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| Approved by the 25th BSPC on 30 August 2016 |  |

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

**(BSPC)**

**Rules of Procedure[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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**1. Objectives**

1.1 The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) was established in 1991 as a forum for political dialogue between parliamentarians from the Baltic Sea Region. The mission of BSPC is to raise awareness and opinion on issues of current political interest and relevance for the Baltic Sea Region; to promote and drive various initiatives and efforts to support a sustainable environmental, social and economic development of the Baltic Sea Region; and to enhance the visibility of the Baltic Sea Region and its issues in a wider European context.

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

1.3 BSPC may consider any matter of specific interest and relevance for the Baltic Sea Region, and may, if needed, give its opinion on such issues.

**2. Participants**

2.1 The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference shall be composed of members of the 11 national parliaments, 11 regional parliaments and 5 parliamentary organizations around the Baltic Sea. A list of eligible member parliaments and parliamentary organization is attached in Annex 1.

2.2 Other institutions or organizations can be granted observer status to the BSPC. A list of observers is attached in Annex 2. Guidelines for Observers are detailed in section 9 below.

**3. Decision-Making**

3.1 Decision-making in the BSPC bodies is made by consensus among the members present in a given meeting or in the Conference. Abstentions do not disrupt consensus.

3.2 In matters pertaining to economic and financial issues of the BSPC, decision-making rights include only those member parliaments which pay financial contributions to the BSPC Joint Financing Mechanism.

**4. Chairmanship**

4.1 The BSPC is headed by a chairmanship, consisting of a Chairperson and two Vice Chairpersons. The mandate of the chairmanship runs from the closure of the annual Conference until the Closure of the following Conference.

4.2 The Chairperson is, as a rule, proposed by the parliament hosting the upcoming Conference.

4.3 The Chairperson and Vice Chairpersons for the upcoming Conference are appointed by the Standing Committee at its meeting in connection with the annual Conference.

**5. Annual Conference**

5.1 Conferences shall be held annually.

5.2 The venue follows the principle of rotation. All national and regional member parliaments can offer to host the Conference.

5.3 Parliamentary delegations may consist of up to 5 delegates or their substitutes from each member parliament and parliamentary organization. Where appropriate, the size of delegation as well as the kind and number of additional participants should be decided by the Standing Committee in consultation with the Host Parliament.

5.4 The Host Parliament issues invitations to the conference. In cooperation with the BSPC Secretariat, the host is responsible for practical arrangements, necessary documentation, press coverage and the conference report.

5.5 The Host Parliament and the BSPC Secretariat agree on a cost–sharing formula for expenditures for practical arrangements in connection with the conference (premises, interpretation, travel costs for external experts, documentation, catering, etc). All participants cover their own costs for taking part in the conference.

5.6 The programme, agenda and chairing procedures of the conference are elaborated in consultation between the Standing Committee and the Host Parliament.

5.7 The working language of the conference is English. Interpretation shall be provided to Russian, Scandinavian, German and, if possible, into other languages as well.

5.8 After introductory statements and presentations in the part-sessions, the floor is opened for debate. Only parliamentarians and speakers who are listed in the programme are entitled to take the floor. At the discretion of the chairperson of the part-session, other participant may be allowed to take the floor.

5.9 Decisions and adoptions in plenary session are made by consensus. Abstentions do not disrupt the consensus. Dissenting views may be explained at the Plenary Session.

5.10 The Conference Resolution is prepared and adopted in accordance with the procedures detailed in section 7 below. The adopted Resolution shall be submitted to the governments of the Baltic Sea region, the CBSS and the EU, and disseminated to other relevant national, regional and local stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region and its neighbourhood.

**6. Standing Committee**

6.1 The BSPC Standing Committee is the highest decision-making body of the BSPC between the annual Conferences. The Standing Committee considers and decides on strategic issues concerning the mission, political priorities, working modes, finances and administration of the BSPC.

6.2 The Standing Committee consists of parliamentarians from all national parliaments, regional parliaments and parliamentary organizations throughout the Baltic Sea Region (see Annex 1). Each member parliament and organization appoints its member(s) in accordance with its own rules.

6.3 The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the BSPC are also Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee.

6.4 The Standing Committee has the overall responsibility for administering the structures and functions of the BSPC, including, but not limited to,

* preparing the annual Conference in consultation with the Host Parliament;
* preparing the Conference Resolution;
* following up on the implementation of the Conference Resolutions;
* drafting an annual Work Programme for the BSPC;
* submitting an annual report to the Conference on the activities of the BSPC and on the annual work programme;
* preparing and approving an annual budget for the BSPC Joint Financing Mechanism, as well as following-up of the financial results;
* maintaining contacts and interaction with other relevant institutions and organizations in the Baltic Sea Region and its neighbourhood.

