

Statements of the governments in the Baltic Sea Region to the 28th BSPC Resolution.

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Åland



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Ålands BSPC-delegation, Ålands lagting

Reference

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Subject
**Unofficial translation: The Government of Åland's
view regarding the BSPC Resolution of 2019 and
information of measures taken and actions planned**

In August 2019 at the annual Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) in Oslo the BSPC resolution was adopted. The purpose of the resolution is that governments around the Baltic Sea region pay attention to different areas described below. December 19th 2019 the parliament of Åland forwarded the resolution to its government for further actions.

The resolution contains 31 priority appeals/points sent to the governments in the Baltic Sea Region. The points are assigned in following four headings:

1. various projects and other collaborations
2. future labour markets
3. maritime related protectives to achieve the UN Sustainability Agenda by 2030
4. migration and integration

The Government of Åland also notice that the appeals/points are being tangent to each other. In this letter the Government of Åland describe measures taken and actions planned for these objectives.

Point 1

The Government of Åland participates in several international collaborations and projects linked to the sea and coastal environments, environment and climate, such as *Coast4us* and *Seabased Measures* as well as *Åland Seamap*. The Government of Åland also cooperating with the other Baltic Sea countries regarding *EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive* and *HELCOM* in terms of both monitoring and action.

Point 2

In accordance to the request to the BSPC's 26th resolution for a multinational forum for young people, *ReGeneration 2030* is under continues establishment. *ReGeneration 2030* brings young people together from 14 countries and autonomous regions around the Baltic Sea: Finland, Åland, Sweden, Norway,

Denmark, Greenland, Faroe Islands, Iceland and Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Germany. The Government of Åland intends to continue the cooperation with both the *Nordic Council of Ministers* and the *Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)* regarding *ReGeneration 2030*, in order to support the involvement of young people in the implementation of *The Agenda 2030*. The third edition of the *ReGeneration 2030 Summit* will be held in Åland August 22-24th 2020. The Government of Åland require BSPC to consider a formalized collaboration with *ReGeneration 2030* in the future.

Point 3

The Government of Åland has been participating in international cooperation in the Baltic Sea region for 25 years and attaches great importance to co-financing projects so that different parties and businesses can participate in international cooperations. This is for example, to increase the region's competitiveness, to reduce nutrient emissions into water, to make common maritime planning, develop tourist attractions and to develop joint training courses in, for example, healthcare on board ships. This provides sustainable funding and efforts that increase people's solidarity and affinity. New Interreg programs for the period 2021-2027 will also be developed during the year 2020.

Point 7, 9, 10

The Government of Åland has commissioned a study made by *ÅSUB (Statistics and Research Åland)* on "Åland's future growth – opportunities and challenges". It shows that the four megatrends in the world are technological development, climate change and climate policy, changing in population structure and the global redistribution of economic power. All these trends will have an impact on the development of the economy in Åland. It affects working life, what kind of competence that is demanded, changing conditions and requirements for policy control, changing consumer behavior and labour market participation and probably new markets will expand. Changes lead to new opportunities and it is an advantage for a small society with the possibility of fast making decisions, but also in terms of seeing new business opportunities. The Government of Åland has identified increased migration and digitization as focus areas in the coming years.

Point 12

Åland, as a region in Europe, is a pioneer with a higher employment rate for women than for men but also regarding a high level of employment. Work remains to create equal conditions for women to participate in decision-making positions. More work also needed to increase the economic equality.

Point 13

The Government of Åland supports all efforts made to prevent 'lost generations', that is, people who don't enter the labour market after their studies.

Point 14, 15, 17

The Government of Åland have adopted a plastic strategy (in 2019) to reduce the spread of plastics and microplastics in the environment.

Point 19, 21

A *Sea Plan for Åland* is being developed to protect and restore marine habitats. The maritime planning has been carried out through the completed cooperation project *Pan Baltic Scope*.

In cooperation with *Åbo Akademi University*, The Government of Åland participating in the project *Åland Seamap*. The aim is to make an inventory of the underwater nature around Åland with the purpose of protecting it.

After worrying reports of the cod status, the Government of Åland together with *Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE)*, will launch a scientific study of the cod around the Åland Islands in 2020.

Point 22, 23

Within the province of Åland, legislation on environmental impact assessment (EIA) and environmental assessment is used in cases that have a significant environmental impact.

Point 25

Freedom of movement within Europe requires systems that can take advantage of knowledge and competence from other countries. Good or common systems also facilitate migration from non-European countries in areas such as education, labour, access to basic services, housing and health care, and social inclusion. Åland works according to the "*The Government of Åland's integration promotion program*", national guidelines and guidelines from the EU, including the "*Integration Action Plan of Third-Country Nationals*". People that comes to Åland as quota refugees/refugees or residing here during their asylum application, are subject to national legislation regarding integration. Other immigrants are subject to local legislation.

Point 28

In 2016, the Government of Åland established the network *bärkraft.ax* together with actors from the trade and industry, civil society and education. *Bärkraft.ax* performs several different functions. One of them is providing a platform for dialogue between both individuals and organisations from all sectors of the society. Physical and digital meeting points for conversations regarding the development of society are available to everyone living in Åland.

Point 26-30

The fact that Åland is a very small region has not yet enabled immigrants to receive all service at only one service point. The responsibility is divided by the state, the Government of Åland and municipalities. Nor are all services available in Åland all the time. For example, the *Finnish Immigrations Service*, which is responsible for permit matters, will come to Åland only every 6 weeks.

Åland have 16 municipalities. Everyone has the responsibility to have a good integration in their municipality and has its own integration programs and any possible agreements with the state regarding the reception of refugees. *The Municipalities Social Services (KST)* is a new association of municipalities that obliges municipalities to a coordinated social service. They begin their operations in January 1, 2021. Integration is one of many social matters that will be transferred into their field of responsibility.

The Government of Åland has regular coordination meetings with the municipalities and the third sector to take note of current needs and interests. For example, by arranging language cafés, different kind of educations, other

activities etcetera. The Government of Åland gives the opportunity to the third sector to seek special funds for various integration projects.

The Government of Åland is the principal in the AMIF project “*A safe port*”. In this project, networking has been deepened and special efforts have been carried out. For example, training of *Society and Health Communicators*. Hopefully the communicators will improve giving the necessary social information and a possibility to give information in their mother tongue. Hopefully the information also will reach a wider target group at an earlier stage. The project also launched a new digital platform www.integration.ax that gather all the necessary information in one place.

The Government of Åland has an information office, *Kompassen (Compass)*, that non-Nordic migrants can visit to be referred to the right public authority. People moving within the Nordic region are offered support through the Nordic Council of Ministers information service, *Info Norden*, that has an office in Åland.

Point 31

Good examples are a good start for new ideas. Today, it is possible to be inspired by good example of integration, through different digital platforms in Finland, the Nordic region and Europe. Then it is often necessary to adapt requirements and strategies to local conditions to have the best possible effect.

Deputy Head of
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Harry Jansson

Administrator

Marcus Åkerblom

Denmark



UDENRIGSMINISTERIET

Comments from the Danish government concerning the conference resolution adopted by the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

The Danish government welcomes the resolution adopted by the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) and its recommendations. Based on contributions from the relevant authorities, the Danish government has the following comments to the resolution:

Cooperation in the Region

On 1 July 2019, Denmark took over the Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) from Latvia. Together with Germany, Denmark founded the organisation in 1992, and the third Danish CBSS Presidency was devoted to concluding the reform of the Council and the CBSS Secretariat initiated in 2018.

The overriding priority of the Danish Presidency was to ensure the effective implementation of the agreed CBSS Reform Roadmap, in order to bring more focus and flexibility in the work of the CBSS, improve CBSS cooperation with other international fora and formats active in the region, and enable concrete results in areas in which the CBSS is uniquely suited to add value.

The CBSS reform process was successfully concluded on 19 May 2020 at a meeting of all CBSS Foreign Ministers and the Secretary General of the European External Action Service, chaired by Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod of Denmark, at which revised terms of reference for the Council and for the CBSS Secretariat were adopted.

In line with the Reform Roadmap, the ministerial meeting also discussed a number of important regional issues and challenges. In addition to regional aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak, these included several of the key issues raised in the resolution of the 28th BSPC, notably engagement of young people, key environment and climate-related challenges, and the fight against cross-border organised crime.

Following this exchange, the ministers adopted the Bornholm Declaration (<https://cbss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Bornholm-Declaration.pdf>), which covers the CBSS reform process as well as many of the key regional issues discussed.

In addition to the ministerial meeting, collaborative efforts by the CBSS Member States, led by the Danish Presidency and assisted by the CBSS Secretariat, yielded a number of complementary outputs that will help strengthen regional cooperation and, specifically, the work of the CBSS in line with the agreed CBSS Reforms. These outputs include orientations for the CBSS role and engagement within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Northern Dimension, operational guidelines for CBSS practical cooperation and fundraising, and revised mandates and strategies for CBSS work on the protection of children and the fight against trafficking in human beings.

More detailed information regarding the work of the 2019-2020 Danish CBSS Presidency can be found in the report published on 18 November 2020 by the CBSS Secretariat <https://cbss.org/report/danish-presidency-2019-2020/>).

An inter-ministerial task force to counter foreign disinformation campaigns against Denmark was established prior to the 2019 Danish parliamentary election. Efforts were made to raise awareness about the threat of disinformation. Briefings and guidance were offered to political parties and journalists. An evaluation of the task force is under way. No foreign disinformation campaigns against Denmark were identified up to the 2019 Danish parliamentary election. The task force continues to handle known cases of disinformation in Denmark.

Denmark supports the work of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga, Latvia.

The Danish National Strategy for Cyber and Information Security for the period 2018-2021 is under implementation. The overall aim is to familiarize and make citizens, businesses and authorities able to manage digital risks, whereby Denmark can continue to use digital solutions to support the development of society.

Measures to improve resilience against disinformation are taken via the inter-ministerial task force to counter foreign disinformation campaigns against Denmark. Measures include briefings and guidance of Danish political parties and journalists.

Future of Working Life

In 2006, a parliamentary majority voted to raise the retirement age in accordance with life expectancy. The principle behind the agreement is that the retirement age is to be raised gradually in order to ensure that persons, on average, can expect to live 14½ years as recipients of the public old-age pension benefit. The parties behind the agreement have agreed to vote on the issue every fifth year, given that life expectancy has increased within the five-year period.

In 2015, the parties agreed to raise the retirement age from 67 to 68 years from year 2030 and onward. In 2020, the Danish Parliament will vote on raising the retirement age to 69 years from 2035 onward. There is currently a parliamentary majority for this raise.

With the aims of, amongst other things, increasing labour of market participation among seniors, the government has recently implemented initiatives that will strengthen economic incentives to work for seniors.

While the general retirement age is gradually raised and the incentives to work for seniors are strengthened, the government has also reached an agreement with a parliamentary majority on introducing legislation on a new right to early pension for those who have been on the labour market for the longest time, often in physically hard jobs.

The new right will be implemented throughout 2021. Predominantly unskilled and skilled workers are expected to obtain access. As skilled and unskilled workers on average have lower life expectancy than those on the labour market with higher education, the Danish government finds that the new right will amend injustices and disparities associated with the gradually rising retirement age.

In 2019, the government has received proposals from a think tank on seniors established with the goal of making proposals on how to improve the working lives of seniors and at the same time encourage seniors that are able and willing to stay a few more years on the labour market.

Inspired by, amongst other things, the findings of the think tank, the government will pursue incentive-based policies that support the ongoing trend by which even more seniors choose to continue to be part of the labour force past the state pension retirement age.

In 2020, a commission on the pension system was established. The commission is tasked with investigating, among other things, the possibilities for a slower increase in the pension age. Additionally, the government is currently implementing a broad parliamentary agreement to improve the physical as well as the mental working environment.

Denmark has prioritized that adult education must also be targeted individuals on the margins of the labour market. In October 2019, the Government reached an agreement on adult and vocational training primarily for the benefit of the unemployed workforce. The agreement contains six initiatives with a budget of 100 million DKK, and provides people with the least education the ability to move from an unskilled level of work to a skilled level of work. For instance, one of the initiatives enables the public authorities to provide subsidy to a company that hires an unemployed person for temporary work, while their employee leaves in order to participate in an education programme.

Denmark works with the issues mentioned through multiple channels. The former Disruption Council and its findings are one such example. Others include the Think Tank on Seniors and the Expert Committee on the working environment effort. The questions are also raised and are part of Denmark's international cooperation in the EU (e.g. EMCO) and the OECD (ELSA committee). The state further supports research into the mentioned topics, fx. through universities.

Denmark has an ongoing focus on the involvement of women in the work-force and reducing the gender pay gap. In order to promote female entrepreneurship in Denmark and improve the conditions for self-employed persons on family-related leave, the Danish Government and the parties behind the political agreement on the State Budget for 2020 have agreed to re-introduce a maternity equalization scheme for self-employed persons. New legislation has been presented to the Danish Parliament. If the legislation is passed, the new regulations will enter into force on 1 January 2021. Furthermore, the Government is in the process of implementing the new EU Directive on a better Work-Life Balance.

Parallel to these efforts, the Government is considering additional national initiatives which may contribute to a more equal sharing of parental leave. These deliberations are still ongoing and will be discussed with the Danish Parliament in due course. Thus, no formal decisions have yet been taken, but the Government is committed to improving the work-life balance of both women and men.

With regards to the gender pay gap, the Danish Centre for Social Science Research (VIVE) published a report on the gender pay gap in Denmark in May 2018. The report was commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Employment and analysed the development in the unadjusted and adjusted gender pay gap in the decade between 2007 and 2016. The report showed that while the

unadjusted gender pay gap had decreased by almost 25 pct. the adjusted gender pay gap remained at approximately 7 pct. In October 2020, VIVE published its report on the adjusted gender pay gap, financed by the Ministry of Employment. The report analyses, through new research methods and additional register-based data, the factors behind the adjusted gender pay gap. The report was published in October 2020 and shows that the gender-segregated labour market plays an even bigger part in explaining the persisting gender pay gap. The report also shows a correlation between the number of women in a job function and a lower level of pay both in the private and the public sector.

Denmark has focused on meeting the challenges of an ageing population and for all to have the opportunity of life-long learning. In the summer of 2018, a think tank was established with the aim of contributing to a better work life for seniors and at the same time encourage seniors to stay a few more years on the labour market. The think tank presented its recommendations in November 2019. The focus of the recommendations was on new measures to get long term unemployed seniors back to employment, how companies with policies for seniors are central in postponement of retirement from the labour market, and how pension funds can help strengthen the information about the economic benefits for seniors who are able and willing to stay in employment after the official retiring age. The Danish government is now considering the recommendations and findings from the think tank and is looking into new proposals on how even more seniors can continue to be part of the labour force – and how unemployed seniors can get back in employment.

Continual education and training has been prioritised through the tripartite agreement concluded in October 2017. This agreement strengthens the adult education system and continual training system and ensures that employees and companies will have access to a strong, focused, transparent, and more flexible education system. The tripartite agreement includes initiatives of DKK 2.5 billion in total over a four year period. Efforts have also been made towards targeting adult education to individuals on the margins of the labour market.

The Danish government generally focuses on increasing productivity and strengthening the competencies of wage earners through investments in scientific research, education and up-skilling. In the fall of 2019, the political parties behind the Employment Reform agreed to reprioritise DKK 100 million to a number of initiatives that will upgrade skills for unemployed and thereby secure qualified labour for companies. The initiatives primarily have the purpose of skills upgrading for unskilled. This includes the opportunity for more unemployed to get vocational training, skills upgrading through job rotation schemes as well as skills upgrading directed towards businesses with labour shortage. Furthermore, the agreement includes an initiative directed towards unemployed graduates.

Denmark still prioritises NEET-youth (Youth not in Employment, Education or Training). After a successful evaluation of the project "Building Bridge to Education" targeting this group, Denmark has launched a follow-up initiative "Job Bridge to Education" that includes mentor support and practical work training for young people who falls within the NEET-group. The project runs in the period 2018-2020.

Safeguarding the Oceans

Denmark is supporting an ambitious implementation of the plastic amendments decided at CoP14 into the European legislation. Denmark is supportive of the work in the plastic waste partnership and is following the partnership's work.

On 19 October 2020, The Nordic Council of Ministers launched the Nordic Report on elements for a new global agreement to prevent marine plastic litter. The Nordic report should be seen as input to the global negotiations at UNEA-5 in 2021 and 2022.

Denmark is currently holding the chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic countries are working dedicatedly on paving the way for a global instrument on marine litter. On October 28th 2020, the Nordic Council of Environmental Ministers adopted a declaration on the need for a new global agreement to prevent marine plastic litter.

Denmark is one of the world's most digitalised societies, with authorities ready to allow experiments and designate test areas that can help make Denmark a leading test lab for digitalisation of vessel traffic and green shipping.

The Danish Maritime Authority experiences interest for test activities for new technologies and green solutions, and several test areas for specific projects have been appointed, e.g. test of a remote-controlled tug boat in Copenhagen area, test of a remote-controlled work vessel in waters south of Fyn, test of an autonomous passenger vessel in Limfjorden, test of an autonomous drone for survey purposes and test of land based pilotage by means of drone technology.

Safety is central in any test activity, and based on a safety case, the Danish Maritime Authority assesses if the safety is satisfactory, and whether the desired area is safe to use for the desired test of technology.

The IMO Maritime Safety Committee approved in 2019 a guideline for testing autonomous ship activities. The purpose of the guideline is to help relevant authorities and stakeholders to ensure, that testing activities with autonomous ships and related systems and infrastructure are carried out safely and with regard for environmental protection.

Generally, all current rules for ships are created on the basis that the vessel is manned at all times, which can result in challenges in relation to future autonomous ships and remote controlled vessels that can be partial or completely unmanned.

At the moment there does not exist specific regulation on autonomous shipping neither domestic regulation nor international regulation.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has started the extensive work looking at the current regulation – a so-called Regulatory Scoping Exercise, where the current rules are reviewed in order to evaluate to what extent those rules are able to contain levels of autonomy, and/or which rules need to be changed or developed. The Danish Maritime Authority participates as Denmark's representative in this work. The goal is to establish common ground rules for autonomous ships, internationally.

Denmark is currently in the process of developing its first marine spatial plan (MSP) for its sea-areas. The Danish Parliament has adopted the Act on Maritime Spatial Planning that establishes a framework for maritime spatial planning in the Danish marine waters.

The MSP will form the basis of the coordination between the many uses of Denmark's sea-area, in a manner that can support the conditions for sustainability and growth in Denmark. The MSP seeks to establish which sea-areas in Danish waters that can be used for, inter alia, the energy sector at sea, maritime transport, transport infrastructures, fishery and aquaculture, mining, some types of land reclamation and preservation, protection and improvement of the environment – all activities which are subjected to different special regulations. The MSP is also expected to point out areas in which permits etc. for installations and use, within the sectors mentioned above, can be issued and thereby abstain other areas of the sea, from these activities.

The preparation of Denmark's first MSP will be based on an ecosystem-based approach. The ecosystem-based approach follows the holistic mindset from Denmark's marine strategy II, which is built upon four pillars: (a) The geographic approach, which is the management of ecosystem components and human activities that exists in the same geographic areas. (b) The concerns of the connections – not only within the ecosystem but also between ecosystem and human. It is worth noting that humans too is an integrated part of the environment – both in relation to its challenges and solutions. (c) The cumulative effects. Human activities often affect ecosystems in a complex matter. Here it is important to have knowledge about the effect of the sum of the impacts on an entire ecosystem. (d) The acknowledgment of the many different objectives and interest at sea. An ecosystem can have multiple functions (ecosystem services), but possibly not all at once. For example, a sandbank can be used for installing a wind turbine, be the foundation for sand and gravel mining, used as a fishing ground for fishermen or be protected as a habitat for fish - underlining that some activities can coexist whereas others cannot.

By taking these measures the Danish MSP seeks to support and back the 14th Sustainable Development Goal (Life below water), on aiming to conserve and sustainably use the oceans seas and marine resources.

Under the Marine Strategy framework directive Denmark is working to ensure coherent network of marine protected areas, which will help achieve SDG 14. With the programme of measures developed under the Danish Marine Strategy (MSFD) from 2017, Denmark has an obligation to investigate the need to identify and possibly designate marine protected areas in the Danish parts of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. This work will be based on an analysis of which habitat types and marine species are not adequately protected at present. Possible new MPA's are expected to be part of the next Programme of Measures related to the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

The UN Ocean Conference, which was supposed to take place in June 2020, has been postponed to 2021. A UN Ocean Conference Political Declaration, co-facilitated by Denmark and Palau, was under preparation in early 2020. However, these preparations have been delayed until early 2021. The relevant SDG 14 targets 14.1, 14.3 and 14.5 on marine pollution, ocean acidification and marine protected areas are all covered by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO-IOC, has been mandated by the UN General Assembly to plan the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). To implement the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in an Arctic Ocean context, a Task Force is presently preparing the development of an Arctic Ocean Action Plan. The Arctic process will take place after the adoption

of the implementation plan by the UN General Assembly, and will thus have stronger focus on identifying and drafting actual realistic actions. Denmark is the organiser of the working groups, whose meetings will take place in October and November 2020. In March 2021, the action plan for the Arctic will be adopted.

Denmark supports that the UN Ocean Conference will contribute to the UN Decade of Ocean Science, in that regard the HELCOM Science agenda can contribute as a Voluntary Commitment to the UN Ocean Conference in 2021.

Denmark has implemented the Espoo Convention in the Danish Environmental Assessment Act (EAA), which covers plans, programs as well as projects. The EAA also transposes the EU Directives EIA and SEA and their provisions concerning the assessment of transboundary impacts on the environment.

The EAA sets the procedural guidelines for conducting consultations and assessing transboundary impacts on the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency has been appointed Point of Contact in accordance with the Espoo Convention and the SEA Protocol to the Convention. The Department of the Ministry of Environment and Food is appointed Focal Point for Administrative Matters in accordance with the Espoo Convention and the SEA Protocol to the Convention.

Denmark is taking part in the ongoing work in HELCOM regarding dumped munitions in the Baltic Sea, e.g, the ongoing work in the HELCOM Submerged group.

Denmark fully supports the process for achieving good environmental conditions in the Baltic Sea. Danish participation in HELCOM is led by the Ministry of Environment and Food in good cooperation with the Ministry of Defence.

Denmark welcomes the work on an updated and ambitious Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) and the Ministry of Defence is in dialogue with the Ministry of Environment and Food concerning the proposed content.

Migration and Integration

Denmark continues to support intergovernmental information exchange on a wide range of integration issues with the other countries bordering the Baltic Sea, through channels such as the EU, UN, IGC, CBSS and Nordic Cooperation, etc.

The integration effort in Denmark is still monitored by "the Integration Barometer", where the annual progress on integration as well as a municipal level is monitored. The integration Barometer is available on <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/> (only available in Danish).

The Danish integration effort is already based on a "one stop" system where most of the necessary services, required for newly arrived refugees and other legal foreigners, are administered by the municipality to which the refugee has been referred or where the legal foreigner is residing after being granted a residence permit. The municipality has the responsibility for providing all necessary services such as housing and social benefits, as well as the self-support and return program offered through the Integration Act, Danish language training and job training.

The main aim of the program under the Integration Act is to ensure that newly arrived foreigners have the opportunity to utilize their abilities and resources in order to become self-sufficient and actively participate in and contribute to Danish society on an equal footing with other citizens. To ensure this, the program primarily focuses on securing better integration into the labour market by a combination of supporting opportunities for newcomers to enter into the labour market combined with financial incentives directed at local authorities, private companies, language course providers and the individual refugee in order to secure successful integration.

One key measure that entered into force on July 1, 2016, is the introduction of a new and more efficient job and training program (Integrationsgrunduddannelse (IGU)) by which newly arrived refugees and family reunited to refugees are gradually - over the course of two years – receiving on the job training (regular employment) and 20 weeks of relevant upgrading of skills. Initially the individual igu-participant may not fully possess the skills and productivity required to qualify for a job on regular Danish wage levels and working conditions. The igu therefore includes a so-called apprentice pay and ensures that job training and intensive skills training are combined within the two-year period. On February 25, 2019, the (former) Government and the social partners agreed to extend the scheme for a further 3 years until the end of June 2022.

Denmark recognizes the importance of facilitating contact between newcomers and the local community in order to ensure that newcomers are introduced to the values and norms of the Danish society thereby providing the best possible starting point for successful integration.

For example in 2016, the Danish Red Cross-Danish Refugee Council launched the “buddy programme” (Friends show the way) which aims to ensure that all newly arrived refugees with a residence permit are offered a so-called buddy (a volunteer) in their host municipality upon arrival. The project’s overall objective is to promote individual integration and social cohesion at the local level, with both the refugees and host societies gaining greatly from the relationship. Further information about this program can be found on the Red Cross website on <https://redcross.eu/projects/friends-show-the-way> (available in English).

The Council of Ethnic Minorities (Rådet for Etniske Minoriteter), financed through the annual Finance Act, has among its “areas of action”, a focus on ensuring political and democratic participation amongst ethnic minorities, including refugees and other newly arrived foreigners. Part of the Council’s vision is to ensure a higher participation in democratic elections from ethnic minorities, and to work towards ensuring that participation of ethnic minorities in Danish institutions and organizations reflects the ethnic composition of the general Danish population in general and to work towards an increase in the number of ethnic minorities participating actively in Danish civil society and in the democratic dialogue.

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Berlin, den 28. Februar 2020

Sehr geehrter Herr Kollege ,

Liebe Johannes,

vielen Dank für Ihr Schreiben vom 24. Oktober 2019 und die beigefügte Entschließung der 28. Ostseeparlamentarierkonferenz 2019. Gerne übersende ich Ihnen anbei die in Kooperation mit den weiteren zuständigen Bundesministerien erarbeitete Stellungnahme der Bundesregierung.

Die Entschließungen der Ostseeparlamentarierkonferenz spiegeln die Bedeutung einer engen Zusammenarbeit auf gesellschaftlicher, wirtschaftlicher und staatlicher Ebene für alle Ostseeanrainer wider. Ich freue mich darauf, am High-Level Meeting des Ostseerats am 18. und 19. Mai auf Bornholm teilzunehmen und hoffe auf konkrete Impulse für die Zusammenarbeit in der Region.

Für Ihr Engagement im Rahmen der Ostseeparlamentarierkonferenz als Vorsitzender der deutschen Delegation danke ich Ihnen sehr.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Dein Michael Roth,

Statement by Germany's Federal Government on the resolution adopted by the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, held in Oslo (Norway) from 25 to 27 August 2019

I. Regarding the preamble:

The Federal Government welcomes the resolution adopted by the 28th annual conference of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), held in Oslo from 25 to 27 August 2019. The resolutions give the Federal Government valuable input for a German Baltic Sea policy which is regionally anchored.

Close and coordinated cooperation between all stakeholders, a healthy Baltic Sea and sustainable economic development of the Baltic Sea region remain priorities for the Federal Government. The Federal Government also underlines the importance of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Helsinki Convention (HELCOM), the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the Northern Dimension (ND) as the pillars of this cooperation. All forums are used for official and social exchange in close coordination between the federal ministries and the northern German *Länder* (federal states). In addition, the Federal Government will continue its formative role as it assumes the chairmanship of the EUSBSR and HELCOM in 2020.

Strengthening trust among all CBSS Member States will continue to be a key priority for the Federal Government. Against this background, the Federal Government welcomes the progress made in implementing the Roadmap by the CBSS Secretariat and the Member States, and in particular by the Danish presidency.

Regarding the calls for action:

The participants, elected representatives from the Baltic Sea Region States, assembling in Oslo, Norway, 25-27 August 2019, call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU,

Regarding Cooperation in the Region, to

1. strengthen trust among all Member States of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) through further concrete efforts and measures;

Response:

Close and trusting cooperation in the Baltic Sea region remains a long-term priority for the Federal Government. The CBSS has a key role to play in strengthening trust

within the region. The Roadmap adopted during the Latvian presidency and enshrined in the Jurmala Declaration of 3 June 2019 is being consistently implemented by the current Danish presidency. The Federal Government is working closely with all members in this context.

2. intensify the early involvement of the next generation and respect the next generation's concerns more intensively in policy and decision-making processes via concrete measures of the governments to reinforce the foundations of trust and security in the Baltic Sea Region as an element of foreign policy;

Response:

The Federal Government is a longstanding supporter of the involvement of young people in the Baltic Sea region. In particular, support for the Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue (BSYD, held most recently in October 2019 in Berlin) is a unique example of this involvement. In addition to the young people from the Member States, young people from Belarus were also represented. The Federal Government has pressed for an extension of the Project Support Facility (PSF), citing the discussions on the subject of young people during the CBSS High Level Meeting in Jurmala in June 2019. In 2020, the support will be focused entirely on projects involving the "next generation" in all three CBSS long-term priorities. The call for applications was published in January 2020.

A post for a youth coordinator has been created in the Secretariat in Stockholm – the recruitment process is ongoing. In addition, EU funding has been secured (funding period: February 2020 to August 2022) to facilitate the initiative for a "youth platform" with the involvement of numerous local partners. This platform is intended to facilitate youth exchange beyond traditional programmes of visits and to serve as a forum for discussions among young people on relevant issues in the Baltic Sea region. A more far-reaching, systematic involvement of young people in the opinion-forming process of the CBSS is currently being discussed by the Member States, with an open mind as to the outcome.

3. continue cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation programmes between EU member states and Russia as well as Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, and actively engage in developing new generations of these programmes for the future;

Response:

In the framework of the Northern Dimension, the Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL) was extended for another five years in November 2019. In the environmental and climate field, the Environmental Partnership (NDEP) has been extended until 15 November 2022. Within this framework, investment projects are supported in the common interest, particularly in the fields of water, waste and

circular economy, energy efficiency, and nuclear safety. The Federal Government called for the extension of both partnerships. The European External Action Service is planning to hold a high-level Northern Dimension meeting in Iceland in 2020 (at which Germany would be represented by the EU). In the CBSS framework, the Federal Government has, together with all Member States, called on the CBSS Secretariat to engage in close dialogue with all ND partnerships.

Regarding European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), close technical coordination of the aims and funding opportunities is taking place between the National Coordinators of the EUSBSR and the Joint Programming Committee (JPC) of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme for the new funding period from 2021 to 2027. A first joint meeting between all National Coordinators and the members of the JPC took place in Riga in February 2020. All involved expressed support for a continuation of cooperation with the non-EU countries of Belarus, Norway and Russia.

4. conclude the current CBSS reform process and increase the focus on synergies between cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region, and

Response:

The Federal Government is working closely with the Danish presidency of the CBSS to achieve the aims established in the reform process by July 2020. At present, the implementation of the measures is proceeding in line with the timetable produced by Denmark.

In addition, the CBSS Member States have asked the CBSS Secretariat to develop a strategy paper identifying strategic partners and potential synergies in regional cooperation. It was considered for the first time by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) in December 2019. A final version is expected by the end of the Danish presidency.

Another example of a successful cooperation format is the Federal Government's financial support for the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD). In this context, synergies between ongoing projects and programmes supported by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (e.g. the National Climate Initiative, the European Climate Initiative, the Advising Assistance Programme (BHP²)) are increasingly being examined and, where appropriate, regionally linked.

5. examine the possibilities to establish fruitful professional cooperation on the basis of international law – such as has existed very successfully for decades through institutions such as HELCOM in the field of environmental policy – in a comparable way in other policy areas as well,

Response:

The Federal Government's current efforts in the Baltic Sea region, particularly in the CBSS reform process, aim to strengthen synergies and reduce thematic overlap between the regional formats. Multilateral cooperation is generally very intensive. Further intensification or the creation of formats on the basis of international law is not being discussed at this time.

6. further strengthen measures to combat terrorism and violent extremism in line with human rights obligations and the rule of law – recognising that the effective fight against terrorism and violent extremism is an important pillar for the preservation of democracy, the spread of disinformation being one key element. Parliaments have a key role to play in this context, as well as in the awareness of all the measures taken to combat terrorism at the international level;

Response:

Hatred, right-wing and left-wing extremism, anti-Semitism and other forms of group-focused enmity have no place in Germany. The Federal Government is resolutely determined to defend our liberal democracy against them.

Terrorism is one of the biggest challenges for the security authorities in Germany and Europe. The large number of terrorist attacks which have taken place in Europe in recent years have provided tragic evidence of this. International terrorism, like all forms of terrorism, aims to spread fear and terror. It not only threatens the individual freedom and security of open societies, but also calls the international order's established structures into question.

The Federal Government is addressing these challenges in part by taking numerous legislative, organisational and societal measures to combat international terrorism. As recently as the end of October 2019, the Federal Government adopted a package of measures produced by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community and the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, which paves the way for still more effective measures to combat right-wing extremism and hate crime by creating or expanding the legal and actual basis for such measures.

This includes expanded powers and greater staffing and technological capacities for the security authorities, initiatives to tackle terrorist content online, and prevention programmes and cooperation in the framework of the EU and with other foreign partners, bilaterally or in multinational contexts, such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum or the United Nations. These and other measures are intended, first and foremost, to protect the population — one example being still more restrictive legislation on weapons and explosives — and to preserve our lifestyles and our liberal way of life.

Regarding the Future of Working Life, to

7. implement an exchange of ideas on the ministerial level as early as possible, involving the social partners' current considerations and strategic approaches to meeting the considerable challenges with regard to ageing populations and thus pressures on pension systems, the new requirements of the labour market on skills and qualifications as well as digitalisation and further technological developments, the need for better synergies between educational systems as well as labour markets' demands and increasing labour mobility regarding their impacts on economic growth, for example countries suffering from highly skilled and competent individuals leaving the country due to better opportunities abroad (brain drain), social cohesion (between social groups) and social sustainability (between generations);

Response:

The Federal Government welcomes an exchange on the challenges and new requirements regarding skills and qualifications which digitalisation poses for the labour market. In particular, an exchange about best practices regarding continuing education and training in the era of digital transformation and environmental change is highly relevant.

The Baltic Sea countries can also cooperate proactively and fruitfully in relation to initiatives at EU level, including the planned updating of the EU Skills Agenda and the Digital Education Action Plan. The structural change being driven by climate action and digitalisation poses a major challenge for companies and employees. To address this challenge, additional incentives are to be created for skills development for employees.

In addition, precautions also have to be taken to allow rapid responses to economic volatility. The Federal Government is therefore seeking to expand and adapt its range of labour market policy instruments via its current bill for a Work of Tomorrow Act (*Arbeit-von-morgen-Gesetz*). The core elements of this bill are a transformation subsidy and support for skills development to improve career prospects – building on the provisions of the Skills Development Opportunities Act (*Qualifizierungschancengesetz*), as a second line of support – as well as an expansion in the support available for skills development in outplacement companies, a legal entitlement to support for continuing education and training leading to a vocational qualification, the introduction of an authorisation to issue ordinances to allow the partial reimbursement of social security contributions in the case of skills development during short-time work, the permanent establishment of assisted vocational training, support for cross-border apprentices during in-company vocational training, rules on the payment of travel expenses in the case of introductory training, greater protection under unemployment insurance for people undertaking continuing education and training, the extension of the continuing education bonus, and the introduction of electronic registration options with the Federal

Employment Agency (early registration as a jobseeker and registration as being unemployed).

In addition, the “New Quality of Work Initiative” launched by the Federal Government is seeking to ensure good working conditions and to encourage companies and public administrations to implement innovative approaches to personnel policy. The initiative is supported by the social partners. It seeks to support companies, employees and staff representative bodies in moving successfully towards the digital future, on the basis of a shared vision. The initiative’s substance is structured around the following areas for personnel-policy action: leadership, equality of opportunity and diversity, health, and knowledge and skills.

