

# Policy Analysis – Baltic Sea Region Governments’ statements regarding the implementation of the 27<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Resolution

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## Basics

Twelve governmental counterparts of the twenty-two signatories of the 27<sup>th</sup> BSPC Resolution, excluding the three parliamentary institutions, submitted statements to the BSPC Standing Committee regarding the implementation of the Resolution → two fewer than in 2018

The twelve submitted statements in reaction to the Resolution vary considerably concerning thematic depth, length and structure.

With 28 paragraphs the 27<sup>th</sup> Resolution is considerably shorter than previous ones (2017: 41 paragraphs and 2016: 61 paragraphs). This is also reflected in the governments’ statements that on average are shorter than in previous years. Most themes addressed in the 2018 Resolution differ from those in the previous Resolution giving proof of the variety and diversity of regional developments and issues of regional cooperation.

Structure of Resolution and corresponding statements:

- Preamble
- “Cooperation in the Region”
- “Vision of a Healthy Baltic Sea”
- “Sustainable Energy, Smart energy distribution platforms”,
- “Migration and Integration”,
- “Economic development and growth in the Baltic Sea region”.

## Assessments of thematic areas

All thematic sections and most paragraphs have been addressed by at least several governments although to different extents. The statements include both national as well as transnational measures to implement the Resolution. This analysis focuses on the latter but also gives a number of examples of national initiatives and provisions. Of particular interest are those national and transnational measures that are linked with each other i.e. national measures to implement regional, EU and international schemes for example in the chapter on the Baltic Sea environment.

## Main messages and recommendations

Overall, the submitted statements underline the notion that the responding governments have taken the 27<sup>th</sup> BSPC Resolution seriously. Most governments demonstrate a sincere effort to offer a good account of how national stakeholders have striven to implement the Resolutions’ calls and suggestions on the national as well as the transnational/regional level. They overall

contain a lot of interesting and useful information on implemented as well as planned activities and offer a broad and rich picture of national and transnational activities and the cooperation networks across the Baltic Sea Region.

The governmental responses provide evidence **a lot in terms of structures is already in place in the BSR**, including even several newer structures for example in the field of migration, and that new structures do not have to be invented. On the other hand, it also becomes obvious that **existing structures could and should be used more effectively and efficiently** in order to achieve the objectives as outlined in the Resolution.

Several governmental statements in general or several individual points within statements are **straight to the point offering clear, specific and informative answers**. Others **continue to be rather general and descriptive**. Many statements also still contain a mere expression of support for certain calls of the Resolution referring to institutions, projects and initiatives without indicating and specifying how this governmental support could look like in more concrete terms.

As in previous years, several statements read like technical exercises without taking into account the broader political climate and without revealing high political ambitions (in particular regarding paragraphs 1 and 2).

Thus, as in previous years it still holds that the **standard of comprehensiveness and quality as well as of concreteness and thoroughness could and should be increased** even more in the future. There still is some potential for improvement in rendering the statements more accountable and relevant.

Nonetheless, statements dwell less than in previous years on activities in the past, but focus more on current and future activities in line with the Resolution's character as a call for future action. In the future, **governments could even try to formulate and offer more such considerations for future action**. It helps that the BSPC put the time frame a bit wider, as the policy analysis has suggested in 2018, by focussing in the 2018 Resolution on different topics than in 2017. This gives the governments the possibility to stretch the time frame a bit further back which means that they might have more to report on. This way it could be avoided that information already provided in previous government responses is repeated. **It may be helpful if this method, different topics every year, the same only every second year, and extending the reporting period to two years, would be systematized.**

Future Resolutions and governmental statements need to be fully aware of the general political climate as well as possible changes (both to the better and to the worse) and be more explicit about the ramifications of the changed environment, where it causes challenges, and elaborate how the still existing cleavages could be overcome.