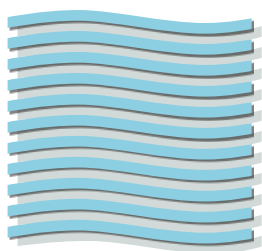


**The Baltic Sea – Our Lifeline
Cooperation, Sustainability
and Smart Energy
Three Pillars for Future
Development
27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary
Conference**

27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

Mariehamn, 26-28 August 2018



The Baltic Sea – Our Lifeline
Cooperation, Sustainability and Smart Energy
Three Pillars for Future Development
27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

Text: Małgorzata Ludwiczek, Marc Hertel,
Bodo Bahr

Editing: Bodo Bahr

Layout: Produktionsbüro TINUS

Photos: Ralf Roletschek, Olaf Kosinsky

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
Bodo Bahr
Secretary General
+49 171 5512557
bodo.bahr@bspcmail.net
www.bspc.net

BSPC Secretariat
Schlossgartenallee 15
19061 Schwerin
Germany

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) was established in 1991 as a forum for political dialogue between parliamentarians from the Baltic Sea Region. BSPC aims at raising awareness and opinion on issues of current political interest and relevance for the Baltic Sea Region. It promotes and drives various initiatives and efforts to support a sustainable environmental, social and economic development of the Baltic Sea Region. It strives at enhancing the visibility of the Baltic Sea Region and its issues in a wider European context.

BSPC gathers parliamentarians from 11 national parliaments, 11 regional parliaments and 5 parliamentary organizations around the Baltic Sea. The BSPC thus constitutes a unique parliamentary bridge between all the EU- and non-EU countries of the Baltic Sea Region.

BSPC external interfaces include parliamentary, governmental, sub-regional and other organizations in the Baltic Sea Region and the Northern Dimension area, among them CBSS, HELCOM, the Northern Dimension Partnership in Health and Social Well-Being (NDPHS), the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF), the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation (BSSSC) and the Baltic Development Forum.

BSPC shall initiate and guide political activities in the region; support and strengthen democratic institutions in the participating states; improve dialogue between governments, parliaments and civil society; strengthen the common identity of the Baltic Sea Region by means of close co-operation between national and regional parliaments on the basis of equality; and initiate and guide political activities in the Baltic Sea Region, endowing them with additional democratic legitimacy and parliamentary authority.

The political recommendations of the annual Parliamentary Conferences are expressed in a Conference Resolution adopted by consensus by the Conference. The adopted Resolution shall be submitted to the governments of the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU, and disseminated to other relevant national, regional and local stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region and its neighbourhood.

INTRODUCTION



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinct honour to have served as BSPC President for this past year and to be the host of our 27th annual conference. The Plenary Hall of the Åland Lagtinget and the Åland Islands – the islands of peace – set the scene for the 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. This conference is after 1999 and 2010 the third Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference which took place in this Plenary Hall and had been the first one under the Presidency of Åland. Thanks to everyone attending that make this possible.

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Åland on 26-28 August 2018 offered constructive dialogue, open debate, forward-looking solutions, friendship and a strong will to increase cooperation and prosperity in the region. The members of BSPC are from different geographical and cultural parts but are united in their care for the Baltic Sea. Our common language is the search for a prosperous future in our common challenge.

Especially for the people of the Åland Islands, the title of the 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference brings it to the heart of what we are all about:

The Baltic Sea our Lifeline.

We are not only surrounded by the Baltic Sea, wherever we look, but we also live from it and with it. We go to sleep every night seeing the sun lowering in the sea and we wake up every morning listening to the sound from the waves.

If the Baltic Sea is not in good shape, we suffer too.

If the Baltic Sea is in good shape, we are great as well.

It is an important matter of our hearts to make every effort – together with our friends and partners – to improve the status of the Baltic Sea and the entire Baltic Sea region. What is healthy for the Baltic Sea is good for all of us.

With our topics “Sustainability and Smart Energy”, based on the fundament of our cooperation I believe we have chosen forward-looking themes, which will increase

the strength of our societies and our region in the future. These are pillars for our future development and success.

I am grateful that the President of the Republic of Finland, H.E. Mr Sauli Niinistö, gave the opening Speech at our 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Mariehamn and highlighted the need for action and not only talk and plans.

We have also included the young generation in our deliberations – as we regularly have done in our former conferences – and gave them the opportunity to discuss their recommendations on the United Nations 2030 development goals which they elaborated one week before in Mariehamn at a youth summit called ReGeneration 2030. We must never forget that the youngsters of today are the decision-makers of tomorrow.

For the first time, we had a general debate, which was hard, but open and honest and did not break off our friendly cooperation. As we all know we learn the most from our honest friends and by sharing your views you inspire others to grow.

We have once again succeeded in unanimously adopting a resolution with far-reaching and forward-looking demands – all of them for the best of the Baltic Sea. Our appeal is to the governments to implement these calls for action. I am convinced that the implementation of these measures will contribute to the further positive development of our region, our states and our homes.

If we have succeeded in strengthening the parliamentary cooperation in the Baltic Sea region on the basis of our democratic values and if together, we can make our vision of a healthy Baltic Sea a reality, then it has been worth all our efforts.

I want to thank all the speakers and participants who attended the Conference and contributed to its extraordinary success and also those who have already committed ideas, suggestions and inspirations in the run-up to this conference.

I also thank the speaker of the Åland Lagtinget Ms Gun-Mari Lindholm and my colleagues from the BSPC delegation in our parliament as well as the administration of Lagtinget for their support and smooth preparation in hosting of the conference. Special thanks go to Mr Sten Eriksson and Ms Maj Falck for their supreme efforts during the entire Presidency. Finally, let me express my gratitude to Mr Bodo Bahr, BSPC Secretary General, for his deep and genuine expertise and inspirational engagement as well as for his close and excellent cooperation. An Association like ours can only be successful if we constantly strive towards being present, actual and factual. Moreover, doing this among friends is necessary. We are democrats and policymakers and we can make a difference.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Norway and entrust the BSPC Presidency to Mr Jorodd Asphjell in 2018-2019, I wish him all success in steering the BSPC all the way up to the 28th BSPC in Oslo.



Jörgen Pettersson

President of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in 2017–2018

Contents

Opening of the Conference	7
---------------------------------	---

Session one

Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region	13
--	----

Session two

The Vision of a Healthy Baltic Sea - A Call for more Action	43
--	----

Session three

Sustainable Energy, Smart Energy Distribution Platform.	63
---	----

<i>The Closing of the Conference</i>	81
--	----

Annex

<i>Conference Resolution</i>	85
------------------------------------	----

<i>List of Participants</i>	92
-----------------------------------	----

<i>Programme</i>	101
------------------------	-----

<i>Impressions</i>	108
--------------------------	-----



Opening of the Conference



*Jörgen Pettersson,
President of the BSPC 2017-2018*

Jörgen Pettersson, the President of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, welcomed all the participants of the conference, extending a particularly warm welcome to the President of the Republic of Finland H.E. Mr Sauli Niinistö. He reminded the conference that the BSPC had been established in 1991 as a forum for political dialogue between the parliamentarians of the Baltic Sea Region. The initiative had come from the Finnish Parliament and its speaker Mr Kalevi Sorsa. The parliamentarians would now meet for the 27th time to find better and common solutions for the region. He expressed his gratitude to the President of the Republic for his willingness to open the 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Mariehamn and underlined that the President of the Republic of Finland was among the friends of peace, progress and prosperity.

Gun-Mari Lindholm, the President of Åland's Lagting, welcomed all those present and noted that the Åland Islands were often mentioned as the islands of peace. She stated that Åland gained its autonomy in 1921 by a decision of The League of Nations and that this decision had been the guarantee of security in the region. She hoped that the conference would bring good results as the topics were urgent and important. She also wished the participants to learn about Åland and their autonomy, their business as well as



*Gun-Mari Lindholm,
President of Åland's Lagting*

everyday life. She highlighted the fact that the Baltic Sea separated people but also united them, and that it was the same sea which would be left to the next generations. She expressed her hope that the conference would come to smart solutions and find ways forward for the environment and humanity because only through the common work of large countries and small islands could the Baltic Sea be protected.

*After a concert by a quartet of young musicians from the Åland Islands playing Jan Sibelius Andante festivo, the floor was taken by the **President of the Republic of Finland H.E. Mr Sauli Niinistö**.*

H.E. Mr Sauli Niinistö underlined the uniqueness of cooperation among the countries around the Baltic Sea, which, starting with the Hanseatic League, had brought remarkable benefits throughout history to the peoples living around it. The sea had connected them long before the road and railroad network. He pointed out that there was probably no other region in the world with a network of different regional cooperation structures as dense as it was in the Baltic Sea region, listing The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, HELCOM, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation and the Union of the Baltic Cities as the examples out of many networks operating in the Baltic Sea Region. He also referred to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), the European Council initiative towards a new kind of macro-regional thinking and mentioned that in the following year, Finland would assume the Presidency of the European



*H.E. Mr Sauli Niinistö,
President of the Republic of Finland*

Union. This was a good moment, 10 years after the adoption of the Strategy, to take a look at its achievements in finding solutions to the challenges faced by the Region by connecting the region, saving the sea and increasing prosperity.

The President stressed that a cornerstone of environmental cooperation in the BSR was the Helsinki Commission, HELCOM, which for decades had done valuable inter-governmental work on protecting the marine environment of the Baltic Sea.

Finland had taken over the Chairmanship of HELCOM for a two-year period. A priority of the Finnish Chairmanship was the updating of The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), the roadmap for achieving the goals for a healthy sea environment. Likewise, Finland was paying particular attention to the effects of climate change on the Baltic Sea and emphasized the need to reduce nutrient inputs and to foster nutrient recycling. He expressed his support for the idea that one day, the Baltic Sea region would also become a model area for sustainable development. While much had already been done to achieve a cleaner sea, there was a need to speed up the actions. Neither reducing the nutrient load from human activities, like agriculture, nor reducing the amount of plastic litter entering the sea could be delayed any longer.

The President appealed to the responsibility of all those present, pointing out that the long tradition of mutual cooperation would be their common superpower and underlined: “Together, we are

stronger. Together, we will sustain a secure and prosperous Baltic Sea area. Together, we will achieve the goals for a better environment.”

President Niinistö closed his speech by a call for concrete actions to sustain a secure and prosperous Baltic Sea area.

Paula Lehtomäki, State Secretary, Prime Minister’s Office, Finland began her presentation on the Finnish Strategy for the Baltic Sea region with the statement that a lot had been done for the Baltic Sea over the years but the current summer with its algae growth had indicated that much more had yet to be done. She stated that in autumn 2016, the Prime Minister’s Office had set up a steering group for the Baltic Sea and Integrated Maritime Policies, consisting of civil servants from various ministries. This was done because maritime issues required a cross-sectoral approach and there was a need to update Finland’s Baltic Sea Strategy. The priorities had been selected in an interactive and inclusive process, considering the views expressed by stakeholders from NGOs, business and academia. The new strategy had been published in November 2017, and currently the government was preparing the maritime policy white paper to clarify the main targets of the Finnish policy on the global level and to work out measures and activities. Ms Lehtomäki explained that the Strategy had set out a vision for Finland’s objectives to develop the Baltic Sea region and stated that Finland was committed to actively work to make the Baltic Sea region a global leader in the economy and the circular economy, to make the BSR well connected and innovative and to have the BSR produce model solutions for safe and clean shipping, the maritime industry and sustainable use of the maritime environment.

The State Secretary listed six key areas of action elaborated in Finland’s Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The first was blue growth, including maritime know-how and industry, the blue bio economy, sustainable tourism and spatial planning, the next bio and circular economy including reducing nutrient and carbon emissions and maritime litter, then connectivity including logistics and transport, communication hubs and smart grids; a safe and secure Baltic Sea with a view to maritime and navigation security, the prevention of environmental accidents and reaction to them; innovation and competitiveness promoting the internationalization and exports of SMEs, digitalization and freedom of trade, and last but not least, international impact and cooperation.



*Paula Lehtomäki,
State Secretary, Prime Minister's Office of Finland*

The speaker acknowledged that the strategy had boosted some core activities in many areas. One of the examples she mentioned was in the area of circular economy: a key project for developing methods to return nutrients from food industry side products back to the fields. Autonomous maritime traffic was another area with the most significant progress. The aim was to create an environment suitable for autonomous ships by 2025.

Ms Lehtomäki drew the audience's attention to the preparation process of the White Paper on maritime policies with sustainable blue growth as the key overall priority. The Paper would also address such issues as maritime logistics, maritime cluster and blue economy, protection of the ocean and the seas. She emphasized that here, the government was also working together with the NGOs and other stakeholders as well as business circles to implement concrete actions. The State Secretary concluded her speech by underlining that the complex nature of the Baltic Sea and the Baltic Sea Region called for deeper cooperation. She expressed her strong belief that strategies were useful because they boosted concrete action and made them more efficient. Strategies could clarify targets and prioritize concrete actions but most importantly, the preparation of the strategies brought people together, and that was how the action would be guided towards the common goal.



First Session

Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

The session was chaired by Jörgen Pettersson, President of the BSPC, Member of the Åland Parliament, and co-chaired by Jorodd Asphjell, Vice-President of the BSPC, Member of the Norwegian Parliament.

Jörgen Pettersson emphasized that The Plenary Hall of the Åland Lagtinget had set the scene for the 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference with the presence of the President of the Republic of Finland, H.E. Mr Sauli Niinistö, and his warm address to the delegates of all represented parliaments and also Ms Paula Lehtomäki, State Secretary to the Prime Minister of Finland who had presented Finland's strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. He highlighted that the decision to organise the conference in the Parliament building,



firstly, kept up the tradition of the BSPC location in Mariehamn, secondly, that the BSPC was a conference of parliamentarians, and thirdly, the house with its historical paintings breathed the history of the autonomous region and the independence of the Åland Islands. The speaker then underlined that the headline of the 27th BSPC - The Baltic Sea – Our Lifeline - presented the conviction that the population around the Baltic Sea depended on the good shape of the Baltic Sea and that parliamentarians should take every

effort to improve the status of the Baltic Sea and the entire Baltic Sea region.

He closed by thanking all those who had contributed their ideas, suggestions and inspirations in the run-up to the conference.

Jorodd Asphjell informed his audience about the organisational structure of the session and gave the floor to **Jörgen Pettersson**, the President of the BSPC, who provided the conference with the report on the BSPC activities throughout the previous year. Mr Pettersson emphasized that the BSPC had visibly and in every respect fulfilled its strategic objectives and achieved significant progress. Based on the BSPC programme and the BSPC resolution in the year 2017-2018, the BSPC had communicated the principles and core messages of a large number of Baltic Sea-relevant events and beyond, had intensified the cooperation with the regional partners and efficiently promoted programmatic concerns and contents. The parliamentary dimension and principles of cooperation had been emphasized, and the impact on governmental activities had been strengthened. The BSPC 2017-2018 work programme covered three strategic priorities: Sustainable societies in the Baltic Sea region based on democratic values, human rights and equal chances for all, Cooperation and integration for a secure and prosperous Baltic Sea area as well as Migration and integration, finding solutions based on mutual information and best practices had been targeted in all activities throughout Åland's BSPC presidency. Jörgen Pettersson presented a list of events and activities beginning with the first Standing Committee under the Åland Presidency in Mariehamn during which, in the run-up to the establishment of the BSPC working group "Integration and Migration", detailed presentations on the topic and a lively exchange of information with experts from Åland had taken place. Then he mentioned the second Standing Committee meeting in Brussels and an expert presentation on the possible consequences of Brexit for the Baltic Sea region, a report on the Swedish Presidency of the CBSS, a report on the current state of the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan by HELCOM and important facts concerning transnational cooperation. The discussion had been continued at the third Standing Committee meeting in Koli. Additionally, at that meeting, experts from the *Finnish Environment Institute* had addressed the SC members in a round of presentations on projects by the Finnish Environment Institute and on collaborative practices for environmental decision-making. Mr Pettersson underlined that it was the honourable duty of the BSPC President to meet with the BSPC partners and other parliamentary organisations. He mentioned his addressing The Session of the Nordic Council in Helsinki, The Baltic Assembly in Tallinn, The Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum in Brussels, the In-



ternational Environmental Forum “Baltic Sea Day” in St. Petersburg and the Plenary Session of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member Nations in St. Petersburg, the International Forum on Development of Parliamentarism in Moscow where delegates from 96 parliaments all over the world and representatives of 10 international parliamentary organisations had attended. The BSPC had been the only international parliamentary organisation to address the participants during the opening plenary session. The BSPC had been represented at the 50th and 51st General Assembly meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC). Based on a memorandum of understanding, connecting the BSPC with the PABSEC, the collaboration had also been deepened by the Secretaries General. At that point, Mr Pettersson showed himself content that the Chairman of the PABSEC Legal and Political Affairs Committee as well as the PABSEC Secretary General, Prof Asaf Hajiev, could attend the conference. Vice-President Carola Veit had attended the Parliamentary Assembly of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) in the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, emphasizing there the crucial importance of parliamentary cooperation and partnerships between the various parliamentary forums. Other MPs had taken part in other events important to the BSPC’s work, such as Kari Kulmala and Saara-Sofia Siren at the EUSBSR Summit in Tallinn. In addition, the BSPC rapporteurs had been to many events and had taken on board the findings relevant to their policy fields. Mr Pettersson stressed that the attendance at that impressive a number of events served to convey the message of the importance of international parliamentary cooperation – especially in times of tense situations – and on the need for interparliamentary dialogue and strengthening the influence of parliaments. He underlined that all the previous year’s expert hearings, all the participation in international events, all the deliberations and discussions had formed the basis for the

27th BSPC and 27th BSPC resolution. He closed his speech by expressing his gratitude to all those involved in the work done during Åland's BSPC presidency.

*According to the Standing Committee's decision, the President of the Conference at which the resolution had been adopted, reports on the results of the governmental statements on the implementation and the evaluation. The political scientists of the previous year – Dr Tobias Etzold, also a member of the CBSS Vision Group, nominated by Denmark, and Christian Opitz, from the Foundation of Science and Politics – have elaborated a political analysis. Therefore, the report was presented by **Ms Carola Veit**, President of the Hamburg Parliament and the Vice-President of the BSPC.*

Carola Veit reported that 14 submitted statements had been featured in reaction to the 26th BSPC Resolution which meant that all national governments of the countries around the Baltic Sea had sent their statements, proving that the request had been treated seriously and the responses had become more and more comprehensive over the previous three years. The speaker pointed out that the resolution's aim regarding strengthening the involvement of young people in all areas of society and thus including the BSPC's willingness to continue the work on establishing a Baltic Sea Forum for Young People had found a reaction by both the Nordic Council of Ministers and the CBSS in supporting the *ReGeneration 2030* initiative. The conference on the Åland Island some days earlier had brought together young people from Denmark, Estonia, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Germany and Åland.