6.5 The Standing Committee convenes at least four times per year (beginning of the year, spring/summer, in connection with the Conference, and in fall). The first meeting of the year should include a report from the CBSS and could also include presentations on the status of relevant EU strategies and policies, as well as the Northern Dimension.

6.6 The Standing Committee is entrusted, where appropriate, to set up ad hoc working groups or other temporary bodies, tonominate Rapporteurs on specific issues, and to call on external experts for information.

6.7 The Standing Committee serves as Drafting Committee during the annual Conference (see section 7 below).

6.8 The working language of the Standing Committee is English, with interpretation to Russian.

**7. Drafting Committee**

7.1 The political recommendations of the annual Parliamentary Conferences are expressed in a Conference Resolution adopted by consensus by the Conference. The recommendations shall refer only to the topics of the Conference.

7.2 A draft version of the resolution drawn up by the Standing Committee forms the basis of the Drafting Committee’s deliberations. A draft baseline resolution shall be forwarded to the delegations no later than six weeks prior to the annual conference. Motions for amendments to the draft resolution should be submitted to the Secretariat no later than one week before the first meeting of the Drafting Committee.

7.3 The Standing Committee serves as Drafting Committee during the annual Conference. A deputy is admissible only in case the appointed member is prevented from attending. The deputy must be a parliamentarian. One staff person per delegation is admitted to assist the member of the Drafting Committee in the proceedings.

7.4 The working language of the Drafting Committee is English, with interpretation to Russian.

7.5 The BSPC Secretariat is responsible for the editorial revision of the final version of the adopted resolution.

**8. Other BSPC Bodies**

8.1 The Standing Committee can, where appropriate, set up ad hoc bodies and functions, such as Working Groups, Observers and Rapporteurs on specific issues.

8.2 Ad hoc bodies should, as a rule, be temporary and targeted on specific issues.

**9. Observers to BSPC**

9.1 The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference welcomes a widened interest in its work and in contributing to the pursuit of its objectives.

9.2 Parliaments and parliamentary organizations in the area adjacent to the Baltic Sea Region, as well as other organizations engaged or interested in the issues of the Baltic Sea Region, are invited to apply for Observer status in the BSPC.

9.3 Observers must adhere to the mission, objectives and principles of the BSPC, as stated in the BSPC Rules of Procedure and other basic documents;

9.4 The annual Conference of the BSPC decides by consensus on the granting of Observer status to an applicant. A list of Observers to the BSPC Annual Conference is attached in Annex 2.

9.5 Observers are automatically invited to the annual Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. They are subject to the general Conference rules. Parliamentarians belonging to the Observers have the right to speak at the Conference.

9.6 Observers may, subject to a decision by the BSPC Chairperson or the Chairperson of a BSPC Working Group, be invited to attend the activities of other BSPC bodies than the Conference. Observers are not entitled to take part in the decision-making procedures in any of the BSPC bodies.

9.7 Observers are encouraged to take an active interest in the issues of the BSPC and to contribute to the dissemination of BSPC resolutions and other statements and opinions.

9.8 The Standing Committee of the BSPC has the right to review and, if deemed appropriate, annul the Observer status of a body.

**10. Secretariat**

10.1 The BSPC Secretariat is responsible for preparations and follow-up of activities in the various BSPC bodies, for the overall coordination of BSPC activities, for administrative and organizational support, for providing investigative resources, and for administering the BSPC Joint Financing Mechanism.

10.2 The BSPC Secretary Level consists of officials from the BSPC member parliaments. It supports the Secretariat in preparing and following-up the work of the Standing Committee, and in overseeing the preparations of the annual Conferences.

10.3 The remuneration of the BSPC Secretary and the operating costs of the Secretariat are financed jointly by all national and regional parliaments of the BSPC.

10.4 The Standing Committee decides on a new appointment of the Head of BSPC Secretariat on the basis of a public vacancy announcement in line with a self-imposed procedure.

**11. Joint Financing Mechanism**

11.1 The national and regional member parliaments of the BSPC jointly contribute to the BSPC Joint Financing Mechanism (JFM). The relative cost shares of the BSPC members are listed in Annex 3.

11.2 The joint financial resources for the BSPC Secretariat should be allocated to, but not limited to,

* Remuneration of the BSPC Secretary;
* travelling expenses for the Secretariat to Standing Committee meetings, Secretary Level meetings and other relevant internal and external meetings and conferences;
* compilation and printing of the BSPC Conference Report, as well as other joint documents from the BSPC bodies;
* interpretation and meeting costs for meetings in various BSPC bodies, including the annual Conference;
* information activities and maintenance of the website ([www.bspc.net](http://www.bspc.net/)).

