maritime policy and counter-trafficking also enhanced by the work and commitment of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in these areas;

notes with appreciation the work done by the Expert Group on Maritime Policy, especially on clean shipping, and **calls on** future Presidencies to take this work forward, seeking synergies with HELCOM and other regional organisations and policy developments;

notes with appreciation the work of Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea (VASAB) and HELCOM on maritime spatial planning and their joint adoption in 2010 of the Baltic Sea Broad-Scale Maritime Spatial Planning Principles;

notes with appreciation the tangible initiatives undertaken by the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings, including trafficking for labour exploitation, and **encourages** Member States to contribute financially to this important work;

welcomes the focus of the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk on the rights of victimised or neglected children in areas where regional cooperation can play a significant role;

welcomes the work and the report of the Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety on environmental radiation monitoring programmes in the Baltic Sea Region and **notes with appreciation** the ongoing work to enhance assistance capabilities among the CBSS countries in case of nuclear or radiological emergencies and **calls** for the application of the highest and strengthened nuclear safety and environmental standards;

notes with appreciation the results achieved by the EuroFaculty project in Pskov in upgrading the education in Business Economics/Business Administration at the Pskov State Polytechnic Institute (PPI) in line with international standards and the Bologna principles as well as the financial commitments recently made by Member States allowing a second three-year phase of the project starting from 1 January 2012;

endorses the CBSS Strategy on Sustainable Development 2010-2015, **calls** for its active implementation, **encourages** support for a green economy and **welcomes** the efforts underway to develop a climate change adaptation strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;

acknowledges the need to explore ways and means to develop cooperation within the CBSS with the aim of adding value to bilateral partnerships on innovations and modernization in the economic, social and legal spheres, thereby helping to increase the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region;

notes the shared responsibility of the public sector and business community for the continued dynamic and sustainable development in the Region and **calls** for an exchange of experiences in the field of public private partnerships to encourage more investments in the future of the Region;

supports the development of green transport corridors and sustainable logistical systems in the Baltic Sea Region, and **encourages** the extension of transport corridors to the neighbouring countries;

encourages synergies in the cooperation between the four Regional Councils in the North and other structures relevant to the development of the Baltic Sea Region, notably the Northern Dimension, recognizing the advantages of projects which involve joint efforts of these structures;

welcomes the efforts under way in establishing cooperation between Iceland, Norway, Russia and the EU in areas where common objectives could be identified under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;

commends the activities of Ars Baltica over the last twenty years in promoting art and culture in the Baltic Sea region as well as achievements by the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage in sustainable management of cultural heritage assets and **invites** all regional structures in the field of culture to combine efforts in the promotion of cultural cooperation in the region;

notes the agreed continuation of youth cooperation as a way to promote social cohesion, inter-cultural dialogue and regional identity in the Baltic Sea region and in this regard commends the efforts of the Expert Group on Youth Affairs;

supports measures aimed at expanding cultural and educational relations, direct people-to-people contacts, including the facilitation of current visa regimes for the citizens of all CBSS Member States while welcoming the visa dialogue between the EU and Russia pursuing a common goal towards visa free short-term travel for their citizens;

welcomes the agreements between Norway and Russia and between Latvia and Russia on the facilitation of travel for border residents and ongoing negotiations on similar agreements between Poland and Russia and between Lithuania and Russia;

supports the continuation of transnational efforts in the field of civil protection under the aegis of the CBSS and continued regional activities in contingency planning and cross-border rescue services cooperation while seeking synergies with other Regional Councils in the North;

commends the efforts of the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Co-operation to establish and sustain an efficient multi-agency co-operation platform with maritime focus, concentrating on preventing and counteracting cross-border criminality in the Baltic Sea Region;

stresses the importance of decisions made by the 2010 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in Moscow to implement the ecosystem approach in the region, and **welcomes** that all Baltic coastal countries have prepared their National Implementation Programmes in support of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan;

welcomes deepened cooperation by the Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC) for sustainable and secure energy supplies in the region and its ambitious project activities focusing on energy strategies for the post-Kyoto period, including elements such as energy planning, energy efficiency, wind power, bio energy, combined heat and power, and also carbon capture and storage;

values the intention to establish a Forum for Social Dialogue in the Baltic Sea Region in conjunction with the final Conference of the Baltic Sea Labour Network in November 2011;

The Council also:

tasks the Committee of Senior Officials to consider further actions to help achieve the goals set out in the Vilnius Declaration A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020 and to report in this regard to the 9th Baltic Sea States Summit in 2012 at the latest;

tasks the Committee of Senior Officials to set up and start implementing a program of modernization of the South Eastern Baltic Sea area with special focus on the Kaliningrad region and its neighborhood, and to report to the 9th Baltic Sea States Summit in 2012 as well as to the 17th Ministerial Session of the CBSS to be held in 2013;

instructs the Committee of Senior Officials to review and evaluate the long-term priorities as foreseen in the Riga Declaration and to submit its conclusions and possible proposals to the next Ministerial Session;

instructs the Committee of Senior Officials to consider ways to further strengthen the effectiveness of the CBSS as a focal point of information and coordination, and to report on actions taken in this regard to the Ministerial Session in 2013 at the latest;

instructs the Committee of Senior Officials to consider ways to further strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to effectively communicate CBSS activities and achievements in order to make them more visible and widely known, and to report on actions taken in this regard to the next Ministerial Session;

reaffirms the direction of the CBSS towards a more project-oriented organisation and **underlines** the need to consolidate the Secretariat budget line for project development by setting aside sufficient financial resources in the annual budgets;

agrees on the dissolution of the Expert Group on Customs Cooperation and Border Crossing Aspects acknowledging the results and taking note of the final report;

The Council furthermore:

thanks the host country of the Secretariat, Sweden, for providing it with new and spacious premises;

welcomes Germany as the incoming Presidency for 2011-2012 and its invitation to host the 9th Baltic Sea States Summit on 30 – 31 May 2012;

decides to hold the 17th Ministerial Session of the CBSS in the Russian Federation in 2013.