With regard to the thematic chapter "Democratic Participation and the Digital Age" of the last year's resolution, Ms Veit noted that many of the issues raised had been well covered by numerous programmes and projects such as digital election in Åland, a focus on digital literacy, the journalists' ethnic ombudsman in Lithuania and the "Nationwide Education Network" in Poland. Closer regional cooperation on digitization had been a key priority for the Norwegian Government during its Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2017, as summed up in a ministerial declaration called *Digital North*. Another issue mentioned by the speaker was democratic participation and the digital age with regard to employing new digital technologies for the subjects of democracy and political development. Here, she mentioned a transnationally successful example of Helsinki's cooperation with Hamburg within the framework of the EU project "MySmartLife". Another initiative pointed out by Ms Veit was one of the participatory projects of Hamburg,

called “Finding Places” for accommodating refugees in which interactive planning desks allowed citizens to identify areas for building sites and settlements and review existing proposals.

Turning to the assessment regarding the chapter “Sustainable Tourism” of last year’s resolution, Ms Veit pointed out that the focus in this diversified section – from wastewater facilities to bike routes –



lay on national measures due to certain international conventions to promote sustainable tourism. Worth mentioning according to the speaker was the regular participation of several countries in the annual Baltic Sea Tourism Forum and their support for the idea of establishing the Baltic Sea Tourism Centre to create a permanent platform for collecting and sharing relevant tourism information about the development of tourism in the Baltic Sea Region. She also welcomed that some of the governments had seemed to have followed last year’s suggestion to concentrate more on transnational initiatives compared to strictly national projects. However, the statements had still concentrated too much on previous activities, several of which even dated back several years. The reporting period of less than a year to implement certain requirements was of course too short in a number of cases to talk about concrete results. Another issue worth taking into account was that more attention should be paid to the overall political environment and the current political development, encompassing the concrete technical measures. It had been a particular concern of the parliamentarians to take successful steps towards restoring a comprehensive political dialogue in the Baltic Sea region.

In conclusion, Ms Veit underlined that thanks to the analysis presented in her report, the parliamentarians had been provided with

the highest possible quality feedback for their further work, because, as she stressed, only if the statements were comprehensive and interdisciplinary, the governments could be held accountable regarding the BSPC Resolution.

*It is the BSPC's tradition to hear the voice of The Council of Baltic Sea States which is the natural counterpart of the BSPC on the executive level. Therefore, the floor was given to **Mr Hans Olsson**, the previous Chairman of the Committee of the CBSS of Senior Officials, Ambassador of Sweden.*

Ambassador Olsson reported that during the Swedish Presidency, which lasted until 30 June 2018, the key priorities had been Sustainability, Continuity and Adaptability and take on new challenges. All those priorities fell under the goals and priorities of the Agenda 2030. An important part of the Swedish presidency had been the follow-up to the Reykjavik Declaration from 2017. In this respect, the task had been given to a group of independent experts to come up with a report with suggestions for the tasks and working methods of the Council after 2020. Much had changed in the Baltic Sea Region since the CBSS had been established in 1992, therefore such a critical analysis had been of utmost importance. The group's report had been presented at the Stockholm Ministerial meeting and would be discussed further during the Latvian Presidency. In the next part of his report, Mr Olsson gave some examples of results achieved during the previous year. He pointed out that the CBSS had started the implementation of the new Baltic 2030 Action Plan with a particular emphasis on the goals 12 - sustainable





consumption and production -, 13 - climate - and 17 - good governance. Other achievements were

- the implementation of the Joint Position on Enhancing Cooperation in the Civil Protection Area, the cooperation in combating disasters and major accidents, involving not only national governments but also regional and local authorities,
- increased cooperation within the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and increased work within the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings including trafficking related to migration flows,
- continued efforts and projects within the framework of the Children at Risk Group, for example the expansion of the “Barnahus” concept to more member states but also to countries outside the CBSS Area,



- continued efforts to improve research and science-related cooperation in the region, for example within the Baltic TRAM framework by organizing a Baltic TRAM Mid-Term Conference and a Baltic TRAM High Level Group Meeting, and last but not least
- the reactivation of the Expert Group on Maritime Issues with a new mandate.

He concluded by expressing his best wishes to the current CBSS Presidency, the Republic of Latvia.

Juris Bone, Chairman of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials, Ambassador-at-Large of Latvia, representing the current CBSS Presidency, gave a brief overview on the priorities of the Council of the Baltic Sea States' Latvian Presidency 2018-2019, e.g. Integrity and Social Security as well as Dialogue and Responsibility. He stated that the Report of the CBSS Vision Group prepared during the CBSS Swedish Presidency 2017-2018 would be taken further and that an implementation plan would be elaborated. He explained that, with regard to Integrity and Social Security, the Latvian Presidency would focus on enhancing cooperation in the civil protection area to strengthen resilience in the region against major emergencies and disasters, on fighting against human trafficking to prevent and mitigate the consequences of this severe crime and on combating organized crime and strengthening border management. The overall aim would be working together to establish the culture of a secure society. Regarding the Priority Responsibility, the main effort would be directed towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the Baltic 2030 Action Plan. Mr Bone emphasized that responsibility was multifaceted – it had political, administrative, environmental, economic, social, cultural and moral aspects. In the Headline Dialogue, the cooperation in the area of cultural heritage would be developed as an important element in



the development of a democratic, law-based, culture-oriented society. Thus, cultural heritage was playing a role both in shaping a regional identity and ensuring sustainable growth – both long-term priorities of the CBSS. This area required a modern, an interdisciplinary approach; it would deal with issues like the digitalization of cultural heritage, including modern heritage, such as the Opera House in Oslo or the National Library in Riga.

The Ambassador also mentioned that during the Latvian Presidency, 20 years of the CBSS secretariat and 20 years of the cooperation on Children at Risk would be celebrated. The cooperation had started in 1988 in Riga. Therefore, the commemoration of the events would equally take place in Riga. Youth involvement was also pointed out by the speaker. He reported that the presidency had started with an event connected to youth cooperation; the “Baltic International Summer School on media literacy and democratic processes” took place at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences in Valmiera in Latvia in the framework of the CBSS Summer University. The ambassador underlined the unique role the CBSS had played in the Baltic Sea Region and hoped for further close cooperation in changing conditions.

Hans Wallmark, Member of the Swedish Parliament and the Chairman of the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration, informed the audience that the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration had come half-way in its work and, as a consequence, delivered a Mid-way Report which had been published on the BSPC website. He reiterated as a well-known fact that the countries of the region had very different traditions with regard to migration. Some of them had been receiving immigrants for a considerable time while others had rather been countries of emigra-



tion, not immigration. He expressed his belief that different historical experiences could serve as a strength enabling parliamentarians to discuss the problems from a wide scope of different perspectives. By highlighting and discussing best practices, everyone would have something to learn.

He appreciated the work that had been done by Ms Carola Veit, President of the Hamburg Parliament, the vice-chair of the Working Group, who had successfully chaired the first meeting of the Working Group held in Hamburg in December 2017 and had done an admirable job in collecting and presenting intergovernmental data covering best practices from each country. The survey would be of great benefit to the working group. The speaker thanked Mr Pyry Niemi who had chaired the third meeting of the Working Group in Copenhagen in June and all the members of the Working Group as well as all who were involved in this work for their high-quality contributions, the intensive discussions as well as the harmonious atmosphere.

Regarding the content of the mid-way report, Mr Wallmark stated that it had shown that much could be learned from German historical experiences of migration, the role that sports could play in Swedish integration policies and the latest findings of Danish research on migration. Another recommendation the speaker mentioned included increased offers of migration-specific advisory services and language training to enhance integration, increased support to the civil society, volunteers and local institutions.

He also underlined the importance of adopting a more holistic view on migration. Migration and security perspectives were of paramount importance when it came to trade, labour rights or environmental preservation, too. His conclusion was that the mid-way report was an overview of the first results as well as the input which the group had received from many experts and a compilation of the materials of the group's work. The main focus was on the political recommendations which had been elaborated during the previous meetings and which would be expanded and deepened in the continuation of the work. Therefore, the report should be considered a strategic summary of the Working Group on Migration and Integration.

Jörgen Pettersson introduced the next speakers by emphasizing that the BSPPC was including young people in the debates with politicians and was listening carefully to their voice. He informed his audience that the ReGeneration2030 summit had taken place the previous week in Mariehamn and that the young participants had agreed on a Manifesto in that very plenary hall.



Simon Holmström, the chairman of ReGeneration 2030, and **Hanna Salmén**, the coordinator of ReGeneration 2030, both representatives of the young generation in the BSR, gave their report on ReGeneration 2030. They noted that the idea of that movement had come from the young people who believed that intense action was needed to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Their vision was to build a movement where teenagers and young adults would innovate and use existing solutions to reach these goals, solutions that could be implemented by individuals, the civil society, businesses and the national legislations in building a sustainable future. They informed the audience that from 18-20 August 2018, more than 90 young people, aged 16 to 30, coming from all the Nordic and Baltic Sea countries, had met on the Åland Islands to discuss, in a context of inter-generational learning, how they could contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG12 – responsible consumption and production. Two very intensive days of work had resulted in formulating a Manifesto which reflected the Vision, Commitments and Demands of the Baltic Sea region youth. A platform had been created around which young people could work on those important issues. The youth representatives stated that they needed cooperation not only within their age bracket but also across sectors, across borders and across generations, to contribute to solving the problems. They pointed out that the movement had been given support from many youth organisations and also from the CBSS, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Swedish Institute, the Swedish Environmental Institute and the BSPC. The main demand called for by the Regeneration 2030 delegates was to include the youth in every decision-making process on all levels of society, allowing them practical influence to promote the 2030 Agenda.

DEBATE

Oleg Nilov, Member of the State Duma, emphasized the significance of preserving the ethnic and cultural traditions as well as the languages in the Baltic Sea Region communities because those traditions should have been transferred to the following generations. He called for more discussion within a permanent working group and to consider this issue as a BSPP priority.



He proposed that one of the next meetings could be devoted to the question how to preserve the culture of the peoples of each BSR State. He underlined the necessity to place more attention and more money on that issue. Another of his proposals was to establish a festival of folk music, ethnic music from all those cultures, thus addressing the issue of ethnic music and culture. He emphasized that as a representative of a social-democratic party, he and his party had focused on culture at the top of their agenda.

At that point, he invited all delegates to the event called “Dobrowidnia”, held in September in the St. Petersburg Palace hall. The event would gather outstanding folk groups and honoured guests.

Ingrid Johansson, Member of the Åland Parliament, shared her thoughts on youth in democratic processes, inspired by the work of ReGeneration 2030. She emphasized that the fact that it was more and more difficult to activate the young people to join traditional parties did not indicate that youngsters were not interested in politics. She believed that it was the opposite, and that young people were taking part in politics to a great degree but often did so differently than the older generation. For instance, young people were more interested in specific topics such as sustainability. At that point, she mentioned ReGeneration 2030 as a great example of that interest. She called on the delegates to consider reforming the parties and political structures so that they would draw more young people into politics. The speaker emphasized that many values which had been



taken for granted were nowadays questioned. As examples of that tendency, she mentioned Brexit, the current American leadership and a more polarized Europe. She highlighted that it was politicians' responsibility to involve young people, that politics should evolve and adapt to a new way of thinking. She concluded her intervention by encouraging all delegates to work together to preserve good cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region and friendship for the future as well. The younger generation needed to be involved, and the older needed to evolve and adapt to a new way of thinking.

Juris Viļums, Member of the Parliament of Latvia, referred to the migration issue. He reported that many people were coming to Latvia from Russia and from other countries and that they served as a source of information about the situation in the countries of their origins. The speaker stated that Latvian politicians were very much concerned about the issue of migration. The Baltic Assembly also discussed that



topic. In the Latvian Parliament, there was a group for cooperation with civil society in the Russian Federation. The Latvian parliament maintained dialogue with the State Duma and other representatives from Russian Federation but they were also listening to the civil society. He emphasized that in his country, Latvians lived together with Russians, Belarussians and people from other nations. These good practice examples of the coexistence of a variety of peoples could be shared with other nations. The speaker also mentioned the situation of Oleg Sencow, who had been imprisoned in Russia. Mr Volems called him a political prisoner and encouraged the parliaments to discuss his situation during debates in their national parliaments.

The second part of the session consisted of reports on the issues of special interest of the BSPC rapporteurs such as Labour Market and Social Welfare, Integrated Maritime Policy, Cultural Affairs, Sustainable Tourism, HELCOM, Eutrophication and the speeches given by the organisations holding observer status at the BSPC.

Christina Gestrin, a former BSPC President, presented her report about environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region which had been published by the Nordic Council on 6 March, the same

day the HELCOM ministerial meeting had taken place in Brussels. She reported that the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership had an important role in bringing together both EU and non-EU states in projects carried out in the north-western part of Russia during the last two decades. The successful measures to restore the sewage systems in St. Petersburg would not have succeeded without the diligent efforts of officials



working in ministries and environmental agencies and the financial support from Nordic and European financing institutions. She emphasized that from 1997 to 2017, about € 1 billion euros, of which approximately one third had been comprised of international loans and grants and two thirds had come from domestic Russian resources, had been designated to environmental projects in St. Petersburg. Currently over 98 % of the waste water in St. Petersburg was being treated. However, the speaker underlined that the political tension in the region had shown serious negative consequences for environmental cooperation as no new projects had been funded or planned by the European banks or the Nordic Investment Bank. Ms Gestrin mentioned some challenges that would therefore remain unresolved, for example 184 sites in the Leningrad region without properly working wastewater treatment plants and sewage systems, Krasnyj Bor, a landfill for hazardous waste situated close to St. Petersburg, and Sosnovy Bor, one of Russia's nuclear towns to the south-west of St. Petersburg with four old nuclear power plants of the Chernobyl-type still operating, and four new nuclear power plants under construction. She admitted that at the HELCOM ministerial meeting in March 2018, the ministers had had to accept that the actions taken by the Baltic Sea states had not been enough and that HELCOM's goal to restore the Baltic Sea's good ecological status by 2021 would therefore not be achieved. The conclusion of Ms Gestrin was that there was no time to waste, that environmental cooperation must continue and that European and Nordic financial institutions should be allowed to contribute to projects carried out within the area, despite the politically challenging times.

Gun Rudquist, Head of the Policy Unit of the Baltic Sea Center at Stockholm University, gave an example of how the university worked to increase the collaboration between science and policy makers in her presentation "Bridging the gap between science and policy". The Baltic Sea Centre, the institution she represented, was operating within Stockholm University and dealt with research.

She emphasized that the Centre had a special task – to synthesize and communicate research results to the stakeholders and policy makers.

For its studies, the Centre had a field station with a research vessel, while communications was served by a general communication unit. She mentioned The Baltic Nest Institute as the research group collaborating with HELCOM and putting together all different background materials mainly on the status of the Baltic Sea.



Ms Rudquist gave an example of The Baltic Eye, a project created and launched by the University together with a foundation. She admitted that it was quite unique for a university to attach so much importance to policy issues. The Baltic Eye Project had gathered a unique team consisting of researchers from different fields along with science communicators, journalists and policy analysts. She explained that the project worked collectively to support evidence-informed decision-making related to the sustainable management of the Baltic Sea environment. This had yielded knowledge that could be understood and useable for policy makers. On the other hand, as she pointed out, researchers should know which questions needed to be answered and what were the urgent issues to be investigated. The speaker drew attention to the Baltic Eye Project website offering many policy briefs and several policy recommendations. She gave an example of the advanced water treatment issue which had been tackled first through research. The investigation had aimed at answering a lot of questions, for instance whether it was possible to measure the flows of chemicals around the Baltic Sea, what could be done to stop these flows etc. The researchers had showed that by implementing advanced wastewater system in the largest wastewater plants around the Baltic Sea, the flows of chemicals could be reduced by 50 %. The next step of the process was to bring the research results to the media as well as to the stakeholders and decision makers. The speaker emphasized that her report at the BSPC was also a good opportunity to discuss the issues that required scientific studies.

Franz Thönnies, former Member of the German Bundestag and former BSPC President, provided his report on the work of the CBSS/BSLF Coordination Group on Labour and Employment. He emphasized that the Baltic Sea Labour Forum had been one of the greatest successes of the BSPC and a great example of turning political debate into action. It was a unique forum for a dialogue of the social partners in Europe. Founded in 2011, the Forum was

currently comprised of 30 organisations, 11 employers' associations and 17 trade unions as well as the CBSS and the BSPC with an active participation by partners from St. Petersburg and Moscow. The speaker reported that labour mobility, cross-border workers, fair working conditions and youth unemployment had been key issues so far. The common goal of all was to increase the competitiveness of the region, to



guarantee cross-border commuting with social security in place and to strengthen training and employment. He pointed out that the meeting of the Labour Ministers of the member states, which had taken place in Berlin in June 2017, had marked the first time in the 25-year history of the Council of the Baltic Sea States that both, representatives of the BSPC and the BSLF had been present. One of the results of that meeting was establishing an ad hoc working/expert group in conjunction with the CBSS Secretariat, the BSPC, the Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Wellbeing and other organisations dealing with these issues. Close cooperation with the BSPC and its Migration/Integration Working Group had also been recommended. The result of an informal cooperation platform formed by the CBSS Secretariat and the BSLF was the “CBSS/BSLF Coordination Group on Labour and Employment” (CG), which functioned thanks to the voluntary participation of representatives of the member states of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The efforts of the group were focused on issues of common interest, such as the future of work, new qualifications and better links between training and labour market needs, the importance of lifelong learning and a broad outlook for the future of the labour market as well as research and demographic development. Mr Thönnies mentioned that the CBSS’ intention was to apply to the European Social Fund for a “BSLF for a sustainable working life” project. In his closing remarks, the speaker thanked all those who had been involved in preparatory work and supported the efforts to establish the Coordination Group, such as e.g. Daria Akhutina, Senior Advisor at the CBSS Secretariat, where the administration of the BSLF was currently located, Maira Mora, the CBSS Deputy-Director General Bernd Hemingway, Anders Bergström from the Norden Association with the Baltic Leader Program, the Swedish Institute and the BSPC Secretary General Bodo Bahr as well as finally the Presidencies of Iceland and Sweden in the Council of the Baltic Sea States, during whose term of office that process had been intensively promoted.

