



Conference Resolution

Adopted by the 19th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

The participants, elected representatives from the Baltic Sea States*, assembling in Mariehamn, Åland Islands, 29 - 31 August 2010,

discussing Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region, Climate Change and Biodiversity, Integrated Maritime Policy, Peace and Security in the Baltic Sea Region, and Trafficking in Human Beings,

- A. emphasizing the important role parliamentarians can play for a sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region, by raising awareness, building opinion, driving issues, exerting political pressure on governments, and initiating and adopting legislation;
- B. reaffirming the close, constructive and mutually beneficial exchange between BSPC and CBSS, as evidenced in e.g. the interaction between BSPC and CBSS working bodies on trafficking in human beings and on integrated maritime policy, and recognizing the usefulness of this interaction as a joint resource in following and addressing the economic, social and political challenges of the Baltic Sea Region;
- C. maintaining its strong support to the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan as one of the main tools for the central tool for the restoration of good ecological status of the Baltic Sea by 2021, regretting that not all HELCOM member states had managed – as they had agreed – to present national implementation plans at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in Moscow 20 May, and expecting that those countries that did not deliver national implementation plans will do so at the high-level meeting of HELCOM in early 2011 at the latest;
- D. noting with satisfaction the adoption of the declaration “A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020” at the 8th Summit of the Baltic Sea States in Vilnius in June 2010, and considering the implementation of its provisions as a key factor for further development of the Baltic Sea Region;
- E. taking note of the adoption of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in October 2009, underlining that since the EU strategy is an internal EU endeavor, it should be adequately harmonized with the Northern Dimension policy, which brings together EU- and non-EU- members as equal cooperating partners;
- F. supporting the Baltic Sea Action Summit as a platform for practical commitments aiming at saving the Baltic Sea, and reaffirming the BSPC commitment to the Summit to continue to take political initiatives, to follow the actions taken by the states in the region, and to exercise parliamentary pressure on the national governments

of the Baltic Sea Region, urging them to fulfill their obligations in the Baltic Sea Action Plan,

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

Regarding Co-operation in the Region, to

1. consider ways to further strengthen cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region between the CBSS and the BSPP in order to ensure cohesion and to avoid divisions in the Baltic Sea Region, while supporting CBSS in implementing the aims of its reform process and achieving concrete results within the framework of its long-time priorities;
2. fulfil their already agreed obligations under the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, in particular – for those who have not already done so – by producing concrete National Implementation Plans by early 2011 at the latest;
3. fulfil their commitments to the Baltic Sea Action Summit, for instance by allocating sufficient resources for the actual implementation of commitments;
4. coordinate as far as possible the EU Baltic Sea Strategy with the Northern Dimension policy, as well as with the Council of the Baltic Sea States - being a core regional cooperation body - and other Northern and Baltic cooperation bodies;
5. provide contributions to the BSAP Trust Fund managed by the Nordic Investment Bank and the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation, thereby strengthening the resources for the development of bankable projects, meaning coherent, realistic and viable projects to implement environmental and other projects for the benefit of the Baltic Sea Region;
6. work to gradually dismantle barriers encountered by workers, companies and tourists, such as visa requirements and requirements to register place of residence, continue to work towards dismantling obstacles to mobility for workers in the border regions and ensure the availability of a range of high-quality information centres ensuring social security for cross-border workers;
7. promote the further development of civil society in the region, including assisting NGOs both in accessing Baltic Sea support programmes and in placing applications in order to boost their involvement in implementing the programmes;

Regarding Climate Change and Biodiversity in the Baltic Sea Region, to

8. apply an ecosystem approach to the environmental work in the Baltic Sea Region, including investments, research and development to protect ecosystem services and to integrate their values in economic systems, national budgets and strategies for sustainable development, as appropriate;
9. support measures to protect and restore biodiversity, such as reinstating migratory waterways, restoring physical environments, oxygenization and restocking;
10. enhance work with the aim of preventing the continued introduction of alien invasive species of flora and fauna in the Baltic Sea by ships, for instance by developing technologies for ballast water treatment and by a possible ban against ballast water exchange in certain areas;

11. take active measures to protect threatened species, minimize by-catches and phase out discard in fishing, and to ensure that commercial fishing respects catch quotas and fishing areas;
12. take strong and focused measures to eliminate illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, by reinforcing inspection resources and by strengthening landing control;

