



Conference Resolution

Adopted by the 24th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

The participants, elected representatives from the Baltic Sea Region States*, assembling in Rostock, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 30 August – 1 September 2015,

welcome, against the background of the crisis in Ukraine, the agreements concluded in Minsk, which may lead to a peaceful solution of the conflict, and insist on their thorough and unwavering implementation and appeal to the parties to provide comprehensive support to the work of the OSCE;

expect all Baltic Sea States to make every effort to ensure that the Baltic Sea region will continue to be a region of intensive co-operation and good, peaceful neighbourliness. To this end, they will use all the opportunities of parliamentary, governmental and social exchange and dialogue. For this reason, they also call for a resumption of the ministerial meetings of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS). This will foster the dialogue and strengthen cooperation;

discussing Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, Cross-Border Cooperation in Health Care, Health and Economy – Paving the Way for Innovation in Social and Health Care, and Sustainable and Accessible Social and Health Care – at the Crossroads of Health Care Provision, the Demographic Shift and Shrinking Budgets;

reiterating their support for the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), welcoming the new long-term priorities of the CBSS, as well as the efforts of the Polish CBSS Presidency to improve coherence in Baltic Sea regional cooperation, and acknowledging the progress and achievements of CBSS in fields such as sustainable economic growth, clean shipping, labour market mobility, research and development, transport and communications, cultural heritage, trafficking in human beings, and civil security, and support the CBSS practical approach to the implementation of the new CBSS long term priorities;

expressing against the background of the current situation their solidarity with the refugees which are forced to flee their homelands, being aware of the big challenge to secure a safe residence;

call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Union (EU);

to ensure the decent treatment of the refugees especially concerning housing and healthcare;

Regarding Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, to

1. strengthen the cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region including the Northern Dimension and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and other regional actors for a stable foundation of relations and encourage further development of the structural dialogue and cooperation between each and every regional organization and format leading to creation of a common Baltic cooperation space;
2. support any cooperation that marks the Baltic Sea Region as a model region with equal access to health for all and with a special obligation to support the dissemination and development of health and well-being by playing a key role in the realization of the new sustainable development goals of the United Nations;
3. reaffirm the pursuit of the entire region to co-operation aimed at becoming a role model region with a sustainable economy, capable of boosting competitiveness and opening up new opportunities for business and employment;
4. co-operate in order to strengthen the Baltic Sea Region as an important competitive knowledge region with an excellent higher education and research infrastructure;
5. encourage co-operation in the fields where mutual benefits and synergies e.g. between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Strategy for the socio-economic development of the North-West Federal district of Russia can only be achieved by identifying common priorities and by developing respective regional strategies and action plans;
6. evaluate the effects and promote the extension of the new regulations on SECA (Sulphur Emission Control Area), in force since 1 January 2015, to other sea basins, including outside of the EU, and support efficient enforcement of these regulations on ships, regardless of which flag they might fly, to ensure the improvement of the environment, human health and to secure the competitiveness of the shipping sector in the region;
7. promote close cooperation between cruise operators, ports and other coastal tourism stakeholders such as in the recently launched Pan-European Cruise Dialogue and actively participate in transnational projects to unlock the full potential for sustainable blue growth in the maritime and coastal tourism sectors;
8. continue work to upgrade reception facilities for sewage in passenger ports to ensure a timely activation of the special area status of the Baltic Sea under Marpol Annex IV of the International Maritime Organization, with the aim to hinder the release of untreated sewage from passenger ships in the future and to reaffirm the commitment for the continued improvement and modernization of the waste water treatment capacity throughout the entire Baltic Sea Region, in compliance with the stricter threshold values agreed by HELCOM;
9. enhance macro-regional capacity to respond to major emergencies based on all-hazards approach and joint, cross-border preparations to protect lives, health and wellbeing of citizens;