8. use the early exchange of current considerations and strategic approaches to meeting these challenges in the individual countries of the Baltic Sea region, the elaboration of common interfaces, but also the visualization of existing differences in the individual approaches as a decisive contribution to the joint further development of the entire region;

Response:

The Federal Government is in constant dialogue with its European partners and the social partners in order to respond to the challenges posed by ageing populations and the new requirements in the labour market. In addition to the regular dialogue at ministerial level, which takes place in bilateral discussions and in formats such as the European Union’s Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), the Federal Government participates actively in bodies such as the Social Protection Committee (SPC) and the Employment Committee (EMCO), in order to ensure a continuous exchange, transfer of knowledge and a substantive strategic discussion among the countries and with the social partners.

9. consider long-term labour market forecasts, including scenarios for digitising the world of work, the development through qualifications, occupations, sectors and regions and to exchange continuous and long-term research results on the development of employment and the labour market in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region. On this basis, a better possibility is to be opened up for measures to meet the challenges posed to the labour market by demographic, technical and qualification-specific structural change, which will take account of developments throughout the Baltic Sea region;

Response:

The Federal Government is engaged in an active dialogue on the findings of research into labour market trends. One component of this dialogue was a workshop held by the Latvian public employment service on 14 and 15 January 2020 in the framework of the Network of Public Employment Services, at which the Federal Government was

represented by the Institute for Employment Research (IAB). The IAB is also a member of the International Labour Market Forecasting Network, in which many Baltic Sea countries are represented by their public employment services. An annual meeting is held in this framework, most recently in May 2019, at which a presentation was given by Sabine Klinger; a joint publication was subsequently issued.

10. jointly discuss the enormous transformation of the world of work that can be expected from further digitisation in a forward-looking and early manner and to explore ways in which these can be better countered by comparable procedures;

Response:

The transformation of the world of work affects all Baltic Sea countries. A forward-looking dialogue helps countries to identify the risks, opportunities and suitable political instruments proactively and at an early stage. In particular, it is important to discuss concrete measures which can help countries to shape the transformation in an equitable and human-centred way. The Federal Government's dialogue with the Baltic Sea countries has been intensified because of these shared interests. The Baltic Sea partners are also pioneers when it comes to a human-centred approach to shaping a digitalised society.

11. agree on fair framework conditions with regard to the design of working conditions in a digital economy and to further facilitate entrepreneurial activity across borders;

The Federal Government is seeking to ensure decent work even for new forms of work, such as the platform economy. We want to enable companies to make greater use of the platform economy's potential. At the same time, good working conditions and social protection must still apply in the platform economy. Given the cross-border business models which exist, regulation at European level is sensible in order to create a level playing field.

12. improve gender parity and ensure stronger involvement of women in the workforce by enabling compatibility of career and family work as well as equal employment opportunity and thereby reducing the gender pay gap;

Response:

The Federal Government believes its holistic approach to tackling the gender pay gap, by looking at all causes of the pay gap between men and women, has been validated. It will continue its steps and efforts to increase the female labour-force participation rate, to make it easier for men and women to combine family and caregiving responsibilities and work, and to reduce the gender pay gap. Important measures

have been taken to promote equality of opportunity in working life, in the form of the national minimum wage, the Act on the Equal Participation of Women and Men in Executive Positions (*Gesetz für die gleichberechtigte Teilhabe von Frauen und Männern an Führungspositionen*) and the Act to promote Transparency in Wage Structures among Women and Men (*Gesetz zur Förderung der Entgelttransparenz zwischen Frauen und Männern*). Family caregiver leave, the care support allowance, the parental allowance “plus”, and the federal programme KitaPlus (which aims to increase childcare availability) have made it easier to combine family and work responsibilities. The right to return from part-time to full-time work also helps people to better combine work and family life, and contributes to a more secure income over the course of people’s lives.

13. step up the efforts to support youths who are currently not in employment, education, or training (NEET) back into education or the labour market - based on best practices and the results of cross-sectoral, transnational cooperation;;

Response:

The Federal Government is open to the further development of international cooperation in the Baltic Sea region regarding NEETs. Currently, the Federal Government is working intensively to enhance national measures for young NEETs. The existing instruments to support young people, particularly in the promotion of vocational training, are regularly updated. One example is “assisted vocational training”, which was introduced in the last electoral term as a new instrument to promote vocational training. It supports disadvantaged young people who require support in connection with learning difficulties or problems in their social environment in the process of successfully completing in-company vocational training in the dual system. This instrument, which was initially introduced for a limited period, is to be made permanent and developed further.

In addition, a range of new developments are taking place, particularly with regard to careers guidance and advice in schools. The careers guidance events begin one year earlier than was previously the case, and include more interactive formats. School students thus come “more directly” into contact with occupational profiles. This is intended to allow young people to explore their own strengths, weaknesses and interests, and to think about their choice of career at an early stage.

The further development of youth employment agencies is an important aim for the Federal Government. Coordinated cooperation in youth employment agencies between the employment agencies, jobcentres and youth welfare offices, in particular, as well as schools in some cases, can enable these services to reach more young people.

The Alliance for Initial and Further Training 2019-2021, which brings together various stakeholders from the vocational training and labour market under the leadership of the Federal Government, has the aim of helping everyone, ideally, to obtain a skilled vocational qualification, and of strengthening the dual system of vocational training. The partners in the Alliance contribute to this aim through joint activities and voluntary commitments. The Alliance covers a broad spectrum of topics, ranging from careers guidance, to placement into vocational training (including support services for apprentices and companies), to greater ease of transfer between vocational training and academic education, to mobility issues, and services for those who drop out of university courses.

Since 2016, the Education Chains Initiative has promoted better coordination of existing services and support options and a coherent approach by the Federation, *Länder* and federal agencies. Negotiations are currently ongoing for the new period.

Regarding Safeguarding the Oceans –

Achieving the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals, to

14. consistently implement the amended Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal signed by 187 states, considering its amendment and decisions on plastic wastes, adopted on 10 May 2019 by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal as important contributions to combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC;

The Basel Convention is implemented in particular by the European Regulation on shipments of waste. The amendments must first be incorporated into an OECD Decision. Negotiations on this are ongoing, as the United States has objected to the amendments to the Basel Convention being adopted unchanged in the OECD Decision. The amendments to the Basel Convention must also be incorporated into the European Regulation on shipments of waste; the European Commission has to produce proposals for this.

15. support the further development of a legally-binding, globally-reaching mechanism for managing plastic waste towards the consistent combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC;

Response:

Regarding the further development of a legally-binding, globally-reaching mechanism for managing plastic waste, the Federal Government is working

actively with countries around the world which are particularly ambitious in driving forward consistent efforts to combat pollution of the seas by plastic waste. In March 2019, on the margins of the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, announced plans to invite these countries to a coordination meeting. The meeting was held in Berlin on 15 October 2019 as a “Roundtable on tackling global plastic pollution — Ways towards an international convention”. It was attended by representatives and ambassadors from 14 countries (China, Denmark, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Norway, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Turkey) and the European Commission; Federal Minister Schulze opened the event. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the potential advantages of a legally-binding, globally-reaching mechanism (e.g. a new convention) and strategic approaches for UNEA-5. There was broad support among the attendees for driving forward the international process towards a global agreement, without determining in advance whether it should be binding in international law.

On the margins of the third meeting of the UN ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics (Bangkok, 18-22 November 2019), which the Federal Government attended at working level, a further meeting of “ambitious countries” with around 20 participants was held on the evening of 20 November 2020, at the invitation of the Federal Government, to build further support for a UN agreement on plastics.

The Nordic countries, particularly Norway, are also playing a leadership role in building support in the framework of UNEA-5 for an international plastics agreement or a new mandate (e.g. the establishment of an international negotiating group), and have taken decisions at ministerial level on this issue. At present, a major study is being produced on behalf of the Nordic countries, accompanied by workshops. The Federal Government (like Switzerland and the European Commission) was invited to the workshops organised by the Nordic countries and attended two-day coordination meetings at working level in September 2019 and January 2020 in Reykjavik and Copenhagen respectively.

16. promote, through appropriate measures, the accelerated digitalisation of vessel traffic and green shipping to achieve the 2030 objectives as soon as possible;

Response:

The Federal Government welcomes this call for action. Reducing shipping’s impacts on the environment and climate is a key element of German engagement in the framework of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Alongside the continuous updating of existing provisions to protect the marine environment, the

focus is currently on the development of concrete measures in the framework of the initial strategy on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships, in particular. In this context, the Federal Government's main focus is ensuring that the level of ambition and the goals of the initial strategy are actually achieved. This is the only way to ensure that shipping can play its part in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. At national level, the Federal Government has produced funding guidelines on the provision of grants for equipping and converting sea-going ships to use liquefied natural gas (LNG) as a marine fuel. Measures are being prepared to support fixed and mobile facilities for shore-side electricity supply for ships when in port.

To promote the accelerated digitalisation of vessel traffic, the Federal Government is working at both international and national level on a wide range of issues, in particular the expansion of the Automatic Identification System (AIS) through the introduction of the VHF Digital Exchange System (VDES), in order to improve the bandwidth for information to be transmitted ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore in the VHF band. The Federal Government is also working in the IMO's Facilitation Committee (FAL) on the creation of an international maritime single window environment based on the European approach (EMSWe), in order to fully harmonise ship reporting worldwide and create the conditions for complete digitalisation. In addition, work is taking place in the IMO's Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) on replacing the analogue NAVigational TEXt Message System (NAVTEX) by introducing Navigational Data (NAVDAT), so that digital navigation information (alerts, nautical information) can be processed directly in electronic form, for example in the Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS).

17. support the plastic waste partnership established by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to mobilize the resources, interests and expertise of business, government, academic and civil society to assist in the implementation of new measures to reduce the generation of these wastes, including microplastics, providing a range of practical support, including tools, best practices, technical and financial assistance;

Response:

The Federal Government is actively participating in the newly established Plastic Waste Partnership. Representatives of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and GIZ have been nominated as members of the Partnership's working group. Its first meeting is due to take place at the start of March 2020. The aim is to implement the programme of work agreed by the Conference of the Parties, and to organise concerted action for appropriate

regulation at the global level to strengthen e-navigation and pave the way for autonomous shipping.

18. organise concerted action for appropriate regulation at the global level to strengthen e navigation and pave the way for autonomous shipping;

Response:

Both e-navigation and autonomous shipping are regularly dealt with through “concerted and global” action at IMO level. Their comprehensive international use will be impossible without the safety framework (performance and testing standards) to be established by the IMO. The Federal Government is active at IMO level.

19. use the ongoing changes and processes on ecologically and biologically significant areas and maritime spatial planning systematically as a sufficient and necessary tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 14 on protecting and restoring ecosystems of the UN 2030 goals and intensify all continuing efforts in meeting the SDG 14 targets;

Response:

In 2018, HELCOM worked with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to identify and describe biologically or ecologically significant marine areas in the Baltic Sea region, including a German marine area, in a scientific process laid down by the CBD. All of these areas were officially accepted by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in November 2019 (see CBD/COP/DEC/14/9), were added to a public list maintained by the CBD Secretariat as “ecologically or biologically significant areas”, and were transmitted to the UN General Assembly.

HELCOM adopted guidelines for the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach in maritime spatial planning as early as 2016, a process launched largely at Germany’s initiative and in which Germany played a key role; HELCOM is thus a pioneer in the implementation of the ecosystem approach in maritime spatial planning.

20. jointly develop far-reaching measures and proposals for the UN Conference on oceans 2020 and try to further evolve these together at the UN level and achieve more decisive action at the international level to ensure political support for these measures in the field of improving the state of the oceans and its recovery;

Response:

The second UN Ocean Conference (SDG 14 conference) will be held in Lisbon from 2 to 6 June 2020. The Federal Government regards the development of global ocean governance as being of key importance for the achievement of the SDG 14 targets. Regional marine protection partnerships are an important foundation for this necessary development. The Federal Government already made this clear at the 2017 conference

in the framework of a voluntary commitment. In 2020, the Federal Government will increasingly press for prioritised and accelerated implementation of SDG 14 in marine regions, i.e. cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation. Within HELCOM and OSPAR, the SDGs have already been translated into goals for the regional level and regional action plans have been developed, which are being updated at regular intervals.

In February 2017, HELCOM engaged intensively with the 2030 Agenda adopted by the UN in September 2015, and set out in a report how the Sustainable Development Goals could be implemented in the Baltic Sea region. For the UN conference in June 2020, HELCOM is planning to put forward contributions to “voluntary commitments” in the discussion process.

Among other things, the Federal Government is actively supporting the ambitious target for 30% of the ocean to be protected in marine protected areas by 2030, in the framework of the post-2020 process under the Convention on Biological Diversity. With regard to improving the state of the world’s oceans, the Federal Government is also actively involved in the efforts to bring about an effective agreement on the conservation of the biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). The Federal Government’s primary objectives are, in particular, effective rules on the designation, protection, management and monitoring of protected areas beyond national jurisdiction, and high environmental standards for high seas environmental impact assessments. Furthermore, in 2016 the EU (with Germany playing the leading role) submitted a proposal to the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) for the creation of a comprehensive marine protected area for the sensitive and almost untouched ecosystem in the Antarctic Weddell Sea (WSMPA). In June 2018, the German Bundestag unanimously adopted a resolution which supported the establishment of this protected area with high standards of protection and gave the Federal Government parliamentary backing for the international negotiations.

21. support in-depth marine research and innovation in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity;

Response:

In-depth marine research into the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity is a priority issue in the Federal Government’s coastal, marine and polar research programme “MARE:N”. With the “Coasts in Transformation” funding announcement in 2019 in the “North and Baltic Sea Coasts” research priority area, the Federal Government is addressing the creation of practical knowledge about the effects of multiple stressors and the sea level rise on the dynamics and integrity of coastal systems, and about the effects of anthropogenic and climate-induced

changes on species occurrence, functional biodiversity and material flows in coastal ecosystems. The funding is due to begin in 2020; six million euros is available. The “Protection and Sustainable Use of Marine Areas” research mission planned by the German Marine Research Alliance (DAM) for 2020 is intended to develop implementation-oriented practical knowledge about reducing the effects of anthropogenic stressors and about management strategies for marine areas.

At European level, the Federal Government is making 7.9 million euros in funding available in the framework of the Article 185 TFEU programme BONUS for the period from 2014 to 2020.

22. ensure that the provisions of the UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991) (Espoo Convention) are complied with in the implementation of projects with transboundary impacts in the Baltic Sea area;

Response:

The Espoo Convention, as an instrument of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), ensures that affected countries and their populations are involved in other countries’ environmental impact assessment processes for projects which can have significant transboundary impacts. This mutual involvement in industrial projects is particularly important for the countries in the Baltic Sea region and is, in general, conducted properly and fruitfully. To enhance cooperation between the countries in the Baltic Sea region, a regular informal exchange takes place between all national Espoo points of contact in the Baltic Sea countries.

23. ensure that large scale projects that affect the coastlines and coastal areas and that have a major impact on ecosystems in the Baltic Sea region have to comply with the obligations arising from relevant international treaties and conventions, including the Espoo Convention and the Helsinki Convention;

Response:

When it comes to large-scale projects that affect coastlines and coastal regions, such as Nord Stream II, in particular, special care is taken to ensure compliance with the obligations arising from the Espoo Convention. The Federal Government engages in a close dialogue with the authorities responsible for the technical execution of the individual projects. The Federal Government has complied with the information obligations arising from HELCOM in connection with Nordstream I and II.

24. with regard to the detection of unexploded ordnance and buried/deposited ammunition present in the Baltic Sea, and with reference to current HELCOM activities, work together and develop a cross-border, sustainable strategy for dealing with this, call on the CBSS to explore the possibility to create a financing tool, i.e. to monitor, contain/secure, salvage or destroy, as the unexploded ordnance in the Baltic Sea may constitute a danger to humans and

the environment, especially with regard to shipping routes and coastal waters used by tourists; based on such monitoring results a commission of experts has to evaluate and analyse the risks outgoing from the buried/deposited ammunition annually and issue recommendations for action;

Response:

The Federal Government would welcome a political consensus among all Baltic Sea countries on the subject of ammunition in the Baltic Sea.

At national level, the Federal Government and the coastal *Länder* have been dealing continuously with the topic of the risk posed by sunken ammunition for a decade, especially in the framework of the Ammunition Expert Group set up by the Federation-*Länder* Working Group on the North Sea and Baltic Sea. The first detailed report, with the title “Ammunition in German marine waters – taking stock and recommendations”, was published as early as November 2011 and has since been updated on an annual basis. The UDEMM collaborative project (total funding: 1.5 million euros), which concluded in 2019, studied the extent of ammunition contamination in the southern Baltic Sea. Spatial risk maps of the German Baltic Sea and guidelines for evidence-based monitoring have been developed on the basis of measurements and modelling.

In light of the decisions taken by the 93rd Conference of Environment Ministers in November 2019, the Federal Government will – on the basis of the Expert Group’s many years of preparatory work and the currently available research findings, particularly the findings of recent months – discuss the way ahead and what action is needed, with an open mind as to the outcome, and will take any measures to counter risks. A further aim is to develop a cross-border, sustainable strategy for dealing with unexploded ordnance in the Baltic Sea. The establishment of a voluntary financing tool might be one option for cooperation.

In the Federal Government’s view, dealing with ammunition in the Baltic Sea and North Sea is a task for all of the countries in these regions. We will therefore conduct assessments on this subject and encourage the development of recommendations for action, including in the framework of cooperation under HELCOM and, in particular, through the established structures of the SUBMERGED Expert Group, chaired by Germany.

Regarding Migration and Integration, to

25. explore the possibility of a Baltic Sea-wide agreement on the future management of migration;

Points 25 and 31 are answered together under point 31.

26. consider – as best practice examples – the implementation of “one stop institutions” where migrants can receive all necessary services in one place as well as the possibility of personal integration plans;

Points 26, 27 and 30 are answered together under point 30.

27. take measures to facilitate direct and regular contacts between newcomers and locals, local institutions, civil society organisations, communities and individuals;

Points 26, 27 and 30 are answered together under point 30.

28. support dialogue platforms as open and regular communication and coordination tools for involved stakeholders to broaden the societal dialogue;

Response:

In the last funding period of the federal programme “Living Democracy!” (2015-2019), the “partnerships for democracy” at municipal level already offered various event formats. These aimed to promote dialogue and the organisation of civil-society stakeholders. The call for funding applications for the “partnerships for democracy” in the current funding period (2020-2024) expressly recommends the “creation of forums for respectful cooperation, constructive dialogue and debate to allow engagement with subjects relevant to the programme”. In addition, a dialogue on security and prevention is to be developed.

Furthermore, the National Action Plan on Integration (NAP-I) is being updated over the period to the end of 2021 to further develop approaches to integration, under the overall leadership of the integration commissioners and with the involvement of the *Länder*, municipalities and civil society. The NAP-I process serves to ensure the comprehensive involvement of integration stakeholders in the design of integration policy and brings together a variety of integration measures in a nationwide strategy in line with the principle that with rights come responsibilities. It is supported by federal discussion formats (e.g. the Federation-*Länder* meetings referred to under point 30 below, the Federal Chancellor’s integration summit), by the Expert Commission referred to under point 30 below, but also by transparency about federal measures through the publication of a regular overview of the Federal Government’s measures, which will also be continued as an online database in 2020.

29. improve within the framework of strategic approaches to integration the receptiveness of host societies through increased democratic participation in integration, with a stronger focus on the municipal level as the area of daily coexistence;

Response:

To provide greater support for the municipal level, the maximum funding available for the “partnerships for democracy” under the federal programme “Living

Democracy!” has been increased by 25 per cent. In 2015 and 2016, in particular, the integration of refugees was a nationwide priority in the work of many “partnerships for democracy”. In places where challenges still exist because of migration flows, projects (“individual measures”) to increase receptiveness are still receiving support from the partnerships. In most cases, they are implemented by civil-society organisations.

30. support and promote a municipal multi-stakeholder governance of refugee integration including systematic participation and multi-stakeholder exchange between politics, the business sector and civil society;

Response to points 26, 27 and 30:

Integration policy is a key policy field for the Federal Government and is directed in particular, though not only, at refugees. The Federal Government’s integration-policy strategy is based on the principle that with rights come responsibilities. Although people are entitled to integration, they are also required to make their own efforts to integrate. Integration can only succeed as a two-way process.

The Federal Government supports the integration of migrants by means of a diverse portfolio of measures, encompassing the fields of language tuition, integration into vocational training, work and education, and integration into society. The measures are focused on participation and equality of opportunity: they are aimed at all eligible persons, regardless of their national, ethnic or religious background.

Asylum seekers are fully informed about integration opportunities already during the application process; depending on their prospects of being allowed to stay in Germany, they can take part in integration measures even while the process is still ongoing. In addition, migrants can obtain information about integration measures from the Migration Advisory Service for Adult Immigrants, for example; one-stop institutions thus already exist (see point 26).

An important guiding principle in the design of federal integration measures is the promotion of contact between migrants and the host society and the development of society’s capacity for integration (see point 27). In this context, the Federation supports a wide range of measures, which are set out in the “Overview of Federal Government measures relating to language tuition and integration” that is published at regular intervals. For example, support is provided particularly for local approaches which promote integration into the community and living environment and which are also aimed at people from the host society as important contributors to the integration process (see also point 29). In addition, the Federal Government has established an Expert Commission to develop proposals relating to key issues in the field of integration policy, particularly with regard to society’s capacity for integration. The Commission is due to submit its report in the summer of 2020.

Integration takes place at local level; the *Länder*, municipalities and civil society are important integration stakeholders with which the Federation collaborates closely (see point 30). The Federation has provided comprehensive financial support to the *Länder* and municipalities when it comes to coping with refugee flows and integrating refugees. In total, the *Länder* and municipalities received around 6 billion euros in refugee-related financial relief in 2019. In addition, federally financed integration measures, such as the integration course and the Migration Advisory Service for Adult Immigrants, are offered throughout Germany, thus reducing the organisational and financial burden on the *Länder* and municipalities. A regular technical exchange also takes place with the *Länder* and municipalities on integration-policy issues, for example within the framework of the Federation-*Länder* meetings organised by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

31. examine the extent to which the regular exchange of best practice examples throughout the Baltic Sea region will make it possible to harmonise migration strategies;

Response to points 25 and 31:

The Federal Government is working intensively with other countries to tackle the causes of refugee flows and illegal migration. At the same time, the Federal Government is honouring its legal and humanitarian commitments and helping refugees. The discussions and negotiations in the European Union are crucial, in the Federal Government's view. The Federal Government welcomes the exchange of best practice examples in this area; this takes place regularly, especially within European bodies.

Estonia

ESTONIAN STATEMENTS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE THE 28th BALTIC SEA PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

I ESTONIAN MFA

Points 1-5

CBSS ministerial meeting in 2019 once again declared the importance of the CBSS as a platform uniquely suited to add value to the development of the Baltic Sea Region, through intergovernmental dialogue and practical cooperation between all countries in the region, by fostering mutual understanding, building trust, ensuring stability and promoting people to people contacts. The meeting endorsed the Roadmap of the CBSS reforms 2018-2020. CBSS CSO was instructed to conclude the implementation of the document by the end of the Danish Presidency in 2020. The Roadmap enables the necessary flexibility of the Council, higher adaptability, preparedness and effectiveness of the CBSS, increases the focus on synergies between cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region and promotes the facilitating role of the CBSS in this regard.

Under the Danish Chairmanship, the CBSS Committee of the Senior Officials (CSO) has worked intensively to achieve the ambitious goals of the reform. Some documents have been already agreed on the Committee level including changes to the Terms of Reference of the organisation. The changes in the basic documents lead to more flexible and effective work of the Council and reflect the experience of the work of the CBSS during last years. There is a common understanding that the Baltic Sea Summits would take place when the Member States consider such political discussions opportune. The consistency and continuity of the political dialogue in the region is ensured by the CBSS Council meetings. CBSS reforms support trust among the Member States and enhance CBSS and its Member States governments and numerous other stakeholders activities in all three Long Term Priority areas. Implementation of the CBSS Project Facility (PSF) during the new period 2020-22 also contributes to the trust as well as the projects initiated by the CBSS Secretariat and participation of the CBSS in projects with other partners. Changes in the PSF documents agreed by the CBSS Member States in the CSO will contribute to the enhanced added value of the projects and take into account the experience of the two previous PSF periods.

During last years CBSS has worked intensively to widen **Youth** participation in regional cooperation and especially in the CBSS led projects. One important way to have Young people concerns accounted is widening their participation in the political process. In Estonia a person must be of at least 18 years of age to vote at national and EP elections, at local government council elections 16- and 17-year olds have been given the right to vote. To stand as a

candidate, a person must be of at least 21 years of age for the Riigikogu and the European Parliament elections, and at least 18 years of age for the local government council elections. Numerous very different Youth organisations are an important and visible part of our civil society. Estonian Youth Council plays a prominent role and cooperates with similar Councils in other Baltic Sea countries. Youth issues are high on the agenda not only at the CBSS but also other cooperation formats, for example, BSSSC and HELCOM. Better cooperation between different formats and efficient division of labour would make Youth cooperation in the Region more efficient and their voice more influential. We would especially mention Youth actions for a better environment, which play a significant role in influencing political decisions.

Estonia considers good cooperation, better division of labour and avoiding duplication important principles for **regional cooperation formats** in the Baltic Sea Region, such as CBSS, Northern Dimension, HELCOM, EUSBSR, Nordic Council, Baltic Council of Ministers and others. Regular meetings between the Presidencies and Secretariats of four regional councils (CBSS, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council) are important for better cooperation and coordination of the activities, we especially would like to see more sectorial cooperation between them.

Interreg Baltic Sea Programme and cross-border cooperation programmes play an important role in enhancing Baltic Sea regional cooperation. We are now approaching the programming process of the new MFF EU financial instruments and it is crucial to define priorities for funding and secure smooth moving from one MFF period to another avoiding gaps in financing.

Baltic Sea cooperation is in many areas based on multiple legal instruments including International conventions, decisions of International organisations etc, some areas are covered by EU legislation, some by political declarations, different action plans, memorandums of mutual understanding and so on. It is up to relevant sectoral departments to decide, which kind of International agreements they would like to use, formal or informal. At first, there has to be mutual political will to do something together and the sides find an appropriate form for their agreements.

II ESTONIAN MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Points 7-13, 26-31

Issues of the **Future of Working Life** involve activities of different national departments who discuss these matters in several international cooperation formats. Every ministerial-level meeting has to be well prepared on the level of officials and experts, it has to bring clear added value. It is crucial to have all members of one or other format to contribute to the success of the meetings.

Currently, Baltic Sea Region states are not in the position to have soon a ministerial meeting about Future of the Working Life issues, because of the lack of results on the level of officials and experts which would create a ground for political level meeting in the Baltic Sea Region format.

Since 2017 we started to provide training and retraining measures for employed people by **Public Employment Services** provider Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund and approved by social partners. This package of measures contains different measures provided directly to employees as well as measures provided to employees via their employers. The main focus is to support people who need support in changing job or remaining employed due to a lack of skills or their skills being outdated, but also to support structural change in the economy. Training is especially focussed to provide skills which has been indicated in skills forecasting system (OSKA) as growing in demand and also IT skills are provided and people 50+ is one of the target groups measures are focussed.

The new services are as follows:

- **a degree study allowance** for an employed person for obtaining vocational, professional higher education or Bachelor's studies;
- **labour market training with a training card** (worth up to 2500 euros for 3 years) to for employed persons at risk of unemployment;
- **support for obtaining qualifications** for employed persons who have undergone labour market or other training with the support of the training benefit;
- **a training grant for employers** for improving the skills and knowledge of their employees upon their recruitment and helping them to adapt to changes in the employer's economic activities.

Different **flexible working arrangements and working conditions** are topics that are frequently discussed between government and social partners. In 2018 the government developed proposals to change the Employment Contracts Act. Proposals covered working time regulation and regulation of fixed-time contracts. The consensus was not reached with social partners and law remained unchanged. Discussions continue whether working conditions under the Employment Contracts Act are sufficiently flexible and who should be covered by this law (should the participants of the digital economy be covered).

At the end of 2018, the Government discussed a further action plan for changes in the **long-term care** (LTC) system. The main aim of the changes is to increase the availability of long-term care services to reduce the care burden on informal carers and through that, support the reconciliation of work and care. In June 2019, the newly formed Government agreed that the Ministry of Social Affairs should continue to develop long-term care reform plan. At the beginning of 2020, the Cabinet approved a new state/municipality partnership model for the provision of LTC. As a next step, the Ministry of Social Affairs will prepare a legislative intent for LTC legislation by the end of 2020.

From January 2019 to the end of 2021, a project is carried out by a research consortium led by the Tallinn University to decrease the still unexplained part of the **gender pay gap** by clearing up further reasons for it through linking together different existing databases, adding qualitative analysis and using simulation and prognosis models to design evidence-based policy scenarios. The project also creates a low-administrative-cost database for up-to-date data on the gender pay gap. Based on the analysis, user-friendly digital awareness-raising features will be developed. The 615 789 EUR project is co-financed from the Regional Development Fund.

In 2019-2020, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioners Office is implementing a project “InWeGe - Income, Wealth and Gender” in collaboration with the University of Tartu and the TalTech (Tallinn Technical University). The project with a total budget of over 700 000 euros is co-financed by the European Commission through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme. The project has three objectives. First, it analyses the gender gap in financial and pension assets, focusing on Estonia, but using data also from other European countries. Second, the project aims to reveal new factors behind gender income gap in Estonia. Additionally, a free of charge and evidence-based innovative web application that predicts wages and pension entitlements is planned to be developed. In spring 2019, scientists from the TalTech and the University of Tartu presented a study about the gender gap in net wealth in Estonia. Administrative data on wealth that is linked to the Estonian Household Finance and Consumption Survey provides an individual-level wealth data for all household types.

In 2019-2020, the think tank Praxis is implementing a project “Nudging Women to Power”, financed from the European Commissions` Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, with a co-financing from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the National Foundation of Civil Society and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The general objective of the project is to improve women’s access to high-level political decision-making. It aims to increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of the importance of gender equality in the public policymaking and how the media, as well as political organizations, can help to empower women in achieving higher positions, as well as visibility and credibility in public domains. The direct target group of the project are Estonian journalists and national policymakers participating in seminars organized during the project. The wider target audience will be all journalists, policymakers, women interested in decision-making and the whole society benefitting from more equal representation of women and men in politics. In November 2019, an 18-month research project started that will concentrate on developing and piloting nudging methods to increase the share of women among ICT sector students and employees. The nudges that could aid in bringing more women to study and work in ICT will be tested in 2020. The project is co-funded by the Estonian Research Council from the European Regional Development Fund and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The **Estonian Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan** was presented in April 2014 and includes different activities by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research. Youth guarantee is coordinated in cooperation between these two ministries. Youth guarantee steering group meets at least twice a year. Youth guarantee steering group members

are Ministry of Social Affairs; Ministry of Education and Research; Estonian National Youth Council; Estonian Employers' Confederation; PES; Innove (Foundation Innove is an education competence centre that coordinates and promotes general and vocational education in Estonia, offers educational counselling services through the nationwide Rajaleidja network and mediates European Union grants in fields of education and working life); Estonian Youth Work Center; Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres and The Labour Inspectorate.

At the local level, different measures are implemented. Since 2018 there is the **Youth Guarantee Support System** (youth tracking system) which is a system designed specifically to support young people not in education, employment or training get back to school or work. The register-based system helps local municipalities to reach out to young people in NEET situation. Also, the tracking system helps to make the overall youth guarantee system (different measures) more complete because specialists from local municipality have information about young people in NEET situation and can offer them different options according to young people aims (for example career guidance, schools, training or other labour market services). Youth guarantee support system has specific IT-system and case management to offer individual support.

Thanks to the cooperation between different partners at local level discussion about the topic has raised wider awareness about the issue.

III ESTONIAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Points 7-10, 13

For the sustainable functioning of society, it is important that every person is employed in the labour market to the best of his or her abilities and able to react quickly and flexibly to changes in the labour market. The **Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy** is a document that proposes measures and actions to reduce the gap between lifelong learning and labour market needs.

The Lifelong Learning Strategy is guiding the major developments in the field of education and is the basis for the national education budget choices for 2014-2020, and will serve as a basis for developing the necessary programs to support change. The new strategy document is being prepared for the years 2021 - 2035

Objectives and actions of the Lifelong Learning Strategy are supported by the *Competitiveness Plan Estonia 2020*, Estonia's national sustainable development strategy *Sustainable Estonia 21* and are a fulfilment of the objectives of the Estonian security policy in the field of education.

The proportion of adults (25-64 years) without special or vocational education in Estonia has been gradually decreasing year-by-year. Those with basic or lower education are the most vulnerable in the labour market. People without secondary education are more likely to be unemployed or away from the labour market and they also tend to have lower wages. In 2018, the

share of people aged 25-64 without secondary education was highest among those aged 25-29 (about 17%).

To reduce the proportion of people without vocational or vocational education, it is important to reduce drop-outs from formal education and increase adult participation in vocational and higher education. The adult participation rate in lifelong learning has reached the highest level in 2019. The participation rate in lifelong learning has increased, mainly at the expense of non-formal learning, but the participation of adults in vocational and higher education has also increased. Less traditional groups - men, older people, non-Estonians and adults with a low level of education - are increasingly involved in training.

The labour market is showing increasing demand for people with vocational education, while several analyzes indicate that, alongside the acquisition of vocational skills, general and transferable skills and knowledge are playing an increasingly important role. Thus, in the future, the focus should be on converging rather than confronting vocational and general secondary education and aiming for more smooth transitions and blended learning opportunities.

The share of young people aged 18-24 with no educational attainment has fallen over the last eleven years from 14.4% in 2007 (the highest level in the time series) to 11.3% in 2018. There is concern about the gender gap: there are still more men than women with low levels of education.

Over the last five years, the employment rate of 20-34 year-olds who have completed one to three years of study has improved, reaching 81.7% in 2018, very close to the 2020 target (82%).

The proportion of 16- to 74-year-olds with digital literacy has also improved in recent years. According to Eurostat, in 2017, 88% of adults had at least a low level of digital literacy.

Within the framework of the Closer Lifelong Learning Program, measures will be implemented to develop the apprenticeship system in vocational and higher education, including apprenticeships, improving the image of vocational education and expanding apprenticeships. Piloting of work-based learning in higher education has begun. The program supports vocational championships and traineeships. To support the interest of entrepreneurs, competitions of the best practice company and trainee were organized under the leadership of the Estonian Employers' Confederation.

There is a great interest in entrepreneurship education. Modules for entrepreneurship education for general, vocational and higher education institutions have been completed. The Entrepreneurship Learning Program has contributed to the rapid growth of student companies.

Skills Coordination System OSKA provides information on key occupations and skills needed in the labour market. OSKA reports will be completed in all areas of the labour market by 2020.

In conclusion, **half of the indicators of the general objective of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy have been fulfilled**. Graduates' employment and adult participation in lifelong learning is increasing, and students at the end of elementary school are among the best in the world. The

share of adults with at least low levels of ICT skills is close to 90%, which is also estimated to be the number of jobs requiring a computer, while the proportion of adults with good skills is low. The share of adults (25-64 years) without special or vocational education has remained stable.

From **youth** affairs perspective exchanging ideas on the ministerial level with strategic partners and interest groups has been constantly evolving. On regards the ageing population and the necessity of empowering youth opinion in decision-making processes, an advisory council of youth organisations was established following the initiative of Minister of Education and Research. During the meeting, youth representatives can raise discussion topics which are important from their perspective. Previously the agenda has included referred digitalisation and synergies between educational systems and labour market.