Daria Akhutina, CBSS Senior Advisor on Economic Issues, coordinator for the Baltic Sea Labour Forum and secretary to the CBSS Expert Group on maritime issues, pointed out that the challenges with regard to ageing populations and the new requirements of the labour market on skills and qualifications called for better synergies between educational systems and labour markets' demands as



well as a response to ageing workforces and pressures on pension systems. She said that it was essential to learn more about how to effectively use the resources at hand by fostering active and healthy ageing and by increasing the labour force participation of older people. In that regard, she underlined the special value of the study carried out by the Max Planck Institute on “Increasing the Labour Force Participation of Older People in the Baltic Sea States: Challenges and Chances” in the framework of the CBSS-supported project “Ageing Workforce, Social Cohesion and Sustainable Development – Political Challenges within the Baltic Sea Region”. The study was based on the outcomes from researchers with profound expertise in the national situation of the workforce participation of older adults from all CBSS member states. The speaker announced that the CBSS Secretariat had the intention to apply to the European Social Fund with a project entitled “BSLF for Sustainable Working Life” focusing on the ageing labour force. Here, the CBSS/BSLF Coordination Group on Labour and Employment would play a key role in the implementation of its results. The project would address three issues crucial for the socio-economic development of the countries in the Baltic Sea Region - the Demographic challenge, Active ageing, and Life Long Learning (LLL). The speaker emphasized that, according to the experts from the field, it was of utmost importance to take a life course perspective when discussing prolonging working lives since ‘the young workers of today are the older workers of tomorrow’. That approach implied a particular focus on lifelong learning, health prevention and reconciliation policies, including the reconciliation of work and care. Other activities mentioned by the speaker had resulted in developing the Working Paper “Fostering sustainable, inclusive and attractive labour markets in the Baltic Sea Region: A life course perspective”, where the topics of future work, demographic challenges and an inclusive labour market had been prioritized.

Pyry Niemi, the BSPC Rapporteur on Labour Market and Social Welfare, Member of the Swedish Parliament, referring to the information provided by Mr Thönnies, and Ms Akhutina, pointed out that the work of the CBSS/BSLF Coordination Group on Labour and Employment should lead to finding common arrangements in the Baltic Sea area, best practice examples and thus to improving the labour market all



around the Baltic Sea. Currently, the labour markets differed greatly from one country to the other because of different legislations and differences in the respective labour market situations. Therefore, creating a common platform would be of an interest of all countries. Mr Niemi mentioned that even if a country enjoyed satisfactory solutions in their own labour market, they were not able to prevent negative phenomena in the labour market such as exploitation and low wages. Such a nation was also unable to make the labour force more mobile, adequately educated and better protected by the law. He mentioned that all these important issues could be discussed during the Norwegian presidency and in the next 2 or 3 years. The speaker expressed the need to interlink the work of the group to the UN 2030 goals, especially goal 4 – Quality education – and goal 8 – Decent work and Economic Growth – which could lead to approaching the issue not only on the BSR level but also globally. He hoped that by implementing the goals mentioned above, the thus improved labour market in the Baltic Sea Region would make it a better place. He also addressed the need to support the work of the CBSS/BSLF coordination group and called on all governments to provide the necessary conditions to do so. Mr Niemi expressed his strong belief that by encouraging all governments to deal seriously with that important issue, the labour market in the Baltic Sea Region would develop to contribute to the economy growth in the region.

Jochen Schulte, BSPC Co-Rapporteur on Integrated Maritime Policy, shared some of the insights gained in the field of maritime policy, out of many published on the BSPC website in the full report. Mr Schulte reported that in January, he had presented the BSPC position at the first meeting of the Maritime Cluster “Maritime Safety and Security” in Rostock and had discussed the emanating opportunities for the maritime economy. The result from that debate had been that all issues of maritime security were bringing forward small and medium enterprises as well as larger enterprises in the BSR –

and vice versa – because they needed innovation in technology and logistics. With regard to the field of Blue Growth, the speaker mentioned that the EU had delivered commitments at the “Our Ocean Conference” in October 2017 and that since then, the European Commission had launched a new 14.5-million-euro investment initiative to further promote sustainable blue growth across the EU. Those resources were



used to support green projects safeguarding the marine ecosystems. Eight million euros from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund had been set aside to help SMEs, including start-ups, testing novel products and services in high-potential emerging blue economy sectors, including ocean renewable energy. The speaker further informed the conference that, according to the annual report on the EU Blue Economy from June 2018, that particular sector had been growing steadily over the last decade. With a turnover of 566 billion euros, the sector had generated 174 billion euros of added value and created jobs for nearly 3.5 million people. With investments in innovation and through responsible ocean management, integrating environmental, economic and social aspects, the sector could be doubled in a sustainable manner by 2030. Mr Schulte also mentioned that the blue economy in several EU member states had grown faster than the national economy in the last decade, softening the effects of the financial crisis. Regarding other sectors, specifically the so-called ‘living resources’ (i.e. fisheries, aquaculture and processing), the speaker reported that growth had gone up by 22 % between 2009-2016. Also, the emerging sectors were booming: The biotechnology sector had marked double-digit growth in member states, and employment in the offshore wind industry had jumped from roughly 23,000 in 2009 to 160,000 in 2016, outpacing the employment of the EU fishing sector. The speaker emphasized the importance of growing the Commission’s support for the maritime economy compared to the ongoing period. The maritime fund would enable investment in new maritime markets, technologies and services such as ocean energy and marine biotechnology. Coastal communities would receive more and broader support to set up local partnerships and technology transfers in all blue economy sectors, including aquaculture and coastal tourism.

In his closing remarks, Mr Schulte expressed his strong belief that the decision to appoint two rapporteurs, one from the northern and the other from the southern part of the Baltic Sea was a good

choice. He thanked all delegates and especially his co-rapporteur Mr Pettersson for his support and great cooperation during the whole time of his work as the Maritime Policy rapporteur which had now come to an end.

Jörgen Pettersson, in his capacity as BSPC Co-Rapporteur on Integrated Maritime Policy, pointed out that the report prepared by both rapporteurs contained a great deal of facts and figures but in his speech, he wanted to comment on the processes, the policies and legislation. He gave an example of the sulphur directive implemented in 2015 which had been heavily criticized by both shipping companies and policy



makers. There were fears that the directive would trigger a mode shift from environmental transportation on the sea to tracks and the roads. He reminded his audience that after the sulphur directive's implementation, the price of oil had gone down, and currently, 4 years after the directive had been imposed, it was noticeable that the life of the people in the Baltic Sea had been extended because of less dangerous particles in the air. The speaker underlined the fact that shipping had still been the main means of transportation of goods in the Baltic Sea and that legislation had made a direct impact and made a difference. He went on to the issue of autonomous ships which had seemed science fiction a few years ago but was currently becoming a reality. At that point, he referred to the information given by Ms Paula Lethomaki on the preparations made by the Finnish government to prepare a legislation for pilotage, a first step to legislation on autonomous ships. Mr Pettersson expressed his strong belief that this would prove another great change in many ways and that it would open new possibilities. He emphasized that cargo vessels spent about 40 % of their time in ports, sailing empty 40% of their time; so the possibilities to improve the effectiveness were invaluable. He appreciated the EU support in raising the effectiveness resulting from the sulphur directive, prompting shipping companies to switch to LNG. Without the EU funds, that process would not have been so fast and successful.

In his closing remarks, Mr Pettersson underlined the importance of legislation and of the role the Baltic Sea Region played in implementing advanced sustainable solutions which would be transferred and introduced by the IMO to the rest of the world for the benefit of environmental condition of the seas.

Karin Gaardsted, BSPC Rapporteur on Cultural Affairs, had chosen to work with a new type of sport called e-sport and reported on that issue. She noted that e-sport was a cultural phenomenon evolving from the world of competitive video gaming through competitions, communities and entertainment. It had captured the youth, especially in the Baltic Sea region, and it was currently the fastest growing sport in the world. Ms Gaardsted said that it enabled a better understanding of how to interact with a digital reality, it contributed to creating jobs in various sectors, and it educated and promoted intercultural dialogue among young people across borders. She pointed out that, although e-sport was a thriving industry with revenues projected to increase by almost 40 % in the current year and expected to become a one-billion-dollar industry by the next year, it suffered from a lack of recognition and support among local and national governments. At that point, the speaker reported on the results of a questionnaire sent out via the BSPC Standing Committee to the respective governments. She admitted that an awareness of the cultural, economic and social reach of e-sport had been growing, but only a handful of the BSR countries had formed national e-sport federations. Yet these were still not quite treated as equals to traditional sports federations. Also, on an amateur level, young people did not have the same possibilities to create teams, sportsmanship and participate in competitions, nor to develop their skills in a positive and constructive way as the league players were sponsored by industry and large companies. The rapporteur presented several ways in which society and sports organisations became involved in e-sport. For instance, the Sports Institute of Finland had been supporting the development of ed-



educational programmes for e-sport coaches and training camps for Finnish e-sports players, while sport clubs in Hamburg considered incorporating e-sport into their structures; in Denmark, Esport Danmark together with Denmark sports associations had created a new sports league which was divided into several divisions. Other areas of society had also shown an interest in e-sport. In the educational sector, public high schools and boarding schools increasingly were adopting e-sport into the curriculum. Ms Gaardsted summed up her speech by pointing out that politicians should support the positive development of e-sport in the Baltic Sea Region as it had a potential for the development of the BSR society with an emphasis on non-commercial efforts working on creating an organisational base for the development of e-sport in and across the respective Baltic Sea countries. Such support would counter the commercialization of e-sport and instead focus on building a base for amateur players to practice and compete in.

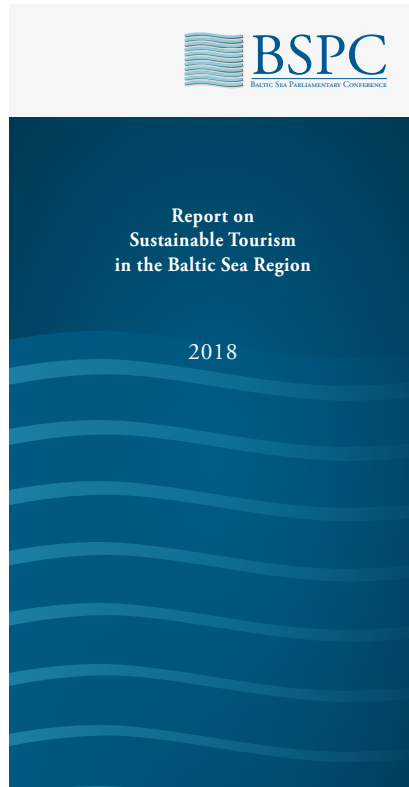
Sara Kemetter, the *Rapporteur on Sustainable Tourism and Member of the Åland Island Parliament* presented the first report on that issue prepared jointly by her and **Sylvia Bretschneider**, *BSPC Rapporteur on Sustainable Tourism and President of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Parliament*, who was unable to attend the conference.



Sara Kemetter informed the audience that the report contained an analysis on the reactions and responses of the governments of the States and Regions of the Baltic Sea on the political positions and recommendations pertaining to sustainable tourism, which had been integrated into the 26th BSPC Resolution. Furthermore, it presented keystones and events of the last year and aimed to inform on the state of sustainable tourism in the Baltic Sea Region, best practices, challenges and opportunities in sustainable tourism. She underlined the fact that in nearly all answers, the governments had responded by promoting wastewater facilities at harbours in the Baltic Sea Region and had provided information on the status of the implementation of these facilities, often with concrete details. To implement a more sustainable tourism, many governments had adopted specific plans or agendas, also labels and management sys-

tems. She found it remarkable that the topic of cooperation had also played some role in the answers of the governments, as the tourism sector was a competitive market, and the companies and regions were struggling to ensure own profit in that sector.

With regard to a central demand of the BSPC parliamentarians around the Baltic Sea to establish the Tourism Centre, Ms Kemetter reported that at the beginning of the year 2018, the profile of this Centre had been enlarged, the development of concepts for the Baltic Sea Tourism Centre network and business plan had been compiled, and the project with the title “From the Sustainable Developments Goals towards a Sustainable Tourism in the Baltic Sea Region” had played a key role in realizing that demand. The speaker noted that sustainable tourism would be discussed at the 11th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum from 14 – 15 November 2018 in Riga and a position paper concerning the cooperation on sustainable tourism after 2020 would be evolved for that forum. Next, Ms Kemetter presented several personal political recommendations referring to the topic of sustainable tourism which she had found of interest for the Åland Islands. She commented on the latest EU ban on single-use plastics and acknowledged that it was a large step towards sustainable tourism but she admitted that replacing single-use plastics would prove a difficult task for many small hospitality businesses, particularly the take-away sector which commonly used single straws, plates, glasses and food containers. The existing alternatives could be too expensive for small hospitality businesses as 90% of them were micro enterprises. This challenge should be taken into consideration by the Commission. She also referred to the widely discussed topic of the growing number of tourists worldwide. The speaker said that the UN World Tourism Organisation forecast the international tourism arrivals to rise by 250 million by the end of the decade. Therefore, those challenges the Europe and Baltic SR destinations were facing should be urgently addressed.



She emphasized that the global rise in the number of tourists to the Baltic Sea was good news for the hospitality business and the tourism sector as the whole. The challenge was that the demands were not evenly spread but were concentrated to a few destinations, especially cities which were suffering from pressure on public infrastructure and the environment as well as on available rentals and the rise of housing cost. Ms Kemetter called for further efforts to establish the Baltic Sea Region the first ecoregion in the world.

Saara-Sofia Sirén, the BSPC Co-observer at HELCOM and Member of the Parliament of Finland, thanked HELCOM for the work that had been done by managing and improving the state of the Baltic Sea and underlined the long-term and close cooperation of the BSPC and HELCOM with a great contribution by Ms Sylvia Bretschneider who had been the BSPC observer since 2002. Ms Sirén was sorry that



Ms Bretschneider could not attend the conference and to present the report herself. Ms Sirén then reported that the BSPC strived to continue and strengthen its relationship with its partner HELCOM, mentioning that the BSPC had again placed its support for the HELCOM work among the most important priorities in the 26th annual Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and in the present draft resolution. Acknowledging that the regional implementation of ocean-related goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda of the United Nations should be a major objective of the region, the BSPC parties had committed to further strengthening and developing HELCOM's role as the major coordinator of this goal in the region. The speaker admitted that in order to do this, it would be necessary for the BSPC to support and strengthen the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan by the governments and make an even stronger commitment to achieving a suitable environmental status for the Baltic Sea by 2021. If applicable, it was also important that the Baltic Sea Action Plan would be renewed in line with the UN Sustainable Development Agenda with commitments extending to 2030.

Another issue mentioned by the speaker in the report was “marine litter” which had become one of the biggest threats to the well-being of the Baltic Sea. To reach a greater awareness of this threat on the political, economic and personal level, the Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern had offered the traditional environmental award of the parliament on the topic of marine litter in the upcoming

ing year. Initiatives, schools and associations were encouraged to participate. The Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern would actively appreciate and support outstanding projects on their path to reduce marine litter. The speaker commented on the newly published HELCOM report from which it appeared that the targets set for 2021 would not be reached in time. Continued and renewed efforts were needed. She endorsed the priorities of the Finnish presidency in HELCOM, i.e. updating the Action Plan, reduction of nutrients and nutrient cycling, mitigation of climate change, synergy between the Agenda 2030 and HELCOM, and she expressed her hope for continuing and fruitful cooperation with HELCOM under the chairmanship of Finland as the cooperation with and support for HELCOM was the key to the future success in environmental and economic sustainability in the Baltic Sea Region.

Saara-Sofia Sirén, in her capacity as BSPC Rapporteur on Eutrophication, presented the report which had been published a year ago and which could not have been presented at the previous conference. She stated that unfortunately, the topic of eutrophication was still timely, as the problem had not been solved within the year, therefore she announced that she would present it to the delegates with some additional information. She stressed that despite all the strategies, programmes, commitments and funding within the Baltic Sea Region since the 1980s, the status of the Baltic Sea still remained alarming. Eutrophication was not only an environmental question but an economic and social question, too. It had been calculated that decreasing eutrophication would bring economic benefits for the region worth 3.6 billion euros. Water pollution could in fact be regarded as an external cost, which required action from the governments concerned. The speaker drew attention to the fact that repairing the damage was a complex task which took time. Therefore, that aspect had to be taken into account when evaluating strategies.

She also underlined the importance of further actions and better targeting as previous actions had resulted in only limited progress and investments had not been as effective as hoped. The HELCOM State of the Baltic Sea report from 2018 showed that the eutrophication status had changed only little since the previous holistic assessment in 2010. Almost all of the open sea was still affected by eutrophication. Around 12 % of the sea was considered in the category of the poorest eutrophication status. The maximum allowable inputs were still exceeded in 6/7 sub-basins for phosphorus and in 4/7 sub-basins for nitrogen. She recalled that in the current year, the HELCOM Ministerial meeting had agreed to strengthen the implementation of the Action Plan and had decided that the plan would be updated by 2021. The ministerial meeting had also agreed

to elaborate the Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy by 2020, aimed at reducing nutrient inputs. Ms Sirén appealed for a strong stand on the ambitious targets of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan which should remain ambitious, even more ambitious than the current one. On the circular economy, she shared her opinion that it had huge potential to decrease eutrophication and could lead to the adoption of a lifestyle that no longer caused pollution and damage. Saara-Sofia Sirén pointed out that because of high temperatures, the summer 2017 had been one of the worst summers in a long time regarding the number of blue-green algae in the bodies of water. That fact had brought up more discussions and on a higher level than ever before. Yet apart from dialogue, intense and effective work was needed to ensure that the children of today would have the opportunity to enjoy and sustainably benefit from the Baltic Sea.

The last part of the session was given to the Representatives of other Parliamentary Assemblies and International Guests who addressed the audience with presenting their messages to the BSPC.

Roger Ryberg, the Chairman of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC), informed the delegates that the BSSSC was a political network organisation – representing all sub-regions in the countries around the Baltic Sea –, promoting the interests of regions towards national authorities and EU institutions and by using the network to promote and share best practices, support regional cross border partnerships and to encourage concrete project developments. He stated that the Baltic Sea Region was a region of prosperity and challenges, bridging east and west – bringing people together. In his view, the bottom-up cooperation involving the local and regional level was more important than ever, maintaining networks and people-to-people contacts across borders in challenging times. He pointed out that cooperation must be based on the common and shared values of democracy, human rights, peace, social dimension and the rule of law. Another issue mentioned by Mr Ryberg concerned sustainable development and climate change. He pointed out that it was probably the most demanding challenge to be faced and the economic, social and cultural as well as the ecological dimension must be addressed simultaneously. The demand for sustainable development could only be met through innovation and



smart solutions, because there had to be a change in the way societies, production, consumption, the distribution of opportunities and institutional structures were organized. The BSSSC Chairman highlighted that the BSSSC strongly supported the Baltic 2030 Action Plan prepared by the CBSS and endorsed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in June of the previous year. And, as sub-regions, the BSSSC would contribute to the follow-up through the network's policy work. Another issue mentioned by Mr Ryberg was the youth and youth involvement. He stated that a continuous and permanent dialogue with the young generation in the Baltic Sea Region was of high importance – as they were the change-makers and the key to a more sustainable future. Therefore, the BSSSC was a partner in ReGeneration 2030 and had taken part in the Summit in Åland from 18 – 20 August. In closing his speech, the BSSSC chairman invited those present to the BSSSC 26th Annual Conference *“Solidarity, participation and being smart in action for a better future”*, from 11 and 12 September in Gdansk, Poland, with the Pomorskie Voivodeship as hosts.