10. strengthen and further develop HELCOM as the main coordinating body in the effort to protect the Baltic marine environment, and to strongly support the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), and to stress the importance of BSAP as the environmental pillar of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;
11. deepen the political exchange among young people in the Baltic Sea Region and to support the permanent establishment of a Baltic Sea Youth Forum;
12. support the Nordic Bioeconomy Initiative by the Nordic Council of Ministers;

Regarding Cross-border Co-operation in Health Care, to

13. expand, strengthen and deepen cross-border cooperation in social and health care and the strategic planning of health services and continue with strong effort the development of a "Baltic Sea Health Region", to decrease inequality and lift the general welfare as a common challenge all Baltic Sea Region Countries face;
14. support the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing (NDPHS) as a highly valued and innovative regional network, significantly contributing to the improvement of peoples' health and social wellbeing in the Northern Dimension area, the new NDPHS Strategy 2020 and its Action Plan, as well as the Policy Area "Health" of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;
15. support the EU's cross-border co-operation programmes and other relevant programmes as tools contributing to strengthening cross-border and regional co-operation in health care in the Baltic Sea Region;
16. launch and develop concrete transnational health care and social wellbeing initiatives, such as ScanBalt or the WHO's Healthy Cities project and to foster the development of the Baltic Sea Health Region by further strategies and transnational projects, e.g. by a joint antibiotics strategy, by connecting the fields of health, tourism, information and communications technology (ICT) and natural resources;
17. spread innovative and best practices throughout the Baltic Sea Region so to become a model region in health care;
18. co-operate on research and sustainable strategies for promotion of cultivation and production of healthy and organic food;
19. make workplaces safer and healthier and thus more productive and recognize the important work of trade unions to promote a culture of risk prevention to improve working conditions throughout the region;
20. improve transnational cooperation and medical specialization in the treatment of rare diseases, bearing in mind the cost-effective usage of medical equipment;

21. regulate transnational emergency care in a way that the fastest possible healthcare provision can be guaranteed regardless of the healthcare providers' country of origin;

22. intensify exchanges of experience and co-operation with the aim of fighting antimicrobial resistance as one of the main global challenges in health care, to implement research in this area, and support and intensify all efforts to develop and implement a global action plan on antimicrobial resistance by WHO;

23. reduce the usage of antibiotics – general – and for agriculture (livestock farming) to an absolute minimum in order to prevent further increase of antimicrobial resistance;

24. strive to introduce the same standards on a high level in the treatment of contagious infectious diseases throughout the Baltic Sea Region;

25. broaden the scope of the Könberg report to the entire Baltic Sea Region, in order to gain a comparable overview of the status of health and care in the Baltic Sea Region;

26. commission a regular report on the status of health including disaggregated data and analysis for different population groups such as children, youth and senior citizens and particularly marginalized groups in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region, in order to coordinate issues, definitions and emphases as a step forward in terms of comparability of different systems within the region and map commonly shared challenges ahead;

Regarding Health and Economy, to

27. appreciate that, whereas economic prosperity is good for health, good health outcomes also favour economic growth and development. To that end, recognize the importance of health and social wellbeing for the economy and other policy areas and vice versa and consider health aspects in all policies;

28. improve support for the development of innovations in health care in order to prevent a brain drain;

29. support the ScanBalt Strategy 2015-2018 and use synergies with existing strategies;

30. develop measures to improve the situation of the medical and care professions through – for example - eHealth;

31. improve conditions to support the development of innovations in health care, including in the fields of eHealth and telemedicine, whilst ensuring that investments in eHealth support the adoption of standards and drive interoperability across the health sector to leverage the "eHealth European Interoperability Framework" (eEIF) and observe the joint European initiatives, such as the "Guidelines under eHealth Network" of the responsible member state authorities;