Strategic cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Research (MoER), Government Office and Estonian National Youth Council ensured youth contribution to long-term national strategy “Estonia 2035” process. In addition to open consultations, youth-targeted activities were conducted and youth field strategic partners involved in thematic discussions. In result young NEETs are addressed as one of the key target groups in national strategies (both “Estonia 2035” and National Youth Field strategy 2021-2035).

Strong co-operation established between MoER and Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) under Youth Guarantee initiative, including preventive youth work and labour services, intervention services for NEETs, career guidance services (provided by Unemployment Foundation), also support for better knowledge in fields of responsibilities of the ministries. Outcomes of Youth Guarantee initiative are constantly observed by the working group and compared with other countries good practices, as well with the European Commission recommendations.

Social sustainability (between generations) and social cohesion (between social groups) are priorities for the Global Estonia Programme under the Ministry of the Interior. Particular working group – focussing on youth and young adults – is a good example of involving viewpoints from young people to understand their relations and perspectives to interact with local community members (from various age groups and diverse profiles).

IV ESTONIAN MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Points 14-15, 17, 19-24

Estonia implements the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal. Estonia supports that all waste, including plastic waste, is handled in an environmentally sound manner. Estonia recognizes the amendments of the Basel Convention annexes and decisions on plastic wastes adopted on 10 May 2019 by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary

Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal as an important contribution to combat plastic pollution globally.

Under Estonia's Presidency of the fourth session of United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA 4), plastic was identified as an important topic (reducing plastic waste was included in the ministerial declaration and the relevant resolution). UNEA-5 is elaborating the topic of plastic further (Estonia being a Vice-President).

Estonia is planning to establish a strategic approach for the circular economy by the end of 2021. Engagement of stakeholders is part of the preparation process. For that, we are analysing potential and possible measures of circular economy in the plastic industry. We are also supporting the reduction of waste generation projects from the Environmental Programme (Environmental Investment Centre). Finally, in 2019, we have launched a Circular Economy homepage (<https://ringmajandus.envir.ee/en>) where practical information is available for everybody.

Baltic Sea states in cooperation with HELCOM have established and designated ecologically and biologically significant areas.

Estonia is in the process of developing a maritime special planning, the second public display of the draft is currently ongoing. In maritime governance, we support agreements which guarantee natural reproductive capacity of marine resources as our resources and potentials are limited.

Under the aegis of HELCOM, together with Germany and Sweden we have made proposals for the UN Oceans Conference and are trying to develop these further at the UN level. In these proposals, we have reached the position that when tackling with the problems of the Baltic Sea we need to consider also issues at global level, for example, climate change. Anthropogenic pressures are similar globally, thus the HELCOM member states contribute also to the global fight against climate change.

In Estonia, the measures are directly linked to the strategic decision-making level since it is the Ministry of the Environment participating in the work of HELCOM.

As Estonia is a Party to the Espoo convention, we have implemented its provisions in case of different projects, including those carried out in the Baltic Sea region, for example, Balticconnector gas pipeline; North-West Estonian Marine Wind Farm, North Stream (twice). Which concerns the EIA protocol of the Espoo Convention, one of the current transboundary cases is the maritime special planning of Estonia. In the transboundary EIA procedures, major impact on ecosystems has always been considered both under relevant international treaties as well as the Espoo and Helsinki conventions.

The issue of the detection of unexploded ordnance and buried/deposited ammunition present in the Baltic Sea has been on the agenda of HELCOM. It would be rational to keep the theme in HELCOM framework and not create duplicating activities in other regional cooperation formats.

V ESTONIAN MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Points 16 and 18

Estonia believes it is important to increase the integration of digitalisation in port reception, logistic chain (e.g. e-Manifest), vessel traffic via e-navigation and innovative green shipping. Estonia already uses National Single Window Environment for all kinds of reporting formalities, including port calls (*just-in-time approach*), customs formalities, migration formalities, health and garbage formalities etc.; and contributes to research and development of autonomous systems technology in transport.

VI ESTONIAN MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

Points 6, 25-31

Since the beginning of 2019 in the field of **counter-terrorism**, the government of Estonia is in the process of renewing its priorities for the fight against terrorism in the Internal Security Development Plan (ISDP) 2020-2030. The Plan will cover all the necessary factors and developments regarding counter-terrorism and violent extremism. ISDP priorities are in accord with the UN CT Global Strategy, as well as the main principles and priorities of the UN, EU, CoE, OSCE and international law (including the protection of human rights).

Estonian Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB) has designated a position of a local coordinator, who coordinates the development of local multiagency network (incl. local communities and private sector partners) on prevention of radicalization. In cooperation with Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, the PBGB, Estonian Internal Security Service (KAPO) and local experts additional courses and guidelines have been created to raise the expertise of first-line practitioners (law enforcement, prison and probation and rescue service officers, specialists in local authorities, social workers, teachers, psychologists, etc.) to detect and react to the radicalization on early stage. PBGB has established an operational format of cooperation against antisemitism together with the Estonian Jewish Community. The Board has signed several bilateral and multilateral agreements related to internal security, counter-terrorism, P/CVE and exchange of personnel. It is developing measures for deradicalization and more targeted measures for support of victims of terrorism.

PBGB has achieved progress in the development of crisis management plans for high-security risk locations (i.e. airports, harbours), protection of public space and soft targets. Estonia has raised the competence and renewed the technology and equipment (including decontamination capacity) of the Estonian Internal Security Service's CBRN (Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) team and Estonian Rescue Board's CBRN team. We organized a CBRN exercise in Tallinn (October 2019), led by Estonian Internal Security Service (KAPO) - the main authority in Estonia, responsible for CBRN related cases. All relevant public

and private sector partners cooperated and participated in the exercise. The exercise was videotaped and has been used as training material for CBRN-related tabletop exercise in February 2020.

Regarding Migration and Integration, good and fruitful cooperation continues between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to discuss and coordinate positions on the EU level.

In March 2019, an expert-level meeting took place in Riga on the initiative of the Latvian Migration Service to exchange experience and to discuss the labour migration legislation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Also, every year a conference is organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers Estonian office, in cooperation with Ministry of the Interior, University of Tartu and other cooperation partners. The conference is a good platform for sharing best practices and the latest research in the field of migration, cross-border mobility in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

9.3.2020

Finland

Ministry of the Environment

Regarding Safeguarding the Oceans –

Achieving the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals, to

14. consistently implement the amended Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal signed by 187 states, considering its amendment and decisions on plastic wastes, adopted on 10 May 2019 by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal as important contributions to combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC;

On the second half of 2019, Finland, as the President of the EU Council, kept issues agreed at COP-14 on table and actively promoted EU and its Member States negotiations in the OECD about incorporating these amendments in the OECD decision on transboundary movement of wastes.

15. support the further development of a legally-binding, globally-reaching mechanism for managing plastic waste towards the consistent combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC;

Finland takes part in cooperation under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). Meeting of environment ministers under the NCM in April 2019 called for the development of a global agreement to more effectively and comprehensively deal with the issue of marine plastic litter and microplastics on a global level in an integrated manner and agreed to provide financial support for a Nordic Report to inform decision-making, sketching out the possible elements and approaches of a new global agreement that would address the whole lifecycle of plastics. Finland has also actively promoted the work on improving the global governance related to marine litter and microplastics both in the EU, especially during its Presidency, and in the UN ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics.

17. support the plastic waste partnership established by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to mobilize the resources, interests and expertise of business, government, academic and civil society to assist in the implementation of new measures to reduce the generation of these wastes, including microplastics, providing a range of practical support, including tools, best practices, technical and financial assistance;

The EU and several Member States participate actively in the partnership. The EU Council working party follows this work and gives guidance when necessary.

19. use the ongoing changes and processes on ecologically and biologically significant areas and maritime spatial planning systematically as a sufficient and necessary tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 14 on protecting and restoring ecosystems of the UN 2030 goals and intensify all continuing efforts in meeting the SDG 14 targets;

In 2020 for the first time in Finland, information on 87 ecologically significant marine underwater areas (EMMA) along the Finnish coast has been described. EMMA was produced under the Finnish Marine Underwater Inventory Programme (VELMU), custom-made for the Finnish maritime spatial planners. Descriptions of EMMAs have been prepared in collaboration with numerous marine nature experts, based

on extensive data and literature incl. e.g. VELMU data. The EMMAs will be taken into account in the national maritime spatial planning process.

20. jointly develop far-reaching measures and proposals for the UN Conference on oceans 2020 and try to further evolve these together at the UN level and achieve more decisive action at the international level to ensure political support for these measures in the field of improving the state of the oceans and its recovery;

Finland has been active both in the preparations by the EU+MSs to the UN Ocean Conference as well as within HELCOM. The HELCOM high-level meeting on 3 March agreed on input to the UN Ocean Conference from the perspective of the Baltic Sea.

21. support in-depth marine research and innovation in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity;

The Finnish Marine Underwater Inventory Programme (VELMU) has gathered information from ca. 160,000 observation points (2004-2019). Data have been used for a number of key assessments and reports on marine nature, such as the Report on the State of the Finnish Red listed species (2019) and Red listed habitats (2018) as well as for the Reporting on the EU Habitats Directive.

22. ensure that the provisions of the UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991) (Espoo Convention) are complied with in the implementation of projects with transboundary impacts in the Baltic Sea area;

Finland has applied the Espoo Convention to all projects with a transboundary context as defined by the Convention. It also takes actively part into the cooperation of the Baltic Sea countries' subregion under the Espoo Convention and is currently a co-lead of this group together with Denmark and Sweden.

23. ensure that large scale projects that affect the coastlines and coastal areas and that have a major impact on ecosystems in the Baltic Sea region have to comply with the obligations arising from relevant international treaties and conventions, including the Espoo Convention and the Helsinki Convention;

Finland has raised awareness of regional environmental authorities and other relevant actors in the application of the international treaties and conventions implemented in the region, including the Espoo Convention and the Helsinki Convention to ensure the compliance with these treaties and conventions.

24. with regard to the detection of unexploded ordnance and buried/deposited ammunition present in the Baltic Sea, and with reference to current HELCOM activities, work together and develop a cross-border, sustainable strategy for dealing with this, call on the CBSS to explore the possibility to create a financing tool, i.e. to monitor, contain/secure, salvage or destroy, as the unexploded ordnance in the Baltic Sea may constitute a danger to humans and the environment, especially with regard to shipping routes and coastal waters used by tourists; based on such monitoring results a commission of experts has to evaluate and analyse the risks outgoing from the buried/deposited ammunition annually and issue recommendations for action;

Finland takes part in the work of the HELCOM SUBMERGED (Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects) expert group that is planned to give its report by the end of this year. The report will deal with submerged ammunition and shipwrecks. Also international research projects on the issue area are ongoing.

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

Development of the Baltic Sea region is one of the key objectives of Finland. The issue is stated in the current Government Programme:

“Finland will promote security policy stability in the Baltic Sea region and will strengthen Baltic cooperation together with the Nordic countries, Russia and the Baltic countries. The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and HELCOM are important forums in Baltic cooperation.

For Finland, the main element of regional cooperation concerning the Baltic Sea is the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the collaboration performed within the strategy framework. Finland’s aim is that the Baltic Sea should be clean and constitute a robust marine environment. The aim is that the Baltic Sea region will take the lead in sustainable development and in the bioeconomy and circular economy.

Regional and cross-border cooperation, including the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, will be taken into account in the process of planning the EU’s financing instruments for the 2021–2027 programming period”

One of the key measures to support the Baltic Sea co-operation is the Interreg Baltic Sea Region. All in all 263,8 MEUR has been allocated to implement this programme.

The other significant tool to support the development of the Baltic Sea Region is the Finnish Structural Fund Programme 2014-2020. By the end of 2019 a total of 2282 ERDF and 198 ESF projects have been funded. Altogether 543,4 MEUR ERDF funding (41% of all ERDF public funding) and 125,0 MEUR of ESF funding (15% of all ESF public funding) is reserved to projects that directly or indirectly support development in the Baltic Sea Region. The most important activity in ERDF projects is connected to increasing global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region (76% of all ERDF projects). 44% of ESF projects are focused on supporting the EU Baltic Sea Region strategy.

Regarding the Baltic Sea Strategy, the most important priority area is to develop the entrepreneurship and support to the development of SMEs. 83% of ERDF projects are connected to this priority area. From ESF funding the most important priority area is development of innovative education and training of young people. All in all 52% of funding has been allocated to this priority area.

The ministers of labour in the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) had their first meeting in 2017. Another high-level meeting was held in 2019 in order to follow up its conclusions. The cooperation in this sector takes place mainly in the CBSS Coordination Group, where Finland has been an active participant. The next event in the sector was planned to take place in the end of March 2020, but it was cancelled. The CBSS Secretariat is implementing an ambitious project on sustainable working life covering for instance the issues of ageing



labour force and the future of work. Finland has national actions financed by the European Social Fund which cooperate and support this important transnational project.

Ministry of Defence

Connected to action items 1-6: IMPLEMENTED:

The Finnish Ministry of Defence, Finnish Defence Forces and Finnish Navy have maintained and developed military capabilities and situational awareness, continued active dialogue and exercise activities between different national (maritime and other) authorities and with international partners, deepened military cooperation especially with Sweden, as well as maintained a high readiness to combat oil pollution. All of these measures have contributed to the stability of the security situation in the Baltic Sea area by decreasing military uncertainty and tensions.

Connected to action items 8 and 10: IMPLEMENTED:

The Finnish Ministry of Defence has participated actively in the maritime policy dialogue, including the national and EU levels, supporting joint discussion and the exchange of current considerations and strategic approaches.

Connected to action item 12: IMPLEMENTED:

The Finnish Defence Forces and Finnish Navy have enhanced recruiting of women to naval careers including Navy officer training, supporting improving gender parity and stronger involvement of women in the workforce and in the maritime career.

Connected to action item 14: IMPLEMENTED:

The Finnish Navy adheres to a responsible handling and disposal regime for all categories of hazardous waste, including oil, grey water, black water, solid trash and batteries on all ships.

Connected to action item 16: PLANNED:

The Finnish Ministry of Defence and Finnish Defence Forces are investigating the inclusion of new digitalised and green technologies onboard the future Finnish Navy combat vessels (Pohjanmaa-class corvettes, aka Squadron 2020 vessels), including propulsion and power systems.

Connected to action item 24: IMPLEMENTED:

Finnish Navy capabilities in mine countermeasures (MCM) have been developed significantly. The Finnish Navy has maintained knowledge of historical minefields and as a part of MCM training continued participation in operations to clear away remaining sea mines from the Baltic Sea. This has been supported by active mapping of the seabed including shipwrecks, in cooperation with the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) and other maritime authorities.

Ministry of Transport and Communications

Action 1 in regard to call for action nr. 16: Environmental legislation on maritime transport will be reformed – focus on waste management

In regard to call for action number 16, Finland will reform national environmental legislation on maritime transport. The focus is on waste management in ports. The aim is to improve the treatment and reception of waste in ports, which will reduce the generation of marine litter and, in particular, the discharge of plastic into the seas.

Amendments will be made to the Act on Environmental Protection in Maritime Transport, as required by the June 2019 revision of the EU Directive on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships. The Directive (EU) 2019/883 promotes the provision of facilities for the reception of waste in ports and the delivery of waste from ships to ports. The arrangements for the payment of a waste fee will also be reformed in order to ensure that the waste will be delivered to the port on a regular basis.

Monitoring will also be increased. In the future, at least 15% of the total number of individual ships calling at Finnish ports annually will be inspected. The monitoring of ships will follow a risk-based approach.

The legislative project also explores the possibility of extending the introduction of administrative sanctions to cover ships violating the emission requirements, for example with regard to sulphur emissions. The aim is also to introduce the legislative amendments required by the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships.

Action 2 in regard to call for action nr. 16: several projects promoting the accelerated digitalization of vessel traffic

The results of flagship projects within the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region's (EUSBSR) Policy Area (PA) Safe have contributed to this target as follows:

- 1) Several flagships have reached the level where they are carrying out real world tests for e-navigation services in the area of the Baltic Sea.
- 2) Resurveying of the major shipping routes and ports in the Baltic Sea Region has continued successfully during the reporting period. Projects dealing with this provide more accurate sea charts which are prerequisites for safer maritime operations.
- 3) In addition, a number of flagships focusing on, for example, emergency preparedness, situational awareness in navigation and winter navigation have been completed during the reporting period.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications of Finland is preparing a strategic plan on transport automation including legislation that will pave the way for transport automation in system level. This involves highly-automated and autonomous shipping.

The initial report of the Automation plan of Transport and Communications of Finland recommends a digital model of physical transport infrastructure, sharing dynamic and accurate data on ship movements for remote-control and e-pilotage purposes as well as sharing predicted and up-to-date route information. It recommends for example enriching electronic navigational charts with dynamic data, building a digital

model of physical transport infrastructure as well as using common interfaces developed in the STM project.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications of Finland is also preparing a logistics digitalization strategy towards sustainability and efficiency with digitalization in transport. This strategy includes all transport modes and nodes such as ports.

Action 3 in regard to call for action nr. 16: Working group to prepare a roadmap for fossil-free transport

The Finnish Minister of Transport and Communications has appointed a working group to prepare Finland's roadmap for fossil-free transport. The aim is to create a range of means for cutting transport emissions by half over the next decade. The solutions must be ecologically, financially and socially sustainable. A large number of various actors in society have been invited to participate in the work.

The task of the working group is to identify the necessary milestones along the way to fossil-free transport and to assess the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the various measures. The roadmap will also cover the emissions reduction commitments made in the different fields of the transport sector.

There is a dedicated sub-group for shipping, that concentrates on measures to reduce emissions in maritime traffic to and from Finland. Due to the nature of this traffic, particular attention will be paid to short-sea shipping in the Baltic Sea. Therefore the results of this national effort may benefit also other Baltic Sea states.

Action 1 in regard to call for action nr. 18: advancing autonomous shipping both internationally and within Finland

The EUSBSR's Policy Area SAFE and its Flagship-projects have contributed primarily to the EUSBSR objectives "Save the sea" and "Clean and safe shipping". In this respect, the scope of activities has been mainly on macro-regional and national levels. However, on a broader scope PA SAFE aligns naturally with several international agendas. These include for example High-level Action Plan of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) where a Regulatory Scoping Exercise concerning autonomous shipping has been under preparation.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications of Finland is preparing a strategic plan on transport automation including legislation that will pave the way for transport automation in system level. This involves highly-automated and autonomous shipping.

The plan will include objectives and projects, overview on state of maritime transport automation, eg. definitions, levels and technological development, data exchange requirements, data needs of automation, digital and physical infrastructure requirements, analysis of existing legislation and additional legislation needs as well as impact assessment. It will include IMO, EU and national legislation.

The report also sees building a Baltic Sea test bed as an opportunity in the long run for enabling demanding testing considering whole transport system and between Baltic Sea countries in the long run.



Finland has been an active voluntary country in IMO regulatory scoping exercise of autonomous shipping. Finland particularly sees cooperation towards holistic, goal-based and technology-neutral legislation for example in accountability, traceability and liability issues as well as concerning use of data crucial both in IMO and Baltic sea cooperation context crucial.

Ministry of the Interior

Action 26. consider – as best practice examples – the implementation of “one stop institutions” where migrants can receive all necessary services in one place as well as the possibility of personal integration plans

- Development of multidisciplinary and low-threshold guidance and counselling services for migrants and the expansion of their availability are key issues Finland in order to promote the reach, settlement and integration of migrants. Multidisciplinary competence development, guidance and counselling services for migrants will be consolidated and developed in the coming years, based on the integration development objectives set out in the government programme.

Action 31. examine the extent to which the regular exchange of best practice examples throughout the Baltic Sea region will make it possible to harmonise migration strategies

- Discussions are taking place between EU countries in various EU formats on best practices in the field of immigration and asylum policy. It should also be noted that, in principle, the EU has a common immigration and asylum policy.
- Finland has an established migration dialogue with countries of the Baltic Sea Region. The dialogue includes, for example, a review of good practices with the Russian Federation.
- The Russian Federation is a member (like the EU countries) also in the Budapest process, the tasks of which are described as follows: *The Budapest Process provides an informal and flexible framework for states and other stakeholders to address issues of common concern and maintain open channels of communication between each other. Through dialogue, information and experience exchange, a common understanding of migration concepts and policies is promoted as well as a common language on migration issues.*
- However, it is important to note that national migration strategies in the Baltic Sea Region are the result of national policy decisions.

Ministry of Education and Culture

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Action 7: “strategic approaches to meeting the considerable challenges with regard to ageing populations and” “the new requirements of the labour market on skills and qualifications as well as digitalisation and further technological developments, the need for better synergies between educational systems as well as labour markets’ demands”...

The Finnish Government will draw up an education policy report for skills and learning in 2030. The report aims increasing the level of education and competence in Finland. In addition, topics like equality in education, and reduction of the differences in learning outcomes will be targeted.

The system needs continuously to be developed. Our objective is that

- the level of education and competence among the population will rise at all levels of education, differences in learning outcomes will decrease, and educational equality will increase
- children and young people will feel well
- education system offers for all equal opportunities for learning
- Finland will be an internationally attractive place to study, conduct research and invest.

The education policy report will examine the entire education system.

Action 9: consider long-term labour market forecasts, including scenarios for digitising the world of work, the development through qualifications, occupations, sectors and regions

National Forum for Skills Anticipation general

The National Forum for Skills Anticipation serves as a joint expert body in educational anticipation for the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI). The system consists of a steering group, anticipation groups and a network of experts. The task is to promote the interaction of education and training with working life in cooperation with the Ministry and EDUFI. No longer provided for by Government Decree, the Ministry's decision, EDUFI appoints the anticipation groups and organises the anticipation work

Anticipation groups are involved in both qualitative and quantitative anticipation work EDUFI draws up an anticipation action plan at the beginning of the term after hearing the anticipation groups and steering group. It also organises the anticipation work

Tasks of the nine (9) anticipation groups

- to analyse changing competence and skills needs and their impact on the development of education on the basis of the anticipation data	- to propose initiatives and give recommendations for the qualification structure of VET, the contents of education and the development of cooperation between education and training and working life
- to develop the operating modes between VET and training and higher education the needs of working life, continuums of education	- to bring up the observed development targets in the debate => research and development initiatives

Anticipation groups: Composition

Representation: employers, employees, education providers (VET + higher education), educational administration (member and secretary), teaching staff (VET + higher education) and research in each field. EDUFI appoints members to anticipation groups based on proposals made by central organisations and

other parties invited to join. Working life representatives, appointed from among anticipation group members, serve as the chair and vice chair. The term is limited to 4 years. EDUFI officials act as secretaries.

An effort is made to obtain education provider and teaching staff representatives from both VET and higher education. There should be at least as many or more working life representatives than other parties in total and there should be no more than 16 members at a time. Deputy members are appointed for each member.

Anticipation groups:

Natural resources, food production and the environment	Business and administration
Education, culture and communications	Transport and logistics
Hospitality services	Built environment
Social, health and welfare services	Technology industry and services
Process industry and production	

Steering group

Tasked e.g. with planning, developing and steering the activities of the Competence Foresight Forum and acting as an expert group. Max. 20 members. The Ministry of education and Culture appoints members based on recommendations made by central organisations and other parties invited to join. The Ministry appoints the chair, vice chair and secretaries from the Ministry and EDUFI.

Representation:

employers and entrepreneurs	employees
education providers (VET + higher education)	educational administration
teaching staff	students (VET + higher education)
expertise in educational research and evaluation	

Expert networks of the anticipation groups

Free form networks, anticipation groups may set them up independently as necessary. Anticipation groups appoint members and decide on the composition. The aim is to complement and deepen the expertise of the anticipation group as necessary. Members of the network participate in the work mainly through electronic tools.

Task 21: “support in-depth marine research and innovation in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity;”

Research, technology and innovation are important means towards achieving sustainable development goals as recently emphasized by the Global Sustainable Development Review (2019) drawn by independent scientists. The interdisciplinary and cooperative approach to tackle global challenges and to identify solutions to solve them is a cornerstone of our activities towards sustainable use of marine resource, marine protection and low-carbon marine mobility. To provide just a few examples:

- Finnish Marine Research Infrastructure (FINMARI) combines all major components of the Finnish marine research community. FINMARI is a distributed infrastructure network of field stations, research vessels and multi-purpose icebreakers, laboratory facilities, ferryboxes, fixed measurement platforms and buoys. FINMARI is included in the national research infrastructure roadmap and has received funding inter alia from the Academy of Finland. FINMARI is linked to



European research infrastructures like EMBRC and Euro-Argo and is involved in many international research projects.

- The Finnish Inventory Programme for the Underwater Marine Environment (VELMU) collects data on the occurrence of underwater marine biotopes, species and communities in Finland's marine waters. The programme contributes to the Baltic marine protection and to the sustainable use of the sea and its natural resources.
- Finland – like many other Baltic countries – is a member of European infrastructure of biological information ELIXIR. ELIXIR is an intergovernmental organisation that brings together life science resources from across Europe. These resources include databases, software tools, training materials, cloud storage and supercomputers. Marine Metagenomics is one of ELIXIR Communities. It brings together experts across Europe to develop standards, services and training within marine metagenomics.
- Smart Mobility programme of Business Finland promotes also smart marine mobility to deliver smart and environmentally friendly high-tech maritime solutions
- Gulf of Bothnia as Resource for Sustainable Growth (SmartSea) is part of the "Climate-Neutral and Resource-Scarce Finland"-program, funded by the Strategic Research Council of Academy of Finland. SmartSea provides science-based guidance and new innovations for the sustainable use of the Finland's marine resources. In SmartSea, the integrated value of nature will be assessed and discussed with the different stakeholders. In the future, this helps planners to do decisions that are efficient, and accepted by the society.

Hamburg



Senat der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg Die Bevollmächtigte

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Bevollmächtigte beim Bund,
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für auswärtige Angelegenheiten

3. Dezember 2019

Resolution der 28. Ostseeparlamentarierkonferenz

Sehr geehrte Frau Präsidentin,

mit Schreiben vom 10. September 2019 an den Ersten Bürgermeister der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg haben Sie dem Senat die Resolution der 28. Ostseeparlamentarierkonferenz, die vom 25. bis 27. August in Oslo stattfand, übersandt und den Hamburger Senat um Stellungnahme gebeten, inwieweit dieser im Rahmen seiner Zuständigkeit entsprechende Maßnahmen zur Umsetzung plant, initiiert oder umgesetzt hat.

Die Senatskanzlei hat eine entsprechende Zusammenstellung angefertigt, die ich Ihnen mit diesem Schreiben übersende.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Attachment 3.2 BSPP SC 2 March 2020 Brussels

3. December 2019

**Statement by the Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg
on implementing the Final Resolution of the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference**

The Senate expressly welcomes the goals formulated in the Resolution. To the extent that the points listed fall within the remit of the Senate and do not require regulation at the federal or EU level, they are in many respects already current practice.

In the following statement, the Senate takes a position on the areas that are its concern and reports on measures and administrative practices that are implemented in Hamburg in accordance with the interests of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference.

Regarding ***Cooperation in the Region:***

With regard to paragraphs 1 – 5 of the Resolution:

Due to its political emphasis on an active Baltic Sea policy, Hamburg has traditionally been intensively involved within the framework of the EU's Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme. Hamburg cooperates in the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme with Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

Institutions in Hamburg (government bodies and offices, universities, associations, etc.) regularly cooperate in terms of content and subject matter with partners throughout the Baltic Sea Region. The breadth of topics extends from measures to combat and adapt to climate change, e-mobility, support for SMEs or knowledge networks to port connections, Smart City issues and cooperation, or the development of concrete measures with regard to demographic change. Here, Hamburg bodies work with international partners to develop valuable solutions, so as to be able to manage their own tasks more effectively, efficiently and innovatively in future.

The Senate Chancellery supports potential and active project partners with finding partners, provides advice with submitting bids and running projects and ensures the appropriate networking of local project participants among themselves. Additionally, the Senate Chancellery is represented on the national and international programme committees and represents Hamburg's interests in the meetings of the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region's international committees.

Through the aforementioned project activities, Hamburg's political commitment in and for the Baltic Sea Region is given a concrete basis. In general, the Hamburg Senate welcomes the institutional proposals for intensifying cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

With regard to paragraph 6:

The Senate puts strong emphasis on the observation that measures to combat terrorism and violent extremism must be constantly adapted to changing challenges and optimised while having regard to the principles of the rule of law.

Hamburg pursues integrated concepts for the prevention and combating of politically motivated extremism and terrorism through its Senate Concept on the Prevention and Combating of Religiously Motivated Extremism and Hostility to Muslims ("Senatskonzept zur Vorbeugung und Bekämpfung von religiös begründetem Extremismus und Muslimfeindlichkeit" adopted in 2014, Document 20/13460, and elaborated in 2016, Documents 21/5039 and 21/14037) and the 2019 State Programme for the Prevention and Combating of Right-wing Extremism ("Landesprogramm zur Vorbeugung und Bekämpfung von Rechtsextremismus 2019" Document 21/18643 and predecessor programme Document 20/9849). The City of Hamburg attaches particular value to the closest possible linkage between repression and prevention as well as to simultaneously addressing different forms of terrorism, extremism and group-focused enmity. The state and civil society make concerted efforts to effectively combat religiously motivated extremism, right-wing extremism and the denigration of people in general. Hamburg authorities cooperate closely in this respect, and resources have been increased repeatedly in recent years.

Because of its anonymity and reach, the Internet is becoming increasingly important to the activities of those with extremist aspirations. This poses great challenges for the security authorities. The Senate has therefore taken various legal and personnel-related steps to meet the new challenges arising from the use of the Internet. In addition, the Senate has created and initiated new instruments to prevent radicalisation, especially among the young. These include the establishment of networks between governmental and civil society structures.

As it is well-nigh impossible to prevent the dissemination of disinformation, Hamburg is concentrating on limiting its effect by supporting political and media education within and outside school.

Regarding *the Future of Working Life*:**With regard to paragraphs 7 – 12:**

The Senate warmly welcomes the proposal for an exchange of ideas between the countries of the Baltic Sea region on the challenges of the changing world of work. All countries face similar challenges and can learn from one another. This applies also to the intent to improve parity between men and women (paragraph 12). With regard to the call to agree on fair framework conditions with regard to the digital economy, it should be noted that this is also a matter for

the parties involved in collective bargaining. The state can do no more here than set the framework for good work (paragraph 11).

See also statement on paragraphs 1 – 5 of the Resolution.

With regard to paragraph 13:

Hamburg already set up a youth careers agency (“Jugendberufsagentur“) in 2012 with the goal of not giving up on anyone. At the point of transition from school to training and work, we ensure that young people who cannot demonstrate any prospects after school (traineeship or university place) receive an offer of careers advice or training. This is offered according to need. The NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) target group receives advice at youth careers agency offices from municipal staff from the youth welfare or social space management sectors who support them in solving practical life problems. In addition, European Social Fund (ESF) resources were used to set up a comprehensive provision of outreach advice and support with the aim of reintegrating these young people into the regular labour market systems. The bodies responsible for these services are represented in transnational working groups where there is an intensive exchange about approaches for reaching and (re-)integrating NEETs.

Within this framework the Ministry for Employment, Social Welfare, Families and Integration (BASFI) and the Hamburg Institute for Vocational Training (HIBB) work under the umbrella of the Hamburg Youth Employment Agency as experts in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region’s (EUSBSR) flagship project “School to Work”.

The goal of the flagship project is the strengthening of transnational cooperation between education providers and the institutions representing the educational sector and the labour market. Together the 60 participating institutions (public bodies, schools, municipal and local government administrations, national agencies, non-governmental organisations) from all the participating states in the EUSBSR are seeking to reduce the number of early school leavers and provide support for the school students affected. To this end, a joint website is operated (in Sweden and Finland) where successful projects can be presented and mutual support offered.

The thematically organised working groups are divided into the following areas among others: encouraging entrepreneurship, labour market integration and vocational training. The flagship project and its various platforms and projects are funded from a range of sources, among them the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, ESF, the Swedish Institute und Erasmus+.

A very successful example of a project in the “School to Work” flagship is the Hamburg ESF project “Come In”, which has been running since 2007. It is directed at unemployed young people who could not be placed by the employment agency. Most of these young people are characterised by poor performance at school and general non-cooperation. Of the 2,712 young

people whom the project succeeded in mobilising by the end of 2016, 49 per cent were successfully placed in vocational training or another educational scheme.

Also worthy of mention is the commitment of HIBB, which since 2009 has been a partner, together with the Norden Association in Stockholm, in the EUSBSR Policy Area Education. Its goal is to encourage an exchange of ideas between the Baltic states on the subject of the transition from school to work but also on general, vocational and academic education. To this end, joint concepts are developed at the various levels. The responsibilities of HIBB also include expanding the network for sharing examples of best practice in integrating refugees into vocational training (cf. paragraphs 25 – 31).

Regarding ***Safeguarding the Oceans:***

With regard to paragraph 14:

At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention it was decided to amend the classification of plastic waste resulting in a tightening of the conditions for the transboundary movements of such waste. The Senate welcomes and supports this. The list entry for non-hazardous plastic waste has been made more specific to the effect that in future only pre-treated and unmixed plastic fractions may be exported to third countries outside the terms of the waste verification procedure, provided that the receiving countries agree in principle to this and that environmentally sound treatment is guaranteed. According to the decision of the conference, all other plastic waste (such as mixed plastics) must in future be declared or is per se subject to the third country export ban. A reduction in the quantities of plastic waste being exported purely as a result of this decision is desirable, but it is no means automatic. In any event, the quality of the material considered for export and thus its recyclability will increase significantly. Of importance in this regard is the fact that the aforementioned decision must be adopted at the OECD level and enshrined in law in the EU in order to be enforced effectively. (There is currently still a veto by the USA.)

With regard to paragraph 15:

The restriction of transboundary movements of plastic waste under the legal provisions mentioned in paragraph 14 is, in the Senate's view, of particular significance for the Pacific region. The Ministry for the Environment and Energy (BUE) has already approached producers in Hamburg to request that they respect the internationally agreed quality requirements for the trade in plastic waste. In addition, at the BUE's request, the inspection authorities will be focussing particularly on this waste stream in the Port of Hamburg.

With regard to paragraph 16:

In the course of its official business, the Senate makes the case for the promotion of digitalisation of vessel traffic and of green shipping.

With regard to paragraph 17:

The Senate welcomes the fact that producers of plastic are voluntarily providing resources for improving waste management infrastructure, especially the objective of providing financial and organisational support for collection, recycling and environmentally sound disposal of waste in countries with poorly developed waste management systems. This is a first step towards increased responsibility on the part of producers. It would be desirable if the manufacturers of filter cigarettes in Hamburg (Reemtsma, BAT) were also to join the alliance.

With regard to paragraphs 18 – 20:

The calls for action listed in paragraphs 18 – 20 do not come within the remit of the Hamburg Senate but require work at the European and global levels. The Senate welcomes the development of joint measures.

With regard to paragraph 21:

The Hamburg Senate actively supports in-depth marine research and innovation in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity through the foundation of the German Maritime Research Alliance (DAM – “Deutsche Allianz Meeresforschung”) in which Hamburg was actively involved. The Senate expressly welcomes further strengthening.

With regard to paragraphs 22 and 23:

The Senate affirms the need to ensure environmentally compatible and sustainable development, especially to take precautions and to guard against, reduce and monitor significant adverse effects on the environment in general and in the transboundary context in particular. In this respect compliance with the provisions of the Espoo Convention of 1991 is of great importance. Due to its geographical location, transboundary activities by Hamburg within the meaning of the Espoo Convention have not so far occurred in practice. Should such activities by Hamburg occur in future, and contrary to expectations, Hamburg will ensure that the provisions of the Espoo Convention are complied with. In the case of foreign transboundary proceedings in which Hamburg is involved (as a rule, proceedings involving nuclear power plants), public participation is carried out in accordance with the Espoo Convention, provided scrutiny by the competent authority has shown that the Hamburg geographical area is affected.