Ulla-Karin Nurm, Director of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) informed the audience that the NDPHS had been established 15 years earlier to provide a framework to support common efforts in the field of health and social well-being. The NDPHS was one of the structures operating within the Northern Dimension policy, which was a joint policy between four equal partners - the European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation. In its work, the partnership focused on three main priorities: 1) prevention of life-style related non-communicable diseases 2) reduction of the spread of major communicable diseases and 3) promotion of healthy and socially rewarding lifestyles and tackling risky behaviours. To illustrate the on-going work, Ms Nurm gave several examples, among them the EU-co-financed project “Northern Dimension Antibiotic Resistance Study” (NoDARS) which had provided new useful information on the levels of antibiotic resistance in society in several countries in the region and would form a basis for international and governmental organisations and policy makers to make evidence-based decisions. Some countries had already stated that they would adjust their national guidelines in line with the project's recommendations. Another example given by the speaker was the NDPHS work with a topic of continuous chal-



lenge for public health and medical professionals, i.e. the harmful use of alcohol. At the beginning of 2018, the Partnership Annual Ministerial Conference had adopted the NDPHS Declaration on Harmful Use of Alcohol that focused on three major topics: a) alcohol use during pregnancy and its influence on the development of the baby (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)), b) screening of the harmful use of alcohol of the patients of the internal disease clinics and 3) community-based interventions to prevent and tackle the harmful use of alcohol. The third example referred to the ongoing work to develop a common NDPHS flagship project involving all NDPHS Expert Groups with the central topic being the health of senior citizens. This NDPHS umbrella project would contribute to the process of advancing the health and well-being of people in their older age and ensuring enabling and supportive environments for said process. Ms Nurm pointed out that those examples demonstrated how regional cooperation in health was contributing to addressing common challenges by joining together knowledge and experience. She stressed that the NDPHS were strong believers in the value of international cooperation and therefore very much appreciated the opportunity to be an observer at the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference.

Prof Asaf Hajiev, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), informed the conference that the PABSEC had been established in 1993 as a result of the major political changes of the late 1980s. Currently it was comprised of 76 MPs representing 12 countries. He recognized the importance of the Baltic Sea and Black Sea regions not only for European politics



but also for global concerns. There were many common interests for those two regions, for example communication and transportation. Both sectors were crucial for each country's economy. The speaker highlighted that the Black Sea Region was a crossroad to main transportation arteries such as the silk road from east to west and, in the near future, the extension of the silk road from the Black Sea to North Europe and the Viking road which was heading directly from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. The speaker appealed for a close cooperation in that field as a lot more could be done together. Another issue mentioned by Mr Hajiev were the huge energy projects realized in the Baltic Sea Region as well as in the Black Sea, for instance North Stream 2 in the Baltic Sea as well as Turkstream and

Nabucco in the Black Sea region. Finally, the speaker touched upon the question of migrants and refugees. He pointed out that there were 60 million migrants and refugees in the world which indicated that among 110 people in the world, there was one a refugee or migrant. In the Black Sea area, the number was even higher – one out of 60 people was a refugee or a migrant and in Azerbaijan, even one out of 10 people was a migrant. He emphasized that the refugee problem caused huge damage to the world economy which was estimated to be a loss of 500 billion dollars. It was an obligation for all parliamentarians to find a solution to that problem. And the best solution for the region was peace, security and stability. At that point, he referred to the history of the Åland Islands that could be the best example of finding a peaceful solution of territorial integrity by granting the nation the right of self-definition. Regarding the memorandum of understanding signed by the BSPC and the PABSEC the previous year, he proposed organizing a joint seminar on the Standing Committee level in the spring the following year. At such a meeting hosted by PABSEC, he offered that all issues of common interest could be discussed. He closed his speech by a personal remark and recalled the year 1991 when his home country received its independence, the borders had been opened, information technology had entered people's lives, and the world had become small. He shared his belief that what this little world needed were security, stability, peace and prosperity.



SECOND SESSION

The Vision of a Healthy Baltic Sea - A Call for more Action

The session was chaired by Prof Jānis Vucāns, Member of the Parliament of Latvia, and co-chaired by Dorota Arciszewska-Mielewczyk, Member of the Parliament of Poland. The background for the session was the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting on 6 March in Brussels: Renewed efforts for a Healthy Baltic Sea. The BSPC had supported the Baltic Sea Action Plan of HELCOM since the very beginning; however, three years before the end of the current Action Plan, a good environmental status for the Baltic Sea has not yet been achieved. Therefore, more political pressure and more action is needed in that respect.

Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for Environment Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, referred in his video message to the report on the state of the Baltic Sea, HELCOM II, which had been adopted in March together with the Ministerial Declaration. He pointed out that this was a positive step towards a healthier sea with a clear mandate for an action plan after 2020. The Finnish chairmanship had guided HELCOM towards the sustainable development of the local blue economy in line with the UN sustainable development goals. The Commissioner emphasized that sustainability was the key to the future of the Baltic Sea. It was the main topic of the recent Commission Report on Blue Growth and the Region, and it was a watchword for the shipping industry, for the bio economy, for coastal tourism and for other future blue growth sectors.



The speaker went on to discuss blue growth and investment. He explained that what was most needed was coordinated action. That was true of ocean energy, tidal and wave technologies which were making great progress in the Baltic Sea Region. Also, highly developed supply chain services must be taken to another level. The speaker claimed that to maintain that leadership especially during

the commercialization phase, more coordination, more political support and more available and accessible investments were needed. He assured those present that most of the framework was already in place. He mentioned the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as a very useful platform for exchange. Now it should be used to work on building a common vision.

The speaker appealed for a more strategic approach which would focus on pulling resources, scaling the projects and reaching critical mass. He emphasized that there was a need to extend and to strengthen the cross-sectorial, regional and interregional partnerships. In fulfilling these tasks, EU funding could help. At this point, he mentioned the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund with the Baltic Scope project which had brought together national authorities in maritime spatial planning. Another project mentioned by the Commissioner was BLASTIC funded by the European Regional and Development Fund.

The speaker addressed the issue of litter in the sea. He explained that mapping litter sources in urban areas and at sea was a first step to reduce the hazardous substances and plastic waste at sea. The European Union was working towards oceans that were healthy, safe and sustainable. The EU's long-standing objective was in line with the global sustainable development goals. However, he underlined the importance of member states, regions as well as the worlds of business and academia working together.

He furthermore considered that the spirit of cooperation was already very evident across the Baltic region and thanked the BSPC delegates for their political engagement and for their valuable parliamentary expertise.

Kimmo Tiilikainen, Minister of the Environment, Energy and Housing of Finland, remarked that he was the head of the Finnish delegation to the BSPC which was why he would be especially pleased to present the Priorities of the Finnish HELCOM Chairmanship and The future of the Baltic Sea Action Plan to the BSPC delegates. He reported that the Holistic Assessment and the State of the Baltic Sea Report published by HELCOM in July, provided the same message: There were many good trends but still too many red areas on the maps indicating that a good status of the sea had not yet been reached. In March 2018, at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in Brussels, the status of implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan had been reviewed. Unfortunately, the conclusions were that although implementation was underway, it had not progressed as swiftly as it should have, and there was still much to do



before 2021, the deadline year for the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The speaker went on to highlight the strengths of the Baltic Sea Region stakeholders. Most important for him were: the good scientific basis with more than 100 years of scientific cooperation between the Baltic Sea states and the more recent BONUS programmes for funding; next, sharing a common view of what a “healthy Baltic Sea” is in all of its technical details, thanks to HELCOM’s monitoring and assessment work, and last but not least the ability to collaborate and cooperate, of which the Baltic Sea Action Plan was a good example. The Minister referred to recent examples of such cooperation, i.e. preparations to jointly address the International Maritime Organisation, IMO, to make the Baltic Sea a Nitrogen Emission Control Area (NECA); jointly designating 12 % of the area of the Baltic Sea as a marine protected area, and the recent agreement of all Baltic Sea states on the description of nine Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs).

With regard to the Finnish Chairmanship of HELCOM, Mr Tiilikainen informed the delegates that the Chair would be Ms Saara Bäck from the Ministry of the Environment. He stressed that Finland was fully committed to its chairmanship, to supporting HELCOM’s work and to fulfilling the priorities of the Finnish chairmanship. The priorities mentioned by the Minister were as follows: updating the Baltic Sea Action Plan, understood as leading the revision process of the Baltic Sea Action Plan and finding common solutions to formulate an ambitious and realistic updated plan; secondly, reducing nutrient inputs and nutrient recycling by facilitating the fine-tuning of the nutrient input reduction system based on the agreed Maximum Allowable Inputs and developing an effective follow-up system; thirdly, climate change and its consequences for the Baltic Sea such as warming, sea ice decline, acidification,

anoxia and shifting species ranges, all of which had been taken into account when updating the BSAP. The fourth priority reported by the speaker was the synergy between the Agenda 2030 and HELCOM's work.

Minister Tiilikainen underlined the important role parliamentarians had in ensuring that the Baltic Sea protection would receive the attention it deserved both in parliaments - and in the national budgets as well. He appealed to all parliamentarians to ensure that all means would be provided for the work that Baltic Sea protection needed.

Camilla Gunell, Deputy Prime Minister of the Åland Islands and Minister for Trade, Environment and Energy, presented the strategic document "Development and Sustainability Agenda for Åland", which was a response of the Åland Islands' society to the challeng-



es of climate change and the consequences of rising temperatures. She emphasized that the current year's dry and hot summer had reminded the inhabitants of the northern part of Europe that climate change was happening and that the situation strongly concerned everybody. In Åland, initiatives to counter the unsustainable elements of social development had been taken relatively early. In 2014, the parliament had adopted the collective goal of total sustainable development in Åland, and the deadline was set for the year 2051. A collective pursuit of that goal was required, a strong and decisive agenda for visions, goals and actions, indicators for monitoring those goals and a supporting structure for the realisation of the agenda. Ms Gunell underlined that the decision to start with the strategy for Åland's sustainable agenda was right on time as in 2015,

the EU member states had formally adopted the Agenda 2030 with the 17 SDGs for the world. She stated that hundreds of Ålanders had taken part to create the vision and the goals together with the representatives of business, authorities and other stakeholders. She described said collective work as a public-private-people partnership. The result of that work were seven sustainable goals, united in one sentence: “Everyone can flourish in a viable society on the islands of peace”. Then Ms Gunell went on to present the goals, e.g. goal one “Happy people whose inherent resources increase”, goal two “Everyone feels trust and has real opportunities to participate in society”, goal three “All water is of good quality”, goal four “Ecosystems in balance and biological diversity”, goal five “Attractive for residents, visitors and businesses”, goal six “Significantly higher proportion of energy from renewable sources, plus increased energy efficiency” and last but not least goal seven “Sustainable and mindful patterns of consumption and production”. Speaking of realizing that vision, she stressed that it would be possible only by joint action, through a combination of commitment and conscious actions amongst operators in every sector of society. She emphasized that not just decisiveness but also structured coordination and monitoring were needed to achieve the goals. Realization required cooperation between citizens, public, private and third sector operators. The implementation also required the mobilization of economic resources controlled by public financiers and private investors. She explained that therefore a special council, the Development and Sustainability Council, had been appointed to take on the responsibility and to lead the work. The council consisted of leading people from various sectors and was responsible for the network’s vitality and long-term existence. The government and the parliament held the overall political responsibility for the realization of the agenda but all municipalities, authorities and other public sector operations were expected to take an active part in the realization of it and to act as examples by thoroughly applying the principles of sustainability to their own working practices. As an example of ongoing action, the Minister mentioned Clic Innovation Ltd, a Finnish organisation owned by key industry and universities who had chosen the Åland Islands to test and demonstrate new business models for the future energy market. The Minister invited all delegates to visit her home region in the future and assured them that they would be able to find many good practice examples for their sustainable work there.

Ottilia Thoreson, Director of the Baltic Ecoregion Programme in the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), remarked that the challenges facing the Baltic Sea Region community were growing at a faster rate than solutions or the ways they could be addressed. Therefore, the commitment delivered by different member states



that were part of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan were of utmost importance. The assessment developed by the Baltic Ecoregion Programme had shown through the scorecard that implementation was weak and needed to be strengthened and better coordinated. The speaker highlighted that scorecards did not show the biological state of the Baltic Sea as had been done by HELCOM in their excellent report but indicated to what degree governments followed through on their commitments. The scorecard measured progress similar to the Baltic Sea Region Action Plan, including key areas such as Eutrophication, Hazardous Substances, Biodiversity, Maritime Activities and additionally Delivery towards a Sustainable Blue Economy. The scorecard aimed at showing how far the countries of the BSAP had met the political commitments, and what had happened in the last five years, since the previous Scorecard had been devised in 2013. Ms Thoreson explained that the HELCOM data base was used for the scorecard. Therefore, the *accuracy* of the analysis was limited to the quality of countries' reporting. They had looked at the actions *according to action deadlines*. Tracking the progress was not an easy task because a great number of actions and deadlines had been changed, split into new actions or combined with little explanation for this alteration. What could be seen was that all the countries were doing rather poorly, as shown in red in the scorecard's summary. The speaker underlined that regrettably, all countries were lagging behind on their commitments to meet the Baltic Sea Action Plan goal of 2021. She also pointed out that, on the other hand, progress had been made since the last scorecard five years earlier. Some countries like Finland and Germany had made progress for example in the area of hazardous substances as well as some other countries. Sweden was the top-ranking nation – followed by Finland and Denmark - in a very low-graded, failing

class. Out of the 177 actions of the BSAP, there were as many as 103 actions that had passed their deadline. Only half of the 177 actions were considered accomplished. Parliamentarians should be aware that their countries were not doing enough. Ms Thoreson remarked at this point that the HELCOM secretariat was doing a great job to push the actions through. This effort had resulted in the score of 70 % delivered joint actions which had been accomplished by the countries together with the leadership of the Secretariat. The speaker emphasized that on the national level, much more had to be done. With regard to hazardous substances, the speaker conceded that much had been done but nonetheless, she pointed out that the level of contamination had not decreased since 2010 and that contaminants had reached a higher level in the columns for animals, sediments and water. Species were still accumulating more contaminants. With regard to biodiversity, Ms Thoreson reported that two deadline for the conservation of many species had not been met. Moreover, many species showed a poor status throughout the food web. To reverse the trend in the field of biodiversity, more actions had to be delivered. As to maritime activities, the speaker noted that there had been some great success stories, for instance the reduction of sulphur through the respective emissions ban. However, during the last five years, very little had been achieved beyond that. The situation was similar with regard to the major threat of alien species and a more and more pertinent problem – underwater noise.

The speaker also informed the conference about the score of sustainable or blue growth. The WWF had developed their own definition of a sustainable blue economy, starting from the understanding that no economy could sustain itself when its natural resource base was systematically being degraded.

To build a sustainable blue economy, smart investment and better management were needed. Those principle had been applied to the WWF report “All Hands on Deck”. Ms Thoreson pointed out that the Baltic Sea Region could become a model region to drive the sustainable blue economy. However, leadership from the governments was needed to achieve this. She gave positive examples of Sweden, Finland, Germany and Russia who had made significant progress, and the speaker appealed to the stakeholders to be more persistent, focusing on implementing measures agreed in the BSAP, ensuring that the countries promptly reported on the progress of actions. It was necessary for countries to commit increased financing to ensure that the BSAP was completed and the sustainable blue economy implemented.

Marc Klaus, Director of the initiative Race for the Baltic and Baltic Sea City Accelerator, informed the conference about the organisation he represented, its mission and one of its main programmes.



He explained that Race for the Baltic was a foundation focusing on strategic initiatives to improve the state of the Baltic Sea. It had been founded over a decade before by Niklas Zennström, the co-founder of Skype and the CEO and co-founder of Atomico. The organisation had worked to get key stakeholders around the table to collectively act to stop the decline and degradation of the Baltic Sea. The speaker emphasized that the main idea behind Race for the Baltic was to change people's mindset, from seeing the challenges of the Baltic Sea as a problem to seeing them as an opportunity. He referred to the name of the organisation which implied that it had begun a race, "A Race for the Baltic".

The purpose of the race in 2013 had been to raise awareness about the state of the Baltic Sea and to spearhead a call for more action. In addition to raising awareness, the campaign was an effort to increase collaboration – and had brought together over 100 organisations as partners on the 3,700 km cycle ride around the Baltic Sea. Moreover, the campaign also had succeeded in collecting over 25,000 signatures in a petition calling on ministers to act to fulfil the goals in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. This petition and the signatures had been presented by Niklas Zennström at the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting held in Copenhagen in October 2013. The next step was creating a road map the cities could follow to take action. The study provided by the Boston Consulting Group for the organisation had shown that the future of the Baltic Sea could be improved by a stronger environmental strategy at the municipal level – and that the investment in clear waters could create jobs and boost economic output.

Across the entire region, the BCG calculated, the difference between a "shipwrecked" scenario and a "clear waters" scenario could

amount to 900,000 jobs and 270 million euros in economic output. The speaker pointed out that by restoring local waters, a city could help to develop sustainable businesses in the community, increase the recreation and aesthetic value of the region, achieve better flood control and, more broadly, raise the general well-being of its citizens. Mr Klaus underlined the fact that as the result of the bike tour and from several meetings in the cities around the Baltic Sea Region, he and his team found out that many local politicians did not sense enough incentive to really act. Environmental goals were set at the top – on the regional or national level – but in many cases, cities were the ones that would need to make the investments and they had these “investments” as a cost. The response to that challenge was The City Accelerator which was a platform for public and private actors and science to explore and co-create innovative approaches to local water challenges and meet sustainability objectives. Building on changing the mind-set from “problem” to “opportunity”, the team had worked together to help create business cases and to create a new narrative about the Baltic Sea. In the Baltic Sea City Accelerator programme, experts from science, entrepreneurs, cities and solution providers were brought together to leverage the power of a collective vision for the Baltic Sea Region. Twelve cities from four countries participated in the Baltic Sea City Accelerator from 2015-2017. Vaxholm, Värmdö, Västervik and Kalmar from Sweden, Panevezys in Lithuania and Slupsk in Poland as well as Mariehamn. The programme improved their understanding of Baltic Sea environmental issues, contributed to their development of a local Baltic Sea Action Plan and supported the sharing of knowledge across the Baltic Sea. The speaker highlighted the necessity of involving local authorities and stakeholders with the broader business community of investors, entrepreneurs and other actors – from science, international networks as well as NGOs to improve the state of the Baltic Sea and capture the opportunity.