32. further strengthen measures for collaborative implementation of a joint eHealth Innovation ecosystem based on a Baltic Sea Region cooperation platform for eHealth initiatives built on smart specialization and mobilize regional resources based on already existing structures and internationally recognized standards;
33. improve the conditions to include eHealth and telemedicine in the standard care;
34. improve early intervention to strengthen good public health through social investment such as vaccine programs, and take strong measures to reduce consumption of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs, and work towards stronger prevention of diabetes II and other lifestyle illnesses;
35. support the usage of cost-reducing methods for better quality of life, including cultural and physical health-related activities in treatment;
36. improve the national labelling relevant for a healthy lifestyle including labelling accessible to different population groups such as child-sensitive and child-specific labelling;
37. foster development of health-related services within the tourism strategies of the Baltic Sea Region countries;
38. ensure global comparability of health economy and measure the performance and the impact of the health care systems via economic growth and employment by establishing a first reliable transnational method like "economic footprint of health economy";
39. check the possibility to establish a "Baltic Health Forum", to ensure and improve a sustainable exchange and networking in this policy field around the Baltic Sea;

Regarding Sustainable and Accessible Social and Health Care, to

40. ensure affordable health care for everyone and emphasize the focus on the needs of patients with due regard to age and gender and to warrant equal and affordable access to high-quality health services throughout the whole Baltic Sea Region;
41. ensure that a positive economic development in the region promotes high standards in health care and social wellbeing;
42. take strong measures to ensure equitable availability, access and use of social welfare and health care services, e.g. between urban and rural areas, between socio-economic groups and with due regard to age and gender;
43. develop and strengthen strategies addressing demographic change, such as the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing and especially considering public services with regard to rural peripheral areas;

44. install geriatric health care centres and modify social rehabilitation centres to ensure health care in rural areas as well as improving age-appropriate medicine;
45. ensure integrated services for children consolidating health care and social care services in a child-sensitive way;
46. ensure support services for families, pregnant women and prospective parents in support of families and parenthood, provide an integrated package of services to families with children in order to encourage childbirth, childcare and child rearing with a view to counteracting the current demographic trends and investing in families and fostering child-friendly communities and societies;
47. encourage patient responsibility for people living in the Baltic Sea Region;
48. raise awareness especially amongst the youth in a healthier lifestyle and to work on making education in healthy lifestyle mandatory in all schools and all school levels, a database on best practice examples on how to improve education and awareness should be created;
49. carry out studies with the aim of developing prevention strategies in health care, such as the North-Trøndelag Health Study (HUNT);
50. establish a first aid system for mental health problems as the recognition, awareness and diagnostic of mental problems are still underdeveloped;
51. support activities on Non-Governmental Organizations focussing on non-formal education for example in culture, sports, volunteering and music in order to fight against stigmatization of disadvantaged groups;
52. create incentives to improve the conditions of the nursing and care professions and to work towards intensified professional and vocational training for people employed in the health sector to significantly facilitate a cost-effective health system in the region and foster understanding of the health sector as a cross-cutting issue;
53. fully recognize the social partners in the social and health care professions, protect their activities and ensure that social partners and trade unions will be involved in the regulatory and implementation process on health issues as early as possible;
54. carefully consider both physical and psycho-social risks at work place, against the background of a rising retirement age, strive for good working conditions, wellbeing and a sustainable work-life balance within the labour force of the Baltic Sea Region;
55. strive to establish laws for patients' rights in all the countries of the Baltic Sea Region and mechanisms to ensure that those rights are fulfilled;
56. establish a Working Group on Sustainable Tourism – with focus on cultural, economic and labour market, maritime and coastal tourism as well as ecological aspects and as a central pillar of maritime spatial planning and with a view to developing synergies with the policy area "Tourism" under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - to submit a first report at the 25th BSPP;
57. welcome with gratitude the kind offer of the Parliament of Latvia to host the 25th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Riga on 28 - 30 August 2016.

*Parliaments of

Denmark,
Estonia,
Europe,
Finland,
Federal Republic of Germany,
Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg,
Free Hanseatic City of Bremen,
Iceland,
Latvia,
Leningrad Region,
Lithuania,
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern,
Norway,
Poland,
Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,
City of St. Petersburg,
Schleswig-Holstein,
Sweden,
Åland Islands,
Baltic Assembly,
Nordic Council