With regard to paragraph 24:

The Hamburg Senate shares the view that, with regard to the sites contaminated by munitions in the North Sea and Baltic Sea, the introduction of organised salvage is required. At the Environment Ministers’ Conference in Hamburg on 14 and 15 November, a corresponding draft, supported by Hamburg, was discussed. In it the environment ministers of the federal states call on the federal government, among other things, to cooperate with the coastal states affected to carry out a comprehensive and site-specific assessment of the condition of munitions to prioritise the possible need for action in the North Sea and Baltic Sea. They consider it expedient, given the hydrological conditions, to focus initially on the Baltic Sea and then to transfer the experience gained to the North Sea as far as is possible. This is to form the basis for the development of joint proposals for the implementation, prioritisation and shared funding of such measures.

Regarding ***Migration and Integration***:

With regard to paragraph 25:

The Senate welcomes the possibility of exploring a Baltic Sea-wide agreement on the future management of migration.

With regard to paragraph 26:

The implementation of central contact points and the possibility of personal integration plans are welcomed. There are corresponding services in Hamburg to provide migrants with individual advice on various areas of life (for example, the refugee centre, the federal advice service for migrants and follow-up support through the integration centres).

The Hamburg Senate, with participation by the Action Alliance for Education and Employment Hamburg – Hamburg Skilled Labour Network (“Aktionsbündnis Bildung und Beschäftigung Hamburg – Hamburger Fachkräftenetzwerk”), has agreed with the employment agency (“Agentur für Arbeit”) and “Jobcenter” to develop training and labour market integration for refugees systematically and across legal boundaries. A comprehensive programme approach (W.I.R programme) was developed to address existing qualifications systematically and in the best possible way. The W.I.R – work and integration for refugees – advice centre began operations in autumn 2015. Its goal is to integrate refugees into the Hamburg training and employment market quickly and sustainably. Largely thanks to W.I.R., Hamburg has a reliable support structure and responsible bodies that closely accompany the integration of refugees into the employment market from the outset in order to avoid people dropping out of work or training. Added to this is strongly developed language learning support in Hamburg that is also available to refugees who do not qualify for federally financed language courses.

With regard to paragraphs 27 and 28:

The refugee aid forum (“Forum Flüchtlingshilfe”) continues to support all volunteers helping refugees with the provision of resources, information, information events, dialogue forums, training and a major annual event. Increasingly, the target group for the services – refugees themselves and migrants’ organisations – are being included, for example through direct invitations to participate in the annual event. In 2019, several dialogue forums worked together for the first time with one of the district administrations and the Jobcenter to organise an information fair specifically for women from a refugee or migrant background, which offered a lot of information and contact points on entering the labour market as well as many related topics (child daycare provision, care of dependants, health care, leisure opportunities, victim support, etc.)

At the annual AKTIVOLI volunteers’ fair, exhibition space is made available to migrants’ organisations by BASFI. In addition, there are numerous projects and services run by

volunteers for encouraging exchange between immigrants and locals, for example two organisers offer discussion groups across Hamburg where volunteers can engage migrants in dialogue and help them with language learning.

Dialogue platforms as open and regular communication and coordination tools for involved stakeholders to broaden societal dialogue are to be encouraged. Hamburg supports societal dialogue through the integration council (“Hamburger Integrationsbeirat”), for instance. The integration council advises the Hamburg Senate on integration policy matters. It acts as an implementation-oriented integration multiplier within all areas of society through the active contribution to furthering integration by its members in their respective areas of responsibility.

With regard to paragraphs 27 – 31:

Sport is one of the most important societal players with regard to integration and citizen engagement for their fellow citizens from a migrant background. Sports clubs are an ideal platform for direct contacts between locals and new arrivals.

Thus, the Senate supports the central body, the Hamburg Sports Federation (“Hamburger Sportbund”) and its member associations in implementing the German Olympic Sports Confederation’s integration programme. By supplementing federal funding with Hamburg state funding, the importance of the integrative function of sport is also taken into account. While in 2017 and 2018 the focus was on a quick and uncomplicated involvement of refugees in sports activities, work now concentrates more on the permanent integration of people from a migrant background into the clubs and their structures; here an important goal is encouraging this target group to take on voluntary roles.

Through continued implementation of the Active City Masterplan, the Senate is carrying on with its work to develop structures and activities to make sport available to all, all of the time, and at low cost. This includes, for instance, “movement islands” – sports and fitness equipment installed in public green spaces in all the Hamburg districts – and the Active City Summer, during which everyone in the city can try out around 1,000 sports and activities for free during the summer months so that they can find out what they enjoy doing without any commitment. This service is aimed particularly at people who perhaps lack the courage to get directly involved in sports clubs – or who may have never have encountered them.

Moreover, the Senate also supports the approach of improving the receptiveness of the host society within the framework of strategic integration work by increased democratic participation in integration, thus shifting the emphasis to the local government level as the area where day-to-day life takes place.

Additionally, since 2015 the topic of integrating refugees and migrants has been firmly established in the EUSBSR Action Plan in the Policy Area Education. The continued high relevance and urgency of the topic area in the Baltic Sea region has led to the adoption of a dedicated flagship project on the subject, “Recognising potential – enabling the integration of migrants”, in the forthcoming EUSBSR Action Plan from 2021 on. The goal is the early recognition of migrants’ potential and facilitating tailor-made education and training concepts for the smooth and rapid integration of migrants into the labour market. A further goal is generating greater awareness in society of the integration of migrants.

To this end, players from the Baltic states from administration, business, politics and civil society at local and regional level should be able to cooperate transnationally and exchange

views on a regular basis. The aim is for this to lead to a harmonisation of migration strategies. The funding of the flagship project is made possible through ESF, AMIF, Interreg, Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe, among others.

As a contribution to initiating the aforementioned flagship project, the Hamburg Senate, spearheaded by HIBB, already successfully staged an international forum on the integration of refugees and migrants on 24 and 25 October 2019. On this occasion 140 participants from various levels of administration and politics in 20 European countries shared their experiences and briefed themselves on successful integration concepts. The format of the conference met with great approval from all participants.

The initial impetus for the planned flagship project provided by the EUSBSR Policy Area Education should be given timely political support such that a partner from the Baltic Sea region with just the right know-how agrees to take over the flagship project.

Latvia



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9 March 2020

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Mr Valerijus Simulik
Vice President of the Baltic Assembly

Mr Jānis Vucāns
Vice President of the Baltic Assembly

Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly
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Distinguished Members of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly,

It is my honor to reply to your letter No. 1/0120 - 4 of 9 January 2020 concerning questions on the implementation of the Resolution of the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference.

Please find enclosed answers submitted by the respective line ministries of the Republic of Latvia.

Enclosed: Annex on 16 (sixteen) pages.

Sincerely yours,

Edgars Rinkēvičs
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Annex

**Answers to the Questions regarding the Implementation of the Resolution of the
28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference**

Regarding Cooperation in the Region

Answers provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- 1. Strengthen trust among all Member States of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) through further concrete efforts and measures.*
- 2. Intensify the early involvement of the next generation and respect the next generation's concerns more intensively in policy and decision-making process via concrete measures of the governments to reinforce the foundation of trust and security in the Baltic Sea Region as an element of foreign policy.*
- 4. Conclude the current CBSS reform process and increase the focus on synergies between cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region.*

Latvia has concluded its presidency 2018-2019 in the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The Latvian presidency provided continuity and conformity with the long term priorities of the CBSS - Safe and Secure Region, Prosperous and Sustainable Region and Regional Identity. Priorities implemented during the Latvian Presidency were Integrity and Societal Security, Responsibility, Dialogue.

Regarding Integrity and Societal Security Latvia aimed to increase macro-regional coherence in approaching societal security threats with focus on three main directions: Civil Protection, Fighting Trafficking in Human Beings, and Combating Organized Crime.

Implementing priority focus area Responsibility, Latvian Presidency concentrated its efforts on further regionalisation of the Global Agenda 2030 and implementation of the sustainable development goals.

Priority "Dialogue" was focused on dialogue among experts on cultural heritage and other stakeholders to discuss heritage preservation systems, including systems for recent cultural heritage, as well as, the use of contemporary methods and technologies to find models that best serve these contexts. The active work on implementation of the priorities led to the highlight of the presidency that was the high level meeting in Jurmala - well attended by the political level decision makers from the CBSS member states and the observer state of Belarus. During the meeting the Roadmap of the Reforms of the CBSS was adopted.

The aim of the Roadmap is to enable the preparedness and effectiveness of the CBSS and increase the focus on synergies between cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region. The synergy between the CBSS and other regional formats should be reached on mutually beneficial basis. Also closer coordination between offices in the countries of the region responsible for regional cooperation within e.g. EUSBSR, Northern Dimension, CBSS corresponds to common interests and priorities.

During the current Danish Presidency Latvia continues to contribute to the implementation of the Roadmap.

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The engagement of young generation into discussions and decision-making process is of vital importance. During the Latvian presidency the support given and cooperation with youth organizations such as the movement “ReGeneration 2030” is a fine example for such engagement that needs to be pursued. Latvia supports the focusing of the CBSS Project Support Facility on youth oriented projects and establishment of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform.

Answers provided by the Ministry of Economics

1. Strengthen trust among all Member States of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) through further concrete efforts and measures.

In the electricity sector, the Baltic States have continued close cooperation to work towards the synchronization of the Baltic electricity grid with the European grid in 2025. In 2019 the Baltic States signed the synchronization agreement and a political roadmap, meanwhile the respective transmission system operators received EU funding for the first phase of technical works for synchronization and prepared an application for EU funding for the second phase of synchronization project. At the beginning of 2020, construction works have also been started for the Latvian-Estonian third electricity interconnection project, which will be finalized by the end of 2020. The Baltic States will continue to work closely to implement the rest of the technical measures for synchronization.

Latvian transmission and distribution system operators are also working on the development of new technologies. Our operators are participating in a project of common interests “Data bridge” together with Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark and France to introduce the smart grids and to ensure the exchanging different types of data between the electricity market participants. This project will be continued in the following years.

In the gas sector, there has been an excellent cooperation between Latvia, Estonia and Finland that has allowed to introduce a common gas market from 1 January 2020. Gas transmission system operators of Latvia, Estonia and Finland have signed an Inter TSO Compensation Agreement, which now enables functioning of a single gas transmission tariff zone for Finland, Estonia and Latvia, so it is possible to transport gas across Finland, Estonia and Latvia without additional costs. Such common gas market is the first one in Europe and it will diversify gas supplies, improve market liquidity and create access to new gas trading platforms and routes. Both the Estonian and Latvian gas transmission networks in the next few years will require additional works in order to achieve the planned maximum capacity at Balticconnector interconnection point. Latvia and Estonia have also developed a common balancing area, but the work on improving the common gas market will continue and Finland has set the target to join to the common balancing zone in 2022 at the earliest.

In the sector of innovation, the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia organized the first 5G Policymakers’ hackathon in November of 2019 with the aim of creating common approach to create better environment for 5G enabled innovations in the Baltic Sea Region countries. The Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia will organize such Policy makers’ hackathon also in November of 2020. Therefore, it is crucial to gather policymakers from the Baltic Sea Region countries in order to work together towards the global competitiveness.

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3. Continue cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation programmes between EU member states and Russia as well as Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, and actively engage in developing new generations of these programmes for the future:

As the European Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) Policy Area Energy (PA Energy) coordinators the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia:

- Working closely with the European Commission on the revision of the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) and EUSBSR PA Energy part of the macro-region strategy action plan;
- Facilitating/supporting the development and implementation of actions and flagships of the PA Energy;
- Working on increasing the cooperation between the policy level and project developers, increasing the project result dissemination on a policy level as well as providing information on policy topicalities to the Baltic Sea Region project developers and other stakeholders;
- Working on regional, cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration and communication platforms and network development to increase the experience exchange bringing out the good examples meanwhile sharing the bad experiences as well, therefore speeding up the development processes of the Baltic Sea region;
- Together with the Swedish Institute the Baltic Leadership Programme (BLP) on Energy Efficiency was developed. It is a leadership training targeting thematic cross-border networks in the Baltic Sea Region. The BLP on Energy Efficiency set up a trans-regional consortium for strengthening transnational collaboration in the fields of energy efficiency. Participants of this programme discussed, analyzed and reflected upon future challenges and needs concerning energy efficiency evaluating future steps to be taken. The programme elaborated a joint transnational flagship process for increased energy efficiency in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Continual communication with the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme to work on the synchronization of the programme to the needs of the Baltic Sea region policy level and project developers to implement the EUSBSR;
- Working closely with the European Commission organizing regional BEMIP working groups on energy efficiency and renewable energy topics, aiming to increase the regional collaboration between the member states.

Answers provided by the Ministry of Transport

3. Continue cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation programmes between EU member states and Russia as well as Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, and actively engage in developing new generations of these programmes for the future:

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In 2019 Latvia chaired the Presidency of Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and logistics (NDPTL) Steering Committee. Ministry of Transport of Latvia was responsible for conduct of Presidency.

NDPTL is one of the most important areas of the Northern Dimension cooperation, improving region's main transport connections and logistics. The partners of NDPTL are Belarus, Estonia, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Finland, Germany, Sweden.

Under the chairmanship of the NDPTL Partnership Steering Committee, Latvia's main identified priority was to continue working on bringing the Eurasia transport system closer to the countries of the Northern Dimension Partnership.

On 12-13 March 2019, representatives of the NDPTL countries met in Riga to discuss previous transportation experience in Eurasia and to agree on new opportunities for cooperation. During the meeting partnership countries agreed to continue their work on the extension of the NDPTL transport network to the Asian countries, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, China or the Far East. The Minister of Transport of Latvia Mr. Tālis Linkaits spoke at the meeting, emphasizing the need to promote integration of the Northern Dimension transport network into the Eurasia corridors. Representatives of the NDPTL countries also presented practical business examples. At the meeting of Steering Committee, held in the Ministry of Transport of Latvia, participants discussed trends for future activities. At the end of 2018, the European Commission (EC) recruited independent experts who carried out an evaluation of the work done so far by the NDPTL countries, highlighting the need to promote the role of the Northern Dimension in the Eurasia transportation, both by land between Asia and Europe and by the Northern Ice Road. It was agreed to work on new cooperation priorities within the partnership that could be endorsed at the next meeting of the Steering Committee in May 2019.

On 15 May 2019, representatives of the NDPTL countries, as well as, representative of the European Commission met in Riga. The participants of the meeting examined the evaluation report on the progress made in the partnership so far, and agreed on the priorities for the future, including preparations for the ministerial meeting on 18 June 2019 in Oslo, Norway.

On 18 June 2019, in Oslo, Norway, the NDPTL High Level Meeting was held, in which Latvia was represented by the Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Transport of Latvia Mr. Dins Merirands and Director of Department of Transit Policy Andris Maldups. During the meeting participants adopted a joint communiqué on the functioning and future priorities of the NDPTL, as well as, supported the continuation of the Partnership cooperation for the next five years.

The following priorities were discussed:

- green transport;
- digitization and technology;
- road safety;
- new commercial routes;
- education in transport.

On 17 September 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers supported the draft regulation entitled "On the Joint Declaration of Intent, which sets out the continuation of cooperation between the Northern

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Dimension Partnership in the field of Transport and Logistics” and agreed on Latvia's continued participation in the work of NDTPPL over the next five years.

On 5 and 6 November 2019, representatives of NDTPPL countries met in Riga. Considering the importance of digitalization in transport and logistics, a separate seminar was organized on this issue on 5 November 2019. Member States presented their experience, projects and ideas related to the use of electronic solutions in transport and logistics services. On 6 November 2019, a meeting of the Steering Committee of the NDPTL was held, during which Minister of Transport of Latvia Mr. Tālis Linkaits signed the Declaration on the continuation of the partnership for the next five years. Participants approved prepared partnership performance assessment report, highlighting the uniqueness of the Partnership's activities in the region, as well as the areas of future priority actions prepared at the initiative of Latvia. Latvia transferred the Presidency status of the Steering Committee to Belarus.

On 28-29 November 2019, Minister of Transport of Latvia Mr. Tālis Linkaits and the Director of Department of Transit Policy Andris Maldups participated in a high-level conference organized under the Finnish Presidency of the European Union, “A Clean and Global North”, dedicated to the 20-year anniversary of the Northern Dimension. The main theme of the conference was climate change and its impact. Discussions were held on sustainable and international cooperation in the Northern region, both current challenges and future opportunities in the context of climate change were explored through dialogue. The Minister of Transport of Latvia Mr. Tālis Linkaits spoke at the conference session “Smart ways to enhance connectivity in the region and beyond”, where a discussion was held on a modern approaches and solutions to improve connectivity in the region. In his address, the Minister of Transport highlighted the role of NDPTL for the exchange of views and interests in transport and logistics in the Northern region, and that within the framework of the Latvian presidency in the NDPTL Steering Committee, the partner countries of the Northern Dimension have agreed on priority actions relating to the promotion of green transport, improving traffic safety, digitalization of transport sector, integration into new commercial routes and exchange of experience on the improvement of transport education system. Latvia is pleased that NDPTL Member States have agreed to continue the partnership for a further period of five years.

Answers provided by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

3. Continue cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation programmes between EU member states and Russia as well as Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, and actively engage in developing new generations of these programmes for the future:

During the current period 2014-2020 Latvian partners cooperate with more than 2800 neighbouring partners in more than 400 projects supported by European territorial cooperation/INTERREG programmes and jointly address such common issues as employment and labour mobility, educational and social inclusion, entrepreneurship and transfer of innovations, efficient management of environmental resources and protection of natural/cultural heritage, promoting low-carbon economy, interconnecting transport networks, improving security of border regions, increasing institutional capacity and public administration efficiency, etc.

For example, in cross-border cooperation Latvian and Lithuanian fire and police services border municipalities installing the observation equipment prevent organized crime and improve the safety of citizens, while another project aims to modernize the road infrastructure in Latvian-

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Lithuanian border regions. Whereas Interreg Estonian-Latvian programme actively supports business initiatives creating joint products and marketing activities in medicine, information technology and food industry as well as supporting modernization of the historic center of twin cities Valga and Valka and development of quality services in 12 small port networks on Eastern coast of Baltic Sea. In partnership with partner countries along the external borders of the EU direct investments are foreseen for development of infrastructure at border crossing points and reconstruction of cultural heritage objects.

In addition, transnational cooperation projects under INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme promote institutional capacity and performance of Latvian partners in such areas as research and innovations, efficient management of natural resources and sustainable transport. Besides, Latvian project partners prove the capacity to use macroregional strategic framework in project generation process and actually are involved in implementation of more than 55 flagship projects of EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Since spring 2018 Latvia has actively participated in the negotiation process of draft regulation for European territorial cooperation/INTERREG programmes. Conceptually Latvia welcomes the work of the Romanian Presidency, supports the proposed Council mandate and updated draft INTERREG regulation, which gives EU Member States and partner countries greater flexibility in preparation and implementation of INTERREG programmes.

As example, a brief insight on *two* projects implemented by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia (hereafter - MEPRD).

1. **Project LARS/Learning Among Regions on Smart Specialisation (INTERREG Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020).**

Programme specific objective is to enhance growth opportunities based on increased capacity of innovation actors to apply smart specialisation approach.

The project attempts to help the public sector in leading smart specialisation processes in their regions and to connect innovation networks across regions. It helps find solutions tackling the fragmentation of regional systems of innovation looking for entrepreneurial discoveries within such topics as blue growth, bio and circular economy, advanced production methods and technologies for energy efficiency.

The project materializes in six steps:

- Mapping of strategies in order to select the final intervention areas;
- Quadruple-helix gap analysis with the purpose of finding deficiencies and also good cases of innovation network functioning;
- Matching partners in transfer network based on the good practices;
- Learning on the transfers, essentially an innovation context analysis;
- Piloting new activities in the regions with the purpose of improving the innovation networks;
- Communicating the findings with a view on the wider implications of the project.

The consortium behind LARS consists of partners from Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Finland, constituting mostly of authorities with a substantial

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experience as implementers of EU-regional policies but also of research institutions with research and advisory experience in the field.

The project period is October 2017 - September 2020.

2. Project Coast4us (INTERREG Central Baltic 2014 – 2020)

The project Coast4us aims at developing innovative, holistic and inclusive approach in the planning process for pilot areas in marine and coastal areas in Finland, Latvia, Sweden and Estonia, through involving stakeholders of different interests.

The project Coast4us will result in:

- Sustainable marine and coastal territorial planning for pilot areas;
- New tools and management strategies, guidelines regarding territorial planning;
- Innovative technical tools (GIS solutions, web-based platforms and applications) developed to support a transparent and inclusive planning process.

Currently:

- Mobilization of different stakeholders has taken place in all pilot areas;
- Based on the developed GIS layers in pilot territories, Tallinn University of Technology is working on creating a manual for planners with analysis on the usability of GIS tools;
- MEPRD is working on creating a Village Development Planning Guidelines that can be used as a guide by any community/village improving involvement of different stakeholders in territorial planning process at local level.

The project is a joint cooperation venture of Sweden (County Administrative Board of Östergötland, Norrköping Municipality, Valdemarsvik Municipality, University of Linköping, Coompanion Östergötland, Aspöja Fastigheter AB), Finland (Government of Åland, Kõkar Municipality), Latvia (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Carnikava Municipality, Salacgriva Municipality, Riga Technical University), Estonia (Tallinn University of Technology, Saaremaa Municipality).|

The project duration: January 2018 - December 2020.

Acknowledging the importance of territorial cooperation/INTERREG programmes' contribution to the implementation of Cohesion Policy by transferring EU-level best practices, development of regional socio-economic potential and ensuring joint planning and investments in cross-border regions, we believe that it is necessary to preserve all elements of territorial cooperation and ensure proper financing and co-financing rate for further reduction of cross-border obstacles in the Baltic States in 2021-2027.

During the period 2021-2027 Latvia is interested in continuing participation in the bilateral cross-border cooperation programmes with Lithuania, Estonia and the Russian Federation, the multi-country cross-border cooperation programme with Estonia, Sweden and Finland, the transnational cooperation programme in the Baltic Sea region, and the interregional cooperation programmes - INTERREG EUROPE, URBACT, INTERACT and ESPON. Latvia supports the preparation of a new bilateral cross-border cooperation programme with Belarus for post 2020 period.

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It was important for Latvia to launch the drafting process of the new INTERREG programmes as soon as possible and agree with EU Member States and partner countries on the content and implementation system. Already in autumn 2019 the preparation process of the next generation of the INTERREG programmes was launched, several preparation meetings were organized on bilateral level, but in 2020 the first meetings of Joint Programming Committees planned/already hold in 2020: on 5-6 February for INTERREG Baltic Sea Region Programme, on 20 February for Latvia-Russia Programme, on 10 March for Central Baltic Programme, on 12-13 March for Estonia-Latvia Programme etc. In early 2020 the Programming Consultation Working Group has been established in Latvia to ensure the involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders in the preparation of new cooperation programmes.

Taking into account that the draft INTERREG regulation no longer provides a strict geographical limitation, during drafting process it is important to ensure a constructive debate between the European Commission, EU Member States and partner countries on themes and activities with the highest added value and adequate geographical coverage.

Latvia also supports the continuity of institutional framework for INTERREG programmes during the next programming period 2021-2027 with a view to prepare new INTERREG programmes and submit them for approval of the European Commission in 2021 and develop the relevant national legal framework in due time.

Regarding the Future of Working Life

Answers provided by the Ministry of Welfare

7. Implement and exchange of ideas on the ministerial level as early as possible, involving the social partners' current considerations and strategic approaches to meeting the considerable challenges with regard to ageing populations and thus pressures on pension systems, the new requirements of the labour market on skills and qualifications as well as digitalisation and further technological developments, the need for better synergies between educational systems as well as labour markets' demands and increasing labour mobility regarding their Impacts on economic growth, for example countries suffering from highly skilled and competent individuals leaving the country due to better opportunities abroad (brain drain), social cohesion (between social groups) and social sustainability (between generations).

The Government of Latvia continuously cooperates with the social partners in the development of both regulatory enactments and policy planning documents and also discussing the new industry initiatives and urgent problems.

In 2016, the Government of Latvia approved the Active Ageing Strategy for Longer and Better Working Lives. This Strategy is the first policy paper in Latvia that aims to address issues regarding different challenges that older people face in the labour market. The following priorities are underlined in the strategy:

- 1) Employment - inclusive labour market for older people;
- 2) Education – educated and knowledgeable older workers responding to changing labour market conditions;
- 3) Health – healthy and physically active older people, who can remain active and independent for as long as possible;

4) Social protection – socially protected older workers.

Social partners were involved in the drafting process of the strategy. Within the strategy, a special ESF co-funded project for active ageing and sustainable employment was developed and now is under implementation in close cooperation with social partners – the Employers' Confederation of Latvia and the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia. The project aims to retain the ability to work and to encourage the employment of older workers (50+). Measures for older workers include vocational guidance support, up-skilling, consultations by psychologists and occupational physicians, guidance for employers on how to adapt the workplace, workplace adjustments etc. More than 3 000 persons will benefit from participation in this project, the results and general recommendations will be available for all companies in Latvia for better ageing management at the company level.

Employment issues related to vocational education are also considered at the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-council on Vocational Education and Employment (hereinafter – the PINTSA) of the National Tripartite Cooperation Council, however, the Sub-council mainly deals with education issues – policy planning documents and draft laws and regulations on human resources development, education and employment, coordinates projects of occupational standards, professional qualification requirements and sectoral qualifications structure as well as coordinates the number of students financed from the state budget and the ESF in vocational education programmes. The PINTSA meetings are organised when required but at least every two months.

Coordination of inter-sectoral cooperation on labour market development is also considered in the Employment Council. The Council consists of three ministers - Minister for Education and Science, Minister for Economics and Minister for Welfare, State Secretaries of the respective ministries and other relevant experts. It promotes the implementation of necessary labour market reforms and the improvement of skills in the labour force. Priority areas include establishing an adult education system, modern and qualitative general education, increasing the number of students in STEM disciplines, more active involvement of employers in the formation of education supply, and improving youth skills and employment.

Regarding the new requirements of the labour market (skills, qualifications, digitalisation), close cooperation among ministries, social partners and other relevant parties has been ensured. For example, the State Employment Agency (hereinafter – SEA) provides training vouchers for the unemployed and job seekers. All training programmes for the unemployed and job-seekers are approved (at least once a year), by a special Training Commission involving representatives of branch ministries (Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economics, municipalities, social partners, non-governmental organisations, the academic field, associations, sector expert councils etc. The Commission approves not only the vocational and non-formal training programmes but also all training programmes within the active labour market policy measures (ALMPs), like short training programmes for gaining basic skills and competencies (including e-learning courses on topics such as financial literacy and preparing for the job interviews).

The Training Commission performs an evidence-based analysis of the labour market situation by analysing the SEA statistical data, the number of the unemployed and profiles in each occupation, vacancies, recruitment indicators etc. and taking into account forecasts carried out by the SEA (short-term) and the Ministry of Economics (medium as well as long-term forecasts) regarding the labour market trends in Latvia.

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Among the SEA clients, the most popular upskilling education programmes (within non-formal learning) are ICT courses which have been approved by the Training Commission in close cooperation with the Latvian Information and Communication Technology Association.

One of the SEA priorities is co-operation with employers. Some training measures require the employer's co-financing (if training is provided upon request by the employer). An employer submits a request to the SEA for the organisation of training and enters into a contract according to which training is provided by an educational institution. Training can also be organised at the employer to prepare the needed specialist. Within the measure "Training at the employer", acquisition of a new profession can be organised (duration of the programme up to six months). The SEA in co-operation with the respective employer carries out the selection of unemployed persons to be involved in the practical training in conformity with the qualification requirements stated by the employer. The suitability of a person is determined by the employer.

The regional mobility support in Latvia is available to the unemployed who start employment at least 15 km away from a declared place of residence. The regional mobility support for covering transportation or living costs is available also in other labour market policy measures - subsidised employment and training if working or training place is at least 15 km away from a declared place of residence. The amount of support depends on real costs of transportation or living - a person shall submit to the SEA all documents justifying expenses. The maximum amount of support is up to 150 EUR per month for all training period or first 4 months if a person starts labour relations (both, regular or subsidised by the SEA).

Social partners play an important role in defining the necessary skills for the labour market. The social partners (the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia and the Employers' Confederation of Latvia) participates in the Monitoring Committee for the establishment of the labour market forecasting system, providing comments and recommendations on the evaluation and harmonisation of the ESF project "Development of the Labour Market Forecasting System" deliverables (short-term labour market forecasting methodology, research implementation). The Monitoring Committee is set up within the framework of the previously mentioned ESF project.

9. Consider long-term labour market forecasts, including scenarios for digitising the world of work, the development through qualifications, occupations, sectors and regions and to exchange continuous and long-term research results on the development of employment and the labour market in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region. On this basis, a better possibility is to be opened up for measures to meet the challenges posed to the labour market by demographic, technical and qualification-specific structural change, which will take account of developments throughout the Baltic Sea region.

In 2016-2020, the SEA in cooperation with the Ministry of Economics implements an ESF project for the establishment of a comprehensive labour market forecasting system using the approaches, forecasting methods and models developed in the 2007-2013 EU funds programming period. Within this project, the Ministry of Economics implemented a study on the possibilities of establishment of the system of anticipating changes in the labour market and linking of labour market forecasts with policies. Several solutions were provided for the improvement of the system. Within this research, the Ministry of Economics prepared the Guidelines for interpretation and use of labour market forecasts. These guidelines aim to provide information and examples of how to understand, interpret and analyse medium and long-term labour market forecasts. This informative material is useful not only for career consultants but for everybody who needs to make decisions related to further education and career.

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To ensure effective dissemination of labour market forecasts, the SEA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Economics, envisages to create a WEB-based labour market forecasting analysis platform which will provide information on occupation and skill demand by sectors of national economy in the short term, medium term and the long term as well as information about education possibilities to simplify the choice of occupation by users. It will allow policymakers, education institutions, career planning and professional improvement centres, graduates planning to continue their studies and other interested persons to study and analyse the latest labour market trends interactively, thus gaining a broader insight into the perspective directions of professional development in the future.

12. Improve gender parity and ensure stronger involvement of women in the workforce by enabling compatibility of career and family work as well as equal employment opportunity and thereby reducing the gender pay gap.

The Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2018–2020 was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 4 July 2018. The objective of the Plan is to promote integrated, purposeful and efficient implementation of sectorial policies thus facilitating the implementation of equal rights and opportunities for women and men into practice. Five directions of activities are set for achieving the goal:

- 1) promotion of economic independence and equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market;
- 2) promotion of equal educational opportunities for boys and girls, men and women;
- 3) reduction of the prevalence of gender-based violence;
- 4) strengthening the capacity of authorities in gender equality issues;
- 5) Educating the public on gender equality issues.

In order to motivate local governments to engage in work and family reconciliation issues and to highlight the best examples, there is an initiative "Family-Friendly Municipality" ("*Ģimenei draudzīga pašvaldība*"). It includes the organisation of the "Most Family-Friendly Municipality" competition in order to evaluate the local governments, determine those municipalities that provide the needed support as well as diverse and accessible services for families with children. Information about the support provided by local governments is available on the website www.vietagimenei.lv.

In November 2019, the Ministry of Welfare, in cooperation with the parents' organisations ("Mammām un Tētiem", "Tēvi"), carried out an informational campaign "Dad, be unique!". The aim of the campaign was to strengthen the father's role in family and society by undermining existing prejudices and perceptions about the areas of responsibility for women and men and by informing about available support (for example, paid leaves, options set in legislation to reconcile the work and family life).

To minimise stereotypes of traditional gender roles in society, which remains one of the main barriers to equality between women and men in everyday life, and to promote the involvement of fathers in family life, dads' video stories were produced. Four fathers from different cities of Latvia share their experience of life and their views on the father's role in their family.

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13. Step up the efforts to support youths who are currently not in employment, education, or training (NEET) back into education or the labour market - based on best practices and the results of cross-sectoral, transnational cooperation.

The implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Latvia is carried out considering a strategic approach by several institutions and organisations. Partnerships, institutional setup and cooperation are established and there are recent efforts to foster more efficient cooperation between the SEA, municipalities and their social services. Outreach measures are implemented in cooperation with local governments and NGOs, with a variety of programmes for different NEET target groups. Regarding personalised services, a NEET profiling system has been developed, individual action plans prepared, and mentoring services are available. However, the remaining challenges concern attracting more employers to provide employment offers, reaching out to NEETs who face multiple barriers and addressing dropout rates among registered NEETs. Further efforts are also needed to strengthen the link between employment and social services. Furthermore, there is scope for improved data gathering on NEET status and retention initiatives concerning education. The ESF project, which aims to prevent early school leaving, has started in 2016. Traineeships are not offered in the framework of the Youth Guarantee, only as part of ALMP measures. These ALMP measures have traineeship characteristics and partly comply with the Quality Framework for Traineeships in terms of working conditions and learning context. Latvia is more focused on workplace learning as part of its education system.

Regarding Safeguarding the Oceans –

Achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

Answers provided by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

14. Consistently implement the amended Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal signed by 187 states, considering its amendment and decisions on plastic wastes, adopted on 10 May 2019 by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal as important contributions to combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC.

Latvia supported adoption of this amendment. Latvia is now actively working together with other European Union Member States to implement provisions of amended Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal in relevant legal acts of the EU and OECD.

17. Support the plastic waste partnership established by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to mobilize the resources, interests and expertise of business, government, academic and civil society to assist in the implementation of new measures to reduce the generation of these wastes, including microplastics, providing a range of practical support, including tools, best practices, technical and financial assistance.

No specific progress has been reached in fulfilling this point of the resolution taking into account limited resources.

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19. Use the ongoing changes and processes on ecologically significant areas and maritime spatial planning systematically as a sufficient and necessary tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 14 on protecting and restoring ecosystems of the UN 2030 goals and intensify all continuing efforts in meeting the SDG 14 targets.

The first maritime spatial plan for Latvia's marine waters (developed by MEPRD) has been adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on May 14, 2019. The common goal of all Baltic Sea countries is to establish plans by 2020 that are coherent across borders and apply the ecosystem approach. Regional coordination in maritime spatial planning (hereafter - MSP) is facilitated by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group; MEPRD participates in the group. Latvia is actively involved in the development of MSP in a transboundary context. Experience of the Baltic Sea Region and new regional concepts, such as Marine green infrastructure, has been delivered to the 4th Global MSP forum "Global meets regional" organized by IOC-UNESCO in cooperation with VASAB Secretariat and held in Riga November 19-21, 2019 (<http://www.panbalticscope.eu/mspforum/>).

20. Jointly develop far-reaching measures and proposals for the UN Conference on oceans 2020 and try to further evolve these together at the UN level and achieve more decisive action at the international level to ensure political support for these measures in the field of improving the state of the oceans and its recovery

HELCOM Contracting Parties, including Latvia, are planning to deliver a regional commitment in the Conference on the development and implementation of the updated BSAP.

Latvia is participating in the updating process of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan till 2021. To support this process Latvia is involved in the ad hoc HELCOM Platform on analyses of sufficiency of measures as well as the selection of new HELCOM actions aimed at protecting the Baltic Sea.

21. Support in-dept marine research and innovation in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity.

Marine research

MEPRD as the competent institution for the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (hereafter - MSFD) in Latvia continues implementation of the project "Improvement of knowledge in the field of marine environment" (2017 – 2022) financed by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund under the Union priority "Fostering implementation of the integrated maritime policy". The aim of this research project is to improve the knowledge basis on the state of marine environment, pressures and their cumulative impacts on marine environment, as well as to assess socio-economic aspects and value of marine ecosystem and its services - to define measures needed to reach the objective of achieving a good environmental status in marine waters under the jurisdiction of Latvia as required by the MSFD and HELCOM.

The Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology is carrying out scientific research on microplastics in Latvia's marine waters within the frame of the mentioned project.

Latvia is participating in the development of the HELCOM Science Agenda – to improve Baltic marine scientific knowledge for the implementation of the Helsinki Convention and to deliver to the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

Annex

Marine litter including plastics

Latvia is involved in the implementation of the HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (hereafter - RAP ML) through improvement of knowledge base, beach litter monitoring and assessment and public involvement and awareness raising. Actions related to marine litter and beach litter are also included in Latvia's "Programme of Measures to reach good marine environmental status" (2016-2020).

22. Ensure that the provisions of the UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991) (Espoo Convention) are complied with in the implementation of projects with transboundary impacts in the Baltic Sea area

There is not any project from Latvia under the Espoo Convention at the moment, but in case such project is planned, Latvia will implement it within the framework of the Espoo Convention.

Answers provided by the Ministry of Defence

24. With regard to the detection of unexploded ordnance and buried/deposited ammunition present in the Baltic Sea, and with reference to current HELCOM activities, work together and develop a cross-border, sustainable strategy for dealing with this, call on the CBSS to explore the possibility to create a financing tool, i.e. to monitor, contain/secure, salvage or destroy, as the unexploded ordnance in the Baltic Sea may constitute a danger to humans and the environment., especially with regard to shipping routes and coastal waters used by tourists; based on such monitoring results a commission of experts has to evaluate and analyse the risks outgoing from the buried/deposited ammunition annually and issue recommendations for action.

Since adoption of the resolution, in November 2019, Latvian Naval Forces have organised one historical mine clearance operation in Latvian waters (Irbe strait) together with NATO Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One (SNMCMG1) HODOPS LVA. During the operation 56 sea mines were found, from which 43 were destroyed. Overall the search covered 19 square-miles.

Furthermore, In May this year international historical mine clearance operation OPEN SPIRIT is also scheduled to take place.

In the area of anti-mine capability development Naval Forces will initiate modernization of 3 mine countermeasures vessels in order to enhance this capability in the future. It has to be noted however that the Naval Forces are executing these tasks in accordance with National Armed Forces Law and there is no direct relation to the resolution.

Regarding Migration and Integration

Answers provided by the Ministry of Culture

26. Consider – as best practice examples – the implementation of “one stop institutions” where migrants can receive all necessary services in one place as well as the possibility of personal integration plans.

Annex

Latvia recognizes the importance of this measure, and has a “one stop institution” in place. It is called „Information Centre for Newcomers” and it has been in place since 2016. The Information Centre provides consultations regarding labour market, housing, healthcare, migration, social and integration issues, among other topics, to migrants that are third-country citizens, including persons receiving international protection. The Centre offers translation services in 18 languages, as well as the help of a psychologist. All services are provided to migrants free of charge.

27. Take measures to facilitate direct and regular contacts between newcomers and locals, local institutions, civil society organisations, communities and individuals.

In various projects that Latvia has delegated for non-governmental organizations to carry out, essential components are socialization events where newcomers and locals can bond in an informal setting, the point being facilitating intercultural communication and dialogue.

28. Support dialogue platforms as open and regular communication and coordination tools for involved stakeholders to broaden the societal dialogue.

There is an Intersectoral Dialogue platform in place in Latvia that gathers stakeholders and different actors working with migrants, - representatives of state institutions, employers, social services, local and regional governments, educational institutions, civil society organisations as well as other active members of the Latvian society and migrant community, which serves the purpose of facilitating active cooperation between the relevant actors as well as exchanging knowledge and building trust.

29. Improve within the framework of strategic approaches to integration the receptiveness of host societies through increased democratic participation in integration, with a stronger focus on the municipal level as the area of daily coexistence;

The Ministry of Culture is currently developing the new Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy, and the Ministry is carrying out wide local society public debates and deliberations about the contents of the new strategy, covering all regions of Latvia, to increase civic engagement and sense of agency in issues relating to integration and cohesive society.

Answers provided by the Ministry of Interior

31. Examine the extent to which the regular exchange of best practice examples throughout the Baltic Sea region will make it possible to harmonise migration strategies.

As regards Paragraph 31 of the Resolution of the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia would like to inform, that the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs has developed a successful exchange of experience with the Member States of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (Lithuania, Poland, Estonia, Norway and Iceland) on asylum and refugee integration issues. Experts from these countries visited the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, as well as the asylum seeker accommodation center “Mucenieki”, to familiarize themselves with the experience of Latvia in matters of reception and integration of asylum seekers and persons granted protection status, as well as to discuss future cooperation opportunities.

*Annex***Regarding the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of former resolutions****Answers provided by the Ministry of Interior**

Regarding the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Resolution of the 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia informs, that, in cooperation with the participating State administrative institutions, work is ongoing on the draft of the Immigration Law and the draft of the Procedures for the Entry and Residence in the Republic of Latvia of Citizens of the Union and their Family Members. Drafts have been drafted on the basis of the Conceptual Report on Immigration Policy (approved by Cabinet Order No.61 of 15 February 2018). Among other things, with regard to the area of integration, the draft of the Immigration Law provides for the definition of immigrant groups for which integration measures would be required. These draft laws are scheduled to be submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers in the first quarter of 2020.

On 6 June 2019, the Saeima adopted amendments drafted by the Ministry of Interior to the Immigration Law (which entered into force on 1 July 2019), which allows foreigners to be employed on the basis of a long-term visa.

On 10 December 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the following Regulations providing for a number of facilities for attracting foreign labor:

1. No.638 "Amendments to Cabinet Regulation No.552 of 21 June 2010, "Procedures for Approval of Invitations and Drawing up of Written Requests"";
2. No.639 "Amendments to Cabinet Regulation No.564 of 21 June 2010, "Regulations Regarding Residence Permits"";
3. No.637 "Amendments to Cabinet Regulation No.55 of 28 January 2014, "Regulations Regarding Employment of Foreigners"".

Lithuania



LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS UŽSIENIO REIKALŲ MINISTERIJA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

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Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly

09-03-2020 No. *(20.1.4)3-1168*

Citadeles iela 2-616

Riga, LV-1010, Latvia

RE: FOLLOW-UP OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE 28th BSPC

Upon the request of the Baltic Assembly to inform about the measures, projects or actions, which have been planned, initiated and implemented in support of the 28th BSPC Resolution, herewith we are sending information submitted by the ministries of the Republic of Lithuania.

Enclosed: Information, 7 pages.

Viceminister

Albinas Zananavičius

Mindaugas Stanys, mindaugas.stanys@urm.lt, 8 7065 2951

**Information
about measures, projects or actions
planned, initiated and implemented in support of the 28th BSPC Resolution submitted by the
ministries of the Republic of Lithuania**

Preamble, para 2:

- underlining the need for peaceful and close cooperation and neighbourliness based on democratic values, the rule of law, human rights as well as equal opportunities for all and urging the regular continuation of the CBSS Foreign Ministers meetings also under the Danish Presidency, furthermore calling again for a resumption of the Baltic Sea States Summits of the heads of governments if possible and closer cooperation at the level of other ministers, too;

Lithuania's position is that informal meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Baltic Sea Region will continue to have a useful role to play as long as formal meetings of the CBSS Council have been suspended in 2014. Lithuania does not object to Denmark, the CBSS Chair, holding an informal meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Baltic Sea States, and having Ministers' discussion on the merits and conditions of renewing the Council's work in the future. However, Lithuania does not see any change in circumstances that would provide for resuming formal Council meetings or Summits.

2. intensify the early involvement of the next generation and respect the next generation's concerns more intensively in policy and decision-making processes via concrete measures of the governments to reinforce the foundations of trust and security in the Baltic Sea Region as an element of foreign policy;

During the Lithuanian Presidency of the CBSS Lithuania will intensify the early involvement of the next generation in policy and decision-making processes by, i.e., arranging a Baltic Youth Platform meeting which is expected to produce the youth vision of the Baltic Sea Region until 2030.

We put a lot of effort to include youth meaningfully to the discussions on the questions of global agenda. We are planning to establish Lithuanian UN youth delegates program, which would allow participation of youth at the major events at the international organizations.

3. continue cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation programmes between EU member states and Russia as well as Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, and actively engage in developing new generations of these programmes for the future,

Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania continues active participation in the Interreg A Cross-Border and European Neighbourhood Instrument programmes, such as Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg South Baltic and Lithuania-Russia Cross-Border Cooperation programme. The programming processes for the new 2021-2027 financing period have already started, with meetings of the respective joint committees taking place. The beginning of preparations constitute setting the rules of procedures, confirming the representatives, discussing policy objectives and programme area, and other activities.

6. further strengthen measures to combat terrorism and violent extremism in line with human rights obligations and the rule of law – recognising that the effective fight against terrorism and violent extremism is an important pillar for the preservation of democracy, the spread of disinformation being one key element. Parliaments have a key role to play in this context, as well as in the awareness of all the measures taken to combat terrorism at the international level;

Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – PD) actively cooperates and exchanges information with the relevant authorities in Estonia and Latvia in the fight against terrorism. Effective and timely communication, close contacts between officials, were positively affected by the European Union Internal Security Fund funded project “Single Wolves” against self-radicalization and directed by the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau and the Estonian Internal Security Service.

With a view to closer cooperation, in 2020, the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau expressed interest in participating in a risk-analysis training project initiated by the Estonian Ministry of the Interior.

It is noteworthy that the PD also continues the implementation of the project “Strengthening of Cross-border Police Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region” launched on 31 December 2018.

The project is being implemented by Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian, Polish and Finnish law enforcement agencies. The project is largely funded by the European Union Internal Security Fund Police Facility. The project aims to: identify and remove obstacles to the full use of cross-border police cooperation instruments; developing common tools for analyzing cross-border crime; analyze the needs for cross-border cooperation and organize practical training for law enforcement officials in bilateral and multilateral cooperation; setting up a cross-border training module on cross-border cooperation; and to prepare for the reintroduction of border control at internal borders if the need arise. The project should be completed by June 30, 2020.

7. implement and exchange of ideas on the ministerial level as early as possible, involving the social partners’ current considerations and strategic approaches to meeting the considerable challenges with regard to ageing populations and thus pressures on pension systems, the new requirements of the labour market on skills and qualifications as well as digitalisation and further technological developments, the need for better synergies between educational systems as well as labour markets’ demands and increasing labour mobility regarding their impacts on economic growth, for example countries suffering from highly skilled and competent individuals leaving the country due to better opportunities abroad (brain drain), social cohesion (between social groups) and social sustainability (between generations);

8. use the early exchange of current considerations and strategic approaches to meeting these challenges in the individual countries of the Baltic Sea region, the elaboration of common interfaces, but also the visualization of existing differences in the individual approaches as a decisive contribution to the joint further development of the entire region;

The Baltic Sea region’s countries network of the European Social Fund (ESF Baltic Sea network), established due to the EU Baltic Sea region strategy (EUBSRS) continued cooperation in 2019. At the meetings, also by means of information technologies (SKYPE), the network members exchanged information about the implementation of the projects financed by the ESF, discussed issues relevant to all Baltic Sea region countries (integration of socially excluded people into the labour market, age management, youth employment, integration of the unemployed into the labour market, education

and integration of young people not in employment or education into the labour market, labour mobility and migration, demographic change, etc.), which could be a subjects for the projects of the EU international cooperation, implementing EUBSRS. The problems of transnational cooperation (TNC) by use of common approach, questions related to the new programming period 2021–2027 were discussed, possible TNC topics (employment, social inclusion, education, active ageing, youth employment) in the Baltic Sea Region were identified, good practices of the ESF projects in the Baltic Sea Region States were introduced, cooperation with the Danube network and representation of the ESF Baltic Sea network at the events of other networks were discussed. The coordinator of the EUBSRS priority area “Education” provided information on the revised Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy to be adopted in 2020.

The example of successful cooperation is flagship project (School to Work (S2W)), which was initiated by the network members together with the coordinator of the EUBSRS priority area “Education” and started to implement in 2017, using funds of the ESF and other EU programs. The objective of the project is strengthening of the cooperation between the countries and various institutions addressing the problems of newly arrived refugees, unemployed, early school leavers, and young people not in employment or education, initiating new projects, developing international cooperation. The leader of the project – the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. Three Knowledge Platforms drive functions of the flagship S2W: the Knowledge Platform on Early School Leaving, the Knowledge Platform on Newly Arrived Refugees and the Knowledge Platform on NEET. The members of three Knowledge Platforms participated at trainings, internships, exchanged with good working experience and worked out the review of “one stop” in all countries of the Baltic Sea region. The representative of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the MSSL) participated at the meetings of the Management Committee. The Department of Youth Affairs at the MSSL participated at the activities of the Platform on NEET and implemented activities related with the implementation of this flagship project. The representative of the Youth Department under the MSSL was responsible for moderating one Thematic Working Group (TWG) “Integration into labour market” (had two meetings in Lithuania), took part in all the organisers meetings and in Gdansk Joint session had one group to lead.

The coordinator of EUBSRS priority area “Education” introduced information about the job done in this priority area and the prospective events, provided updated information about flagship projects and benefits thereof. The possibility to take part at the flagship project under the PA Education „BSLF for sustainable working life” was discussed. The MSSL joined this project in October 2019. The main objective of the project is to improve working life conditions and life-long learning provisions, systems and policies for elderly in order to promote active ageing and employability. The representative of the MSSL took part at the kick-off meeting and joined the Thematic Working Group (TWG2) “New job opportunities for an ageing labour force, including entrepreneurship”. The Council of the Baltic Sea States is the leader of the flagship project.

The measures contributing to the implementation of the EUBSRS are financed by the ESF and are therefore implemented under the Operational Programme for the European Union Funds’ Investments in 2014-2020 (hereinafter referred to as the Operational Programme). The MSSL is responsible for the implementation of Priority Axis 7 “Promotion of Quality Employment and Participation in the Labour Market” and Priority Axis 8 “Promoting Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty”. The MSSL implements measures such as “Integration of the Unemployed into the Labour Market”, “Increasing Youth Employment”, “Integration of Socially Excluded Persons into the Labour Market”, “Integrated Assistance at Home”, “Integrated Family Services”, “Roma Social Integration”, “54+”, “Support for Work”, “Entrepreneurship Promotion”, “Business Start-ups” and others contribute to reducing unemployment, social exclusion, delivery of quality service, business

development, while at the same time increasing wellbeing of the population living in one of the Baltic Sea region countries. It is planned that in new programming period (2021–2027) the measures contributing to the implementation of the EUSBSR will be implemented as well.

14. consistently implement the amended Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal signed by 187 states, considering its amendment and decisions on plastic wastes, adopted on 10 May 2019 by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal as important contributions to combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC;

17. support the plastic waste partnership established by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to mobilize the resources, interests and expertise of business, government, academic and civil society to assist in the implementation of new measures to reduce the generation of these wastes, including micro plastics, providing a range of practical support, including tools, best practices, technical and financial assistance;

Lithuania is participating in Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal (hereinafter – the Basel Convention) meetings. The 14th Meeting of the Basel Convention adopted decisions related to transboundary shipments of plastic waste, Annexes II, VIII and IX to the Basel Convention were modified accordingly. Amendments to the Basel Convention will have to be integrated into European Union law - Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2006 on shipments of waste, which is directly applicable in Lithuania. The amendments are planned to be incorporated into European Union law by 1 January, 2021.

15. support the further development of a legally-binding, globally-reaching mechanism for managing plastic waste towards the consistent combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC.

Ministry of Environment of Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – Ministry of Environment) currently have meetings and consultations with the industry and business community in order to tackle plastic pollution problem, overconsumption of single – use plastic products and packaging and challenges in waste management. It is very important to find suitable and more sustainable alternatives of SUP product, so business and science and responsible authority's cooperation is an essential key.

Ministry of Environment already arranged 6 meetings and we are ready to develop this collaboration.

Moreover, in order to shift towards circular economy, promote responsible use of plastics and tackle problems associated with plastic wastage and pollution, Lithuania has decided to join the European Plastic Pact Initiative.

16. promote, through appropriate measures, the accelerated digitalisation of vessel traffic and green shipping to achieve the 2030 objectives as soon as possible;

18. organise concerted action for appropriate regulation at the global level to strengthen e-navigation and pave the way for autonomous shipping;

Regarding goals listed in article 16 and 18 on the digitalisation in maritime sector, e-navigation, autonomous and green shipping, Lithuania has taken necessary steps to implement all instruments,

adopted at international (International Maritime Organization conventions), EU and regional (such as Helsinki Commissions decisions) level. In 2019 particular attention has been given to an early preparation to implement the EU regulation on establishing maritime single window. In this regard, inter-institutional cooperation framework has been established, data to be transmitted to the Maritime Single Window has been agreed on.

The discussion at the IMO level on legislative scoping regarding the autonomous shipping is closely followed by the representatives of relevant institutions with the aim to introduce necessary amendments to the national legislation to facilitate the use of maritime autonomous surface ships (MASS).

Furthermore, to raise the awareness on the digitalisation topic, several events, with a participation of representatives of public and private sector, took place in Lithuania in 2019. Among others, the discussion on *"Shaping the future of shipping. What is needed to support the Baltic Sea region maritime industry to take the digital leap"*, organised within the framework of the Baltic Sea States Subregional co-operation Annual conference (Klaipėda, Lithuania, 19-20 September, 2019) as well as the *International Portathon Baltic 2019 hackathon* (Klaipėda, Lithuania, 20-22 September, 2019) could be mentioned. The latter was aimed at developing modern solutions for ports and brought together business, academics, innovation developers and start-ups to generate ideas on smart transport ecosystems and the logistics sector which are to be implemented through automation and digitalisation of port terminal facilities and various processes.

To promote green shipping, among other measures such as shore-side electricity use promotion, efforts to reduce the ships waiting time to enter the port, reduced port dues for green ships, etc, a particular focus on liquefied natural gas LNG use in the Baltic sea region has been given. In this regard, the project "Blue Baltics", led by the Lithuanian company (Klaipėda Oil Company), aimed at the creation of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) value chain and the promotion of the clean fuel use in shipping, should be mentioned. During the project a small-scale LNG reloading infrastructure, in cooperation with a port user and SE Klaipėda Seaport Authority, has been created; this allows to promote the use of more sustainable maritime fuels in the Baltic Sea.

19. use the ongoing changes and processes on ecologically and biologically significant areas and maritime spatial planning systematically as a sufficient and necessary tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 14 on protecting and restoring ecosystems of the UN 2030 goals and intensify all continuing efforts in meeting the SDG 14 targets;

Lithuania has achieved the SDG 14.5 target – as of 2018, 18.2 per cent of Lithuania's coastal and marine areas are protected¹. However, for many of these designated sites nature management plans have yet to be adopted to ensure the quality and effectiveness of their management, including outlining ecosystem restoration measures. Goal 2 of Lithuanian Water Development Programme 2017-2023² is "to achieve and / or maintain good environmental status in the Baltic Sea", which also includes protection of marine biodiversity. Relevant measures, such as those relating to pollution prevention in the Baltic Sea, including noise pollution, control of invasive species, protection of wintering grounds of seabirds, as well as protection of benthic communities, are outlined in the Lithuanian Action Plan for the Implementation of the Water Development Programme 2017-2023³. Ecosystem-based approach is also mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan of Lithuania (a key national

¹ <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/nacionaliniai-darnaus-vystymosi-rodikliai> [Accessed 2020-02-25]

² <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/4606c421eea211e6be918a531b2126ab/asr> [Accessed 2020-02-25]

³ <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/4824cba0315d11e79f4996496b137f39/asr> [Accessed 2020-02-25]

spatial planning document), in the section on Maritime Territories⁴, adopted in 2015, as a guiding principle. No specific actions and/or measures have been developed specifically in light of the Resolution.

20. jointly develop far-reaching measures and proposals for the UN Conference on oceans 2020 and try to further evolve these together at the UN level and achieve more decisive action at the international level to ensure political support for these measures in the field of improving the state of the oceans and its recovery;

Lithuania welcomes the relevance of the preliminary issues that will be discussed at the UN Conference on oceans 2020 that will be held from 2 to 6 June, 2020 in Lisbon, co-organised by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal. We agree that it's time for solutions for a sustainably managed ocean that involves green technology and innovative uses of marine resources. Decision on the participation of Lithuanian representatives will be taken after having assessed the relevance for Lithuania of the specific issues of the forthcoming conference.

21. support in-depth marine research and innovation in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity;

Goal 2 of Lithuanian Water Development Programme 2017-2023 is "to achieve and / or maintain good environmental status in the Baltic Sea". Lithuanian Action Plan for the Implementation of the Water Development Programme 2017-2023 outlines measures to promote marine research relevant to Goal 2, primarily relating to pollution (and its reduction) as well as fish stocks, their condition and sustainable yield. Research and monitoring in these areas is on-going or is planned to begin in the near future. The establishment of the Baltic Sea Animal Rehabilitation Centre is an example of a current project. The Centre is under construction and will provide assistance to marine animals affected by pollution and other marine incidents, and also carry out population monitoring programmes. Furthermore, in Lithuania's preliminary Priority Action Framework for 2021-2027 (PAF) there are some measures planned in regards to marine habitats, e.g. assessments for the need of reef restoration and studies on by-catch reduction. Adoption of nature management plans for marine NATURA 2000 sites are also planned under the preliminary PAF.

22. ensure that the provisions of the UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991) (Espoo Convention) are complied with in the implementation of projects with transboundary impacts in the Baltic Sea area;

23. ensure that large scale projects that affect the coastlines and coastal areas and that have a major impact on ecosystems in the Baltic Sea region have to comply with the obligations arising from relevant international treaties and conventions, including the Espoo Convention and the Helsinki Convention;

Provisions of UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991) (Espoo Convention) are fully transposed into national legislation of Lithuania, namely the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment of the Proposed Economic Activity, setting out the general principles and requirements for EIA and a number of Governmental Decisions and Orders of the Minister of Environment, containing further more detailed and comprehensive provisions.

⁴ <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/bcc054214e411e5a3b4e978a14c356f?jfwid=q8i88miji> [Accessed 2020-02-25]

National provisions on EIA also ensure that that large scale projects that affect the coastlines and coastal areas and that have a major impact on ecosystems in the Baltic Sea region will be properly assessed and all obligations arising from relevant international treaties and conventions, including the Espoo Convention and the Helsinki Convention will be taken into account during the EIA process.

24. with regard to the detection of unexploded ordnance and buried/deposited ammunition present in the Baltic Sea, and with reference to current HELCOM activities, work together and develop a cross-border, sustainable strategy for dealing with this, call on the CBSS to explore the possibility to create a financing tool, i.e. to monitor, contain/secure, salvage or destroy, as the unexploded ordnance in the Baltic Sea may constitute a danger to humans and the environment, especially with regard to shipping routes and coastal waters used by tourists; based on such monitoring results a commission of experts has to evaluate and analyse the risks outgoing from the buried/deposited ammunition annually and issue recommendations for action;

The UN General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session for the fourth time adopted by consensus the resolution *"Cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea"*. This is the only resolution submitted by Lithuania to the UN General Assembly. Since 2010, at the UN formats Lithuania raises the question and participates at the discussions on the issue of chemical munitions dumped at the sea.

26. consider – as best practice examples – the implementation of "one stop institutions" where migrants can receive all necessary services in one place as well as the possibility of personal integration plans;

It is planned to establish the International House in Vilnius. Main goal of the International House is to improve the quality of various services for foreigners as well as to enhance integration of foreigners. The International House aims to provide immigration, taxes, social security, employment and integration services and consultations in one place for targeted groups of foreigners, for example, for highly qualified specialist who are coming to Lithuania as Blue Card holders, and their spouses.

31. examine the extent to which the regular exchange of best practice examples throughout the Baltic Sea region will make it possible to harmonise migration strategies;

Identification of the common interests among the States of the Baltic Sea region in the area of migration could facilitate the harmonization of migration strategies. Lithuanian experts working in the field of migration as well as policy makers meet regularly with partners in Baltic region countries. Best practice of the Baltic Sea region countries has stimulated Lithuanian institutions to adopt certain measures in the field of legal migration and migration management. The recent visits of Lithuanian experts on migration to Estonia and Finland to learn the functioning of the local systems on data management and "one stop institution" for foreigners can be taken as a good example. Good practice and knowledge gathered during the visits will be used while developing the Lithuanian migration information management system and establishing International House. Implementation of the practices similar to the partner countries have the direct impact on improvement of national systems and contributes to the harmonization of the strategies.

Mecklenburg- Vorpommern

Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Die Präsidentin

Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Die Präsidentin
Lennéstraße 1 (Schloss), 19053 Schwerin

Mr. Valerijus Simulik
President of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary
Conference
Member of the Lithunian Parliament

c/o The Secretariat of the BSPC

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Schwerin, 2 July 2020

Implementation of the 28th BSPC resolution

Dear Mr. President Simulik,

on 30th January 2020 the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern adopted the resolution of the 28th BSPC (Landtagsdrucksache 7/4609). Our government was tasked to implement the recommendations in the fields of its competence and to report on the implementation.

Enclosed you can find the Statement of the Government Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to the resolution and to the decision of the Landtag. It has been published as official printed matter in German language.

For further questions please contact the International Secretariat of the Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (international@landtag-mv.de or +49 385 525 1530).

Best regards
p.p.



Birgit Hesse
President

of the Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Annex

Excerpt of:

**„LANDTAG MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN
7. Wahlperiode**

**Drucksache 7/4875
14.04.2020**

UNTERRICHTUNG

durch die Landesregierung

Stellungnahmen der Landesregierung Mecklenburg-Vorpommern zur Umsetzung der Resolutionen des 17. Parlamentsforums Südliche Ostsee und der 28. Ostseeparlamentarierkonferenz“

Information of the Government Mecklenburg-Vorpommern about the Implementation of 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Resolution

With the statement, the government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern reports about the implementation of the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference resolution, which took place in Oslo from 25 to 27 August 2019. The Government meets with this statement the request of the Parliament to convey a report by 31st March 2020.¹ The statement only covers the fields of competence of the Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and field of overall importance for the Land.

“The participants, the elected representatives of the states of the Baltic Sea region, who met in Oslo (Norway) from 25 to 27 August 2019, call upon the governments of the Baltic Sea region, the Council of Baltic Sea States and the European Union, **with a view to cooperation in the region**

Para	Conference Resolution	Statement of the Government Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
1	strengthen trust among all Member States of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) through further concrete efforts and measures;	
		Fostering international relations is high on the list of priorities in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern,

¹ See document Landtagsdrucksache 7/4609 of 15 January 2020 in conjunction with document Landtagsdrucksache 6/4498 of 15 September 2015.

		<p>whereas the focus is on the Baltic Sea region. In order to initiate or strengthen cooperative exchange, the State Government relies on participation in multilateral structures such as the Baltic Sea Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions in Europe (CPMR), in cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes and on its involvement in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The Council of the Baltic Sea States has also assumed responsibility in the implementation process of the strategy.</p> <p>Civil society cooperation within the framework of town twinning, youth encounters, cultural events such as the Nordic Sound or the Usedom Music Festival, as well as project and network cooperation have resulted in numerous interactions between people from the countries bordering the Baltic Sea, which help overcoming prejudices and building trust.</p> <p>The State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern supports these activities in many different ways and contributes to a trustful cooperation in the region through discussions at the political level, delegation trips and by fostering cooperation with the State's partner regions in the Baltic Sea region.</p> <p>Main partners currently are Poland, Russia and the Scandinavian countries. Here, the State Government maintains a tight network of contacts and regional partnerships. From 16 to 18 April 2020, the Minister-President will go to St. Petersburg, where she will participate in events of the German Week, organized by the German consulate general, as well as in the opening of the business event "German Business Days in the Leningrad Region". She will be accompanied by a business delegation and representatives of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.²</p>
2	intensify the early involvement of the next generation and respect the next	In multilateral cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, increasing space is being given to the involvement of youth representatives. In the run-up to the Stakeholder Forum on the EU Baltic Sea Strategy 2019 in Gdansk, for

² Annotation by Parliament: Delayed, due to COVID-19.

	<p>generation's concerns more intensively in policy and decision-making processes via concrete measures of the governments to reinforce the foundations of trust and security in the Baltic Sea Region as an element of foreign policy;</p>	<p>example, a Baltic Sea Youth Camp was organized, attended by over 100 young people from the Baltic Sea Region. The political demands developed there were presented and discussed by youth representatives during the Stakeholder Forum. This format is to be repeated at the Stakeholder Forum on 16 and 17 June 2020 in Turku and will be consolidated in the future. The Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States plays a central role in this process, building a platform for youth encounters on the basis of project funding from the EU Erasmus+ programme. The Ministry of the Interior and Europe of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is in a good exchange with the Regional Youth Council (Landesjugendring) Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to support the involvement of youth representatives from the State. At the level of Northern German coordination in Baltic Sea affairs with the Federal Foreign Office, Brandenburg, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, there is also an exchange about measures that can help to communicate issues of Baltic Sea cooperation better and in a way more appealing to the youth. The Ministry of the Interior and Europe of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is planning to create audiovisual formats for social media use and suitable publications. In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Integration and Equality Mecklenburg-Vorpommern also supports international youth encounters in the Baltic Sea Region by offering grants. An amount of 20,000 euros per year is provided for this purpose.</p>
3	<p>continue cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation programmes between EU member states and Russia as well as Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, and actively engage in developing new generations of these programmes for the future,</p>	<p>The Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is actively committed to the continuation of the cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes in the Baltic Sea Region in the existing formats. This applies in particular to the Interreg programmes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Brandenburg/Poland, the Southern Baltic Sea and the Baltic Sea Region. The EU Baltic Sea Region programme is of central importance for the development of cooperation potentials in the region. This applies above all to the implementation of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy, within the framework of which 17 projects with participation from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern are or have been</p>

		<p>funded as so-called flagships and start-up projects next to coordinators of policy areas.</p> <p>The Ministry of Energy, Infrastructure and Digitalization Mecklenburg-Vorpommern underpins these various forms of cooperation with its own projects and activities. It is also involved in the Interreg Europe project "Next2Met", which merges activities with the "Digital Innovation Space MV". An adoption of possible results within the Baltic Sea region is being examined.</p>
4	conclude the current CBSS reform process and increase the focus on synergies between cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region, and	<p>The Ministry of the Interior and Europe of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is accompanying the reform process of the Council of the Baltic Sea States via the North German Coordination in Baltic Sea Affairs with the Federal Foreign Office. It particularly welcomes the intended flexibilization of discussion formats at political and technical level and the development of synergies through closer collaboration between various cooperation structures.</p>
5	examine the possibilities to establish fruitful professional cooperation on the basis of international law – such as has existed very successfully for decades through institutions such as HELCOM in the field of environmental policy – in a comparable way in other policy areas as well,	<p>An essential element of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's international network are the State's partner regions, which are primarily located in the Baltic Sea Region. Fields of cooperation are logistics, renewable energies, tourism, science and research, health care, culture, youth and sports. Within the Baltic Sea Region, there are partnerships between Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the West Pomeranian Voivodship (Poland), the Pomeranian Voivodship (Poland), the Leningrad Oblast (Russian Federation) and Southwest Finland (Finland). Mecklenburg-Vorpommern actively seeks the exchange of views with its partner regions. International contacts help to study well-tried concepts and to become more competitive.</p>
6	further strengthen measures to combat terrorism and violent extremism in line with human rights obligations and the rule of law – recognising that the effective	<p>The State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern backs this demand.</p>

	<p>fight against terrorism and violent extremism is an important pillar for the preservation of democracy, the spread of disinformation being one key element.</p> <p>Parliaments have a key role to play in this context, as well as in the awareness of all the measures taken to combat terrorism at the international level;</p>	
7	<p>implement and exchange of ideas on the ministerial level as early as possible, involving the social partners' current considerations and strategic approaches to meeting the considerable challenges with regard to ageing populations and thus pressures on pension systems, the new requirements of the labour market on skills and qualifications as well as digitalisation and further technological developments, the need for better synergies between educational systems as well as labour markets' demands and increasing labour mobility regarding their impacts on economic growth, for example countries suffering from highly skilled</p>	<p>Education in schools and day-care facilities is subject to the Digital Agenda of the State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Within the framework of the jointly agreed Digital Pact, the federal government is providing five billion euros of initial funding for German school's IT equipment, reaching from primary to vocational schools.³ To this end, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern can use a total of around 100 million euros of federal government funding over a period of five years. The beneficiaries are all the providers of public and private general education as well as vocational schools, according to a coordinated distribution key. The State co-finances a further ten percent of the amount of federal funding. The Digital Pact was accompanied by a comprehensive concept of (continuing) teacher education.</p> <p>In its Digital Agenda of May 15, 2018, the government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern also decided to establish a competence centre for the digitalisation of work within the State. The project is designed as a social partner project and is supported and co-financed by the coastal section of the Industrial Metal Union (IG Metall Küste) and the employers' association Nordmetall. The "mv-works. Competence Centre Work (Kompetenzzentrum Arbeit) 4.0 MV" started work at the beginning of March 2019 and shall be a central contact point for</p>

³ The funds of the DigitalPakt Schule are particularly designed for the purchase of necessary technical infrastructure in school buildings (cabling, WLAN) and of smartboards. In addition, a standardized learning platform will be set up in the State. In order to be eligible for these subsidies, schools have to develop media education concepts as a part of their programmes. The State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has provided a manual to support the schools. Media development plans are drawn up by the school authorities.

	<p>and competent individuals leaving the country due to better opportunities abroad (brain drain), social cohesion (between social groups) and social sustainability (between generations);</p>	<p>employers, employees and their representatives regarding the effects of digital change on work.</p> <p>It will bundle and pass on information and experience on these effects, establish a network structure and support in reacting to the challenges posed by the new world of work. The requirements of the labour market in terms of skills and qualifications were discussed, for example, with the Association of German Engineers in conjunction with the chairs for engineering training of the State's science locations in order to analyze the status of training, to single out possible measures at the State's universities and colleges and the possibilities for support from the Federal State Government with regard to the digitalisation competence of future engineers. The results showed that, with the measures of the Digital Agenda and the existing regional programmes, the educational systems of the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern could be set up more seamlessly, and improved synergies with the labour market were created. The development of the M-V innovation area with its operationally active innovation centres at the university/college locations and the formation of so-called ecosystems will promote intensive support and coupling of the education systems' and labour market's needs.⁴</p> <p>Securing employment is a key focus of the "Future Alliance M-V", which was agreed on together with the social partners in March 2019. In addition to training, the main areas of action to address the skilled labour situation are tailored qualification and further training to support companies and employees in digitalisation processes. That is the focus of the Land's qualification guideline, which is mainly financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). Under this guideline, essentially all companies can apply for so-called education vouchers for</p>
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⁴ For example, the digitalisation congress "NØRD", which took place simultaneously at six university/college locations nationwide in November 2019, has helped to develop a community feeling for the "Digital MV" brand. With around 2000 participants and 202 speakers over two days, important impulses were given, especially for young people interested in settling in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern as a business location. The new formats, such as interactive online portals, creative event formats and open commentary forums (e.g. Tweedback, Twitter, Instagram), which were applied with high intensity for the first time, brought together all social groups (citizens, companies, administration, scientists), also across generations, with the participation of other Baltic state partners.