Jari Nahkanen, Chairman of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, stressed that environmental policies might bring results only when the emphasis would be put on implementation. He noticed that actions that had been presented by previous speakers had been taken by actors on local and regional level, and therefore, it was necessary to safeguard that the framework of policy and instruments supported that. He noted that the negotiations about the next programme period in the EU had started, and they were not only about numbers in a budget but about the preconditions for actors to get involved. He feared that the tools and funds on the local and regional level were proposed to decrease. Mr Nahkanen referred to the subsidiarity



principle which stated that decisions and priorities should be taken as close as possible to the citizens. That enabled different priorities in the north of the Baltic Sea compared to the south. For example, in the northern parts of the Baltic Sea region, the speaker's home, much of what applied to Arctic policy was relevant and interconnected with Baltic Sea Policy. This was a fundamental fact which had to be taken into consideration when proposals about climate change and environmental issues were made as the Baltic Sea was a part of the Arctic and the Baltic Sea was also affected by global warming. He gave an example of a problem of so-called black carbon or the fine particles of soot. It caused ice melting and warming of the Arctic. Black carbon emissions were estimated to be worse than greenhouse gases. Reducing the use and emissions of black carbon was not only an environmental but also a health issue. The reduction of black carbon emissions in the Baltic Sea region was realistic through cross-border cooperation. Therefore, the speaker expressed his concern that when the Commission proposed merging the maritime cross-border programmes, in an eagerness for a more effective administration, they would lose the essence of effective governance. Another great threat reported by the speaker was that for the first time ever in an EU Budget proposal, the amount of funds directly managed by the European Commission was greater than the amount that would be managed by the member states and regions. The mechanisms and also the political priority setting were being centralised to either capitals or Brussels. The speaker stressed that this was not the right direction; a functional implementation was required. He also mentioned that new political priorities and Britain's exit would sharply reduce EU finances. That meant that the EU was expected to do more but with less funds. The CPMR BSC chairman stated that the CPMR Baltic

Sea Commission was highly concerned that the EU Commission had proposed reducing the budget for Interreg, despite its added value for fostering cooperation across Europe. There was a risk that Interreg would not be able to deliver due to its very limited financial resources. The CPMR was calling for a strong and well-resourced European Territorial Cooperation. He also expressed his concern as to the new architecture for maritime cooperation proposed by the Commission, which diminished the programmes that were close to local and regional actors. He opposed the scenario to integrate Interreg maritime cross-border programmes into transnational programmes, which would mean getting rid of the South Baltic, Central Baltic and Botnia-Atlantica programmes, which had brought tangible results.

He concluded his speech by saying that politicians on the national, regional and local level must engage even more in the discussions on what future the EU wanted because the action was needed for the Baltic Sea, also for its competitiveness and connectedness.

Comments

Valentina Pivnenko, Member of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, expressed her concern that some statements voiced during the session did not contribute positively to a debate on sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region, increasing the quality of life of inhabitants and the prosperity of all of those who were living in the Baltic Sea countries; after all, these were the reasons for coming together at that session in the first place. The main concern had been brought by some parts of Ms Gestrin's report referring to Russia, to Crimea and the sanctions in place, indicating that all those issues were making it almost impossible to work in the environmental area. Ms Pivnenko stressed that Crimea had always been a part of Russia, as clearly witnessed by history; therefore, linking sanctions to the impossibility of cooperation was not just incorrect, it did not refer to reality. The speaker underlined that to preserve the quality of clean water, dealing with waste water, preserving the environment had been a hard endeavour. Those issues were a top priority for Russia, not only for the government of the Russian Federation but for all the member states working in the Baltic Sea Region and all regional parliaments of four Russian Baltic Sea regions. Ms Pivnenko also reminded her audience of the Standing Committee meeting in Finland organized by Kari Kulmala, Member of the Finnish Parliament, at which the questions around the environ-

mental cooperation of Russia and Finland had been discussed. She acknowledged that the debate had been constructive and mutually beneficial, and that it had led to changes in the approach towards the development of that region. She mentioned that in Russia, the topic had been continuously discussed on the national level but also with local authorities. Moreover, in the fourth quarter of the year, the progress of environmental projects would be monitored, particularly those efforts that had been earmarked by the European Commission, the European Council or the governments of Finland and Russia. She stressed that Russia was very concerned about the state of the most important European lakes in the Republic. The purity of their water was closely linked to the environmental state of the Baltic Sea Region. That issue was of utmost importance to local populations. Therefore, a special Federal Programme to protect those lakes had been set. All those issues were discussed in Petrozavodsk and also in the State Duma consultations with the Ministers. Ms Pivnenko stressed that she was firmly convinced that



the programme would get the financial resources it required, and it would be subject to monitoring and screening. She concluded her intervention by saying that examples given by her had proved that the discussion on how to improve the cooperation for the benefit of the region was needed rather than discussing political issues which would lead to the destabilization of that cooperation.

Sussane Swensson, Member of the Swedish Parliament, in her comment referred to the urgent issue of plastic waste in the sea. She mentioned that a positive signal had come from the BSPC when the drafting committee had modified the approach in the Resolution towards stronger formulations regarding plastic and its amounts in the seas.

She welcomed the ban of the EU on single-use plastics but warned that it was not enough because the discussion on micro plastics and plastic pollution in the ocean had been carried on in the BSPC, but



the situation was not improving. Therefore, Ms Swensson called for the process of implementing new methods across the Baltic Sea Region to be sped up so as to reduce the number of plastic packages, plastic bags etc. She mentioned that influencing public opinion was important and gave an example of the law introduced in Sweden according to which a customer had to be asked whether she or he needed a plastic bag. The law had reduced the number of plastic bags offered in retail outlets by 50 %. The speaker called for more research, more legislation and more action in all countries across the Baltic Sea.

The last point in the session agenda was a panel debate moderated by Simon Holmström, the representative of the young generation and the Chairman of the Regeneration 2030 summit. He was given the opportunity to raise the core questions for the future to the decision makers of today.

Simon Holmström proposed that the topic of the discussion he was about to moderate should be “How to make the Baltic Sea Region great again” and invited all speakers of the second session to take part in the debate.

His first question to Otilia Thoreson was why the countries of the Baltic Sea were not good at implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan goals.

Otilia Thoreson's opinion was that the many counteracting policies, some on the national, some on the regional, some on the local level, streamlined by other spheres and by other ministers, could be blamed for that situation. She mentioned that the work HELCOM performed was mainly in the capacity of the ministers of environment, but back home, they had to negotiate with the enterprise ministries, forestry ministries, agriculture etc. which was not an easy task to have. That was the challenge, according to the speaker. More cohesion and intergovernmental discussions towards understanding the environment was a top priority and could improve the situation.

Minister **Kimmo Tiilikainen** agreed with Otilia Thoreson that the lack of implementation was a main problem. However, he stressed that each government had to be responsible for doing their work. He reminded his audience that one of the reasons for Finland raising the importance of the Agenda 2030 was the holistic approach which Finland was applying in their policies. It was that approach which had led to a debate on a sustainable future rather than one or the other ministry issue. At that point, he mentioned the Åland Islands' strategy as a great example of a holistic approach to envi-

ronmental issues. He called for more spirit in implementing the Agenda 2030

Minister **Camilla Gunell** admitted that the island location of Åland, with solar and wind energy resources, was an important prerequisite of success. She compared the process of developing a green strategy to building a house – in both cases, the work had to start from the ground up.

Simon Holmström requested an answer about the most pressing obstacles when it came to achieving a healthy Baltic Sea.

Jari Nahkanen admitted that there were different challenges in different parts of the Baltic Sea. Therefore, cooperation was needed on various levels, although this did not have to be a cooperation at a state level; a cooperation between regions was equally beneficial. He underlined that currently more than ever, cooperation and cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region and in Europe were needed. He gave an example of the efforts of the northern Sweden and Finnish border regions to save natural salmon populations. As a result of the cooperation between those regions, Finland decided to shift focus from planting fish to maintaining and restoring the natural reproductive cycle in the Finnish national fishing strategy.

Marc Klaus was asked whether it was possible that business in the Baltic Sea could transition towards the blue economy. He confirmed that there was also a significant business opportunity in generations or areas not yet identified, for example large corporate shipping companies could shift from the traditional maritime economy to an economy based on digital technologies, from skills for developing games or music to skills for collecting data around the ocean or services and discovery technologies based on information related to the Baltic sea. The speaker mentioned that another field of progress could concern the leadership. The private sector could bring some leadership and initiatives to the public sector; however, such a cooperation would require the public sector to provide predictable opportunities on a longer term for private investments. And another aspect mentioned by the speaker was the understanding of the consumer. Business leaders might also address the role that enterprises could take to provide a product that was sustainably produced for a more sustainable consumption pattern. Identifying the marketing perspective, presenting the leadership issues, looking for a way to tap sectors of the economy that hadn't been seen as contributing to the health of the Baltic Sea – all of these aspects could also contribute to the transition process.

Ottilia Thoreson referred to the topic of the conference which was a call for action and stressed that there had been a lot of talk about taking action, implementation, leadership and cooperation. All of those were valid points to consider for the Agenda 2030. However, for Ms Thoreson, it was worrying that even the goals for 2021 would not be achieved. Describing issues by using new buzz words only moved the goal further away. To Ms Thoreson, leadership was about taking action immediately and having immediate results.

Minister **Kimmo Tiilikainen** answered the question of whether there were too many buzz words and too many strategies emphasized. He stated that the number of strategies was sufficient, but more actions were needed to go straight forward with the implementation, for example the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The speaker pointed out that the challenges were even greater than earlier because of climate change and new threats such as macro and micro plastics. Each country must improve its performance and focus on recycling nutrients in the spirit of the circular economy which had proved to be another great challenge for all countries around the Baltic Sea. The speaker informed the delegates that Finland, follow-



ing the European Commission's proposal of a European Strategy for Plastic in a Circular Economy, had developed a national roadmap.

Minister **Camilla Gunell** supported the opinion of the preceding speaker and called for thorough analyses of the reasons for not reaching the 2021 BSAP and which conditions were needed to be successful next time. She emphasized that societies could not afford to fail with the climate question. Ms Gunell stressed that harmonizing the rules and legislation around the Baltic Sea Region would be very valuable and beneficial for all stakeholders.

Marc Klaus stated that great work had been done already, with many best practice examples, but adopting a certain solution could be perceived as risky for some local politicians who had to take the election cycle into account. Therefore, more information sharing was needed to help politicians take decisions and to push for faster action. He explained that many solutions or actions started at a 50 % level; if they were launched at 80 %, there would be enough time to work on the remaining 20 %. Too often, though, actions even started from scratch.



Jari Nahkanen informed the delegates that existing Baltic Sea Region networks could help in sharing information about best practice examples. He mentioned CPMR, BSC, BSSSC and UBC and highlighted that closer cooperation was required between those organisations.

Ottilia Thoreson drew attention to the fact that recently, everybody had been talking about plastics, even though plastic litters had been a maritime problem for a long time before. She believed the interest had been brought to the public, directly connecting it to the people and people's health. She mentioned that the English Premier League had teamed up with Sky News in an ambitious new partnership aimed at getting clubs and fans to stop using single-use plastics. For Ms Thoreson, that action was an example of how to tackle the problem of plastics.

Simon Holmström asked his panellists if more alternative actions – such as the [school strike for climate initiated by 15-year-old Greta Thunberg](#) – were needed to speed up the work.

Minister **Camilla Gunell** replied that if the children in all participating countries would refuse to go to school before any action against climate change was taken, there would be a revolution.

Minister **Kimmo Tiilikainen** was of the opinion that a paradigm change was necessary for if the Agenda 2030 and Paris Agreement target to be met. First of all, he underlined, the pipeline-fossil-based economy had to be converted into a circular economy.

In their final round, the panellists pointed out the most urgent issue that should be combatted together.

For **Jari Nahkanen**, it was the need for action towards reducing plastic waste and the inflow of hazardous substances into the Baltic Sea. He gave an example of the BLASTIC project – one of the flagships of the Baltic Sea Strategy which aimed at compiling a list of pathways and sources as well as recommendations for cost-effective measures to combat marine litter in e.g. the waste and water sector on a municipal level.

Marc Klaus said that that it could help to shift minds, perceiving waste water treatment as production facilities for resources and focusing on nitrification through recycling, i.e. the circular economy. Also, awareness could be raised by understanding on a very strong emotional level that the Baltic Sea was the swimming, the fishing and the sailing.

Ottília Thoreson underlined that the catchment area of the Baltic Sea was four times larger than the Baltic Sea itself. Therefore, a huge area had to be involved for the Baltic Sea Action Plan. She reminded the audience that there were many EU policies, for instance a very good Maritime Framework Directive, a Water Framework directive, but they were not delivered by countries. She indicated that water was the key factor for climate issues; on the one hand, there were more and more floods while on the other hand, good drinking water was lacking. For the speaker, therefore, water linked societies together and was relevant to the climate issue and public health.

Minister **Camilla Gunell** shared her belief that the stakeholders knew what had to be done. Good practice examples should be highlighted, and more effort had to be put into the work.

Minister **Kimmo Tiilikainen** pointed out that a clean Baltic Sea would have a huge impact on people's welfare and on the economy. The Baltic Sea Action Plan would be updated, and the measures to be implemented should be treated as investments into a cleaner future. He called on those present for their support to reach that ambitious goal.





Third Session

Sustainable Energy, Smart Energy Distribution Platform

The session was chaired by Valentina Pivnenko, Member of the State Duma, Russian Federation, and co-chaired by Karin Gaardsted, Member of the Parliament of Denmark

Mr **Berndt Schalin**, Senior Advisor to the Government of Åland, presented the topic of “The Future Fossil-Free Energy System on Åland”. He spoke about pilot systems, which had been in the planning stage for a long time and would be entering full-scale implementation, to show that a fossil-free energy system was possible. Åland was planning to be fossil-free in its energy supply as soon as possible, at the very latest by 2050. To that end, a pilot project had been devised, attracting major technology suppliers, to create an energy grid run exclusively on renewable sources. The challenges here were related to wind and solar power not being stable sources of energy. They were variable, or “VRES” (Variable Renewable Energy Sources). For a truly self-sustainable energy grid with 100 % renewable sources, flexibility was necessary. This demonstration system was about proving that a flexible energy system with 100 % renewable power sources was possible. He stressed that this could not be done with the current structures of energy grids in most countries. That meant primarily changing the rules by which the energy market was operating, to incentivize players to introduce flexibility into the system. The government recognized that it was the key to empower the citizens to understand and engage with the system. Accordingly, it was explained to people what and why they were doing and what that meant for everyone in society. Most similar projects in the past had hit obstructions in the way of citizen protests.



By now, wind and solar had become feasible energy production methods but were hampered by their variability. On Åland, it was

important to demonstrate the sources of flexibility. The viability required a smart grid as the foundation.

The Åland Islands had been selected because of a number of unique characteristics, such as excellent wind and solar conditions, with the most solar hours in Finland; because 80 % of electricity was imported from Sweden, that made switching over to a new grid easier; thanks to the Islands' being self-governed with its own rules on electricity, regulations could be tweaked more easily than in larger markets; Åland is also a "full society" of 30,000 citizens, with an industry and service sector, allowing the results of the demonstration to be scaled up; moreover, wind parks had already been planned to cover more than the Islands' electricity requirements. Finally, Mr Schalin stressed that most of the features of the Åland Islands, such as GDP, electricity consumption or population, were similar to the rest of Finland.

He also mentioned that the roll-out would be an ongoing process with several stages. There were the investments into renewable energy that were not part of the demonstration project as such but rather an element of the Åland Islands' 20-year experience of installing wind power. Several houses on the islands also had solar power rooftops. Moreover, the infrastructure for electric power charging points had been established, assisting in the fast increase in the number of electric vehicle sales. Furthermore, electric buses were being planned. Nonetheless, the speaker underlined that these were processes that had already been started and were continuing independent of the demonstration project.

In terms of organisation, the project had started with an intense phase of research, development and innovation, scheduled to be completed at the end of 2018. It was managed by an innovation cluster called Clic Innovation Ltd., owned by 30 companies and 16 universities. For the upcoming implementation phase, a new company would be formed, a joint venture between Clic Innovation and the Åland Island industry organisations. The new company, the speaker noted, would be up and running within about four weeks of his speech. He also noted that the project had drawn much interest from the industry, leading to a large number of players participating in the demonstration.

As the co-chair, Ms **Gaardsted** thanked him and mentioned that the problem was no longer to produce renewable energy but rather how to store it so that it could be used when needed.

Mr **Schalin** agreed on that count and confirmed that this was a large part of the flexibility that he had been talking about. He added that another factor was shifting consumption when it was applicable. Moreover, it was necessary to consider how to integrate it into

the market in a cost-efficient way, so that electricity prices were not raised due to storage. In a very simple calculation, he described that they had identified about six days with neither wind nor sun, sometime during the winter on the Åland Islands. For the local population, that equated to 6 GWh of electricity. Storing that amount of power in lithium-ion batteries at current prices would cost 1.9 billion euros. Since this was an impossible price, other solutions needed to be found.

Mr **Reinis Āboltiņš**, energy market and policy expert, reported about challenges to sustainable energy in the Baltic Sea region. He underlined the geographic complexity and therefore the difficulties in improving the interconnectivity. Here, electricity was concerned but the placement of natural gas pipelines would be equally complex and challenging. He admitted that currently, there were only three electrical connections between the Baltic states and Scandinavia, two between Estonia and Finland as well as one between Lithuania and Sweden. Mr Āboltiņš stressed that these were important for the functioning of the Nordic electricity spot market, Nord Pool. The speaker noted that the Baltic Sea Region was often looked at as a single unit, but at the same time, it was difficult to imagine a more diverse ecosystem of diverging power systems as the countries of the region presented.