11.3 The Standing Committee decides, in its fall meeting, on the nominal sum of the contributions to the Joint Financing Mechanism in the following year.

11.4 The Secretariat is responsible for providing continuous information about the status of the JFM, and to submit an Annual Financial Report of the JFM to the Standing Committee at its first meeting of the year.

11.5 If additional resources are needed for organizing events, the Standing Committee, after receiving an application from the BSPC Secretary,shall decide on the possibility of granting additional funding.

11.6 The Standing Committee shall decide on the BSPC budget reserve fund and its use.

11.7 The technical modalities for transferring contributions are forwarded annually to the members of the BSPC

11.8 An audit of the usage of the Joint Financial Mechanism is made annually.

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**ANNEX 1**

**BSPC Member Parliaments and Parliamentary Organizations**

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| **Member** | **Rep´s** |
| Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation | 2 |
| Parliament of Denmark | 1 |
| Parliament of Estonia | 1 |
| Parliament of Finland | 1 |
| Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany | 1 |
| Parliament of Iceland | 1 |
| Parliament of Latvia | 1 |
| Parliament of Lithuania | 1 |
| Parliament of Norway | 1 |
| Parliament of Poland | 1 |
| Parliament of Sweden | 1 |
| Parliament of Åland | 1 |
| Parliament of Free and Hanse City of Bremen | 1 |
| Parliament of Faeroe Islands | 1 |
| Parliament of Greenland | 1 |
| Parliament of Free and Hanse City of Hamburg | 1 |
| Parliament of Kaliningrad Region | 1 |
| Parliament of the Karelian Republic | 1 |
| Parliament of the Leningrad Region | 1 |
| Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern | 1 |
| Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein | 1 |
| Parliament of the City of St Petersburg | 1 |
| Baltic Assembly | 1 |
| European Parliament | 1 |
| Nordic Council | 2 |
| Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  | 1 |
| PA of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe | 1 |

**ANNEX 2**

(Status as per 1 September 2015)

**Observers to the BSPC Annual Conference**

1. Adrian-Ionian Initiative (AII)
2. Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR)
3. Baltic Council of Ministers
4. Baltic Development Forum (BDF)
5. Baltic Sea Commission/CPMR
6. Baltic Sea Forum – Pro Baltica
7. Baltic Sea Region University Network (BSRUN)
8. Baltic Sea States Sub-Regional Co-operation (BSSSC)
9. Baltic Sea Youth Forum
10. Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-IPA)
11. Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS)
12. Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) Secretariat
13. European Commission
14. FUEN (Federal Union of European nationalities)
15. Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)
16. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
17. NGO Forum
18. Nordic Council of Ministers
19. Parliamentary Association of North-West Russia (PANWR)
20. Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC)
21. Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN)
22. Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)
23. Nordic Investment Bank (NiB)
24. Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO)
25. Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)
26. Skåne Regional County Council
27. South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP)

**ANNEX 3**

**Joint Financing Mechanism of the BSPC Secretariat**

**Relative Shares of Contributions to the JFM**

The relative cost shares of the contributions of the BSPC members to the JFM are listed below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Member Parliament** | **Share %** |
| Denmark | 9.3 |
| Finland | 9.3 |
| Germany | 9.3 |
| Norway | 9.3 |
| Poland | 9.3 |
| Russia | 9.3 |
| Sweden | 9.3 |
| Estonia | 3.2 |
| Iceland | 3.2 |
| Latvia | 3.2 |
| Lithuania | 3.2 |
| Bremen | 2.0 |
| Faroe Island | 2.0 |
| Greenland | 2.0 |
| Hamburg | 2.0 |
| Kaliningrad | 2.0 |
| Karelia | 2.0 |
| Leningrad | 2.0 |
| Mecklenburg-Vorpommern | 2.0 |
| St Petersburg | 2.0 |
| Schleswig-Holstein | 2.0 |
| Åland | 2.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |

1. First adopted by the 8th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) on 8thSeptember 1999 in Mariehamn; amended by the 11th BSPC in St Petersburg on 1st October 2002; amended by the 14th BSPC in Vilnius on 30th August 2005; amended by the 16th BSPC in Berlin on 28 August 2007; amended by the 18th BSPC in Nyborg on 1 September 2009; amended by the 19th BSPC in Mariehamn on 31 August 2010; amended by the 20th BSPC in Helsinki 30 August 2011; amended by the 24th BSPC in Rostock 1 September 2015; revised and adopted by the 25th BSPC in Riga 30 August 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)