	<p>cross-sector and sector-specific continuing education for their employees. In addition, through the above-mentioned directive, companies in the commercial sector with supraregional sales have been able to receive company-specific project funding since 2018 for the competence assessment of their employees (consulting), for the analysis of the qualification requirements of the jobs in the company (consulting) and for the vocational qualification (training) of their employees by external service providers.</p> <p>Today, lifelong learning is omnipresent. It is relevant in all phases and areas of life and is acquired in various places and in many different forms, from early childhood education to continuous further education and training during (professional) life. The State is supporting this process, both financially and politically. For example, the first Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Continuing Education Day will take place on 23 September 2020 alongside the nationwide campaign.</p> <p>With regard to pension insurance, a pension commission was set up at the federal level with the aim of securing and refining the welfare system for the elderly on a sustainable basis from 2025 onwards in order to ensure the viability of the intergenerational contract. The report was to be submitted by the end of March 2020. Furthermore, on 19 February 2020, the Federal Cabinet adopted the draft of a Basic Pension Act, which provides for a basic pension for longtime employees with at least 33 years of "basic pension periods". Its aim is to grant low-paid employees with low pension entitlements a pension which recognizes the achievement of a lifetime and which reduces poverty among the elderly.</p> <p>The effects of demographic change on nursing are expected to be considerable: Already the current population structure with about 91,000 people in need of care (cutoff date: 15 December 2017) requires a comprehensive structure of supply in the nursing field. It can be concluded from the "5th Population Forecast for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern", that relatives will not assume responsibility for care to the same</p>
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		<p>extent as a portion of overall supply as in the past. (Previously, relatives formed the main pillar.) It is therefore foreseeable that efforts to lighten the burden of family members providing care and to reconcile care and work will have to be significantly increased once again.</p> <p>To this end, first and foremost the federal legislator is called upon to take action. At the level of the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the existing care structures have to be constantly adapted to demographic developments. Due to the growing number of people in need of care, the demand for permanent care, possibly requiring increased specialization (for instance caused by a higher number of people suffering from dementia), is likely to rise in the future. Investments by the State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in the area of permanent care are not advisable - at least not in the present circumstances - because there is already great interest in investment on the part of potential facility operators. However, the realization of possible projects is being significantly hampered by the already precarious situation of skilled labour. Without the necessary personnel, a nursing facility cannot be adequately utilized. Particularly, employers are called upon here to make working conditions more attractive in future. The State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is taking a wide variety of measures to ensure balanced care structures corresponding to the requirements. This is being done in the area of day-care inpatient nursing, for example, by means of flat-rate daily allowance subsidies and in the area of short-term nursing by means of an investment support programme that will be launched in the near future.</p>
8	use the early exchange of current considerations and strategic approaches to meeting these challenges in the individual countries of the Baltic Sea region, the elaboration of common interfaces, but also the	<p>Digital borders between the neighbouring countries are being dismantled through the gradual fulfilment of the requirements of the Single Digital Gateway (SDG) regulation of the European Commission and the consistent operational implementation of the objectives of the Online Access Act, which is being harmonized in Germany. Technical and organizational interfaces are thus reduced when accessing services provided by public</p>

	<p>visualization of existing differences in the individual approaches as a decisive contribution to the joint further development of the entire region;</p>	<p>administrations. The standardisation efforts involved in business transactions with the administrations result in aspects of subsequent use in the economic sector with regard to Baltic cooperation. Therefore, the exchange of knowledge on national/Baltic innovation and value chains is an integral part of the strategic work of the State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.</p> <p>Within the framework of the regional planning committee of the German-Polish government commission, the Joint Future Concept (GZK) 2030 for the German-Polish integration area was drawn up with the participation of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Thematic areas including recommendations for action are, for example: a common growth area in Europe, strengthening and deepening interdependencies or improving transport connections. The GZK is now being implemented through different projects.</p> <p>In addition to the already mentioned social partner project "mv-works", the "Regional Future Centre Mecklenburg-Vorpommern", which is supported by the federal government, started work in December 2019. One focus of the Regional Future Centre will be the development and testing of curricula for coping with structural change. The Regional Future Centre Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in particular considers establishing thematic links with institutions in countries bordering the Baltic Sea and developing opportunities for cooperation.</p> <p>Reference is also made here to the comments in Section 7.</p>
9	<p>consider long-term labour market forecasts, including scenarios for digitising the world of work, the development through qualifications, occupations, sectors and regions and to exchange continuous and long-term research results on the development of employment and the</p>	<p>Long-term macroeconomic labour market forecasts took a wide array of influencing factors into account. Modern open economies such as Mecklenburg-Vorpommern are connected to the Baltic Sea countries through a variety of networks. The analysis of long-term scenarios and forecasts relevant for the development of the labour market, such as those concerning the effects of the digitalisation of the world of work, is carried out continuously and on an ad hoc basis by the State Government. Also on the basis of such long-term labour market forecasts,</p>

	labour market in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region. On this basis, a better possibility is to be opened up for measures to meet the challenges posed to the labour market by demographic, technical and qualification-specific structural change, which will take account of developments throughout the Baltic Sea region;	<p>the creation of a Digital Innovation Area Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is now being promoted, which is intended to promote innovative change in the economy and counteract the challenges of emigration and demographic change. In digital innovation centres, citizens are to be provided with technical conditions that enable them to work remotely, and, for example, to develop regional and sectoral solutions through digital business ideas.</p> <p>Digitalisation has long since found its way into the field of teaching. Online study programmes, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), exchange via learning platforms, preparatory online courses and digital examinations are in demand among an increasing number of students and used with ease and naturalness. Additionally, the focus will increasingly be on personalized, individual study courses, tailored to individual strengths and weaknesses of the students. Next to the possibility to enroll on courses according to individual needs, interdisciplinarity is promoted due to personal combinations of subjects, which is considered to be useful on the job market.</p>
10	jointly discuss the enormous transformation of the world of work that can be expected from further digitisation in a forward-looking and early manner and to explore ways in which these can be better countered by comparable procedures;	<p>The State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern discusses internal developments as well as past and potential radical changes on the labour market. At the same time, it supports and promotes projects that help to create more transparency regarding the knowledge/experience of these changes, to advise companies and employees and to manage structural change on the labour market.</p> <p>Reference is also made to the comments in Note 7.</p>
11	agree on fair framework conditions with regard to the design of working conditions in a digital economy and to further facilitate entrepreneurial activity across borders;	<p>Modern information and communication technology brings about a change in nature of cooperation, even across national borders. Cooperation independent of time and place is only possible with the help of modern communication structures. In addition, the digital innovation centres in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern can exchange information with comparable institutions from the member regions and generate added value, so that</p>

		<p>potential digital start-ups can be supported in opening up international sales markets and networks. Fair working conditions can also be created in rural areas by making information and communication technology more flexible. Cross-border cooperation can not only result from the virtual fusion of village and urban structures, but also from the entrepreneurial activities of neighbouring countries' economic and scientific systems.</p> <p>As a reaction to changed working conditions/models, particular attention was paid to data protection and security of sensitive data. This includes making working conditions in small and micro enterprises more efficient and effective through consistent centralization of security mechanisms in high-security computer centres. By this means, security gaps in the transition from analogous to digital production can be closed and consistent methodical analysis tools can increase security before the switch in production.</p> <p>Ensuring uniform minimum standards in the labour market protects both posted and non-posted workers and thus also promotes cross-border entrepreneurial activities. The State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is promoting the mobile advice centre for foreign employees "CORRECT!" in order to combat exploitation of labour and forced labour preventively, as far as possible, especially where labour mobility across borders is concerned.</p> <p>Besides regional cooperation, interdepartmental collaboration was enhanced by dealing with the fundamental issue of digitalisation. Interdepartmental cooperation takes place, for example, in the working groups Smart Regions, Smart Countries, Digital Villages and Smart Housing.</p>
12	improve gender parity and ensure stronger involvement of women in the workforce by enabling compatibility of career and	<p>The strategy of the European Social Fund (ESF) in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern for the period 2014-2020 includes the cross-cutting objective of equality between women and men. The use of the ESF in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is intended to contribute to the cross-cutting goals within the fulfilment of all thematic objectives.</p>

	<p>family work as well as equal employment opportunity and thereby reducing the gender pay gap;</p>	<p>Gender equality plays an important role in achieving the goals Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is pursuing by means of ESF funding. Measures should promote equal job opportunities for men and women to the greatest possible extent and increase the employment rate among women, which at the same time can counteract the shortage of skilled workers resulting from demographic change. To this end, the well-tried dual strategy will be continued, which on the one hand provides for the integrated implementation of the principle of gender equality and on the other hand includes a set of specific measures.</p> <p>This will help reduce gender segregation on the labour market and improve the work-life balance, thus making greater use of the potential of both sexes to improve the competitiveness of companies and the development of the State. The specific promotion of gender equality on the labour market and the improvement of the work-life balance on the one hand, and the cross-cutting objective of gender equality on the other, are complementary and therefore have a joint impact on gender equality. Specifically, the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern supports projects and other measures which contribute to the development of structures improving gender equality and increasing professional development and entrepreneurship among women. The goal of the State Government is to enable women to participate in the labour market and to intensely and sustainably encourage them on their way to management positions, in particular by anchoring the personnel development tool of "mentoring" for women in the economy, at university/college and art. Beyond that, it promotes the development and testing of strategies and concepts to improve the work-life balance of men and women, corresponding to their needs in different phases of life. This allows for new opportunities to use the full potential of women and to counteract the shortage of skilled workers, thus contributing to women's independent livelihood.</p> <p>Since 2018, a regionwide communication campaign has promoted a balanced distribution</p>
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	<p>of work in family, housekeeping and gainful employment based on partnership and has informed about implementation models, opportunities, risks and challenges. The campaign also focuses on the increased use of parental leave by fathers, which plays a key role in the division of gainful employment and care. What is more, support is given to thematic campaigns raising public awareness of women's concerns on the labour market as well as of the challenges faced by women and men in terms of work-life balance; those increasing the visibility of women who already are successfully heading companies and institutions are also supported.</p> <p>Moreover, business personalities in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern who are modelling/particularly committed to promoting a corporate culture sensitive to gender and different phases of life will be made known to the public. Increased public relations, particularly via social media, will render companies more willing to give employees access to further development. Also, well-qualified women are encouraged to advance their careers and are supported along the way.</p> <p>The Land also supports measures to raise awareness of gender biases on the labour market and to test suitable instruments for identifying structural inequalities. These instruments are to be tailored to the business structures in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, in order to counteract inequalities in the context of work in a well-directed manner.</p> <p>Based on the insight that the choice of certain professional fields or of (fe-)male-dominated professions is strongly influencing the potential income and career of women and men, the State supports measures suitable for changing historically handed-down choices of careers and courses of study. The State Government is supporting cliché-free career and study choices. On 26 March 2019, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern was the first federal state to join the initiative "National cooperation on the choice of career and studies free of gender stereotypes".</p>
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13	<p>step up the efforts to support youths who are currently not in employment, education, or training (NEET) back into education or the labour market - based on best practices and the results of cross-sectoral, transnational cooperation;</p>	<p>In order to be able to meet existing and future demand for skilled workers, all potentials for attracting skilled workers must be used. This includes young people in particular. The State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern backs finding suitable vocational training, for example, through vocational orientation already during school life and through comprehensive social work at school as a building block for preventing dropouts before vocational maturity.</p> <p>Benefits (e.g. professional education aid) during vocational training can be provided by the Federal Employment Agency. The aim here is that financial dependency on social security systems is avoided and that own gainful employment assures one's livelihood. In principle, these benefits are available to all persons who have access to the labour market. No distinction is made between nationalities. Young socially disadvantaged people between 15 and 25 years of age with multiple individual impairments and several placement difficulties on the labour market can in principle be accepted at one of the five existing production schools any time after having completed compulsory education. At the production schools, the youngsters are prepared for starting vocational training or gainful employment in the long run. They are working in workshops under socio-pedagogical supervision and close to companies' needs. As things stand at present, the production schools will continue to operate until 2022 (end of the ESF funding period 2014 - 2020) and also under the ESF+ programme thereafter.</p>
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on protective measures for the world's oceans in order to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Agenda 2030 for sustainable development

14	<p>consistently implement the amended Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal signed by 187 states, considering its amendment and decisions on plastic wastes, adopted on 10 May 2019 by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of</p>	<p>The resolution includes a tightened control regime for the export of plastic waste from 2021 on, according to which plastic waste may in future only be freely traded if it causes almost no disturbances and if it is intended for recycling. The export of other plastic waste will then require the approval of the exporting and importing countries worldwide. This will improve the possibilities of controlling the export of such waste and prevent the export of non-tradable plastic waste to countries that do not have an adequate infrastructure for the environmentally</p>
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	the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal as important contributions to combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC;	sound treatment of plastic waste. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the State Office for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Geology is responsible for the approval and monitoring of transboundary waste shipments.
15	support the further development of a legally-binding, globally-reaching mechanism for managing plastic waste towards the consistent combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC;	Directive 2019/883/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on port reception facilities for ship-generated waste, amending Directive 2010/65/EU and repealing Directive 2000/59/EC (OJ EU No. L 151 p. 116) must be transposed into national law by the Member States by 28 June 2021. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Ship Waste Disposal Act is to be amended accordingly. The new regulations are intended to help to reduce the discharge of ship-generated waste and cargo residues into the sea, particularly the illegal dumping caused by ships: By improving the provision and use of port reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues, marine environmental protection shall be enhanced.
17	support the plastic waste partnership established by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to mobilize the resources, interests and expertise of business, government, academic and civil society to assist in the implementation of new measures to reduce the generation of these wastes, including microplastics, providing a range of practical support, including tools, best practices, technical and financial assistance;	The Plastic Waste Partnership established under the Basel Convention is considered an important forum for harmonizing international projects on plastics and for creating synergies. It involves a range of practical measures of mutual support, such as the exchange of views on best practices and technical/financial assistance. Currently, the structure and organization of the partnership is under discussion, and member states, organizations and industry are asked to participate. In Germany, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety together with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is examining potentials for suitable collaboration.
19	use the ongoing changes and processes on ecologically and biologically significant areas and maritime spatial planning systematically as a sufficient and necessary tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 14 on protecting and restoring	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has created a Maritime Spatial Development Plan for its Territorial Sea. It was included in the State Spatial Development programme (LEP); for the first time in 2005, and in an updated version in 2016. A review of the LEP is currently being prepared (this is foreseen after 5 years according to the State Planning Act). The review also includes the provisions of the LEP for the coastal sea. However, spatial planning is committed to sustainable spatial development as a

	ecosystems of the UN 2030 goals and intensify all continuing efforts in meeting the SDG 14 targets;	whole and not just to achieving a single sustainability objective.
20	jointly develop far-reaching measures and proposals for the UN Conference on oceans 2020 and try to further evolve these together at the UN level and achieve more decisive action at the international level to ensure political support for these measures in the field of improving the state of the oceans and its recovery;	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is actively involved in developing and implementing measures protecting the Baltic Sea marine environment within the framework of the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the work of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM). This also applies to the work at national and HELCOM level with regard to the sustainability goals of the United Nations.
21	support in-depth marine research and innovation in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity;	The maritime sciences and maritime technologies are acknowledged focal points of research and teaching within the State. The Department "Maritime Systems" at the University of Rostock, the Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research Warnemünde, the Marine Microbiology at the University of Greifswald and related courses of study as well as the "Research Focus 1: Knowledge Society and Global Change - Markets, Trade and Shipping Traffic" at the University of Applied Sciences Wismar are displaying the State's competences and potential. These are being expanded strategically through the joint initiative of the marine research institutions, the Northern German states and the Federal Government, establishing the German Marine Research Alliance (DAM), and through the creation of the Ocean Technology Campus (OTC) in Rostock.
22	ensure that the provisions of the UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991) (Espoo Convention) are complied with in the implementation of projects with transboundary impacts in the Baltic Sea area;	Germany is a signatory of the Espoo Convention, whose provisions hence also apply to Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Moreover, a specific German-Polish Environmental Agreement, agreed to in 2007, lays down clear rules for cross-border environmental impact assessments of major projects carried out in Germany and Poland.
23	ensure that large scale projects that affect the coastlines and coastal areas and that have a major impact on ecosystems in the Baltic Sea region have to comply with the obligations arising from relevant international treaties and conventions,	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is committed to the objective of achieving good environmental status of the Baltic Sea in accordance with the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and status assessment. During the environmental impact assessment, the compatibility of the respective project with the requirements and objectives of European directives (e.g. Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Habitats Directive) is also examined. Regional development plans and regional planning procedures, each with integrated

	including the Espoo Convention and the Helsinki Convention;	<p>regional planning assessment of environmental issues, are suitable instruments for achieving or maintaining sustainable spatial compatibility of projects. Already before the initiation of an approval procedure, the various spatial uses can be agreed upon and solutions be found/conflicts be avoided in the interest of sustainability.</p> <p>Compliance with the obligations of relevant international treaties and conventions, including the Espoo and Helsinki Conventions, is comprehensively assessed in all approval procedures within responsibility of the planning approval authority for high-voltage lines in the Ministry of Energy, Infrastructure and Digitalization of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the State's Mining Authority, and guaranteed as a result of procedures.</p> <p>Reference is also made to the comments in Note 22.</p>
24	with regard to the detection of unexploded ordnance and buried/deposited ammunition present in the Baltic Sea, and with reference to current HELCOM activities, work together and develop a cross-border, sustainable strategy for dealing with this, call on the CBSS to explore the possibility to create a financing tool, i.e. to monitor, contain/secure, salvage or destroy, as the unexploded ordnance in the Baltic Sea may constitute a danger to humans and the environment, especially with regard to shipping routes and coastal waters used by tourists; based on such monitoring results a commission of experts has to evaluate and analyse the risks outgoing from the buried/deposited ammunition annually and issue recommendations for action;	<p>The State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern supports the DAIMON (Decision Aid for Marine Munitions) project of the EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme. It aims to better evaluate different management options on a scientific basis. The environmental impacts of chemical warfare agents and conventional munitions are studied as a basis for an appropriate risk assessment. The objective of DAIMON is to develop techniques describing the impact of marine munitions on the ecosystem, maritime activities and humans as consumers. The State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern keeps the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern informed about the problem in many ways.</p>
25	explore the possibility of a Baltic Sea-wide agreement on the future management of migration;	<p>Migration management is a pan-European task and it lies within the responsibility of all EU member states. So far, it culminates in the so-called Dublin procedure. The development or adaptation of the Dublin system has been under discussion for some time.</p>

		<p>An agreement between the states bordering the Baltic Sea would have to fit into the future system. Irrespective of this fact, the added value for the countries bordering the Baltic Sea is not discernible, provided the Dublin procedure works.</p>
26	<p>consider – as best practice examples – the implementation of "one stop institutions" where migrants can receive all necessary services in one place as well as the possibility of personal integration plans;</p>	<p>The agreement of 9 April 2019 between the Federal Government and the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern on a more effective organization of asylum procedures lead to another bundling of competencies in the field of asylum law in order to provide fast, comprehensive and legally secure procedures for asylum seekers. To this end, all relevant actors (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, State Office for Internal Administration including the Central Foreigners Authority, the Federal Employment Agency, State and Federal Police) work closely together on site at the locations of the initial reception facility, as far as possible. In 2016 and 2017, the State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern operated an integration office at the central reception facility in Schwerin (Stern Buchholz). Its information and counselling services aimed at providing a first orientation on arrival in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Germany. In addition, it served to determine social and/or vocational starting points for a targeted individual allocation to a specific municipality (apart from the allocation based on quota).</p> <p>Counselling with regard to general social aspects of migration and vocational guidance were offered, too. The office also worked closely together with the Federal Employment Agency, which operates an external office in the same building. Since 2018, due to declining numbers of asylum seekers, the information and counselling services have been provided by the operator of the facility.</p> <p>After having been distributed to the local authorities, migrants may receive assistance of integration guides. Once they have been recognized under asylum law, refugees are offered initial orientation, coordination, help and advice on site. They are supported in dealing with administrative matters and with regard to housing, and they are provided with information on topics such as childcare, compulsory schooling and leisure activities.</p> <p>Nationwide social counselling of migrants is separately supported financially and organizationally by the Federal Government (Migrationsberatung Erwachsene – MBE/migration counselling adults) and the Federal States (Migrationssozialberatung – MSB/ Social counselling for immigrants). The counselling serves</p>

		<p>as an early contact point for newly arrived immigrants and represents a central service in the entire counselling network for people with a migration background. The focus of the advisory services is on case management based on needs, the development of self-help potential or socio-pedagogical assistance. The counselling centres are mainly designed as in-house services. They are mainly run by welfare organizations. The social counselling funded by the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is primarily aimed at migrants and migrants with permanent residence status and also includes asylum seekers and tolerated persons.</p> <p>In local authorities and offices as well as many local institutions, communication between skilled personnel and immigrants with insufficient knowledge of German is often difficult. Linguistic mediation carried out by immigrants, also in connection with cultural mediation and mediation fostering integration, has proven to reduce thresholds and to support communication among all parties involved. The four pools of linguistic mediators, sponsored by the State, support successful communication and contribute to the intercultural opening up of authorities, institutions and advisory services.</p>
27	take measures to facilitate direct and regular contacts between newcomers and locals, local institutions, civil society organisations, communities and individuals;	<p>Asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining in the country are distributed as quickly as possible from the initial reception facility to the districts and independent towns, where there are many different ways of making contact. Measures providing first orientation are already offered in the initial reception centre as a basis for settling in in Germany. In order to promote the integration of immigrants into society and to foster the coexistence of everyone in the land, the State has been financing projects since 2016 via the Integration Fund, supporting understanding and peaceful working and living together within municipalities and local communities. An annual sum of one million euros is made available for this purpose.</p> <p>Within the framework of the State's programme "My homeland - my modern Mecklenburg-Vorpommern", projects encouraging cultural encounters and understanding between citizens who have lived in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern for a longer period of time and immigrants can be supported.</p>
28	support dialogue platforms as open and regular communication and coordination	The State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern supports the integration and participation of migrants by funding MIGRANET-MV, the umbrella organization and network of migrant organizations in

	tools for involved stakeholders to broaden the societal dialogue;	<p>Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Since its foundation in 2009, this network of migrant organizations and associations has continuously evolved. It now consists of over 60 self-organizations of migrant groups. MIGRANET-MV supports the foundation of these self-organizations, the qualification of their staff and relevant projects aimed at increasing the social and political participation of migrants. Being an umbrella organization, MIGRANET-MV is an essential partner of the State Government and local communities in the field of integration policy. It is also a member of the Federal Immigration and Integration Council (BZI) and of the umbrella organization of migrants' self-organizations in Eastern Germany (DaMOst).</p> <p>The regional coordination of migrant associations' commitments enables a strengthened cross-regional participation of migrant associations with regard to important questions of planning and implementation of integration measures.</p> <p>The specialist conferences "Integration" of the states' integration commissioners serve as a forum for the exchange of information at working level between the actors dealing with the topic of integration in a wide variety of different issue areas. They allow the launch of best-practice examples. The State's Integration Advisory Council facilitates specialist political exchange on the situation of immigrants and on the necessities of integration policy, assuring broad participation of actors from the national and local level as well as civil society. The State Integration Advisory Board also involves six working groups on "Day Care and Integration", "School", "Transition from School to Work", "Vocational Integration", "Health" and "Social Integration", approaching subject-specific issues.</p> <p>In addition, the conference of local/municipal integration officers facilitates a regular exchange on integration issues (see also the comments in point 30).</p>
29	improve within the framework of strategic approaches to integration the receptiveness of host societies through increased democratic participation in integration, with a stronger focus on the municipal level as the area of daily coexistence;	<p>Having adopted its integration concept in September 2019, the State Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern reaffirmed the increasing importance of opening up to interculturality within civil service. This task has to be fulfilled in organizational processes, in personnel management and in quality development processes in view of the growing proportion of people of foreign origin. Further education courses are being enhanced to strengthen the intercultural competence of employees in the administrations, and intercultural</p>

		<p>aspects are taken into account in development programmes and support measures.</p> <p>It is essential to increase the proportion of employees with a migrant background in the public sector by removing obstacles to recruitment. The State Government is in close contact with the local authorities and associations in order to develop the management of personnel at local level in that same sense.</p> <p>In addition, the Integration Fund in particular serves as an instrument for strengthening democratic participation in the host society (see also the comments under point 27).</p>
30	support and promote a municipal multi-stakeholder governance of refugee integration including systematic participation and multi-stakeholder exchange between politics, the business sector and civil society;	<p>The local/municipal integration officers are playing a central role in the integration process on the ground. Therefore, the responsible department of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Integration and Equality of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern regularly hosts the conference of local/municipal integration commissioners. The conference serves as an exchange platform and is attended also by other partners, related to the topic.</p> <p>In the field of higher education, the further internationalization of the State's universities is being sought and promoted. This also includes the development of a welcoming atmosphere, both for foreign students/staff and with regard to the integration of refugees. In 2020/2021, the State's budget will provide funds of 100,000 euros per year for concrete measures to integrate refugees at university. Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has planned to provide funds of 50,000 euros per year for this purpose.</p> <p>Apart from this, the social mission of the universities ("Third Mission") includes offers for regional knowledge and technology transfer as well as for further education, enabling all parts of society to benefit from the acquired knowledge. Increasing importance is also attached to scientific communication. Various event formats and digital offers are designed to reach a broad range of civil society.</p> <p>Reference is made here to the comments in point 27 concerning the State's programme "My homeland - my modern Mecklenburg-Vorpommern".</p>
31	examine the extent to which the regular exchange of best practice examples	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, as a Baltic Sea region situated in the centre of Europe, is predestined for international cooperation; and on the basis of the recently adopted continuation of the concept "Living

	throughout the Baltic Sea region will make it possible to harmonise migration strategies;"	together in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern", which is promoting the integration of migrants, it is striving to participate in cross-border exchange, partnerships or other projects. An exchange on best practice examples between the regions concerned is to be welcomed. Subsequent harmonization has to be examined, depending on the respective subject areas. State action in the area of asylum and residence law is based primarily on federal law. It is not possible to change it in a straightforward way.
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Norway

Norwegian comments to the resolution of the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) in Oslo on 25-27 August 2019

With reference to the resolution adopted by the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Oslo, Norway, on 26-27 August 2019, Norway has the following comments:

Cooperation in the region

Norway shares the emphasis put by the BSPC on the importance of ensuring that the Baltic Sea Region remains a region of peaceful and close neighborly cooperation, based on democratic values, the rule of law, human rights as well as equal opportunities for all. Norway takes an active part in a number of cooperation structures and programs in the region, as a member of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and of the Northern Dimension, of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Arctic Council, and in the Nordic cooperation and the Nordic-Baltic cooperation. Norway also contributes considerably to the economic and social cohesion and development in this region through the EEA and Norway Grants scheme.

Regarding the reforms of the CBSS, Norway has actively participated in the implementation process following the decisions adopted at the High Level meeting in Jurmala (Latvia) in June 2019. Norway trusts that this will lead to an even more efficient and fruitful cooperation within the organization, as well as increased synergies with other cooperation formats in the region. In the reform discussions, Norway has underlined the importance of the CBSS both for concrete project cooperation and for political dialogue, and we expect that the process will contribute to reviving the Council as a platform for political dialogue on issues of common interest and relevance to our region.

The Future of Working Life

Norway works closely with countries in the Baltic Sea region within different frameworks for cooperation on the topic of "future of the working life". In the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers of Labour, the Nordic countries launched in 2017 an extensive project on "the future of work", where researchers from the five Nordic countries will study how the ongoing transformations in production and labour markets will influence the future of work in the Nordic countries. As a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the ILO, Norway has also taken part in the broader discussions on this topic on a ministerial level over the recent years. The basis for the exchange of ideas and experiences with other countries in the Baltic Sea region is the development of a sound knowledge base to guide the development of national policies. An appointed official committee, with the participation of the social partners, will by 1 June 2021 deliver a report on the appropriateness of the different forms of labour market attachment and organisation in the context of the future of work. The Official Committee on Skill Needs has delivered three reports in the period 2018-2020 on the best possible evidence-based assessment of Norway's future skills needs, as a basis for national and regional planning, and for strategic decision making of both employers and individuals.

Safeguarding the Oceans – Achieving the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals

Norway welcomes the focus in the BSPC resolution this year on sustainable oceans in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the relevance of this agenda to the Baltic Sea.

If we make economic production and ocean protection mutually supporting, the ocean holds the key to meeting many of the Sustainable Development Goals. The High-Level Panel for Sustainable Ocean Economy, which Prime Minister Solberg initiated in 2018, will present its recommendations ahead of the UN Ocean Conference in Portugal in 2020, underlining the relationship between a healthy and clean ocean, sustainable use of ocean resources, economic growth and development. Many of these recommendations will have a bearing on the issues raised in the BSPC's resolution, such as marine plastic pollution, green shipping, marine research and innovation and integrated ocean management. The Panel urges all coastal states to implement these recommendations.

Marine plastic litter is one of the fastest growing environmental concerns. Litter knows no borders and collective action is crucial. In order to fulfill our joint commitment from the UN Environment Assembly in 2017 (to eliminate all discharge of plastic litter into the ocean), Norway believes there is a need for a new global agreement to combat marine litter. In 2019, following a proposal from Norway, the Nordic Ministers of Environment signed a declaration calling for such an agreement. Norway thus appreciates the reference to a global agreement in the Conference Resolution. Norway has also put forward proposals to strengthen existing mechanisms, in particular an action plan under the IMO that was adopted in 2018, and the new global partnership on plastic waste and stricter control of transboundary movements of plastic wastes under the Basel Convention as referred to in the BSPC resolution. Norway is also continuing its development aid program amounting to 200 million USD over the next four years to combat marine plastic litter. However, we do recognize that in some places other land-based pollution such as sewage and agricultural run-off are more pressing issues, which we understand is the case for the Baltic Sea. We must constantly remind ourselves of the multiple stressors that affect the marine environment. Norway is one of the co-founders of PROBLUE, a multi-donor trust fund in the World Bank with a comprehensive approach to sustainable management of marine resource and protection of the marine environment.

Norway also puts great emphasis on green shipping as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2019, the Government published its action plan for green shipping, which aims to reduce emissions from domestic shipping and fisheries by half by 2030 and promote the development of low- and zero-emission solutions for all vessel categories. Encouraging the development of autonomous vessels is an integral part of the plan, as digitalisation and automated processes can lead to safer and more environmentally friendly production. The Government has therefore allocated 15 mill. NOK to strengthen digital competence in the ocean industries. Norway is also supporting the transition to green shipping in developing countries through its contribution of 50 million NOK to the IMO-led project Green Voyage 2050.

The topic of the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon in June is "scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions". Norway puts great emphasis on marine science and innovation, not least through the UN Decade on Ocean Science 2021-2030, and is actively supporting the IOC in its role as coordinator of the Decade. Domestically, ocean research is one of the prioritised areas in the Government's Long-term Plan for Research and Higher Education (2019-2028). In February 2020, the Norwegian Research Council announced 380 million NOK to ocean research within the fields of marine ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture. Norway also participates actively in the EU's ocean research programs with the aim to contribute to a sustainable blue economy. Furthermore, Norway will continue to participate in a

wide range of ocean oriented research co-operation, territorial cooperation programmes and shipping co-ordination in the Baltic Sea

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is the legal basis for all ocean activities. Norway puts great emphasis on following up international treaties and conventions related to the ocean, such as the Espoo Convention and the Helsinki Convention.

Migration and Integration

Norway attaches great importance to developing and implementing policies that ensure good integration of migrants who live and work in Norway for shorter or longer periods, as well as of refugees who are granted legal residence in the country. The Norwegian government has launched an Integration Strategy – *Integration Through Knowledge* (2019-2022). The goal of the integration strategy is increased participation in working and social life, through a coordinated and comprehensive effort. The intensified effort to promote integration and this strategy are important to ensure economic and social sustainability, opportunities for all and a welfare society with trust, unity and small differences. Cooperation and support through grants are provided to municipalities and civil society. From January 2020 the role of the County Councils for tasks regarding integration has been strengthened.

Norway works closely with other countries in the region in respect of migration issues, both in a Nordic and a broader context, in particular within the framework of the European Economic Area and the Schengen cooperation. As a Schengen member state, we are part of an internal free-travel area with a common external border. Our association agreement on participation in the Schengen cooperation gives us the right and the obligation to apply all the Schengen rules. These include rules on police cooperation, legal cooperation on criminal cases, visa rules and rules on checks on persons at the outer borders. Through the EEA and Norway Grants, Norway contributes to strengthening capacity for handling asylum and migration especially in Greece but also in some other countries affected by the Eastern Mediterranean migration route. Norway also takes part in the Valletta cooperation between European and African states, which was established as a response to the influx of migrants to Europe in 2015. Our participation includes a significant financial contribution to the European Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF).

Poland

**Information on activities carried out by Polish institutions in order to implement specific areas of
Baltic Cooperation, which were indicated
in the Resolution of the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
(Oslo, 25-27.08.2019)**

Regarding Cooperation in the Region

Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with other ministries and governmental institutions participated actively in the process of the Council of the Baltic Sea States reform. Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Jacek Czaputowicz took part in the videoconference of the ministers of foreign affairs of the CBSS on May, 19, which adopted the revised versions of the CBSS' strategic documents thus finalizing the Council's reform. During the meeting Minister Czaputowicz expressed his conviction that the reform will improve the effectiveness of actions in the Baltic Sea and facilitate cooperation with the partners active in the region: the Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and as part of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as well as the Northern Dimension. Minister shared the opinion that through political dialogue and specific projects, the Council will take part in implementing strategy and policies for the region.

Poland-Russia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020

The main objective of the Poland-Russia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 is to support cross-border cooperation in the social, environmental, economic and institutional sphere.

Partnership

Within the Poland-Russia CBC Programme support can be obtained by applicants, who are legal persons established in the Programme area or by the international organizations with a base of operations in the Programme area. The European grouping of territorial cooperation may be beneficiary, regardless its place of establishment, provided that its geographic coverage is within the Programme area. Each project shall involve at least two beneficiaries: 1 from Poland and 1 from Russian Federation.

Programme budget

The total Programme co-financing amounts to **62 298 477 EUR**. The financial allocation consisting of the European Regional Development Fund (**20 652 617 EUR**), European Neighbourhood Instrument (**20 993 243 EUR**) and Russian Federation contribution to the Programme (**20 652 617 EUR**). No grant may exceed **90% of the total eligible costs of the project**.

Thematic objectives

The Programme focuses on four thematic objectives selected from a list attached to the Programming Document for EU support to ENI Cross-border Cooperation 2014-2020. Within the Programme the following thematic objectives were chosen: TO 3 Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage, TO 6 Environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation, TO 7 Improvement of accessibility to the regions, development of sustainable and climate proof transport and communications networks and systems and TO 10 Promotion of border management and border security, mobility and migration management.

Programme Priorities

The Poland-Russia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 has set four priorities that reflect the selected Thematic Objectives of the Programme:

1. Cooperating on historical, natural and cultural heritage for their preservation and cross-border development.
2. Cooperation for the clean natural environment in the cross-border area.
3. Accessible regions and sustainable cross-border transport and communication.
4. Joint actions for border efficiency and security.

Regular projects

The Programme supports the implementation of regular projects that are selected in an open competition procedure – the Open Call for Proposals. The planned duration of a regular project may not exceed 24 months.

All projects realized within the Programme have to be implemented in a partnership of at least two institutions, one from Poland and the other one from the Russian Federation. Among themselves, the partners shall agree which institution will play the role of the lead beneficiary who will be responsible for representing the partnership.

The minimum value of the grant for a project is 100 000 EUR, whereas the maximum grant for a project is 2 500 000 EUR. The maximum Programme co-financing is up to 90% of the total project budget.

Large Infrastructure Projects

The Joint Monitoring Committee of the Poland-Russia Programme 2014-2020 approved **three Large Infrastructure Projects**.