Key energy production in the local states – also including Iceland and Norway as parts of the BSPC – were geothermal energy, dominating in Iceland, while Norway derived nearly all of its energy from large hydro power plants. Denmark featured a great deal of wind power as well as CHPs. Mr Āboltiņš explained the latter as Combined Heat and Power, that is, power plants producing heat and electricity at the same time. In the case of Denmark's CHPs, they were switching over primarily to using biomass as their fuel from coal and natural gas. Sweden's electricity supply was dominated by large hydro power plants, especially in the northern parts; moreover, the country had stuck with nuclear power but also used wind and biomass as energy sources. Finland based its energy supply on gas CHPs, also nuclear power – where, the speaker noted, the public opinion had stayed roughly 50:50 on pro and contra nuclear energy -, large hydro power as well as wind plants. The parts of Russia on the Baltic Sea, i.e. Kaliningrad and St Petersburg, relied mostly on nuclear power

plants as well as CHPs. Mr Āboltiņš pointed out that Estonia had worked hard to introduce renewable energy but still relied primarily on oil shale which was particularly “dirty”, even compared to other fossil fuels. Nonetheless, this resource had made Estonia one of the most energy-independent countries among the EU member states. Latvia, though, relied mostly on large hydro power plants as well as gas CHPs, with about one third of their energy imported from neighbouring countries, mostly from Estonia. After Lithuania had discontinued – or stalled – its nuclear energy program, it was left with gas CHPs, hydro energy, wind power and biomass plants. Among all the countries around the Baltic Sea, Lithuania was probably the most energy-dependent nation, the speaker stressed. For Poland, coal was still its primary source of energy, not least because it was a native source of energy; the country also made use of gas CHPs and some wind energy. Mr Āboltiņš expected the share of gas in the energy mix to rise as the EU would pressure Poland to switch from the fossil fuel coal to the fossil fuel gas, as the latter is much cleaner, one of the cleanest resources. Finally, the Baltic Sea Region part of Germany had gas CHPs, plenty of wind power, much like Denmark, and biomass reactors; moreover, its transmission and distribution network was very well developed. This also allowed integrating variable renewable energy sources into the grid and distributing evenly, covering peak hours etc. Mr Āboltiņš admitted that there was indeed a huge diversity in the countries around the Baltic Sea. Some were fully energy-independent, while some others were quite energy-dependent. The question was how to deal with this situation. Key for sustainable energy production was the introduction of fresh renewable energy sources and the switch of energy sources – from coal to natural gas, from gas to more distributed, renewable sources. Mr Āboltiņš listed six key challenges to sustainable energy, technical or technological, economic or commercial, environmental, political, legal and societal. He mentioned the Baltic SCOPE project concerning cooperation among the Baltic Sea Region states in marine spatial planning. The project aimed at incorporating four areas: energy, shipping, fisheries and the environment. The interactions of these areas were being investigated. As for the origins of the project, Mr Āboltiņš pointed out that marine space was finite and did not expand, but the demand for that space was growing quickly. The increasing demand and growing competition between maritime sectors needed to be funnelled into an integrated planning and management approach. In the Baltic SCOPE project, experts and policy-makers such as parliamentarians and members of the executive were brought together to balance the needs of the sectors.

The last part of his presentation referred to the Nord Pool power market and the electricity system price.

Comments

Silja Dögg Gunnarsdottir, Member of the Icelandic Parliament, wished to clarify that 70 % of Iceland's energy production came from hydro power and less than 30 % from geothermal sources. On the other hand, 70 % of consumption was covered by geothermal energy since it was used to heat buildings. In general, she said that 99 % of Iceland's energy came from renewable sources, and efforts were underway to implement wind energy. In that, she considered Mr Schalin's presentation interesting since Iceland could benefit from the demonstration project on Åland.

Prof. Jānis Vucāns, Member of the Latvian Parliament, referred to the Nord Pool map and asked for the reason behind the price divergence between Norway and the other nations of that market.

Mr Āboltiņš replied that the primary reason was that Sweden and Finland were more closely connected with the Baltic states; in addition, the energy portfolio and the availability of energy resources also played a role. He pointed out that the north of Sweden set the price for the rest of the Baltic Sea countries, with the exception of Norway. Any change in the north of Sweden affected all the immediately connected regions, while Norway was more energy-independent in this respect. Moreover, the dry season had not impacted Norway as much as Sweden since more snow – or water – was generally available in Norway. Therefore, the Norwegian prices were generally lower than in the rest of the market, although Mr Āboltiņš pointed out that the prices in the four subdivisions of Norway also differed from each other. In the Oslo price area (Norway 1), the prices were often similar to those of the Swedish price areas Sweden 3 and Sweden 4. The prices in the remaining Norwegian regions generally were lower than those of Norway.

Prof. Jānis Vucāns conceded that the Baltic Sea Region was not the sunniest area in Europe or the world and noted that solar power had not been listed as a major source of energy for any of these nations. Nonetheless, in Lithuania, more and more fields were covered by solar panels rather than being farmland.

In response, Mr Āboltiņš stressed that his presentation had been describing the current situation rather than drawing up the prospects of future power supplies. He agreed that solar energy was being researched intensively, not least by Nordic Energy Research, based in Oslo, which was investigating the efficiency of solar panels with the goal of generating enough power even in Scandinavia. He noted that the angle of sunlight was different, so the panels had to be

more efficient to produce the same amount of electricity. He also confirmed that Lithuania had indeed set up plenty of solar energy parks, adding that a similar process was going on in other nations, such as Scandinavia. This was less true of Latvia and Estonia. Mr Āboltiņš concluded by saying that the general wisdom said that solar power was part of the future of the energy mix, also in the Baltic Sea Region. The use of solar energy would match that of the rest of Europe in the future.

Kolbeinn Óttarsson Proppé, Member of the Icelandic Parliament, noted the interconnectedness of the EU energy grid, including the EU member states among the Baltic Sea states, and wondered how that complication affected the analysis.

Mr Āboltiņš said that all the production units only made sense when connected to the grid, and the power grid only made sense when it was well connected nationally and internationally. Accordingly, the grid had to be as smart as possible. Technologically, it should be so advanced that it could react in real time to changes in demand and use the benefits of demand-side management. In the future, the households – not just industrial consumers – would probably have an agreement with the grid operator – or the distribution system operator – regarding potential energy sources in their homes. With the respective agreement, the operator could manage these as well



to ease peak demand situations. Mr Āboltiņš underlined that the best energy was the one we did not use rather than the one we did produce. All these issues had to be considered: energy efficiency, smart management of power grids and effective incorporation of all sources of consumption and production in the smart grid. It was complex in terms of technology and management. He pointed out that the EU energy policy was clearly steering towards implementing such a smart grid. It was only a matter of time until this became real, and that would also affect energy markets, leading to less volatile and more linear pricing, with changes mostly related to the respective season.

Ulrike Sparr, Member of the State Parliament of Hamburg, was considering the divergent regulations in the various nations and stated that there should be a unification of these policies, directed towards more renewable energy in the grid. She considered the political side more important since there was a basic understanding of how the technological side should work.

Mr Āboltiņš responded that this issue fell under the legal challenges he had outlined in his presentation. He also pointed out that the EU was moving towards a more unified approach to the regulatory framework for the functioning of energy systems. The EU, he stated, already had a coordinating organisation in this field that was al-



ready working on the regulatory principles of the member states. In his mind, the picture was not too bleak, with a lot of work already having been done. While he could not foresee a homogeneous regulatory framework across all of Europe, a set of common principles would be implemented, allowing consumers to get the best out of the European energy market, in terms of prices and the availability of energy.

General Debate

With this debate, the BSPC has tried out a new format, a general debate without any restrictions on content, to give parliamentarians the opportunity to address those issues which they consider to be particularly important at the moment.

Atis Lejiņš, Member of the Parliament of Latvia, took the floor to speak on international rights and Crimea. He stated that he felt forced to make a statement of his own in light of previous statements supporting criminal actions going against everything the UN stood for. For the record, he said that Crimea had not always been a part of Russia. Today, it was *de facto* part of Russia but not *de jure*. Only eight states had recognized the annexation, among them North Korea, Syria, Venezuela. He also called it a risky prophecy to state that Crimea would stay in Russia forever. The speaker mentioned that Stalin had said something like that about the Baltic states. Now, the Soviet Union had disappeared. Russia, in the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, had stated that “Russia [would] respect Belarussian, Kazakh and Ukrainian independence, sovereignty and the existing borders forever”. The speaker noted that another Russian government might return to the Budapest Memorandum and offered his hope that this would come sooner than it had for the Baltic states.

Chair-woman Valentina Pivnenko offered the comment that on the previous day, it had not been Russia that had started this discussion but rather that it had been the statement put forward by Christina Gestrin who had spoken of the Russian invasion in Crimea. She thanked the head of the Åland parliament for tending to history. She considered it interesting to see the Russian memorials that were being looked after here. The tour guide had mentioned that the Crimean war had started in Åland in the mid-nineteenth century; the resulting war had led to Crimea becoming Russian. This was



her comment on the historical side. Otherwise, she noted that it was correct to talk about international right, but she also raised the point that nobody had responded to the state revolution in Ukraine which had led to the deaths of many people in Odessa. When the referendum had been carried out, Russia had faced a choice: either to allow a war there or to protect its population, and Crimea had always been Russian. Russians had lived there all the time, the Black Sea Fleet had been stationed there, yielding a great deal of money for Ukraine. In 1956, Khrushchev had signed a law – which did not adhere to any international laws – saying that Crimea would be given to Ukraine. Ms Pivnenko underlined that this was history, and without history, no one could understand the future. She conceded that the Latvian speaker had a right to his own opinion, but Russia had the right to protect Russian citizens wherever they lived. In addition, Ms Pivnenko noted that at one prior conference, there had been a very hot debate about Russia's involvement in the war with Georgia. At that time, she had said that they had not been right and would be forced to apologize, and now, all the international organisations were aware of this: The war had been started by Georgia. Georgia had admitted it themselves, and so had other international organisations, but nobody had apologized for the things they had said. Ms Pivnenko said the time would come when they would apologize for Crimea as well.

Oleg Nilov, Member of the State Duma, noted that their discussions sometimes raised tempers which might be a good thing because it was better to discuss openly rather than to just feel unhappy and suddenly end up in an argument when discussions were no longer possible. Even in the Russian parliaments, any kind of discussion



took place directly. Any member of the public could get involved in this live debate. Still, there was too little of that in his view. He suggested live-streaming these discussions so that anyone could get involved. The speaker asked for a video recording and noted that he had been informed this was not possible. In his mind, that should be possible, he insisted. As subtle as these issues were, live-streaming and video recording would allow a more open debate. It should be possible to be critical occasionally. He noted that there were no microphones in the gallery; to be heard, one had to sign up for the speakers' list. He underlined that a general debate was important, and this should be set out in their standards. If they wanted to talk about political issues, about history, about international law, then that should be discussed. But that should be done with a working group organizing the discussion. The issue could be prepared from various points of view, with diverse questions. As participants in the group, they could then either interject some concepts, come up with resolutions and vote on them, as was being done in the parliament in Mariehamn. The speaker mentioned the bee problem as an example of what was happening and what might happen. He noted that a well-known scientist had stated that with the bee population disappearing, all of humanity's dreams of a wonderful future would just die with the bees. The speaker mentioned an experiment that he had conducted. There was a flower beloved by bees, like clover. The speaker said that bees didn't want to pollinate genetically modified seed-based plants and were avoiding these. There were special adaptations to increase the plant harvest. Farmers were buying genetically modified seeds to get a better harvest, but that was a huge problem for the bees, the speaker claimed. Accordingly, he suggested speaking about agricultural production the next time – technology and the consequences of what was supposedly progress, but the

speaker saw huge disadvantages to it. This issue should be debated, and he reiterated that for matters of international law, any debate required preparation in a working group setting. Furthermore, the speaker insisted that there were double standards being applied here. International law, in his view, was only valid if it was defended equally. He conceded that Russia was also affected by double standards in some respects. The speaker called for double standards to be abandoned or at least not to apply them in these circles. Regarding the previous Latvian speaker, he mentioned that Finland and Åland had demonstrated the mechanism of bilinguality. Many problems in Ukraine, he said, were started by Russian being banned as an official language. They needed to learn from the local example and having national leaders come to Åland to see a demilitarized place where Swedish was the official language, the flags were Finnish. He reiterated that this was a role model that would serve when discussing different conflicts which were multi-layered – language conflicts, cultural conflicts and many others. The speaker also suggested having a meeting in Crimea to find out what the locals were thinking. This could be discussed at length but at another time. With that, he yielded the floor back to the chair.

Britt Lundberg, Member of the Åland Parliament and the Nordic Council, introduced herself as both a member of the Åland parliament and a former president of the Nordic Council. Together with the Icelandic delegate, she was representing the Nordic Council and noted that both of them came from Nordic islands, known for their peaceful nature. In her mind, equality and inclusion together with high levels of openness and trust as well as low levels of corruption were important reasons for economic success. She further pointed out the Nordic Council's international strategy to strive to ensure that democracy, the rule of law, equality and human rights were always high on the international agenda. Said strategy also stated that the Council wished to pay particular attention to areas where Nordic countries were leading the way and could make a difference. As examples, she mentioned the rights of children, women, sexual minorities, people with disabilities as well as indigenous people. She was very pleased that societies in the Baltic Sea region were based on democracy, human rights and equality, but she believed there was always room for improvement. Therefore, she suggested that everybody ask themselves if they were doing enough for equality in their societies, enough for women's rights, enough to protect vulnerable minorities and if there was a way to learn from each other and to do better. One important aspect to support democracy was to always question if those affected by a decision had been engaged. Another way to ensure equality was to consider who would be happy about that decision.

She also spoke of the environment in the Baltic Sea, a topic important to all attendees. She noted that environmental problems sometimes seemed overwhelming, but not all solutions had to be that complicated. She cited a low-key example from Copenhagen called “the Green Kayak”, a concept offering tourists and residents a free trip in kayaks in exchange for collecting waste from water surfaces and sharing these experiences on social media. This concept, she stated, had proved highly effective and was very flexible, allowing hard-to-reach areas to be cleared of waste. In 2017, more than 800 volunteers had used green kayaks in Copenhagen, and more than 3.5 tonnes of waste had been collected from the harbour. Since then, the Green Kayak had expanded to Aarhus and held a series of activities focused on collecting waste from nature and water areas. She suggested that this could be easily transferred to other Baltic cities – one might simply rent a kayak, gather trash and share this on Facebook. No money was needed, she claimed. Ms Lundberg also noted that the Nordic Council was happy to join the conference of the BSPC and thanked them for the interesting days. Moreover, the Council was always open for cooperation with their friends in the BSPC. Together, she concluded, they could do better.

Annette Holmberg-Jansson, Member of the Åland Parliament, considered it a very positive aspect of the BSPC that it allowed people from small places like Åland or from large countries such as Germany to realize that they were still facing the same problems. One of those was demographic change, i.e., society getting older. She repeated the previous day’s suggestion that people would have to work until older age. Furthermore, new methods had to be found to care for the elderly. The speaker also pointed out that new challenges would arise in areas that had not been problematic earlier. Here, she mentioned loneliness. This was a serious problem as a great number of elderly people mentioned that they were feeling lonely. Loneliness, the speaker went on, could lead to psychological illnesses. 20 % of the elderly were suffering from loneliness. With an aging population, this would become one of the most common diseases. New ways were needed to activate the elderly and help them to feel part of the society. She noted an example from Åland, remote elderly care. Elderly people had screens allowing them to easily contact other elderly people. There was also a conference room for activities, such as a music quiz or playing bingo together, to visit an art exhibition via the screen, do gymnastics or simply talk to somebody, like a pharmacist, a priest, a politician etc. One old lady had told the speaker that she and her new friend would call each other every day at 2 o’clock and drink coffee together via the screen. According to the people in charge, feelings of loneliness were decreased. The speaker stressed that they had to share more best practice examples

with each other. Åland had the oldest population of Finland, and Finland itself was among the countries with the oldest populations in Europe. Accordingly, action was needed right then and there.

Next, the floor was taken by **Carola Veit**, President of the Hamburg Parliament. Referencing the previous statements by Mr Oleg Nilov, she stressed that political correctness should not deter them from pointing out problems and disagreements. After all, political organisations were forums to discuss political disagreements. The latter, in democracies, was rather the norm than the exception. She said that the official position of the Kremlin should be heard but political minority opinions should also be given the floor, despite past and present *modi operandi* in Ukraine not being understand-



able or acceptable for the majority. She offered her thanks for the organisation of the conference which had provided space for open discussions and noted that the place for new suggestions or new technical features was the Standing Committee.

Kolbeinn Óttarsson Proppé, Member of the Icelandic Parliament, pointed out that although Iceland was not technically part of the Baltic Sea, he was very proud to take part in the conference. On a personal note, he mentioned that he had arrived on Friday after meetings in Norway and Sweden and then had been able to sit on a pier and had had a euphoric moment about the work in the BSPC. They had come together to speak about the environment, the people living together in the countries around the Baltic Sea. For him, not history was the most important aspect but rather the future. With all the problems they were facing, it was the commitment



and will of the participants to tackle these issues. They discussed the problems and cooperated in trying to find solutions. The speaker considered this the best way to deal with the greatest problems faced by human beings. He noted that they were all privileged to be able to travel, meet other people and discuss the problems of their countries. Referring back to a statement of the previous day, he pointed out that their international efforts were proceeding well but that there were some difficulties in implementing measures on the national level. He said that he would work on promoting the issues and recommendations from the conference back home in Iceland.

BSPC President **Jörgen Pettersson** referred to Kalevi Sorsa, the speaker of the Finnish parliament who had been instrumental in forming the BSPC, a social democrat and also an internationalist who had seen the need for a meeting place for those who did not necessarily agree with each other. Mr Pettersson noted that human beings did not always understand each other. That might be a good thing; if you did not understand the one you were speaking to, you yourself tried to do convey your meaning better. The president stated that he believed the Finnish parliament's speaker of that time would have been proud to see the debates at the conference, to see that people were actually talking to each other. Mr Pettersson



reiterated that the moment people stopped communicating with each other was when real problems had begun. He mentioned that he was inspired by Mr Oleg Nilov. While Mr Pettersson did not agree with all the points made by Mr Nilov, he appreciated the way these had been expressed. The president noted that some of the statements made about Åland were unfortunately incorrect – such as that everyone was free to come to the islands – but that meant that Mr Pettersson had the opportunity to clarify these elements. That was how dialogue could evolve into something much better. Telling the truth and making someone cry, he stated, was better than telling a lie and making someone smile. This was an old saying that the speaker suggested people should heed in future discussions. Mr Pettersson went on to note that the participants of the BSPC came from extremely different backgrounds; some had experienced democracy for many years while others were relatively new to democracy, but all of them were the same kinds of people – people who wanted to be loved, to be respected, to feel safe; people who wanted a tomorrow that was better than today. That, he pointed out, was the basic reason for the attendees having come together. Mr Pettersson underlined that the Åland Islands were a good example of crisis management. In the early 1900s, Åland had been sandwiched in-between Finland and Sweden which might have led

to severe problems. Instead, a peaceful situation had been found, giving the islands their autonomy, and in 2022, Åland would turn 100 years old. He noted that it would be very nice if all the attendees would come to the islands for that occasion. Returning to a previous point, Mr Pettersson said that differences of opinion, even if they were painful, made the world a little better. In the future, the BSPC would be even more transparent. As parliamentarians, it was important for their voters to see these debates and what they were saying. As such, the BSPC would look into the possibility of video-streaming the debates, and the president stressed that it was an inspiring idea. Furthermore, he added that this would put pressure on people to carefully consider what they were going to say, whether their words would actually move things forward. The president believed that they had indeed moved forward on many fronts, such as energy, peace, the environment and many other questions essential for their governments and people. His humble wish, he said, was that everybody would take these ideas and suggestions back home to tell their governments that there were ideas around the Baltic Sea that were not necessarily their own but were still very valid for them.

