

OPENING

Welcome Address



H. E. Mr. Viktoras Pranckietis
Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

Welcome address by the Speaker of the Seimas

I am happy to address you at the opening of the 29th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. This conference is exceptional as, for the first time, we are holding it in a remote format instead of meeting directly. However, although I cannot shake your hands in Vilnius, I believe that this remote meeting will be no less constructive in terms of fruitful and meaningful debates.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses enormous challenges to parliaments. The huge challenge faces also inter-parliamentary cooperation that is extremely important. Nevertheless, it is particularly now that it is essential to maintain the cooperation between parliaments and governments as intensive as possible. It is especially now that we need to ensure that the representatives elected by the people continue to work closely together in a spirit of confidence and give the necessary impetus for future action.

This year, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference will discuss safe and successful cooperation and development in the Baltic Sea Region with a view to overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. Preservation of the environment, seas and oceans for future generations, migration and integration, mutual exchange of information, search for common solutions based on best practices are the issues that are common to us all. The debate on these issues leads us, first and foremost, to a better mutual understanding, which enables us to build a safer, more stable and prosperous Baltic Sea Region.

It is necessary to highlight the urgent need and expectation that all the Baltic Sea states continue to make every effort to ensure that the Baltic Sea Region remains a peaceful region characterised by close neighbourhood and intensive cooperation. Today, a particularly high premium is placed on the foundations of our cooperation, namely democratic values, the rule of law, human rights and equal opportunities for all. We must make every effort to ensure that the Baltic Sea Region continues to be a peaceful region with close neighbourly ties and active cooperation. To this end, we must make full use of the opportunities offered by parliamentary, governmental and social cooperation and democratic dialogue.

The decisions taken at the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference relate to the expectations of bringing our region closer to a better future. I believe that this Conference will give the opportunity to get acquainted with new parliamentarians, ministers and experts from other countries. I believe that we all – parliaments, parliamentary organisations, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, and all governments and partners – will further develop a unique Baltic Sea Region by generating ideas, showing commitment, and offering cooperation and friendship.