The list of Large Infrastructure Projects:

1. Development of tourist-recreational potential and water tourism in Svetly and Malbork towns (Phase 2).

- Lead beneficiary: Administration of "Svetly urban district".
- Other beneficiaries: Municipality of Malbork.
- Total project budget: 5,1 mln euro.
- Amount requested: 4,6 mln euro.
- Scope of the project: The project is a continuation of cooperation initiated during the implementation of the Lithuania-Poland-Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013. Its main objective is to support local culture and preserve the historical heritage of the cities of Svetly and Malbork and to develop a water tourism between the Kaliningrad region and the Pomeranian Voivodeship by using the international waterway E-70.

2. CBCycle: Cross-border cycle routes for promotion and sustainable use of cultural heritage.

- Lead beneficiary: Ministry for Tourism of Kaliningrad region.
- Other beneficiaries: Administration of Svetlogorsk municipality, Administration of Pionersky municipality, Administration of Zelenogradsk municipality, Department of Tourism of the Marshal's Office of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship, European Foundation for Monuments Protection.
- Total project budget: 4,5 mln euro.
- Amount requested: 4 mln euro.
- Scope of the project: The project aims to improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of the Kaliningrad region and north-eastern Poland by creating a common cycle route, integrated and connected with EuroVelo cycle routes.

3. Construction of the new route of the regional road No. 512 with the construction of the bridge over the Łyna river in Bartoszyce.

- Lead beneficiary: Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (Voivodeship Road Administration in Olsztyn).
- Other beneficiaries: Administration of Municipality "Gusev city district".
- Total project budget: 8 mln euro.
- Amount requested: 7,2 mln euro.
- Scope of the project: The project involves the construction of a bridge along with the construction of a new section of the road on the Polish side of the border and the renovation of streets and sidewalks in Gusiew, on the Russian side. The implementation of the project will contribute to improvement of access to the border-crossing point Bezledy – Bagrationowsk and development of the transport network in the border area.

Cooperation in the Baltic Sea region under Interreg programs

Poland actively participates in the implementation of the transnational programme of the Baltic Sea Region, and also acts as the Managing Authority of two cross-border cooperation programmes in this region - South Baltic (with participation of Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Lithuania) and Poland - Russia. For many years, Polish beneficiaries have been involved in international partnerships aimed at implementing projects focused on developing the potential of the Baltic Sea region. Effective cooperation in this area is supported by the European Union under subsequent financial perspectives.

Existing Interreg programmes around the Baltic Sea are proof that without territorial cooperation across borders the development of this region is not effective. Interreg projects from the Baltic Sea region can be a thematic inspiration for projects in other parts of Europe.

We are currently focusing on preparation of the next edition of Interreg programmes for this region - for the years 2021-2027. Programming groups are working on the programming documents that will allow to continue existing cooperation networks and create new ones to meet the challenges that the area of Baltic Sea Region is facing.

Regarding the Future of Working Life

Activities conducted by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy

Youth support initiative at the CBSS forum

Support for the initiative from the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy. A similar trend is perceivable at the level of the European debate, as the importance of the issues of employing and activating the youth is growing. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy expresses a positive view on establishing the Expert Group on Youth Affairs. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy gladly acknowledges that one of the tasks of the Group includes vocational development of persons with disabilities to allow them to fully participate in social and professional life, as well as enabling youth with disabilities to participate in the social life on par with persons without disabilities.

In 2020, an initiative was taken to engage in cooperation within a similar format at the EU level, i.e. the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). It included a conference titled: "Transnational collaboratives strengthening the capacity to support Youth NEET", held by the

Knowledge Platform - Integrate NEETs on March 4th of 2020 in Stockholm. One of the motions of the aforementioned meeting involves including Poland in the cooperation as part of the Platform. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy has presented the members of the Team on Youth Guarantees with detailed information on the subject matter discussed as part of the Platform and has received a positive opinion with regards to the potential involvement in their works issued by the NSZZ "Solidarność" National Commission, Student Forum Business Centre Club (these institutions delegate members to the aforementioned Team), as well as information regarding the participation of the members of NSZZ "Solidarność" National Commission in seminars and conferences held by the Platform.

CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk

Since 2014, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy has been included in the works carried out by the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk (CAR). The group identifies the issues, initiates and supports cooperative measures implemented by the Member States in favour of widely understood rights of the children and the youth on the local level and at the Baltic Sea region, implementing programmes in areas designated by the CBSS. It must be pointed out that some of the projects implemented by CAR have a rather local and regional level and may thus better identify the issues faced by the Member States, and point out the possible routes for solving the issues, also matching the specific nature of these countries. The projects are implemented by non-governmental organisations as well as other institutions which handle issues related to children's rights as part of their statutory duties. The subject areas of the projects pertain to securing the rights of children in several areas (Children rights, Children and Parents support, Unaccompanied minors, Combating violence against children, Child friendly justice).

The current crucial issue of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and the manner of protecting the rights of children and families and ensuring their rights in the Baltic States will soon be also reflected in the works carried out by the CAR Group. The plans include discussions and exchange of good practices in that respect implemented in the individual Member States.

Activities conducted by the Ministry of National Education

In Poland, the share of NEET among young people is relatively low and since 2013 has been systematically decreasing according to Eurostat, 16.4 percent of young people in Poland (aged 20-34) did not work or study in 2018.

The main reasons for the NEET phenomenon among youth are the difficult situation of young people on the labour market, lack of competences and early school leaving. In case of Poland the youth unemployment rate is lower than the average European and only a small percentage of young people leave school before attending secondary school education. Since 2006 the percentage of early school leavers did not exceed 5.7% and since 2012 a steady decline in the number of early school leavers can be observed. The National target for Poland to be reached in 2020 is 4.5%.

The Strategy of Human Capital Development 2020

In Polish legislation there is no separate strategic document devoted exclusively to the problem of early school leaving, however this issue is tackled in the Strategy of Human Capital Development 2020 (Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Ludzkiego 2020) as well as in the Lifelong Learning Strategy (Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie).

As far as early school leaving is concerned, the Strategy of Human Capital Development lists three main goals: preventing early school leaving from early childhood, early stage identification of young

people at risk of early school leaving, compensating early school leavers and providing them with appropriate assistance.

Strategy of Human Capital Development 2020 (Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Ludzkiego 2020) is implemented at the national level. With respect to young people, the ministries involved are the following: Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It also involves actively schools at all levels and Voluntary Labour Corps. The regional strategies are developed by the local authorities. The main tool of monitoring the phenomenon of early school leaving in Poland is the education information system (System Informacji Oświatowej).

The Responsible Development Strategy until 2020 (with a perspective to 2030)

Education has a significant impact on the situation of young people entering adult life in Poland. That is why it is one of the elements of the Responsible Development Strategy adopted by the Council of Ministers on 14 February 2017. This document forms the main strategic document of the Polish government. In accordance with the provisions of the Strategy, teaching should be adapted to the needs of the labour market and should respond to the country's changing economic conditions. The Strategy assigns key importance to transversal skills, which allow for playing social and professional roles in different contexts; digital skills, which are indispensable for functioning in the contemporary world; and professional skills, as the shortage of skilled workers can prevent or hinder the development of vital sectors listed in the Strategy. The Strategy identifies the following strategic projects related to education:

- The Higher Education Reform;
- Integrated Qualifications System;
- The Skills Initiative;
- The Innovators School;
- Education in Digital Society;
- Modern Human Resources for Polish Industry;
- Study and Work in Poland.

Examples of national activities undertaken in the field of youth

The aim of actions taken in the field of youth at the national level is to improve the situation of the young people, especially in terms of access to high-quality education, active participation in the labour market and participation in social and political life. An important issue in this respect is to take into account the situation of marginalized and vulnerable youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

With a view to improve the situation of young people in Poland, the following have been adopted and carried out in recent years:

- comprehensive reform of the education system, taking into account changes in the general education curriculum,
- reform of vocational education (the new measures aim at improving prestige of vocational education in Poland, mostly through improving quality and effectiveness of VET in schools and other institutions),
- reform of higher education,
- strategic document in the field of lifelong learning perspective covering various forms of learning (formal, non-formal, informal) at different educational levels,
- the Act on the Integrated Qualifications System;
- Integrated Skills Strategy;
- government programmes to support families;

- 0% PIT programme for young people up to 26 years old;
- Dialogue Council with the Young Generation was established.

At the European level, Poland supports all initiatives aimed at increasing the scale of investment in human capital of the European Union, i.e. programmes aimed at raising young people's competences, gaining professional experience and increasing social involvement. That is why Poland supports further development of the European Solidarity Corps and the Erasmus+. These two support the personal, educational, social, civic and professional development of participating youth, including NEETs in particular.

Measures by the Ministry of National Education focusing on vocational education and training system (VET)

In the field of VET the following measures have been implemented since 2016:

- making the structure of education more flexible and ensuring access to further education and training thanks to the introduction of I and II stage sectoral vocational schools. Such a model ensures full permeability of vocational education and training and allows for taking the Matura (final secondary education leaving) examination;
- enhancing practical training by allowing schools to increase the number of hours for practical training implementation;
- introducing compulsory career guidance at schools in order to increase the validity of decisions related to the choice of a career;
- modifying the model of financing vocational education with taking into account the cost intensiveness of training in individual occupations;
- abolishing the limit on remuneration paid to labour market specialists employed at schools;
- acquiring partners to work together on behalf of vocational education and training - management boards of special economic zones have declared their cooperation with the Ministry of National Education and support for schools teaching specific occupations; a joint letter from the Prime Minister and Minister of Education was addressed to employers, including state treasury companies, in which they encouraged to support sectoral vocational and technical schools; ministries competent for specific occupations were included in the cooperation;
- more than 1000 employers actively participate in the development of curricular amendments;
- a new tool for monitoring the demand for VET graduates is developed in cooperation with the Central Statistical Office;
- the Ministry of National Education announces competitions for employers to present the best solutions in the area of practical training;
- companies (e.g. PGE, KGHM) conclude agreements with schools, which provide for the formation of forms sponsored by such companies;
- representatives of individual industries conclude agreements with the Ministry of National Education aimed at the development of vocational education and training (e.g. electric power and power sector, rail and road transport sector);
- each employer interested in starting cooperation with a given school can use the services of VET Coordinators appointed for this purpose at each education authority;
- the Council of Vocational School Headmasters appointed by the Ministry of National Education participates in the development of reforms of vocational education and training and public consultation on them in the school environment.

New core curriculum for post-primary schools – new regulation by the Minister of National Education
The following educational aspects have been addressed in the new core curricula:

- focus on the development of key competences;

- improving the efficiency of mother tongue teaching through introducing pupils to cultural tradition and literature, which serves rooting in the past, developing one's identity and cultural continuity;
- improving the efficiency of modern foreign language teaching giving pupils a framework for continuing and systematic foreign language learning (two languages) and a possibility of bilingual education;
- return to learning of history as a separate subject for all pupils taking into consideration a wide context of internal and international situation;
- development of entrepreneurship, creativity and ICT skills not only for educational purposes but also for everyday life, with a focus on all aspects of ICT teaching and introduction of coding for all pupils;
- development of knowledge and skills in maths and science through teaching of separate subjects of biology, chemistry, physics and geography at the II educational stage – with continuation at the III educational stage;
- return to the growth based learning approach through repetition, enhancement and development of knowledge on the subsequent levels of education;
- replacing of subject integration concept with a subject correlation one (in the field of humanities and in the field of science).

National Reforms related to Transversal Skills and Employability

The Ministry of National Education proposed a number of changes to make sure that vocational education and training regains its status in Poland. As part of them, each year the Ministry will provide a forecast about the demand for staff in trade occupations on the domestic and provincial labour markets.

Thanks to the forecast, schools and school authorities can already plan educational offer in occupations, which will be launched in subsequent school years. What is important, decisions made in this scope cater for diversification of funding of these occupations.

It is worth reminding that the presence of employers at all stages of vocational education and training is a priority included in changes introduced by the Ministry of National Education. Employers should be involved in identifying the needs in the scope of new jobs and skills, in designing education and training offer in these occupations and skills, in offering practical training, in verification of learning outcomes during occupational examination, and in employing school graduates. Thus, apart from obtaining the opinions of provincial councils of the labour market, prior to launching education offer in a given occupation, a school head will be obliged to start cooperation with employers representing a specific occupation or sector.

Integrated Skills Strategy 2030

In February 2019 the Council of ministers approved a document “Integrated Skills Strategy 2030 - General Part” (Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności 2030 – część ogólna). The Strategy is to provide a country and the economy with a strategic approach to accumulating, maintaining and using their human capital in order to boost employment and economic growth and to promote social inclusion and participation.

The Integrated Skills Strategy includes the entire system of education and training, including general education, vocational education and training, higher education, and non-formal and informal education. It takes into account the demand for specific skills; their supply and methods of forecasting the demand for skills; skill shaping and development, adaptation to the needs of the labour market and the economy; as well as their effective application, and a system of management and coordination. It provides a framework, which promotes the complementarity of the policy supporting the development, activation and efficient use of skills.

A key element of the strategy development is to diagnose and define the strengths, and, above all, the challenges and priorities related to the development of relevant skills in Poland, the activation of skills supply on the labour market, and the efficient use of skills in economic and social life, as well as the reinforcement of a system of skill development and shaping.

The Integrated Skills Strategy is aiming at:

- planning a coherent policy for developing skills,
- coordinating measures undertaken by different stakeholders acting towards development of skills,
- assuring equal access to information on supply and demand for skills, professional guidance and training offers linked to the development of skills,
- strengthening the awareness of skills' importance in individual, economic and social development,
- increasing educational and professional activity of all social groups, especially those in a risk of exclusion.

Regarding Safeguarding the Oceans – Achieving the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals

Activities conducted by the Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation

Inclusion of cyber competences to the STCW Convention

Poland is engaged in review of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW Convention) to better answer actual needs in shipping. The STCW Convention misses competences related to the skills of operating advanced devices and IT systems, as well as work using these devices and technologies. The current version of the convention does not specify IT requirements and standards. Based on that, Poland fully supports the discussion on development of requirements and standards for the training and certification of IT competences. We also propose to add the new STCW Certificate of Competences (CoC) for IT Officer as a crew member. Unlike the Electro Technological Officer (ETO), which is responsible for monitoring all electronic and electrical equipment, IT Officer would be responsible for operating advanced programmes and cyber security onboard for technological advanced vessels and also with a view to the autonomous ships. It is possible also to include IT competences in already existing certificates, especially for navigation and radio operator. Important element of the revision of STCW is adaptation of new regulations to the autonomous shipping.

Currently the discussion is held within the EU Member States which are working on the proposal of the document to present during the 103. Session of Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization (planned in November this year). Poland takes an active part in that discussion.

Connection to the articles in Resolution: 9, 16, 18

Current state of the activity: in progress

Council of the Baltic Sea States' Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy

Poland is active within the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States' Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME). EGSME as an intergovernmental group of experts provides political support to improvement of the Baltic Sea Region's international competitiveness with regard to the development of a sustainable maritime economy, transforms Baltic Sea Region into a model region for maritime best practice and for a balanced co-existence of a successful sustainable maritime

economy and protection of the vulnerable marine ecosystem.

Connection to the articles in Resolution: 16

Current state of the activity: in progress, current engagement

Engagement in dialogue on decarbonization of shipping

Poland believes that all necessary instruments to fight against pollutions should be proposed by the IMO as a specialized UN agency that deals with modern day shipping on daily basis. Their expertise would allow the smooth transformation of shipping industry into zero-emission industry without affecting the global demand for maritime transport. Polish experts are engaged in all IMO works, especially in both committees: Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) and Maritime Safety Committee (MSC). In the context of environment protection Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) is another crucial body.

The Ministry's position on greenhouse gas emissions from ships has three basic elements:

- support for taking measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from maritime transport;
- support for European Union activities supporting the adoption of appropriate global solutions through the International Maritime Organization (IMO);
- focus on achieving emission reductions with alternative fuels.

Connection to the articles in Resolution: 16

Current state of the activity: in progress

"Green shipyard"

As annual global pollution created by uncontrolled ship recycling is growing rapidly it is necessary to support the green initiatives in Baltic Sea and North Sea areas.

"Green Shipyard in Poland" is a grass-root initiative of entrepreneurs themselves in order to apply new maritime policy of Poland that includes rebuilding shipyard industry and new EU standards of ship recycling.

The idea is to add a new functionality (ship recycling) to existing shipyards by using synergy of our know-how, human potential and the innovation aspect that would allow financing the process. Polish Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation is fully committed to that idea. Currently the feasibility study is being prepared.

Connection to the articles in Resolution: 16

Current state of the activity: planned

"Project of the marine protection plan for the Natura 2000 area, Ławica Słupska"

Great examples of that balanced co-existence are Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). MPAs are widely considered to be an essential tool for recovering, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, maintaining productivity and increasing the resilience of ecosystems in the face of a changing climate, and for securing these benefits for current and future generations.

MPAs are about 25% of Polish total marine area. Polish Natura 2000 marine protected sites consist of 8 bird areas, 8 habitat areas and 1 area Ławica Słupska that belongs to both bird and habitat areas. In the coastal zone, other habitats such as cliffs, various types of dunes or saline marshes are protected.

In Poland there are three forms of protection on the Baltic Sea. Two of them are incorporated in the Nature Conservation Act: national parks and Natura 2000 sites. The third is related to the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention, HELCOM).

The latest "Project of the marine protection plan for the Natura 2000 area, Ławica Słupska" aims to create tools to effectively protect the marine Natura 2000 site "Ławica Słupska" (Słupsk Shoal) by developing environmental documentation and creating a conservation plan project being the first such plan for the Natura 2000 area entirely located in maritime areas in the Polish exclusive economic zone. The plan will allow rational and sustainable management of the Natura 2000 site in order to preserve or improve its values, in the context of the growing pressure of various planned activities in the maritime areas. Process of consultations was planned till October 2020.

Connection to the articles in Resolution: 19

Current state of the activity: in progress

UN Ocean Conference 2020

Poland was actively working on EU input to UN Oceans concept document. We also delivered our own national input to above mention document and submitted the candidature of the Deputy Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation to lead one of the proposed dialogues (panels).

Connection to the articles in Resolution: 20

Current state of the activity: in progress

HELCOM Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (SUBMERGED)

Poland is actively working within HELCOM Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Hazardous Submerged Objects (SUBMERGED). SUBMERGED is now in the process of assessment of number of the hazardous wrecks in Baltic Sea that needs quick actions in order to prevent a mass-scale pollution. Last meeting was held in January this year.

Poland is also working on that issue within the framework of our national laws as out of 300 estimated wrecks in Baltic Sea around 100 is located in Polish waters. The most hazardous are from the World War II period, like s/s Stuttgart and t/s Franken. Stuttgart has already produced fuel leaks. Franken is at advanced corrosive state and may collapse anytime.

On top of that there are numerous wrecks carrying the deposits of chemical weapons. The estimates are that the release of only the sixth part of those deposits would create a mass-scale catastrophe that would seize the life in Baltic Sea for a century.

The costs of removing all hazardous deposits from the Baltic Sea are enormous. Polish Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation strongly believes that those cost could be distributed amongst all Baltic Sea States.

Connection to the articles in Resolution: 24

Current state of the activity: in progress

Activities conducted by the Ministry of Climate

The Ministry of Climate is focusing on the transposition of the Single-Use Plastics Directive - Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment (Official Journal of the European Union L 155/1 of 12/06/2019).

To support the further development of a legally-binding, globally-reaching mechanism for managing plastic waste towards the consistent combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste - the Ministry of Climate along with the Ministry of Economic Development and Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation are involved in preparing the EU & Member States positions for meetings of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics (AHOEEG)

which works under the auspices of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). During the 3rd AHOOEEG meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, on November 18-22, 2019, Poland was represented by Ministry of Economic Development.

Referring to para 14 &17 – Poland actively participates in works of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal especially by developing positions within the European Union which take into account Polish views.

Points 22 and 23 of the Resolution

Ministry of Environment:

For every project, planned by Polish entrepreneurs in the Baltic Sea, which may have negative significant transboundary impact, the provisions of the UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991), Espoo Convention, are applied. This concerns especially large scale project such Baltic Pipe, for which the transboundary EIA procedure was carried out with 3 countries: Denmark, Sweden and Germany.

A very important tool in order to achieve sustainable development goals for the Baltic Sea is strategic environmental assessment for maritime spatial plans (MSP) in the Baltic Sea region. Polish party is currently conducting transboundary SEA procedure for Polish MSP with Sweden, Germany and Denmark in order to comply with provisions of Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (2003).

On the basis of the Habitats Directive, Poland designated 17 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) with a total area of 574,356.28 ha and, on the basis of the Birds Directive, 13 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) with a total area of 795 128.70 ha. These areas have been designated for the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems. Most of these areas have draft protection plans in place, which are currently being processed by the Polish Ministry of Environment. After the establishment of these plans, the activities included will serve the purpose of active protection of marine habitats, and their findings will be binding while creating spatial development plans and planning investments in the Baltic Sea.

Regarding Migration and Integration

Activities conducted by the Ministry of Interior and Administration

In order to facilitate contacts between foreigners applying for international protection and local societies, local institutions, civil society organisations and individuals, Office for Foreigners as well as non-governmental organisations carry out different integration activities. Integration actions aiming at social inclusion starting at the moment when the applicant arrives at the reception centre (temporary stay) and then continue in the residence centres during the whole period of the procedure for international protection. The intent of these actions is to create positive relations with the local communities, institutions and local organisations.

These are the examples of the activities on promotion of social inclusion:

- 1) for newly arrived foreigners in reception centres are organised information meetings on topics related to social assistance as well as basic functioning in Poland, i.e. norms, customs, traditions, health care education or issues related to employment. During these meetings foreigners receive brochures with the contacts dates to all kind of organisations providing support for migrants;
- 2) minors applying for international protection have access to public education and care in public kindergartens, primaries and secondary schools on terms applicable to Polish citizens. There is a steady collaboration facilitated partially by the Office between applicants,

local community and representatives of the local institutions. Children attending to Polish schools are fully involved in the school life, e.g. by participating in celebrations, anniversaries or intercultural events;

- 3) within a public education system minors are entitled to the classes about their countries of origin, which are organised in the mother tongue by cultural associations or relevant embassies (for a maximum of 5h/week);
- 4) there are organised leisure activities for children and youths in all the centres within project financed from AMIF, which include cultural and entertainment events and excursions to places such as: theatres, cinemas, swimming pools and to places related to the region, i.e. parks, historic places, etc. One of the aims of these activities is to get minors familiar with the surrounding neighbourhood and local public space;
- 5) an important role in the field of integration between foreigners and local communities play NGOs. The main examples of actions undertaken by NGOs are: educational support organised in the centres, sport and leisure activities, legal aid, material and psychological support, cultural mentoring and assistance in dealing with official matters, integration events involving local societies. Some of these actions are not only organised in the centres but also outside;
- 6) foreigners applying for international protection in Poland can obtain, also in a short time after arrival to the reception centre, social assistance in a form of money allowances and they can live outside of the centres. This social benefit is granted on the request of the foreigner. It can be granted for organisational, safety or family reasons or to prepare foreigners for an independent life after they receive one of the forms of protection. Living outside the centre gives more independence and stimulates integration processes.

CBSS Civil Protection Network

The National Headquarters of the State Fire Service – KG PSP actively takes part in the CBSS Civil Protection Network ('CPN'), which constitutes a vital opportunity for all participating states to develop a common framework for improving safety and security in the region in relation to day-to-day emergencies and major disasters.

Activities undertaken by the CPN support implementation of the Joint Position on Enhancing Cooperation in Civil Protection Area, agreed by the CBSS Directors General for Civil Protection in 2017. The document lists areas in need of strengthened cooperation to provide even better prevention and preparedness of the Baltic Sea Region (more details: <http://www.bsr-secure.eu/showcase/4261/>).

The participation in the events undertaken by the CPN helps to exchange the knowledge, strengthen connections between countries and disseminate information about cooperation possibilities to relevant stakeholders within the country.

As an example, the delegates of the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service – KG PSP took part in the recent edition of the Baltic Excellence Programme in Civil Security, held in Tinglev, Denmark (18-20 November 2019) under the Danish Presidency in the CBSS. The international training course focused on transboundary cooperation and developing strategic leadership skills as well as addressed *inter alia* challenges posed by climate change.

EUSBSR Policy Area SECURE

In addition, representatives of the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service – KG PSP are actively engaged in the works of the Policy Area SECURE Steering Group under the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). Flagship projects of the EUSBSR also support implementation of the above-mentioned Joint Position on Enhancing Cooperation in Civil Protection Area.

Some of the flagship initiatives of the EUSBSR, in which the State Fire Service units are involved, include:

- CASCADE – Making Communities Resilient to Climate Change: Cross-Sectorial Cooperation in Capacity-building (participating institution from Poland: The Main School of Fire Service – SGSP);
- Fire-IN – Improving the national and European fire and rescue capability development process by fostering innovation in this domain and promoting cutting edge solutions to recognized operational needs (participating institutions from Poland: The Main School of Fire Service – SGSP, Scientific and Research Centre for Fire Protection – National Research Institute – CNBOP-PIB).

Further activities with the participation of the State Fire Service units are under development, including project proposals:

- NEEDS - bringing relevant societal security field knowledge into higher education curricula;
- ChyResilience, focused on the role of children and youth in building a resilient society.

Engagement of the Polish Police

Polish Police in active way participates in the working group of the Baltic Sea Task Force on Organized Crime (“BSTF”).

The current active participants of the BSTF are: the Kingdom of Norway, the Kingdom of Denmark, The Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Estonia, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Finland, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Republic of Iceland. Moreover, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, Interpol, Europol and UNODC have an observer status at this group. The Task Force members are the Personal Representatives of the Prime Minister Offices in the particular countries. Since 2016, Poland is represented by the 1st Deputy of the Commander-in-Chief of Polish Police. The Operational Committee is an executive body of the Task Force. In the years 2019-2020 Poland supports German presidency in the BSTF.

The Operational Committee of the BSTF consists of national coordinators and officers-experts - representatives of the Police, Border Guard and the National Revenue Administration.

In the meetings of the Strategic Committee of the BSTF takes part the Personal Representative of the Prime Minister - the 1st Deputy of the Commander-in-Chief of Polish Police or – in his absence – Deputy Commander of the Police Central Bureau of Investigation.

The International Police Cooperation Bureau at the National Police Headquarters in Warsaw coordinated an arrangement of all BSTF Strategic Committee meetings in Poland in 2019, both on matters of substance and in terms of organization and logistic.

The priorities of the BSTF for the years 2019-2020 are:

- Exploitation of analytic and operational possibilities of Europol, maximize the synergy with activities carried out within the framework of OAP and EMPACT;
- Combating drug-related crime;
- Combating organized crime and against property;
- Combating organized crime groups arranging illegal migration;
- Combating organized economical crime including customs and tax fraud in international trade.

The following tasks were fulfilled during German presidency with Polish operational support in 2019:

- on 27-28 of February 2019 in Warsaw – meeting of the Operational Committee of the BSTF (organized by Poland);
- on 18-19 of June 2019 in Gdansk - meeting of the Operational Committee of the BSTF (organized by Poland);
- on 25 October – 1 November 2019 in Berlin – meeting of the Strategic Committee.
- There were planned two meetings in Poland and one strategic meeting in Germany in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 outbreak the preparation was suspended. The new terms will be provided at the end of the epidemic.
- During the strategic meeting at the end of the 2019, the member states made a decision to continue the cooperation in current form. The points of next presidency as well as the number of operational and strategic meetings remains open. Poland will present and evaluate the operational activities carried out during current presidency. The presentation and evaluation should be done with the resumption of the BSTF meetings.

Border cooperation

In the scope of statutory tasks of the Border Guard related to maritime security of the state border, including the maritime border and supervision compliance with regulations in Polish maritime areas, implementing tasks at both operational and tactical levels, the Maritime Regional Unit of Border Guard is involved in cooperation with the countries of the Baltic Sea region as part of the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation Conference (BSRBCC).

The scope of activity implemented by the Maritime Regional Unit of Border Guard focuses directly on the implementation of tasks in the form of exercises and operations of international nature, meetings and workshops at the expert level, as well as 24/7 information exchange in the field of maritime border protection and surveillance of maritime areas. In addition, joint training of officers is carried out, and a joint annual report on risk analysis in the Baltic Sea region (BSRBCC Annual Threat Assessment) is being developed.

It should be emphasized that the Russian side (FSB Federal Border Service of the Russian Federation) is actively involved in BSRBCC activities, which, in the opinion of the Maritime Regional Unit, could be qualified as the implementation of the continuation of cooperation in accordance with section 3 of the resolution.

Considering the epidemiological threat associated with the SARS CoV-2 virus, this year, 2 out of 14 planned projects have been implemented under German forum chairmanship. At the beginning of March all other activities were suspended, while in May it was decided to transfer the German presidency in BSRBCC for 2021.

In the field of cooperation in the region mentioned in section 5 and 6 of the resolution, under HELCOM joint patrols are carried out using vessels of the Maritime Regional Unit Vessel Squadrons, in which inspectors from the competent Inspectorates for Environmental Protection and Maritime Offices participate. The purpose of these projects is to check compliance with the provisions on the protection of the marine environment, as well as conducting research on the quality of this environment, observing and assessing its condition and changes occurring in it. In order to monitor transitional waters and offshore, inspectors on board SG vessels take water samples in the territorial sea and internal marine waters.

In addition, on 25/09/2019, the Maritime Regional Unit participated in the Polish-German exercise organized by the Maritime Search and Rescue Service (SAR) code name "POLGER 2019". This

mentioned exercise, as recommended by HELCOM, was aimed at strengthening sub regional cooperation in the field of combating threats and pollution at sea.

Referring to section 6 of the resolution, vessels of the Maritime Regional Unit of Border Guard, carrying out border activities consisting in patrolling Polish maritime sea areas, carry out tasks related to escorting ships entering LNG ports with LNG cargo or other dangerous cargo that may be the object of a terrorist attack.

Russia

**28th BSPP Resolution Implementation (Oslo, August 2019 r.)
Russian Federation**

Call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU, regarding cooperation in the region, to...

1. (strengthen trust among all Member States of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) through further concrete efforts and measures;)

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov took part at the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Ministerial Meeting held on 19 May 2020. As part of efforts aimed at reinforcing trust among the CBSS member states, strengthening the Baltic cooperation and increase its resilience in a changing world Minister Lavrov proposed a set of concrete steps, including elaboration of a strategic document for the development of the Baltic Sea Region by 2030; resumption of meetings of Heads of Government of the Baltic Sea countries; establishment of streamlined vertical cooperation in the region that would embrace national, regional and municipal levels (based on interaction between CBSS, Baltic Sea States Sub-Regional Cooperation (BSSSC), Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)); strengthening the CBSS financial capacity (including its Project Support Facility); resumption of coordination meetings of the intergovernmental councils in the North and the Northern Dimension (ND) Partnerships at the political level.

2. (intensify the early involvement of the next generation and respect the next generation's concerns more intensively in policy and decision-making processes via concrete measures of the governments to reinforce the foundations of trust and security in the Baltic Sea Region as an element of foreign policy;)

Russia, as a Member State of the CBSS, supported establishment of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform at the CBSS Ministerial Meeting on 19 May 2020. A number of Russian youth organisations, associations and agencies joined the Platform as associated partners. Russian regions actively engage through BSSSC, UBC and Euroregion Baltic that act as strategic partners within the Platform.

3. (continue cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation programmes between EU member states and Russia as well as Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, and actively engage in developing new generations of these programmes for the future,)

The Annual Cultural Forum of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC) was hosted in St Petersburg in November 2019 in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of Russia.

Thematic seminars on “Digitalisation of Transport” (Riga, November 5, 2019) and “Decarbonization of Transport” (online, June 23, 2020) were organized by the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics together with the Northern Dimension Institute.

Permanent cooperation in the Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) expert groups was accompanied by meetings and

conferences on specific topics. On March 11, 2020 the Russian Centre for Coordination and Monitoring of the Cooperation in the NDPHS organized the first National Needs Assessment Workshop on Health and Social Well-being of Ageing Population in the ND Countries. The NDPC and NDPHS Partners started elaboration of the new cooperation strategies for the periods of the next 3-5 years.

Russia continued implementation of numerous projects co-financed by the Environmental and Nuclear Windows of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership.

Along with the successful implementation of the of the cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes between Russia and the EU member states as well as the “Interreg. Baltic Sea Region” programme for the period 2014 to 2020 Russia and other participating countries started the preparation process of the new generation of these programmes for the period of 2021 to 2027.

Programming Committees for all the CBC programmes were established, and a series of meetings took place in February-August 2020. The Joint Programming Committee of the “Interreg. Baltic Sea Region” programme for the period 2021 to 2027 continued its work with the Russian participation, and a number of meetings were held (the last one in June 2020). At the meetings the thematic priorities and objectives as well as the legal framework of the future programmes were discussed.

4. (conclude the current CBSS reform process and increase the focus on synergies between cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region,)

At the CBSS Ministerial Meeting on 19 May 2020 Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov proposed resuming coordination meetings of the intergovernmental councils in the North and the Northern Dimension at the political level.

Building synergies between cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region was among the main topics of the XVIII Annual Strategic Planning Leaders Forum of the Regions and Cities of Russia hosted in St Petersburg in October 2020. It was attended by the representatives of the Russian and foreign national, regional and local ministries and agencies, the CBSS, “Interreg. Baltic Sea Region” programme and “South-East Finland – Russia” cross-border cooperation programme, HELCOM, VASAB, BSSSC, UBC as well as international expert centres, business and academia.

Coordination between cooperation formats in the region is also one of the elements of cross-border cooperation between Russia and the EU member states.

**INFORMATION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF the 28th BSPC
RESOLUTION
BY RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Migration and integration aspects

Information of the Russian Federal Agency on Nationalities' Affairs (FADN)

In accordance with decree of the President of the Russian Federation (August 24, 2017 No 399) "On amendments to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of March 31, 2015 No. 168 "On the Federal Agency for ethnic Affairs", the FADN of Russia has the authority to develop and implement state national policy, state policy in the sphere of social and cultural adaptation and integration of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation, as well as regulatory and legal regulation and provision of public services in the field of state national policy, social and cultural adaptation and integration of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation.

During the reporting period, as part of the development of a methodological guide for Executive authorities of the Russian Federation "on social and cultural adaptation and integration of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation", the FADN of Russia analyzed the information received from the subjects of the Russian Federation, and continued to prepare methodological recommendations for state authorities and local self-government bodies, national-cultural public associations and non-profit organizations that carry out activities in the field of social and cultural adaptation of foreign citizens, summarizing the best regional practices in this area.

Work continues to improve legislation in the field of social and cultural adaptation and integration of foreign citizens. With regard to the implementation of the resolution adopted at the 28th Parliamentary conference of the Baltic Sea in Oslo on August 27, 2019, the FADN of Russia reports the following.

According to p.26 of the Resolution the state budget institution "Multifunctional migration center" (Migration center), operates in Moscow, they accepts applications and documents necessary for issuing or reissuing a patent confirming the right to work. The patent must be obtained by foreign citizens who arrived in the Russian Federation in a manner that does not require a visa.

The migration center is the only organization where you can get a genuine patent to work in Moscow. All the procedures required for registration of a full set of documents for a patent can be completed on the territory of the Migration center.

According to p.28, the FADN of Russia provides information and Advisory support for round tables, conferences, and forums that raise issues of socio-cultural adaptation and integration of foreign citizens. On October 9, 2019, the 9th Session of the scientific and methodological Association on migration and demographic processes was held at the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation. Employees of the Federal migration service of Russia took part in the discussion of political and legal approaches to the adaptation of immigrants, taking into account the norms of ensuring human rights and minimizing migration risks. On October 15, 2019, the Moscow forum on public security was held at the Moscow house of nationalities,

among others, a round table on the theme "Migration and security". At the round table, FADN employees raised issues of migrant phobia of the host community and radicalism in the migrant environment, ways to overcome these problems by building a dialogue between the national majority and migrant communities, as well as involving youth organizations and activists in the normalization of the migration situation.