Mr Pettersson went on to quote a saying that the winner wrote the history books. That might have been true in ancient days, he conceded, when information had sometimes been kept secret. These days, everything was transparent in a completely different world. That world should be taken opportunity of and be aware that you could always be listened to and seen. Mr Pettersson considered this a good development because it was no longer the winner who wrote the history books but rather, it was the truth that did. That should be borne in mind during their meetings and discussions. He concluded by thanking everybody for their input and wishing them the best for their future.

The floor was next yielded to Mr **Johannes Schraps** from the German Bundestag. He noted that he had become – as a newly elected representative of the Bundestag and successor to Franz Thönnies – head of the delegation from the Federal Republic of Germany to the BSPC. Much like Mr Óttarsson from Iceland, this was the first time he attended the annual conference. As such, he considered it a huge responsibility to be the head of his delegation, in particular considering the deep involvement of his predecessor in the BSPC's development. Mr Schraps noted how much he had benefited from the advice of more experienced colleagues, as should be common for younger politicians. Nonetheless, he stressed that one learned the most from one's own experiences. He considered this conference an impressive learning experience. One approach of his was to imagine what such proceedings, such debates would look like

to outsiders with no experience in the parliamentary process. In Germany, he noted, there was a saying: “Die Wahrheit liegt immer im Auge des Betrachters.” (“Truth is always in the eye of the beholder.”) Mr Schraps pointed out that truth was always changing, depending on the environment and the possible angles from which certain situations were observed. Witnessing the manifold angles manifested by the attendees, Mr Schraps noted he had often thought of another famous line: “United in diversity.” This, he said, truly described the strength of the conference, that they had found common ground despite their differences, through the unanimous adoption of the conference resolution. Mr Schraps agreed with President Pettersson’s words that they were meeting as friends. He said that, despite their different angles, they were meeting and discussing issues with respect, based on their shared values of democracy, human rights and equality, based on dialogue, strength in cooperation and peace. Even though there were issues that divided the attendees, the speaker stressed that they should focus on what they had in common. So, positive signals should continue to be sent to their home countries and regions. Instead of signs of divisions, signs of togetherness should be sent out.

Chair-woman **Valentina Pivnenko** concluded the debate on this positive note and suggested moving on to consider the resolution they were about to adopt.



The Closing of the 27th BSPC

BSPC President **Jörgen Pettersson** stated that the time for the conclusion of the 27th BSPC Conference on the Åland Islands in Mariehamn had come. With him was **Jorodd Asphjell**, the next BSPC President, at the podium. Before handing over the presidency, Mr Pettersson noted that the resolution of the current conference had to be adopted by unanimous consent and asked the conference if they would first adopt the work strategy and work programme for 2018/19.

The conference agreed unanimously to adopt the work strategy and work programme for 2018/19.

Turning to the actual resolution, BSPC President **Jörgen Pettersson** underlined that this was the most important document from the conference. He thanked all the delegations for their hard work, especially the members of the drafting committee. As always, he noted, coming to an agreement had not been an easy feat but had been worth the effort. Through the discussions, everybody had learned something new.



The conference agreed unanimously to adopt the 27th Resolution of the BSPC.

BSPC President **Pettersson** referred to Vice-President Carola Veit's report on the follow-up to the resolution and said that the governments' interest in the resolution was increasing. Governments saw the value in parliamentarians having discussed the contents of policies and daily life for their citizens. Reading the resolutions would give them new angles and perspectives on different matters. Mr Pettersson underlined that this was the BSPC's task – they were a think tank, producing ideas and discussing them together, eventually coming up with a joint resolution. As such, he reminded the participants, when they went back to their parliaments and their ministers, that the resolution was not just fiction but the real product of real people's discussions.

Mr Pettersson went on to note the true honour he had experienced in the past year as BSPC president and in a good BSPC tradition, **passed the baton on to Jorodd Asphjell from the Norwegian Parliament.**

The incoming BSPC President **Jorodd Asphjell** thanked everyone for their trust. As a member of the Norwegian Olympic Committee, he promised that he would indeed take good care of the baton. He thanked Mr Pettersson and Åland for having hosted the 26th BSPC and admitted that he was looking forward to the next conference to be hosted by Norway.

Mr Asphjell underlined that the Baltic Sea countries were Norway's neighbours and friends, and their most important trading partners. Peace and cooperation in the Baltic Sea were also very important to Norway. The country was a member of the Nordic Council, and the Baltic Sea region had always been of a great importance to the Council.

Mr Asphjell emphasized that he was looking forward to the coming year when the BSPC would work on several important issues. The Working Group on Migration and Integration would continue its important work on an issue that mattered to everyone. Another prospective matter was the future of working life, including factors such as digitalization, integration and labour mobility in the Baltic Sea region. He considered this an important topic, crucial for all citizens, to know how technology would affect working life in their region in the future. New opportunities but also challenges would be raised. This was another area where the countries of the Baltic Sea region were performing within the UN Sustainable Develop-

ment Goals, but there was still work to be done, according to a recent report by the governments in the CBSS. Mr Asphjell stated his belief that the BSPC should consider how to contribute to this important work.

Next, a film about Oslo and Norway – the host of the 28th BSPC Conference - was presented to the audience.

In his closing remarks, **Jörgen Pettersson** thanked everyone involved in the preparation and organisation of the conference. He also thanked the parliamentarians, the experts, the government representatives and guests for their active involvement. Moreover, he stated his gratitude to the staff of Åland's lagting, Sten Eriksson and Maj Falc and everyone else who had created a very efficient organisation for this conference. Furthermore, the speaker thanked his colleagues within the BSPC delegation. He also thanked Mr Bodo Bahr who, he said, had taught him a lot about international diplomacy.

He appreciated the efforts of the interpreters and technicians in charge of the smooth course of the Conference.

Addressing his fellow parliamentarians, Mr Pettersson expressed his hope that cooperation and friendship had been deepened and political decisions of the BSPC delegates would contribute to making the world a better place. With that, Mr Pettersson declared the 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference closed.



ANNEX

Annex 1

Conference Resolution

Adopted by the 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

The participants, elected representatives from the Baltic Sea Region States*, assembling in Mariehamn, Åland, 26-28 August 2018,

- renew the expectation that all Baltic Sea States make every effort to ensure the Baltic Sea Region continues to be a region of peaceful and close neighbourliness and intense cooperation based on democratic values, the rule of law, human rights and equal opportunities for all. To this end, they will pursue all the opportunities of parliamentary, governmental and social exchange and democratic dialogue among neighbours. For this reason, they welcome the Stockholm Declaration of the Council of Baltic Sea States and in particular the Roadmap for Reform. They furthermore welcome the resumption of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Foreign Ministers meetings including under the Swedish Presidency but additionally call for a resumption of the Baltic Sea States Summits. This will foster the dialogue, strengthen cooperation and manifesting peace;

- welcome the comprehensive implementation statements and reports by the governments of the Baltic Sea Region on the 26th BSPC Resolution and the progress made to implement the BSPC's calls for action;

- welcome the efforts of the Swedish CBSS Presidency 2017/2018 to improve coherence in Baltic Sea regional cooperation, acknowledge the progress of the CBSS - based on the priorities of sustainability, continuity and adaptability under the umbrella of the UN 2030

**Parliaments and Parliamentary Organizations:*

Baltic Assembly, Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, Denmark, Estonia, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Iceland, Kaliningrad Region, Karelian Republic, Latvia, Leningrad Region, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Nordic Council, Norway, Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA) Poland, City of St. Petersburg, Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Schleswig-Holstein, Sweden, Åland Islands.

goals - and recognise the achievements in areas of Sustainable Development, Youth, the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings, Child Protection and Civil Protection;

- encourage the Latvian CBSS Presidency 2018/2019 to continue efforts within its three priorities: Integrity & Societal Security, Dialogue, Responsibility;

- share the vision of the CBSS Vision Group, that the Baltic Sea Region shall become a role model of ecological, economic, social and security standards and policies, with a vibrant regional civil society and will take into account the report of the Vision Group in their further discussions on future developments in the Baltic Sea Region;

- underline again the need for political exchange among young people and will proceed to establish a Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum based on the youth projects of their member parliaments and parliamentary organizations but also effect efforts to establish closer cooperation between youth organisations in the BSR and formats such as 'Regeneration 2030' involving young people in the deliberation of issues to be discussed in the BSPC;

- welcome all efforts to move towards a healthy and clean Baltic Sea;

- establish a way, as a first step within the framework of a progressive foreign and trade policy to address the issue of plastic litter on a global scale;

- strongly welcome all concrete actions and all regulations in banning or reducing the use of single-use plastic products that are found most often on beaches and in oceans, along with fishing equipment lost or left behind at sea, and intend to help raise awareness of the negative impact of plastic waste among consumers;

- discuss Cooperation, the Vision of a Healthy Baltic Sea, Sustainable Energy as well as Migration and Integration;

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

Regarding Cooperation in the Region, to

1. intensify the interaction between the Northern Dimension policy and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea and the Russian Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West federal district;
2. extend the scope of transnational programmes covering the whole Baltic Sea area and anchor this possibility and the corresponding funding in all macro-regional strategies on a formal level to improve relations between neighbouring countries;
3. strengthen cooperation in the field of migration and integration, involving all countries bordering the Baltic Sea, to better meet similar tasks;
4. intensify programs in the scope of visits and multinational meetings of youth in view of meeting each other, fostering mutual understanding and developing relations;
5. actively support – referring to the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the CBSS Labour Ministries in June 2017 – in the field of labour and employment in the Baltic Sea Region, the work of the “CBSS/BSLF Coordination Group on Labour and Employment” (CG) – focused on the cross-cutting and topical issues pertaining to the new qualifications required for future work patterns, and their linkage to education and the needs of the labour market, life-long learning and comprehensive labour market forecasting and research, including demographic challenges; guarantee equal opportunities for men and women;
6. meet the challenges of an ageing population, social cohesion and sustainable development in the Baltic Sea region through increased cooperation on incentives and practical systems for life-long learning and adult education, adaptation of job conditions and workplaces to the needs of older persons, anti-age discrimination policies, measures to promote good health and flexible and gradual retirement schemes;

Regarding the vision of a Healthy Baltic Sea – a call for more action, to

7. – as the BSPC supports the HELCOM Ministerial Declaration of 6 March 2018 in Brussels and shares its critical view on the state of the Baltic Sea under various aspects – vigorously implement the decisions contained in the Ministerial Declaration;
8. establish effective coordination processes and policies to support the Implementation Strategy for the sustainable Blue Growth Agenda for the Baltic Sea Region;
9. enhance consultations and cooperation regarding a spatial master planning in the Baltic Sea region, considering all interests and aspects of economy (shipping, fishing, energy, tourism, etc.), environment and the neighbours;
10. considering that, depending on the country, only 25 to 60 percent of the targets of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan to be implemented by 2021 are currently met at the national level – urgently intensify efforts at the national and regional level to set appropriate policy priorities so as to achieve the objectives of the BSAP by 2021 as far as possible on schedule;
11. hold regular HELCOM Ministerial Meetings – including all responsible ministers of each member state in the meetings – and come to binding rules under international law – as was the case with the measures to increase maritime safety with the involvement of the transport ministers –, thus bringing the issue of a clean Baltic Sea more strongly into the political debate of each nation and region and to achieve a more binding enforcement of the agreements reached;
12. develop or enhance both joint and additional national and regional sustainability strategies to achieve the UN-Agenda 2030 goals and realise the vision of a clean Baltic Sea free from marine litter whilst promoting sustainable agricultural practices, more sustainable shipping and tackling eutrophication and underwater noise;
13. prepare for and help shape the “Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development” from 2021-2030 proclaimed by the United Nations, in order to reach the goal of delivering the ocean we need for the future we want;

14. further strengthen the relationship between the UN Sustainable Development Goals and human rights whilst recognising their close relationship and mutual reinforcement;
15. take preventative measures and immediate actions to improve the quality of waste-water effluents and halt untreated discharges without delay and to show determination to clean up the heavily polluted sea;
16. take urgent efficient action on the worrying levels of plastics and micro-plastics in the seas; support and implement the regulations on reducing or banning single-use plastic as quickly as possible; promote public awareness of microplastic pollution throughout the Baltic ecosystem and encourage customers to avoid personal care products containing plastic microbeads;

Regarding Sustainable Energy, Smart energy distribution platforms, to

17. enhance and efficiently use cross-border transmission connections by building and expanding fluent electricity networks to enable new energy markets and new forms of energy services and products to better integrate renewable energies, as well as use undersea electricity connection to integrate grids;

Regarding Migration and Integration, to

18. acknowledge objective differences in the political system as well as in the historical and cultural background due to the scars of the Second World War, continue discussions and reflections about flight and migration, and share best governance practices to raise awareness in our societies;
19. initiate a Baltic Sea-wide data basis on integration conditions and measures to improve the public discussion on a factual basis;
20. intensify the dialogue on migration and integration between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea;

21. increase the offer of migration-specific advisory services and language training in order to intensify integration efforts;
22. enlarge projects for advising and supporting volunteers, local institutions and civil society organizations working in the field of integration and taking into account the unifying and integrating role of sports;
23. consider migration and security perspectives in relevant other political agendas such as trade, labour rights and environmental preservation;
24. seek holistic and multi-faceted solutions to the challenges posed by current refugee and migration policies which include a well-coordinated combination of migration management, humanitarian assistance, political solutions, European and international collaboration, fair trade agreements and development assistance;

Regarding Economic development and growth in the Baltic Sea Region

25. support the Implementation Strategy for the sustainable Blue Growth Agenda for the Baltic Sea Region;
26. acknowledge, that the Baltic Sea is a crucial line of sea transportation (a motorway of the sea) for all its neighbours, a resource for nutrition (fishing) and energy (oil, gas, wind and wave) as well as a recreation area for millions of tourists, therefore use all opportunities of Baltic Sea cooperation to enable managing and considering all interests and aspects of economy, environment and the neighbours;
27. further develop the Trans-European Networks for transport in the Baltic Sea region, take initiatives to synchronize toll systems in Europe, in particular the Baltic Sea neighbours, to make transport via sea and rail most economic compared to trucking;
28. aim to make the Baltic Sea a pioneer area for automatic shipping.

Furthermore, the Conference decides to

welcome with gratitude the kind offer by the Parliament of Norway to host the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Oslo on 25-27 August 2019.

Annex 2

List of Participants

Member Parliaments and Parliamentary Organizations

President of the Republic of Finland

1. Mr. Sauli Niinistö

Åland Parliament

2. ***Gun-Mari Lindholm***, *Speaker of the Åland Parliament*
3. ***Veronica Thörnroos***, *Deputy Speaker of the Åland Parliament*
4. ***Jörgen Pettersson***, *President of the BSPC, Member of the Åland Parliament*
5. ***Sara Kemetter***, *BSPC-delegation, Member of the Åland Parliament*
6. ***Annette Holmberg-Jansson***, *BSPC-delegation, Member of the Åland Parliament*
7. ***Ingrid Johansson***, *BSPC-delegation, Member of the Åland Parliament*
8. ***Johan Ehn***, *Member of the Åland Parliament*
9. ***Harry Jansson***, *Member of the Åland Parliament*
10. ***Mikael Staffas***, *Member of the Åland Parliament*
11. ***Tony Wikström***, *Member of the Åland Parliament*
12. ***Tage Silander***, *Member of the Åland Parliament*
13. ***Roger Nordlund***, *Member of the Åland Parliament*
14. ***Pernilla Söderlund***, *Member of the Åland Parliament*
15. ***Susanne Eriksson***, *Secretary General of the Åland Parliament*
16. ***Sten Eriksson***, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Åland Parliament*
17. ***Maj Falck***, *Assistant to the Delegation of the Åland Parliament*

Baltic Assembly

18. ***Valerijus Simulik***, *President of the Baltic Assembly, Member of the Parliament of Lithuania*
19. ***Prof. Jānis Vucāns***, *Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, Member of the Parliament of Latvia*
20. ***Prof. Aadu Must***, *Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, Member of the Parliament of Estonia*
21. ***Marika Laizane-Jurkane***, *Secretary General of the Baltic Assembly*

Bremen

- 22. **Sülmez Dogan**, *Member of Parliament of the State Parliament of Bremen*
- 23. **Antje Grotbeer**, *Member of the State Parliament of Bremen*

Denmark

- 24. **Karin Gaardsted**, *Member of the Danish Parliament*
- 25. **Kamilla Kjølgaard**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Danish Parliament*

Estonia

- 26. **Johannes Kert**, *Member of the Estonian Parliament*
- 27. **Ulle Must**, *Staff of the Delegation of the Parliament of Estonia*
- 28. **Ene Rongelep**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Parliament of Estonia*

European Parliament

- 29. **Jørn Dohrmann**, *Member of the European Parliament*
- 30. **Ausra Rakstelyte**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the European Parliament*

Faroe Islands

- 31. **Páll á Reynatúgvu**, *President of the Parliament of Faroe Islands*
- 32. **Kári P. Højgaard**, *Member of Parliament of the Faroe Islands*
- 33. **Johnhard Klettheyggj**, *Director of the Parliament of the Faroe Islands*

Finland

- 34. **Kari Kulmala**, *Member of the Parliament of Finland*
- 35. **Saara-Sofia Sirén**, *Member of Parliament of Finland*
- 36. **Mika Laaksonen**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Parliament of Finland*

Germany

- 37. **Enrico Komning**, *Member of the German Bundestag*
- 38. **Petra Nicolaisen**, *Member of the German Bundestag*
- 39. **Johannes Schraps**, *Member of the German Bundestag*
- 40. **Peter Stein**, *Member of the German Bundestag*
- 41. **Nicole Tepasse**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the German Bundestag*

Hamburg

- 42. **Carola Veit**, *President of the State Parliament of Hamburg*
- 43. **Kurt Duwe**, *Member of the State Parliament of Hamburg*
- 44. **Dania Ilkhanipour**, *Member of the State Parliament of Hamburg*
- 45. **Stephan Jersch**, *Member of the State Parliament of Hamburg*

46. **Jörn Kruse**, *Member of the State Parliament of Hamburg*
47. **Ulrike Sparr**, *Member of the State Parliament of Hamburg*
48. **Michael Westenberger**, *Member of the State Parliament of Hamburg*
49. **Johannes Düwel**, *Director of the Parliament of Hamburg*
50. **Friederike Lünzmann**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Parliament of Hamburg*

Iceland

51. **Kolbeinn Óttarsson Proppé**, *Member of the Parliament of Iceland*
52. **Helgi Thorsteinsson**, *Secretary of the Delegation of Parliament of Iceland*

Kaliningrad

53. **Evgeny Mishin**, *Member of the Parliament of the Kaliningrad Regional Duma*
54. **Marina Prozorova**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Kaliningrad Regional Duma*

