

# FIRST SESSION

**Vision 2030: Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region,  
Safe and Prosperous Development – Common Effective  
and Sustainable Solutions for the Future**



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Statement by Neris Germanas, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

Dear Colleagues, Members of Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to make a presentation at the memorable event that comprises the two Lithuanian presidencies in the region – in the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and in the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

The CBSS is an important player in the region, so it is our task to ensure that the organization has an opportunity to shape a united response and strategy in the present challenging situation. It is our task to direct it toward concrete actions in the areas where the CBSS is uniquely suited to add value.

The Bornholm Declaration adopted at a high-level meeting during the Danish Presidency gave us a clear indication in what direction the Baltic Sea Region should move. The Revised Terms of Reference of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and of the Secretariat adopted together with the Bornholm Declaration gave us the necessary tools to act.

On July 1, Lithuania took over the CBSS annual rotating Presidency from Denmark. In these challenging times, the Presidency will seek ways of turning challenges into opportunities.

The Presidency will focus on developing green industry, including green and maritime tourism aimed at reviving regional economy, increase region's visibility; provide employment opportunities to young people.

In light of the current pandemic, the Presidency will also attempt to boost civil protection in the region and strengthen its resilience against major emergencies and disasters.

It will strive, by the effort of the CBSS expert groups, to find ways to protect those most vulnerable in our societies, such as those at risk of human trafficking for labour exploitation and children at risk of violence.

The Presidency will also put special attention to the involvement of the young people in building up the future of the Baltic Sea Region.

It has been 10 years since the Vilnius Declaration envisioning the state of the Baltic Sea Region by 2020 was adopted by the Heads of Government of the CBSS member states. The Presidency has therefore already offered an assessment prepared by a group of regional experts of the achievements in the region and an evaluation of the CBSS' role in fulfilling the Declaration's goals. This assessment is planned to be followed by a new Vilnius Declaration "A Vision of the Baltic Sea Region until 2030".

The Baltic Sea Region has long been recognized as a model of an advanced socio-economic development and successful regional cooperation in the European Union and beyond. Still multiple challenges remain to be turned into opportunities. By 2030, we would like our region to be:

On the economic side:

- focusing on sustainable economic (blue and green) growth and development, innovation, clean energy as well as the protection of the environment;

On the governance side:

- reaping the benefits of resilient economies and societies, responsive public services and strong institutional frameworks for cooperation;
- striving for better inclusion, prosperity, public health and social cohesion;
- improving the possibilities of digitalization for communication, accessible for all people;
- protecting the vulnerable;

On the side of safety and security:

- being able to tackle current and future challenges and crises through joint action where applicable;

On the side of regional identity building;

- promoting elements of a common regional identity and common values through culture, research and education;

And, finally, this should be the region:

- involving and enabling the youth and
- building trust between its nations.

For this to be implemented we need an even more coherent framework for continued strong cooperative efforts and actions in the region in all policy areas, strong willingness and continuous commitment by all regional actors.

We believe that such a declaration and its implementation could be closer monitored in the future. Such an annual report might be produced by the CBSS Secretariat, and shared regularly with the BSPC and the public.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation for the growing cooperation between the BSPC and the CBSS for the benefit of the region.