Regarding Integrated Maritime Policy in the Baltic Sea Region, to

13. promote new measures in view of reduction of harmful emissions:
 - render more active support than heretofore to short sea shipping as an eco-friendly alternative to inland transport;
 - investigate to what extent the reduction of the sulphur content of ship fuels may result in competitive disadvantages to the economy in the Baltic Sea Region and elaborate proposals on how to avoid such disadvantages while maintaining high environmental standards in the maritime sector;
 - actively support the projects approved for funding under the Baltic region Programme, especially such projects with the objective to reduce harmful emissions from ships and develop reception facilities for waste water from ships in the ports of the Baltic Sea;
14. support the implementation of improved security and fire prevention measures regarding vessels, terminals, ports, sea and shore-line constructions as well as the use of environmentally friendly substances to alleviate damages caused by accidents;
15. extend the obligatory use of pilots in risk areas of the Baltic Sea and strictly implement the ban on transporting oil in single-hulled tankers;
16. initiate measures which 1) pave the way for and promote the use of a single language in international transport operations at sea and on land, and 2) standardize and facilitate the implementation of joint customs and taxation procedures;
17. continue to ensure improvements to the transport infrastructure in the Baltic Sea Region and, while focussing in particular on developing land and sea routes, to promote a transport policy that is in principle governed by the idea that transport operations should be carried out in an eco-friendly way, supported by an interconnected infrastructure;
18. make sure that the EU TEN-T core network must be made up of nodes (capitals, other cities or agglomerations of supra-regional importance, gateway ports, intercontinental hub ports and airports, the most important inland ports and freight terminals) and connections of the highest strategic and economic importance linked with key infrastructure in third countries (including Russia).
19. attach particular importance to the strategic development of the seaports with associated logistics centres and rail terminals in order to create national, regional and European networks. In this context, gaps in the priority TEN projects should be filled, and the projects should be linked and consolidated into a core network;
20. support initiatives for improving safety of navigation and environmental risk reduction in the Baltic Sea and addressing the human factor including support of initiatives that can lead to less administrative burdens by harmonizing and elaborating

the existing ship reporting systems (SRS) and vessel traffic services (VTS) in the Baltic Sea;

21. strengthen the joint regional as well as national preparedness and capacity to tackle major spills of oil and hazardous substances, for instance by sub-regional preparations, co-ordination and exercises, as pursued in the HELCOM BRISK project, and by procuring sufficient supplies of oil spill and hazardous substances recovery equipment;

Regarding Peace and Security in the Baltic Sea Region, to

22. encourage and foster the development of a joint perception of the threats against public safety and civil security in the region, covering natural as well as technological and other man-made threats and risks;

23. promote the development of joint strategies, action programmes and concrete resources to prevent and manage the threats against civil security in the region;

24. extract and exchange experiences from recent threats, such as the bird flu in 2007, the cyber attacks in Estonia in 2007, and the swine flu in 2009, in order to gain knowledge and enhance the joint awareness and preparedness for such threats;

25. promote the dissemination of the experiences from the Baltic Sea Region regarding peace, security and development of democracy in political and diplomatic contacts in order to support democracy;

26. exchange available information on the location and state of sea-dumped chemical weapons, to inform the public about the threats caused by these weapons, to prepare guidelines for behaviour if unexpectedly encountered with sea-dumped chemical weapons, and to organize seminars and conferences on this issue.

Regarding Trafficking in Human Beings, to

27. sign, ratify and accede, for those countries that have not already done so, to all relevant international conventions, protocols and decisions, such as the Trafficking in Persons Protocol ("The Palermo Protocol"), the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, and other international agreements; consequently, national legislation and administration of justice should, where necessary, be reviewed and amended in order to ensure conformity with international conventions and protocols and to enable legislation that criminalizes all chains of trafficking in human beings;

28. recognize that trafficking in human beings is an international cross-border crime that requires international cooperation and concerted action across borders, but also that the actual exploitation of victims is perpetrated locally and therefore should be fought by enhanced local plans and resources, including efforts to curb the demand for sexual services from victims of trafficking;

29. allocate sufficient, permanent and dedicated funds and resources to, for instance, public authorities, specialized agencies, NGOs, and inter-governmental organizations and projects, such as the CBSS Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings, in order to maintain the pursuit of persistent and sustained efforts against trafficking in human beings, for example by measures such as the Nordic Council internal instruction on using only those hotels that can issue a guarantee that they do not engage in any facilitation of selling or buying sexual services;

30. promote the development of an interoperable, coordinated and transparent system for the collection, analysis, exchange and dissemination of information on trafficking in human beings, in order to enhance the understanding of the problem, develop adequate measures against it, improve the capacity to identify victims of trafficking, support investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, and provide best possible assistance to victims of trafficking;

31. ensure that a victim-centered approach is adopted in all measures and actions against trafficking in human beings, meaning that trafficking is exploitation irrespective of where it takes place or what form it takes, that the human rights of trafficked persons should be at the centre of all efforts against trafficking, that victims should be protected, assisted and empowered, and that victims and relatives of victims should receive unconditional assistance regardless of their status, their willingness to participate in criminal proceedings against traffickers or the kind of exploitation experienced;

32. promote and support the development of the operational capacity to fight trafficking in the field; efficient cooperation models should be developed both between relevant state actors - such as the police, prosecutors, social welfare authorities and migration authorities - and with NGOs, in order to strengthen the chain of assistance and protection of witnesses, victims and relatives of victims and to increase the number of convictions of the perpetrators;

Furthermore the Conference

33. asks the Standing Committee to perform an evaluation of the functioning of the BSPC Joint Financing Mechanism, including a consideration of a possible revision of the procedures for financing the Secretariat function;

34. adopts the amended Rules of Procedure, to take effect after the closure of 19th BSPC;

35. welcomes with gratitude the kind offer of the Parliament of Finland to host the 20th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Helsinki on 28 – 30 August 2011.

*Parliaments of Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Greenland, Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Latvia, Leningrad, Lithuania, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Poland, Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, City of St. Petersburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Sweden, Åland Islands, Baltic Assembly, European Parliament, Nordic Council.