November 5, 2019 employees of FADN took part in the International scientific-practical conference on "Migration in Russia and modern world: problems, perspectives, practical solutions", which discussed the conceptual issues of the modern migration policy, models of management of migration processes, the problems of sociocultural adaptation of migrants as a factor of modern ethnic mobility as well as good practices combating the formation of ethnic enclaves. December 5-6, 2019 MGIMO (University) and the Institute for Social and political research of the Russian Academy of Sciences held the XI International scientific and practical forum "Migration bridges in Eurasia: new approaches to the formation of migration policy for sustainable development" within the framework of the project "Migration bridges in Eurasia"(2008-2019).

Employees of FADN took part in the round table "Integration of migrants into Russian society: do we need the law and what practices are effective?", where questions were raised as to the prospects for the adoption of the law on social adaptation and integration of foreign citizens, the role of national-cultural autonomies in the process of migrantophobia host communities and radicalism in the migrant environment.

Schleswig- Holstein

II. Resolution of the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

1. In view of the future of working life

To Item 11: Fair framework conditions for work in a digital economy

(**MWVATT**) The digital transformation in the working environment provides **a variety of opportunities for employees as well as companies**. Thus, digitalisation allows greater self-determination and freedom due to a more flexible organisation of working hours and place of work. In order to shape the current changes and challenges in the world of work in a future-oriented manner, it is also necessary to adapt the federal legal framework. In this context, several activities exist already on a federal level, which are respectively accompanied by the state.

To item 13: Measures to support adolescents without education and employment

(**MSGJFS**) The task to support young people in finding access to the job market and to remain employed represents a sector of general, as well as international, youth employment. Currently, MSGJFS supports the Alte Schule e. V. in the context of their project Generation Europe. The organisation has linked youth tourism and social work and has developed it into a sustainable model with versatile programme offers for children and adolescent groups, international encounters and many projects against social segregation and for employment. The Alte Schule e. V. offers programmes for socially and educationally disadvantaged adolescents. This conceptual basic orientation is simultaneously the main concept for the structure and the organisation of European encounter programmes. Generation Europe was promoted by the state of Schleswig-Holstein with respectively €10,000 in the context of two youth encounters in 2018 and 2019. The objective of the programme is the initiation of an international youth network and to motivate the participants to joint political actions.

(**MWVATT**) Currently, Schleswig-Holstein has **adolescent employment agencies at 20 locations in 10 districts and district-free cities**. Further launches are to come to create a comprehensive offer. The jurisdiction-transcending cooperation ensures the low-key, non-bureaucratic and individual counselling and guidance of young people in the transition from school to professional life.

The key objectives "Nobody should be left behind along the way" and "Everyone is needed" show that the adolescent employment agencies also address specifically those young people who are currently neither in training nor in employment. Due to the close cooperation with schools and the Lifelong Career Guidance Service of the Employment Agency, the aim is to provide young people with an offer of advice before they leave school in order to discuss the next steps with them and to work out possibilities for follow-up (training, educational measures, studies etc.).

The state government shall establish a **Schleswig-Holstein Institute for Vocational Training (SHIBB)** at MWVATT on 1 January 2021 in order to optimise the intermeshing of vocational training and the world of work. Its core tasks will include the increase of activities and the quality of the dual vocational training, particularly by bundling responsibilities and competencies. This includes particularly the improvement of the transition of young people from school to training and employment and thus the reduction of the number of adolescents as well as the length of time in the transition period by improving their chances of occupational training. A board of trustees with representatives of the relevant ministries, social partners, school authorities and vocational schools will be set up as an advisory body in order to emphasise the community of responsibility between all those involved in vocational education and training and to strengthen their cooperation.

2. In view of protective measures for the oceans

To issues 14-15: Strategy for the handling of plastic waste

(**MELUND**) The ever increasing problem of the pollution of the oceans is the essential reason for the recent activities in the handling of plastic waste. This problem has become more and more apparent throughout the past years due to scientific studies. The extent to which it exists by now has dramatic consequences for marine ecosystems and their food chains. This problem has to be addressed at the source as well as in the marine area. It was therefore determined on a European level in the context of the **EC Marine Strategy Framework Directive** of 2008 that the characteristics and quantities of waste in the ocean may not have detrimental effects on the shores and marine environment and that good environmental conditions and environmental targets and measures must be determined and implemented. The current implementation is documented in the respective reports for the Northern and Baltic Seas (see <https://www.meeresschutz.info/berichte-art-8-10.html>).

The basis for a new plastics economy was created with the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy in spring 2018.

It fully considers the requirements in terms of reuse, repair and recycling in the design and manufacturing of plastics and plastic products. With the EU Circular Economy Package and the directive regarding the reduction of the effects of certain plastic products on the environment were initiated in the first legal regulation. In addition, further limitations are currently being debated with respect to micro-plastics in the context of the EU Directive REACH (*Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals*).

At federal level, legislative processes to amend the Cycle Management Act (KrWG) (particularly the reinforcement of waste prevention and recirculation management) and the Packaging Act (e.g. prohibition of plastic bags) are underway. **MELUND** supports this procedure. The Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) submitted a 5-point plan for less plastic and more recycling at the end of 2018. With this measure, BMU initiated important steps toward less superfluous packaging, less disposable products, less waste as well as more recycling.

The resolutions passed at the member states conference to the Basel Convention (BÜ) regarding the intensification of the BÜ regarding the transport of plastic waste will result in the fact that plastic waste may only be traded freely if it is almost free from impurities and determined for recycling. All other plastic waste has to be reported in accordance with the BÜ regulations - i.e. involving the respectively responsible authorities. The export of mixed and contaminated plastic waste from the EU is to be prohibited at the start of 2021. The purpose of this resolution is to prevent that such waste reaches countries without suitable recycling structures. It ultimately also prevents that these reach the environment. MELUND welcomes and supports the BÜ resolutions and expects that they are implemented into European law and subsequently national law, if applicable, as soon as possible. In the context of its risk-oriented control plan, the society for the organisation of the disposal of special waste (GOES mbH, Neumünster), as the responsible authority for border-transcending waste transport in Schleswig-Holstein is currently conducting **regular and random systems controls at the exporters and importers of plastic waste**, which contributes to the prevention of illegal transports. Schleswig-Holstein has been at the Round Table for "Ocean Waste" since 2016. Here, the suggestions for national measures against ocean waste are discussed and supported in a broad spectrum of participants and specific strategies developed for their implementation.

To point 16: Digitalisation of ferry traffic for the further development of a green shipping industry

(**MWVATT**) The state is not entitled to determine the stipulations for the digitalisation and intensification of the specifications for fuels in the shipping industry organised pursuant to private law, as this occurs at the international level. However, it is possible and already practiced to create the **legal parameters in state law** to implement these international requirements in order for, e.g., the bunkering with lower-emission ship fuels. However, neither digitalisation in the shipping operation nor "green" shipping industry or even an autonomous shipping industry are in direct association: neither does digitisation make shipping more environmentally friendly per se, nor can the vision of an autonomous ship be realised solely through digitally controlled processes in ferry operations. These three diverse segments move forward at their respective own speed. The state supports each in accordance with its options.

To point 21: Support of research projects and innovation-promoting measures to secure the biodiversity of the Baltic Sea

(**MELUND**) Legal requirements and principles on an international, European and national level already exist to safeguard biodiversity. In addition, several measures have already been taken. The respective EU environmental regulations of the Fauna-Flora-Habitat (FFH) Directive, the Directive of the Wild Birds Directive (VRL), the Water Framework Directive (WRRL) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSRL), which are supported and, if applicable, supplemented on an international level by the principles of the regional Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OPSAR) and the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) deserve a particular mention. For example, according to EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSRL), the biological diversity has to be maintained. At the same time, the quality and the occurrence of habitats, as well as the distribution and frequency of species, have to correspond with the prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions. In this context, the good condition of the environment has to be defined according to legally specified timetables, which have to be achieved by the determination and implementation of environmental targets and measures. Equally, the economical state of preservation for specifically stipulated species and habitats worthy of protection has to be maintained or achieved according to the Fauna-Flora-Habitat (FFH) and the Wild Birds (VRL) Directive. In the context of implementing these Directives, research projects are undertaken also, which gear toward maintaining or protecting biodiversity and its characteristics. The habitats of the Northern and Baltic Seas will also be a component of the state biodiversity strategy. It is their objective to initiate key issues and solution approaches to maintain and develop the natural diversity on Schleswig-Holstein by the end of 2021.

Research is still required with respect to the opportunities of assessing of the effects of introduced species. Equally, many questions are still open regarding the eco-systematic connections in order to allow for a total assessment of the ecological condition of marine ecosystem and to protect their diversity in a targeted manner. For example, the joint project StopP, which was completed in 2019, used statistical habitat models, ecological network analyses and high-resolution hydrodynamic models to investigate which abiotic factors cause the formation of specific habitats and their species communities. Furthermore, investigations are currently carried out in the context of the BMU Environmental Research Plan for the implementation of the MSRL Directive Programme of Measures 2016-2021. With respect to these issues, Schleswig-Holstein is working closely with the coastal states and the Federal Government on the implementation of the MSRL. Currently, further research requirements are being discussed with the objective of a specific project application in the context of the inter-ministerial state initiative "Future Oceans" of the state of Schleswig-Holstein. These needs refer to the networking of data and information, the linking of marine nature conservation and the use of marine habitats as well as the quality of habitats (and the species found there) under changing anthropogenic conditions.

(**MBWK**) Research projects to secure biodiversity in the Baltic Sea have been part of the portfolio of the institutionally supported scientific establishments in Schleswig-Holstein, particularly at GEOMAR - Helmholtz Centre for Maritime Oceanic Research and at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität in Kiel. **Additional subsidies for research works** in in this sector can be expected in this area as of 2020 through the **Deutsche Allianz Meeresforschung (DAM)**, in which the state of Schleswig-Holstein together with the other Northern German states and the Federal Government are involved. DAM, founded in July 2019, promotes the collaboration within the German maritime research by way of joint research missions as well as networking projects in the infrastructure and data sectors. A contribution of the DAM research mission "Protection and sustainable use of maritime spaces" is expected in view of the biodiversity in the Baltic Sea. Following final preparation and consent of the DAM Administrative Board, it is to be posted in 2020. The objective is the development of a sustainable usage of maritime resources and ecosystem performances while aiming for good environmental conditions by 2023. For this purpose, the expertise from various institutes is to be accumulated. On a regional level, the focus lies on the Northern and Baltic Sea, specifically in view of the influence of the fishing and shipping industry, material discharges, tourism, renewable energies, mining of mineral resources, sand mining, coastal protection measures, harbours and the bio-economy.

To item 24: Border-transcending sustainable strategies for the monitoring and salvaging of munition in the Baltic Sea

(MELUND) In 2019, Progress has been made in terms of the description of the effects of munition dumped in the ocean based on the previously presented results of the scientific projects DAIMON (INTERREG-Baltic Sea, see <https://www.daimonproject.com>) and UDEMM (sponsored by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research, see <https://udemmm.geomar.de>). The approach of the INTERREG Baltic Sea project DAIMON, integrating the results of previous projects (MERCW, CHEMSEA, MODUM) and the methodological findings on eco-toxicological assessment from the UDEMM project have provided the scientific basis for this. The now available evidence of toxic substances from weapons in seawater, sediment and also in marine organisms is still based on extremely low concentrations due to the corrosion that has begun. However, it is a serious warning signal due to progressive rusting processes. Therefore, the results do not yet justify immediate action. The consortium of the project "Robotic Underwater Salvage and Disposal Procedure including Technology for the Delaboration of Ammunition in the Sea" (RoBEMM) presented its work at the status meeting "Maritime Technologies-2018" as a technical breakthrough. A system based on the results of this study should make it possible to eliminate large, unmanageable maritime explosive devices without underwater blasting in the future. Since 2003, approx. 25 million Euro subsidies were applied to maintain this situation. Due to media coverage on television and in print media as well as the annual reporting of the Expert Group on Ammunition in the Sea of the federal/state working group North and Baltic Sea (<https://www.munition-im-meer.de>), the results will be made available to an interested public.

Currently, the HELCOM work group SUBMERGED is collating the findings regarding the contamination of the entire Baltic Sea with munition, ship and military plane wrecks. With this process, a recommendation of the authors of the HELCOM report regarding chemical weapons in the Baltic Sea (see <http://www.helcom.f1/Lists/Publications/BSEP142.pdf>) is being implemented. Publication is envisaged in late 2020. For a further two years, work will continue in the Interreg North Sea Project "North Sea-Wrecks" under the guidance of the Deutsches Schifffahrtsmuseums (German Shipping Industry Museum) to transfer methods from UDEMM and DAIMON to the situation in the North Sea. The objective is to clarify which risks can emanate from war ship wrecks with particularly poisonous fuels and munition. The new methods are practically unlocked for the neighbouring countries by way of regional conferences and internships of the project DAIMON 2 and the decision support systems DIAMON-DSS is transferred to an operatively effective status.

In addition, the European Fisheries Fund promotes the projects BASTA and ExPloTect to continue to close already identified technical-methodical gaps.

Future project applications will primarily deal with the issue as to whether and how the chemical compound of weapons in marine organisms can impact food from the sea.

The recent decisions of the expert minister conferences for the environment as well as internal affairs can be considered the first national strategies. Both exhibit the willingness to collaborate and provide partially extremely specific measures, but also account for the results available so far by first raising systematic data to focus on the correct situation with suitable measures. The resolutions were preceded by different parliamentary deliberations in the State Parliaments of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein as well as minor enquires to the Federal Government by the parties of the German Bundestag.

4. In view of migration and integration

Regarding points 27 and 28: Promotion of contacts between migrants and civil society as well as political involvement

(MILI) Schleswig-Holstein has created a coordinated measures package to promote integration, participation and cooperation on a regional and local level in the shape of a Directive, which entered into force at the beginning of 2019. Since 1 January 2019, MILI subsidises **coordination venues related to all migrant groups**. It is their objective to implement structures and measures within their respective administration geared toward integration and participation and to initiate and establish them in close collaboration with the district authorities and municipalities and other relevant societal actors as well as beyond district borders, if required. Overall, 30 venues (two per district/district-free city) could be sponsored with the available subsidies.

Furthermore, local measures for the participation and collaboration (MaTZ) are promoted to reinforce the social participation of adult migrants and the coexistence and solidarity of the overall society on site. MaTZ is geared toward the social participation of individual persons. Fields of action are: promotion of local coexistence and cohesion, intercultural opening of administration and organisations, sensitisation to discrimination, knowledge transfer to promote the participation of adult migrants in social and political regulatory structures (e.g. associations, advisory boards), discussion and understanding of social values, overcoming barriers to entry and addressing specific migrant groups.

In addition, **local contact points are created to promote self-organisation and the equal social and political participation of migrants** (local participation - PORTs). Until the end of the directive's term at the latest, support is provided for the establishment and operation of a local contact point for initiatives and organisations of migrants that work towards the active participation in shaping a diverse society. The tasks of the PORTs with limited geographical scope are to advise initiatives and organisations of migrants, e.g. on setting up associations and applying for funding, to organise training courses for migrant organisations and to support networking.

Sweden

**Regeringskansliet**

2020-05-08

Utrikesdepartementet

Enheten för Östeuropa och Centralasien

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**Uppföljning av rekommendationer antagna på den 28e
Parlamentariska Östersjökonferensen (BSPC) 2019**

Nedan regeringskansliets samlade återkoppling på rekommendationer antagna på BSPC, i Oslo, i augusti 2019.

Regarding Cooperation in the Region, to

1. **strengthen trust among all Member States of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) through further concrete efforts and measures**

Utrikesdepartementet

Strengthening trust among the CBSS member states is of central importance. It is achieved through practical cooperation in several different areas within the framework of the three long-term priorities of the organization – namely “Safe & Secure Region”, “Sustainable & Prosperous Region”, and “People-to-people cooperation”.

2. **intensify the early involvement of the next generation and respect the next generation’s concerns more intensively in policy and decision-making processes via concrete measures of the governments to reinforce the foundations of trust and security in the Baltic Sea Region as an element of foreign policy**

Utrikesdepartementet

The engagement of young people is a priority of the CBSS. The lives of young people are affected by all different policy areas on all levels of implementation, and they must therefore have a say in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies that concern them. A new “Baltic Sea Youth Platform” will be launched on May 19th, which enables young people to interact, cooperate and communicate across borders, meet peers as well as decision-makers.

3. **continue cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation programmes between EU member states and Russia as well as Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, and actively engage in developing new generations of these programmes for the future**

Statsrådsberedningen EU-kansliet

The Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme continues to invite Russian organisations to be involved as project partners as they may apply for the Programme funding. This strengthens present and future cooperation between EU member states and non-member states in the region. The Program is an agreement between EU member states Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and the northern parts of Germany as well as partner countries Norway, Belarus and the northwest regions of Russia.

4. **conclude the current CBSS reform process and increase the focus on synergies between cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea Region, and**

Utrikesdepartementet

The ongoing CBSS reform process will be concluded at the Council meeting on May 19th and has i.a. entailed strengthening co-operation with other international fora and formats active in the Baltic Sea region.

5. **examine the possibilities to establish fruitful professional cooperation on the basis of international law – such as has existed very successfully for decades through institutions such**

as HELCOM in the field of environmental policy – in a comparable way in other policy areas as well,

6. further strengthen measures to combat terrorism and violent extremism in line with human rights obligations and the rule of law – recognising that the effective fight against terrorism and violent extremism is an important pillar for the preservation of democracy, the spread of disinformation being one key element. Parliaments have a key role to play in this context, as well as in the awareness of all the measures taken to combat terrorism at the international level;

Regarding the Future of Working Life, to

7. implement and exchange of ideas on the ministerial level as early as possible, involving the social partners' current considerations and strategic approaches to meeting the considerable challenges with regard to ageing populations and thus pressures on pension systems, the new requirements of the labour market on skills and qualifications as well as digitalisation and further technological developments, the need for better synergies between educational systems as well as labour markets' demands and increasing labour mobility regarding their impacts on economic growth, for example countries suffering from highly skilled and competent individuals leaving the country due to better opportunities abroad (brain drain), social cohesion (between social groups) and social sustainability (between generations)

Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet

The Nordic Ministers for Labour initiated the Nordic project: The Future of Work: Opportunities and challenges for the Nordic model in the fall of 2017. In this collaborative project funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, researchers from the five Nordic countries study how the ongoing transformations of production and labour markets associated with, amongst other, digitalization, demographic change, and new forms of employment will influence the future of work in the Nordic countries. The objective is to enhance research-based knowledge dissemination, experience exchange, and mutual

learning across the Nordic boundaries. The project is conducted by a team of more than 30 Nordic scholars and will be finished in 2020. An interim report was published in 2018.

Utbildningsdepartementet

Baltic Sea Labour Forum for Sustainable Working Life (BSLF-SWL) is a 2-year project with a funding of 8 million SEK from the Swedish ESF Council. The project has also received additional funding for third-country participation from the Swedish Institute. BSLF-SWL started its preparation phase in January 2019 and entered implementation phase in June 2019. The overarching aim of the project is to improve working life conditions and lifelong learning provisions, systems and policies for elderly labour force in order to promote active ageing and employability. The project addresses three issues, crucial for the socio-economic development of the countries in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)- the demographic challenge, active ageing and lifelong learning. More information about the project can be found at: <https://www.bslf.eu/sustainable-working-life/>

8. **use the early exchange of current considerations and strategic approaches to meeting these challenges in the individual countries of the Baltic Sea region, the elaboration of common interfaces, but also the visualization of existing differences in the individual approaches as a decisive contribution to the joint further development of the entire region;**
9. **consider long-term labour market forecasts, including scenarios for digitising the world of work, the development through qualifications, occupations, sectors and regions and to exchange continuous and long-term research results on the development of employment and the labour market in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region. On this basis, a better possibility is to be opened up for measures to meet the challenges posed to the labour market by demographic, technical and qualification-specific structural change, which will take account of developments throughout the Baltic Sea region**

10. **jointly discuss the enormous transformation of the world of work that can be expected from further digitisation in a forward-looking and early manner and to explore ways in which these can be better countered by comparable procedures**

Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet

The Government has established a new agency for work environment expertise. The agency has been commissioned to collect knowledge and identify knowledge gaps on the future of work regarding working life and workers' safety and health.

11. **agree on fair framework conditions with regard to the design of working conditions in a digital economy and to further facilitate entrepreneurial activity across borders**

Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet

The Government has made several efforts regarding knowledge on changes in the field of workers safety and health. An inquiry was appointed to map out the challenges of modern working life and analyse and assess whether the existing regulations on work environment responsibility are fit-for-purpose in view of those challenges.

12. **improve gender parity and ensure stronger involvement of women in the workforce by enabling compatibility of career and family work as well as equal employment opportunity and thereby reducing the gender pay gap**

Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet

The Government has decided to appoint a commission for gender-equal lifetime earnings. The commission has been instructed to present proposals that aim to increase economic equality between women and men in Sweden in the long term. The commission is primarily to propose measures that contribute to the promotion of gender-equal wages, gender-equal lifetime earnings, a gender-equal distribution of public support measures as well as gender-equal workplaces. In addition to presenting proposals, the commission is to

work to ensure a broad discussion in society and spread knowledge about how economic equality and gender-equal lifetime earnings can be promoted. The commission's final report is to be presented by 20 December 2021. An interim report is to be presented in January 2021.

<https://www.government.se/press-releases/2020/03/government-appoints-commission-for-gender-equal-lifetime-earnings/>

- 13. step up the efforts to support youths who are currently not in employment, education, or training (NEET) back into education or the labour market - based on best practices and the results of cross-sectoral, transnational cooperation**

Utbildningsdepartementet

The project "PlugIN 2.0" with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR) as the project owner is funded by the Swedish ESF Council and focuses on trying to prevent early school leaving. Over the project years, more than 7 700 young people, that had not completed their studies or were at risk of not completing, participated in the project. The project has helped to identify challenges, contributed to solutions and increased knowledge on the issue of early school leave. New working methods and forms of collaboration that reduce study interruptions have emerged.

Together, the parties have created opportunities for improved work with the target group and continued dissemination of experience and knowledge about the issue of early school leave. More information about the project can be found at:

<https://skr.se/skolakulturfritid/forskolagrundochgymnasieskola/uppdragfullfoljdutbildning/pluginminskarstudieavbrottenpagymnasiet/plugin.8701.html>

Regarding Safeguarding of the Oceans –

Achieving the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals, to

- 14. consistently implement the amended Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal signed by 187 states, considering its amendment**

and decisions on plastic wastes, adopted on 10 May 2019 by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal as important contributions to combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC

Miljödepartementet

Sweden warmly welcomes the Basel Convention decisions to secure better control of plastic waste that will play an important role in combatting plastic pollution. It is now important to secure an ambitious implementation of the new rules. Sweden is heavily involved in the work to implement the amendments in the EU (Waste Shipment Regulation) and OECD.

- 15. support the further development of a legally-binding, globally reaching mechanism for managing plastic waste towards the consistent combating of the pollution of the seas by plastic waste in accordance with the resolutions of the BSPC**

Miljödepartementet

Sweden firmly believes that a global agreement on marine plastic litter and microplastics is needed to address plastic pollution in the marine environment. Sweden has been actively engaged in the work of the Ad Hoc Open- Ended Expert Group on marine litter and microplastics which was established at the third meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Nordic Environment Ministers have also agreed to finance a Nordic report on possible elements of a new global agreement. This report is currently being drafted and will give us concrete proposals that will bring us one important step towards forward to a positive outcome at the Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA5) in 2021.

- 16. promote, through appropriate measures, the accelerated digitalisation of vessel traffic and green shipping to achieve the 2030 objectives as soon as possible**

Infrastrukturdepartementet

Sweden is very dependent on foreign trade and shipping is a vital link in transport chains for our import and export of goods.

Consequently, the Swedish Government is very engaged in maritime policies and supportive to the implementation of new facilities for obtaining more efficient and green shipping. In the Government's Maritime Strategy enhanced digitalisation in the maritime sector is a significant part and is consequently supported by the Government and its national transport administrations.

- 17. support the plastic waste partnership established by the Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to mobilize the resources, interests and expertise of business, government, academic and civil society to assist in the implementation of new measures to reduce the generation of these wastes, including microplastics, providing a range of practical support, including tools, best practices, technical and financial assistance**

Miljödepartementet

The plastic waste partnership under the Basel Convention plays an important role in the work to secure sound management of plastic waste globally. Sweden is actively involved in the different working groups of the plastic waste partnership.

- 18. organise concerted action for appropriate regulation at the global level to strengthen e-navigation and pave the way for autonomous shipping**

Infrastrukturdepartementet

Sweden is actively participating in IMO and especially supporting in the development of autonomous shipping.

- 19. use the ongoing changes and processes on ecologically and biologically significant areas and maritime spatial planning systematically as a sufficient and necessary tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 14 on protecting and restoring**

ecosystems of the UN 2030 goals and intensify all continuing efforts in meeting the SDG 14 targets

Miljödepartementet

The process to identify and describe EBSAs (Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas in the context of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD) in the Baltic Sea was carried out by the Baltic States through a regional workshop in February 2018. The candidate EBSAs were thereafter decided in decision 14/9 in the CBD COP 14. The process of establishing a review process for EBSAs is ongoing and is expected to be discussed and possibly decided in CBD COP 15. The Baltic EBSAs are all either within or crossing national jurisdiction, so constructive cooperation in the Baltic region is necessary to ensure that EBSAs can be used to contribute to achieving SDG 14. EU member states shall establish and implement maritime spatial planning in accordance with the EU directive on maritime spatial planning [directive 2014/89/EU establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning]. Sweden is to establish maritime spatial plans at the latest by 31 March 2021, after a five-year planning process. One of the aims with such plans is to contribute to meeting the SDG 14 targets.

20. jointly develop far-reaching measures and proposals for the UN Conference on oceans 2020 and try to further evolve these together at the UN level and achieve more decisive action at the international level to ensure political support for these measures in the field of improving the state of the oceans and its recovery

Miljödepartementet

The UN Ocean conference is postponed and there is presently no new date for the conference but HELCOM meeting 41 decided on 5 joint voluntary commitments from the HELCOM parties. These are:

1. Update of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan

HELCOM commits to updating the Baltic Sea Action Plan by 2021, and to include, in the update, increased support for the

implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Baltic Sea Action Plan is HELCOM's strategic programme of actions and measures for achieving good environmental and ecological status of the Baltic Sea. Since its inception in 2007, it has resulted in a lot of environmental improvements such as a reduction in nutrient inputs to the sea, an improved state of biodiversity and a reduction in maritime incidents and spills. The update is meant to strengthen the current plan, while also considering new issues currently not addressed within HELCOM. The update will carry over already agreed actions of the current BSAP as well as include new actions and measures to respond to previously unaddressed environmental challenges such as underwater noise, seabed integrity, pharmaceuticals, and impacts of climate change. Furthermore, the updated BSAP will, at the very least, maintain the same level of ambition as existent in the current plan. In the BSAP update, HELCOM seeks to integrate and support national, regional and global processes aiming at improving the state of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea. This includes the UN Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG 14 on life below water), global work on the link between oceans and climate, the work carried out within the Biodiversity Convention (CBD) and the EU Member States' implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. HELCOM also commits itself to consider relevant measures to avoid new sea-based and new land-based input of marine litter and addresses in particular waste from ships including abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), litter from touristic activities as well as riverine inputs.

2. Contribution to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), including through the development of a HELCOM Science Agenda

HELCOM commits to contribute to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), taking on an active role in its related processes, notably by participating in related events and activities. HELCOM also commits to developing a HELCOM

Science Agenda that will outline existing and foreseen Baltic Sea regional science needs, supporting the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

In addition to supporting processes under the UN Decade of Ocean Science and linking to its strategic objectives, the HELCOM Science Agenda will also provide the necessary scientific underpinnings for future HELCOM work, including the implementation of the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan. HELCOM further commits to linking the HELCOM Science Agenda to national science plans and scientific research.

3. Sharing experiences with other Regional Seas Organisations

HELCOM commits to sharing experiences on the protection of the marine environment and environmentally friendly and sustainable maritime activities with other regional seas organisations, notably within the framework of the UN Regional Seas Programme and through cooperation with other regional seas organisations. By sharing knowledge and experiences among regional seas organisations, HELCOM seeks to facilitate and accelerate the global response to the current challenges our seas and oceans are facing, notably originating from anthropogenic pressures such as from our economic activities or climate change, while sparing resources that could be used to drive the response even further. The regional seas share certain similarities, be they the same pressures on the marine environment caused by similar human activities, the same biochemical characteristics and biodiversity, or similar geopolitical situations. Sharing knowledge and information on how a regional sea deals or has dealt with its own challenges can be a valuable and resource-efficient contribution to the work of other regional sea organisations facing similar issues relating to the protection of the marine environment. HELCOM, in particular commits to sharing its experiences with other regional seas organisations on carrying out holistic assessments of the marine environment and on the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan, including the analysis of sufficiency of measures and the achievement of good environmental/ecological status through improved implementation of these measures.

4. Strong support for global efforts to address the matter of marine litter, including plastic, on a global level.

HELCOM notes with concern the high and rapidly increasing levels of marine plastic litter and microplastics as a global environmental problem and a serious threat to the marine environment. HELCOM commits itself to the prevention and significant reduction of marine plastic litter and microplastics from both land- and sea-based sources, which constitutes a contribution to achieving the sustainable development goals. HELCOM, in particular finds that strengthened global action is needed to prevent further discharge and reduce levels of marine plastic litter and microplastic in the marine environment stemming from current global and market-driven consumption of plastic products. The matter of marine litter, including plastic, cannot be solved by any one country alone and effective, dedicated global governance is needed to address existing gaps and promote coherence, coordination and effective prioritization of our efforts. Therefore, HELCOM commits itself to support the development of a global instrument to more effectively and comprehensively deal with the issue of marine plastic litter and microplastics on a global level in an integrated manner.

5. Workshop on ecosystem-based management in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science

Ecosystem-based management may be a central practice that needs to be implemented for the UN Decade of Ocean Science to be effective. With a view to strengthen ecosystem-based management in the Baltic Sea region, HELCOM commits to organise a joint workshop bringing together policy, management and science. Key topics of such a workshop could deal with bottlenecks to the implementation of ecosystem-based management, suggest concrete actions to overcome these bottlenecks and propose pilot areas and concrete use cases where implementation could be tested.

Besides HELCOM - contributing, especially with its advanced knowledge on holistic assessments and implementation of actions supporting ecosystem-based management of the marine environment - other important actors to engage could be ICES, national agencies

involved in the implementation of marine policies as well as organizations designing these policies. If a pan-European focus is deemed relevant, OSPAR, UNEP/MAP and the Bucharest Convention could be potential partners, among other international fora. The Baltic and North Sea Coordination and Support Action (BANOS CSA), addressing both the North and the Baltic Sea, could also be considered as a relevant partner.

21. support in-depth marine research and innovation in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity

Miljödepartementet

There are many research projects and networks set up in the region. Research cooperation between the Baltic countries is well developed and have been vivid for decades. Many projects are supported by regional funding institutions, e.g. EU Interreg and BONUS (joint Baltic Sea research and development programme). BONUS have been key to some of the developments that have been done within the HELCOM cooperation in the Baltic sea, especially on the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework directive. The marine research performed within the framework of ICES is also strongly supported by Sweden through the participation of many researchers. Since 2018 a new funding programme is planned from 2021: Baltic Sea and North Sea Research and Innovation Programme (BANOS). Between 2017-2020 there are e.g. more than 20 projects implemented under BONUS within the themes Blue Baltic (e.g. Optimisation of mussel mitigation cultures for fish feed in the Baltic Sea, and Multilevel assessment of microplastics and associated pollutants in the Baltic Sea) and Synthesis projects (e.g. Multi-method assessment for resilient ecosystem services and human-nature system integration). The EU Baltic Sea Strategy is supporting and coordinating many research projects and cooperation's.

22. ensure that the provisions of the UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991) (Espoo Convention) are complied with in the implementation of projects with transboundary impacts in the Baltic Sea area

Miljödepartementet

Sweden is strongly supporting the Esbo processes where needed and Swedish authorities have an obligation to follow the Esbo guidelines as appropriate.

- 23. ensure that large scale projects that affect the coastlines and coastal areas and that have a major impact on ecosystems in the Baltic Sea region have to comply with the obligations arising from relevant international treaties and conventions, including the Espoo Convention and the Helsinki Convention**

Miljödepartementet

See recommendation 22.

- 24. with regard to the detection of unexploded ordnance and buried/deposited ammunition present in the Baltic Sea, and with reference to current HELCOM activities, work together and develop a cross-border, sustainable strategy for dealing with this, call on the CBSS to explore the possibility to create a financing tool, i.e. to monitor, contain/secure, salvage or destroy, as the unexploded ordnance in the Baltic Sea may constitute a danger to humans and the environment, especially with regard to shipping routes and coastal waters used by tourists; based on such monitoring results a commission of experts has to evaluate and analyse the risks outgoing from the buried/deposited ammunition annually and issue recommendations for action**

Försvarsdepartementet

Sweden has presently no planned measures regarding deposited ammunitions. The Swedish armed forces provide support when unexploded ordinance is detected, and the Swedish defence research agency provide advice and support regarding chemical munitions. The Baltic Sea and Skagerrak contains a dark legacy of ca. 250 000 tons of dumped munitions. The DAIMON project, have assessed the risk. The group is preparing the report on environmental threats posed by wrecks and dumped munitions.

Regarding Migration and Integration, to

- 25. explore the possibility of a Baltic Sea-wide agreement on the future management of migration;**

Justitiedepartementet

It is of great importance that we continue working towards a long-term European solution for an asylum and migration system.

We need a sustainable common asylum system that can manage crisis situations. We look forward to the coming proposals from the Commission.

- 26. consider – as best practice examples – the implementation of “one stop institutions” where migrants can receive all necessary services in one place as well as the possibility of personal integration plans**

Justitiedepartementet

We need to await the proposals from the European Commission and continue to work towards a common European solution.

- 27. take measures to facilitate direct and regular contacts between newcomers and locals, local institutions, civil society organisations, communities and individuals**
- 28. support dialogue platforms as open and regular communication and coordination tools for involved stakeholders to broaden the societal dialogue**
- 29. improve within the framework of strategic approaches to integration the receptiveness of host societies through increased democratic participation in integration, with a stronger focus on the municipal level as the area of daily coexistence**

Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet

Sweden has a tradition of openness to the rest of the world and is fully committed to maintaining an inclusive society. The Government's objective is that newly arrived immigrants who have been granted asylum will take up work or education and training within two years after being granted residence permit. To this end, the Government has several targeted measures, with a special focus on those with a short education, and on the women situation. The challenges that the Government is facing right now is related to the fact that women are underrepresented in the targeted measures for integration and on the increased segregation in society.

The integration of newly arrived immigrants is a shared responsibility on a national, regional and local level. A good reception system and efficient integration system require cooperation between several different actors. Central government, county councils, regions and municipalities must all work together. Therefore, the public sector cooperates with social partners, employers and civil society to be successful in our integration efforts.

- 30. support and promote a municipal multi-stakeholder governance of refugee integration including systematic participation and multi-stakeholder exchange between politics, the business sector and civil society**
- 31. examine the extent to which the regular exchange of best practice examples throughout the Baltic Sea region will make it possible to harmonise migration strategies**

Justitiedepartementet

We are working on using the existent networks more and better in order to exchange best practices, for example the European Migration Network (EMN), Intergovernmental consultations on migration, asylum and refugees, IGC and the Nordic high-level cooperation (NSHF)