Karelia

55. **Antonia Zherebtsova**, *Member of the Parliament of the Karelia Legislative Assembly*

Latvia

56. **Romualds Ražuks**, *Member of the Parliament of Latvia*
57. **Atis Lejiņš**, *Member of the Parliament of Latvia*
58. **Juris Viļums**, *Member of the Parliament of Latvia*
59. **Ingrīda Sticenko**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Parliament of Latvia*

Leningrad

60. **Regina Iilarionova**, *Member of the Leningrad Region Legislative Assembly*
61. **Dmitrii Puliaevskii**, *Member of the Leningrad Region Legislative Assembly*
62. **Dmitrii Voronovskikh**, *Member of the Leningrad Region Legislative Assembly*
63. **Zoya Rodina**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Leningrad Region Legislative Assembly*

Lithuania

64. **Kęstutis Bartkevičius**, *Member of the Parliament of Lithuania*
65. **Renata Godfrey**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Parliament of Lithuania*

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

66. **Ralf Borschke**, Member of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
67. **Dirk Friedriszik**, *Member of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*
68. **Karsten Kolbe**, *Member of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*
69. **Nikolaus Kramer**, *Member of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*
70. **Beate Schlupp**, *Vice-President of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*
71. **Jochen Schulte**, *Member of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*
72. **Georg Strätker**, *Secretary of the delegation of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*
73. **Julien Radloff**, *Secretary of the delegation of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*

Nordic Council

74. **Silja Dögg Gunnarsdottir**, *Member of the Parliament of Iceland and the Nordic Council*
75. **Britt Lundberg**, *Member of the Åland Parliament and the Nordic Council*
76. **Arne Fogt Bergby**, *Secretary of the delegation of the Nordic Council*
77. **Hrannar Arnarsson**, *Secretary of the Socialdemocratic Party Group in the Nordic Council*

Norway

78. **Jorodd Asphjell**, *Member of the Norwegian Parliament*
79. **Hanne Dyveke Sottar**, *Member of the Norwegian Parliament*
80. **Thomas Fraser**, *Secretary of the delegation of the Norwegian Parliament*

Poland

Sejm of the Republic of Poland

81. **Dorota Arciszewska-Mielewczyk**, *Member of the Sejm, Parliament of Poland*
82. **Jerzy Borowczak**, *Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland*
83. **Jerzy Materna**, *Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland*
84. **Grzegorz Matusiak**, *Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland*
85. **Mirosław Suchoń**, *Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland*

Senate of the Republic of Poland

86. **Andrzej Mioduszeowski**, *Member of the Senate of the Republic of Poland*
87. **Slawomir Rybicki**, *Member of the Senate of the Republic of Poland*
88. **Piotr Koperski**, *Secretary of the Delegation for International and European Union Affairs*

Russian Federation

Council of the Federation

89. **Igor Fomin**, *Member of Council of the Federation*
90. **Anna Zhiltsova**, *Councilor of the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Council of the F*

State Duma

91. **Valentina Pivnenko**, *Member of the State Duma*
92. **Oleg Nilov**, *Member of the State Duma*
93. **Yulia Guskova**, *Secretary of the Delegation of International Relations at the State Duma*

Saint Petersburg

94. **Dmitry Tugov**, *Member of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly*
95. **Vatanyar Yagya**, *Member of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly*
96. **Said Yagya**, *Secretary of the Delegation of Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly*

Schleswig-Holstein

97. **Rasmus Andresen**, *Member of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein*
98. **Wolfgang Baasch**, *Member of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein*
99. **Hartmut Hamerich**, *Member of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein*
100. **Stephan Holowaty**, *Member of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein*
101. **Regina Poersch**, *Member of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein*
102. **Volker Schnurrbusch**, *Member of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein*
103. **Jette Waldinger-Thiering**, *Member of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein*
104. **Aminata Touré**, *Member of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein*

105. **Jutta Schmidt-Holländer**, *Secretary of the Delegation for International Affairs of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein*

Sweden

106. **Jonas Jacobsson Gjörtler**, *Member of the Swedish Parliament*
 107. **Per-Ingvar Johnsson**, *Member of the Swedish Parliament*
 108. **Pyy Niemi**, *Member of the Swedish Parliament*
 109. **Emma Nohrén**, *Member of the Swedish Parliament*
 110. **Suzanne Svensson**, *Member of the Swedish Parliament*
 111. **Hans Wallmark**, *Member of the Swedish Parliament*
 112. **Ralph Hermansson**, *Staff of the Swedish Parliament*
 113. **Petra Sjöström**, *Secretary of the Delegation of the Swedish Parliament*

BSPC and Observers

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

114. **Bodo Bahr**, *Secretary General of the BSPC*

Baltic Sea Region University Network (BSRUN)

115. **Kari Hyppönen**, *President of the BSRUN*

Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC)

116. **Roger Ryberg**, *Chairman of the BSSSC*
 117. **Ann Irene Saeternes**, *Secretary General of the BSSSC*
 118. **Janne Tamminen**, *Advisor, Region of Uusimaa*
 119. **Ossi Savolainen**, *Director, Region of Uusimaa*

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)

120. **Hans Olsson**, *former Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials of the CBSS, Ambassador of Sweden*
 121. **Juris Bone**, *Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials of the CBSS, Ambassador at Large, Government of Latvia*
 122. **Sergey Petrovich**, *Committee of Senior Officials of the CBSS, Deputy Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*
 123. **Maira Mora**, *Director General of the CBSS*
 124. **Daria Akhutina**, *Senior Adviser*

CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

- 125. **Jari Nabkanen**, *President of BSC*
- 126. **Hanna Honkamäkilä**, *Advisor*
- 127. Åsa Bjering, *Executive Secretary*

The Government of Finland

- 128. **Kimmo Tiilikainen**, *Minister of Energy- and Environment*
- 129. **Paula Lehtomäki**, *State Secretary, Prime Minister's Office*
- 130. **Kristina Pingoud**, *Ministry for Foreign Affairs*
- 131. **Taru Savolainen**, *Senior Advisor, Ministry for Environment*

Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)

- 132. **Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky**, *Secretary*

Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)

- 133. **Silvija Geistrarte**, *Senior Adviser*
- 134. **Ulla-Karin Nurm**, *Director*

Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)

- 135. **Prof. Asaf Hajiyeu**, *Secretary General of the PABSEC*

Skåne Regional County Council

- 136. **Anders Karlsson**, *Chairman, Region Skåne*
- 137. **Maria Lindbom**, *Senior Advisor, Region Skåne*

Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)

- 138. **Mikko Lobikoski**, *Strategy Coordinator*

Åland Government

- 139. **Camilla Gunell**, *Deputy Prime Minister of the Åland Government*
- 140. **Wille Valve**, *Minster of the Åland Government*
- 141. **Helena Blomqvist**, *Senior Advisor of the Åland Government*
- 142. **Johnny Lindström**, *Advisor of the Åland Government*

Åland delegate to the Finnish Parliament

- 143. **Mats Löfström**, *Member of Parliament of Finland*

Consular Corps

- 144. **Mikhail Zubov**, *Consul, the Russian Federation*
- 145. **Nils-Erik Eklund**, *Honorary Consul, Iceland*

Lecturers and guests

- 146. **Bernt Schalin**, *Managing Director of Clic Innovation Ltd, Lecturer*
- 147. **Christina Gestrin**, *Former President of the BSPC, Lecturer*
- 148. **Reinis Aboltins**, *researcher Riga Technical University, Lecturer*
- 149. **Simon Holmström**, *ReGeneration 2030*
- 150. **Hanna Salmén**, *ReGeneration 2030*
- 151. **Malgorzata Ludwiczek**, *Secretariat for Youth of the Westpomeranian Region*
- 152. **Franz Thönnnes**, *Former BSPC-President, Baltic Sea Labor Forum*
- 153. **Rita Thönnnes**, *guest*
- 154. **Anders Bergström**, *guest, The Norden Association in Sweden*
- 155. **Ottilia Thoreson**, *WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme*
- 156. **Marc Klaus**, *Director of the Race for the Baltic/Baltic Sea City Accelerator*
- 157. **Gun Rudqvist**, *Head of Policy, Baltic Sea Center, Stockholm University*

Other Participants

Wikipedia

- 154. **Olaf Kosinsky**, *Photographer*
- 155. **Ralf Roletschek**, *Photographer*

Interpreters

- 156. **Elena Almaas**
- 157. **Maria Hemph Moran**
- 158. **Aleksandr Jakimovicz**
- 159. **Catherine Johnson**
- 160. **Piotr Krasnowolski**
- 161. **Stein Larsen**
- 162. **Aleksei Repin**
- 163. **Aleksandre Tchekhov**
- 164. **Gyda Thurow**
- 165. **Martina Würzburg**

Administrative staff from the Åland parliament

166. **Tommy Bårdén**, Member of Staff of the Åland Parliament
167. **Marina Eriksson**, Member of Staff of the Åland Parliament
168. **Hans Grönvall**, Member of Staff of the Åland Parliament
169. **Ulla Johansson**, Member of Staff of the Åland Parliament
170. **Christoph Neymeyr**, Member of Staff of the Åland Parliament
171. **Hans-Erik Ramström**, Member of Staff of the Åland Parliament
172. **Carina Strand**, Member of Staff of the Åland Parliament
173. **Marina Wikstrand-Andersson**, Member of Staff of the Åland Parliament

Speakers

- **Jörgen Pettersson**, MP Åland, President of the BSPC
- **Reinis Aboltins**, Professor, Adviser on Energy in Latvia
- **Daria Akbutina**, Senior Advisor CBSS
- **Juris Bone**, Chairman of the CBSS
- **Marc Klaus**, Race for the Baltic
- **Karin Gaardsted**, Member of WG on Cultural Affairs
- **Christina Gestrin**, Former BSPC-President
- **Camilla Gunell**, Deputy Prime Minister of the Åland Government
- **Prof. Asaf Hajiyev**, Secretary General of the PABSEC
- **Simon Holmström**, Regeneration 2030
- **Sara Kemetter**, BSPC Rapporteur on Sustainable Tourism
- **Jari Nahkanen**, Chairman CPMR Baltic Sea Commission
- **Pyy Niemi**, BSPC Rapporteur on Labour Market and Social Welfare
- **Hans Olsson**, Outgoing Chair of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials
- **Roger Ryberg**, Chairman of the BSSSC
- **Gun Rudqvist**, Head of Policy, Baltic Sea Center, Stockholm University
- **Hanna Salmén**, Regeneration 2030
- **Bernt Schalin**, Clic Innovation Ltd
- **Jochen Schulte**, BSPC Rapporteur on Integrated Maritime Policy
- **Saara-Sofia Sirén**, BSPC Observer at HELCOM and BSPC Rapporteur on Eutrophication
- **Kimmo Tiilikainen**, Minister of the Environment and Energy
- **Franz Thönnies**, Baltic Sea Labor Forum
- **Ottilia Thoreson**, WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme
- **Hans Wallmark**, Chairman of the BSPC WG on Migration and Integration
- **Carola Veit**, President of the Hamburg Parliament
- **Karmenu Vella**, EU Commissioner, Participation through videomessage

Annex 3

Programme

Registration, Plenum and other meetings will take place in the Parliament building

Ålands Lagting, Strandgatan 37, Mariehamn

Saturday, 25 August

12.00-15.00 Participants registration and information desk
available at the Entrance Hall, Ålands Lagting

Sunday, 26 August

08:30-15.00 Participants registration and information desk
available at the
Entrance Hall, Ålands Lagting

10.00-12.00 **Meeting of the BSPC Drafting Committee**
Ålands Lagting, Plenary Hall

12.00 Coffee break / snacks

12.30-14.00 **Meeting of the BSPC Standing Committee**
Ålands Lagting, Plenary Hall

Excursions on the following themes:

- 12.30-17.00 Excursion No 1: Daily life in the Archipelago, visit on the small island and municipality of *Föglö* in the archipelago (*Incl. 25 min trip with a ferry*)
- 14.00-17.00 Excursion No 2: Åland history and political background to the present Autonomy (*Bustrip on the main island and a visit to the Bomarsund Fortress area*)
All buses leave from *Ålands Lagting, Strandgatan 37, Mariehamn*
- 19.00-22.00 **Reception and Dinner hosted by Ålands lagting**
Venue: Badhusparken Pavillion

Monday, 27 August

- 8.30-9.30 Meeting of the BSPC Drafting Committee (if necessary)
Ålands Lagting, Plenary Hall

09.30

OPENING

*Chair: **Jörgen Pettersson**, MP, President of the BSPC*
*Vice-Chair: **Carola Veit**, MP, Hamburg, Vice-President of the BSPC*
Ålands Lagting, Plenary Hall

Jörgen Pettersson, MP, President of the BSPC
Introduction

JMs. Gun-Mari Lindholm, President of Ålands Lagting, “Welcome address”

JQuartett of young musicians from Åland
J. Sibelius: Andante festivo

JH.E. Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland Opening speech

JMs. Paula Lehtomäki, State Secretary to the Prime Minister of Finland “Finlands Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region”

10.05

Family photo

Inside the Plenary Hall

10.20

FIRST SESSION**Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region***Chair: **Jörgen Pettersson**, MP, President of the BSPC**Vice-Chair: **Jorodd Asphjell**, MP, Norway, Vice-President of the BSPC***Report by Mr. Jörgen Pettersson**, MP, President of the BSPC**Report by Ms. Carola Veit**, President of the Hamburg Parliament,
Vice-President of the BSPC – “Implementation of the 26th BSPC Resolution”**Report from the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)**

- **Mr Hans Olsson**, Outgoing CBSS Chair, Ambassador of Sweden
- **Mr Juris Bone**, Chairman of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials Ambassador-at-Large of Latvia

Mr. Hans Wallmark, MP, Chairman of the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration – Midway Report of the WG**Mr. Simon Holmström and Ms. Hanna Salmén**, representatives of the Youth Event: Regeneration 2030**Debate**12.30-13.15 **Lunch** outside the Plenary Hall13.15 **THE FIRST SESSION continues Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region****Ms. Christina Gestrin**, former MP Finnish Parliament and BSPC President “Environmental Cooperation in the Baltic Sea region”

**Report on the work of the CBSS/BSLF
Coordination Group on Labour and
Employment, joint report by:**

- **Mr. Franz Thönnies**, former MP German Bundestag and BSPC President, Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF)
- **Ms. Daria Akhutina**, CBSS Senior Advisor on Economic Issues, coordinator for Baltic Sea Labour Forum' and secretary to CBSS Expert Group on maritime issues.
- **Mr. Pyry Niemi**, BSPC-Rapporteur on Labour Market and Social Welfare, Member of the Swedish Parliament

Briefings from BSPC Rapporteurs

- **Mr. Jörgen Pettersson** and **Mr. Jochen Schulte** on Integrated Maritime Policy
- **Ms. Karin Gaardsted** on Cultural Affairs
- **Ms. Sylvia Bretschneider** and **Ms. Sara Kemetter** on Sustainable Tourism
- **Ms. Sylvia Bretschneider** and **Ms. Saara-Sofia Sirén** on HELCOM
- **Ms. Saara-Sofia Sirén** on Eutrophication

**Addresses by the Representatives of other
Parliamentary Assemblies and International
Guests**

**Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation
(BSSSC)**

- **Mr. Roger Ryberg**, Chairman of the BSSSC

**Northern Dimension Partnership in Public
Health and Social Well-being**

- **Ms. Ulla-Karin Nurm**, Director of the NDPHS

Baltic Sea Center, Stockholm University

- **Gun Rudquist**, Head of Policy, Baltic Eye,
“Bridging the gap between science and policy – an
example from Stockholm University Baltic Sea
Center“

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

15.30 -17.30 **SECOND SESSION****The Vision of a Healthy Baltic Sea –
A Call for more Action***Chair: Prof Jānis Vucāns, MP, Latvia,**Co-Chair: Dorota Arciszewska-Mielewczyk, MP,
Poland***Mr. Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for
Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries**

“Protecting our environment while maintaining our competitiveness in regards to the UN 2030 goals for our oceans and the Baltic Sea Action Plan“

Video-message**Mr. Kimmo Tiilikainen, Minister of the
Environment, Energy and Housing of Finland**

“The Priorities of the Finnish HELCOM Chairmanship and the future of the Baltic Sea Action Plan”

**Ms. Camilla Gunell, Deputy Prime Minister
of the Åland Islands and Minister for Trade,
Environment and Energy.**

“Sustainability Strategy of the Åland Islands as a best-practice example for the Baltic Sea Region”

**Ms. Ottilia Thoreson, Director, WWF Baltic
Ecoregion Programme**

„Baltic Sea Scorecard and the need for stringent action“

**Mr. Marc Klaus, Race for the Baltic, Baltic Sea
City Accelerator**

“Private Engagement for a healthy Baltic Sea and a better Environment”

Mr. Jari Nahkanen, Chairman CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, “Co-operation among Regions in the Baltic Sea”

Panel Debate moderated by Mr. Simon Holmström from ReGeneration 2030.

17.30-18.30 Meeting of the BSPC Drafting Committee
(if necessary)

Ålands Lagting, Plenary Hall

19.00 **Cultural Event and Dinner hosted by the
President of the Åland Lagting**

Venue: Ålands sjöfartsmuseum (Åland Maritime
Museum), Hamngatan 2

- Cocktail in the Museum hosted by the Town of
Mariehamn, represented by the chairman of the
Town Board **Mr. Tage Silander**
- Dinner in Restaurant Nautical (above the Museum)
*(The museum is open from 18.30 and dinner starts
at 19.30)*

Tuesday, 28 August

09.30-12.00 **THIRD SESSION**

**Sustainable Energy, Smart energy distribution
platforms**

*Chair: **Valentina Pivnenko**, MP, Russian Federation*

*Co-Chair: **Karin Gaardsted**, MP, Denmark*

Next generation electrical grids – Pilot projects in
Baltic Sea Region

- **Mr. Berndt Schalin**, Senior Advisor,
Government of Åland “The Future Fossil Free
Energy System on Åland”
- **Mr. Reinis Āboltiņš**, Senior Adviser on Energy,
Latvia “Challenges to Sustainable Energy in the
Baltic Sea Region”

Coffee Break

General Debate

Open forum for speeches from the parliamentarians
with possibility for discussions.

12.00

CLOSING OF THE 27th BSPC*Chair: Mr Jörgen Pettersson, MP, Åland, President of the BSPC**Co-Chair: Mr Jorodd Asphjell, MP, Norway, Vice-President of the BSPC*

- Administrative matters
- Adoption of the Conference Resolution
- Address by the **incoming President** of the BSPC 2018-2019
- Presentation of Next Year's Host Country

13:00

Lunch outside the Plenary Hall

Transfers to the Airport or Ferry terminal















Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Secretariat
www.bspc.net

BSPC Secretariat
c/o Schlossgartenallee 15
19061 Schwerin
Germany