

Developing Sustainable Tourism

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Intro - Fritzi

Good morning ladies and gentleman! We are very honoured to be speaking to you today. This is Elias Lindstrom and my name is Friederike Schick. He is 23 years old and I am 17. Together we are here to present to you the outcome of the BSYF in Kiel in March this year. In a group of 13 young delegates from all over the Baltic Sea region we gathered to discuss the topic of sustainable tourism together with your responsible working group. Not only did we get a great insight into the way politicians work but we were also able to integrate our ideas and wishes.

In order to present them we split our outcomes into five main areas: Digitalisation, Borders, Work and travel programs, Tourism and at last environment.

Digitalisation - Elias

Use of digital tools is an important success factor for a tourist destination. A web-portal for the Baltic Sea Region is something that was seen as important by all participants in our discussions. With easy access to the individual countries info-sites and in the future, booking for train/ferry tickets in a package.

Digitalisation of museums were an idea that also was thoroughly discussed. Digital equipment in physical museums will have to be implemented for an interactive experience, by using augmented- and virtual reality.

Start-ups in different forms is where innovations happen, sufficient support needs to be in place to assist their growth and enable them to keep their level of innovation high.

The strength of the Baltic Sea Region is that we are a very diverse region with many different countries, cultures, ethnicities and languages. The idea of a common marketing for our region is something we would have to agree upon, though the term “baltic” might be hard for some countries to accept. We discussed alternative concepts that describe our region. The hanseatic league is something that we previously were a part of, the term “Hansa” Could perhaps be something that could be used in a common brand for the baltic sea region.

Apart from being a diverse region, the political stability in our region is also a great argument for tourists. You can experience what makes Europe great by visiting the countries around the Baltic Sea, with short travel distances and diverse cultures.

Borders - Fritzi

This leads directly to the next topic: Borders. As Elias just said, the baltic sea region is so incredibly rich in cultural diversity and yet there is just a sea between them. So in order to make the baltic sea region attractive for a generation that travels more than any other before, open borders are essential. It must be possible to visit different baltic countries without complicated border procedures.

Another idea that we had which would make travelling in the baltic sea region more attractive is a so called baltic sea summer ticket. Similar to the Europe ticket or summer ticket. With one ticket one should be able to travel across the baltic sea and visit different countries.

Furthermore infrastructure such as port facilities and train stations must be improved to make travelling as comfortable and sustainable as possible. Everything should be accessible without a car.

In order to achieve all of that a cross border cooperation between the different tourism industries is needed. This has been mentioned before by other speakers but we really believe that a good cross border cooperation is the key to easy travelling and a successfull international tourism industry.

Work & Travel - Elias

Education is a part of what makes a good tourist destination, but there are challenges.

Jobs in the tourism industry are generally seen by youths as something for low-qualified workers with low wages. To attract people to work full time in the tourism industry, the status of these jobs needs to improve. Also improved knowledge of different languages is much needed.

Tourist destinations around the Baltic sea are almost exclusively summer destinations, for people to make a living wage off their work, some type of full-time jobs has to be offered. Here cooperation is needed between summer and winter destinations. For example, you could work during the summers near the coast and the rest of the year at a ski resort.

Exchange programmes could also be a part of this. You could work half of the year, and combine it with studying something that benefits the tourism industry.

Tourism - Fritz

As the whole baltic sea region includes so many different countries it offers a great range of tourism industries. We believe that we have to strengthen the different branches to really make use of the great potential that we surely believe in!

At first one could establish a so called Eco tourism. By increasingly marketing farms urban tourist can escape from the crowded cities and enjoy the nature. One could establish a regional association to support farms.

Nature and sport tourism includes activities such as hiking, cycling, swimming or even husky racing. All these activities should be accessible through a "tour de baltic".

The last idea and actually my favorite one is attracting more tourists through cultural tourism. Music festivals such as the German rock festival Wacken in Kiel would attract thousands of people. But also other festivals

such as art or food festivals would attract a wide range of people. Again it must be easy to find these event, maybe by using the mentioned web portal. A pass for multiple events would allow people to stay for a longer time period.

Environment & Ending - Elias

Mass Tourism is an issue when it exploits the natural resources and ruins the culture and “soul” of the destination. There are places in various countries around the world where this has happened. If we wish to improve our status as a tourist destination we need to keep this in mind.

Port facilities is something that has to be improved to enable a sustainable ferry traffic, for example by enabling ferries to use power from land instead of running their own engines during stays in harbours. Public transport is an important factor when developing a sustainable lifestyle for all us, together with electrification and use of green energy.

These are some of the points from our discussions during the Baltic Sea Youth Forum, however a recurring event would be needed to enable young politicians to get together and discuss important topics. We hope for a continued support from the BSPP for a youth forum in the coming years.

I would like to end our presentation with a big thank you for being given the chance to present this, and perhaps we might meet again next year?