



Berlin, 27 – 29 August 2023

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

Statutes and Rules of Procedure¹

Revised and adopted
by the 32nd Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) in Berlin on 28 and 29 August 2023

Contents

1. Fundamentals, Core Principles, Mission and Objectives
2. Participants
3. Decision-making
4. Presidency
5. Annual Conference
6. Standing Committee
7. Drafting Committee
8. Other BSPC Bodies
9. Observers
10. Secretariat
11. Joint Financing Mechanism
- Annex 1. BSPC Members
- Annex 2. Observers
- Annex 3. Joint Financing Mechanism

¹ First adopted by the 8th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) on 8th September 1999 in Mariehamn; amended by the 11th BSPC in St Petersburg on 1 October 2002; amended by the 14th BSPC in Vilnius on 30 August 2005; amended by the 16th BSPC in Berlin on 28 August 2007; amended by the 18th BSPC in Nyborg on 1 September 2009; amended by the 19th BSPC in Mariehamn on 31 August 2010; amended by the 20th BSPC in Helsinki on 30 August 2011; amended by the 24th BSPC in Rostock on 1 September 2015; amended by the 25th BSPC in Riga on 30 August 2016; revised and adopted by the 26th BSPC in Hamburg on 5 September 2017; amended by the 28th BSPC in Oslo on 27 August 2019; revised and adopted by the 31st BSPC in Stockholm on 13 and 14 June 2022, revised and adopted by the 32nd BSPC in Berlin on 28 and 29 August 2023.

1. Fundamentals, Core Principles, Mission and Objectives

1.1 The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) was established in 1991 as a forum for political dialogue between parliamentarians from the Baltic Sea Region.

1.2 The fundamentals and core principles of the cooperation in the BSPC are

- democratic values,
- the rule of law,
- human rights,
- peaceful neighbourliness,
- respect for international law,
- a resilient civil society and robust NGOs.

1.3 The mission of the BSPC is

to raise awareness of and provide opinions on issues of current political interest and relevance for the Baltic Sea Region;

to promote and drive various initiatives and efforts to support a sustainable environmental, social and economic development of the Baltic Sea Region;

and to enhance the visibility of the Baltic Sea Region and its issues in a wider European context.

1.4 The objectives and decisions of the BSPC are geared to

initiate and guide political activities in the Baltic Sea Region, endowing them with additional democratic legitimacy and parliamentary authority with a particular focus on contributing to security, prosperity and a sound and sustainable status for its environment;

initiate all necessary measures ensuring the security of the peoples and the defence of the democratic values and democracies of its Member States.

The BSPC and its members are convinced of the need to

protect free and independent media, including combatting disinformation and fake news;

support and strengthen democratic institutions in the participating states;

improve dialogue between governments, parliaments and civil society;

strengthen the common identity of the Baltic Sea Region by means of close co-operation between national and regional parliaments with legislative powers on the basis of equality;

intensify people-to-people contacts on all levels – parliaments, governments and civil society – as the backbone for peace, prosperity and the protection of the environment in the Region;

promote the exchange among and the inclusion of the youth and young people as a prerequisite for guaranteeing and securing the foundations of the Baltic Sea Region for future generations as well;

promote equal opportunities, gender equity and diversity in our societies.

1.5 The BSPC may consider any matter of specific interest and relevance for the Baltic Sea Region, and may, if needed, give its opinion on such issues.

2. Participants

2.1 The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference shall be composed of members of the national parliaments, regional parliaments with legislative powers and parliamentary organisations around the Baltic Sea (state or supranational parliaments, regional parliaments with legislative powers, parliamentary bodies and organisations).

Adherence to and advocacy for compliance with the recognised rules of international law are a sine qua non for participation and cooperation in the BSPC and its work.

Members of the BSPC must adhere to the fundamentals, core principles, mission and objectives of the BSPC, as stated in the BSPC Statutes and Rules of Procedure and other basic documents.

If a Member State blatantly violates the aforementioned foundations and principles by flagrant violation of the rules of international law, the member or members from that country may, by decision of the remaining members in the BSPC, be suspended from membership for an indefinite period and all cooperation with those members may be frozen.

Such a decision includes the suspension from the Annual Conference, the meetings of the BSPC working bodies, proceedings, work and projects of the BSPC and freezing of any joint activities with them until cooperation under the fundamental principles of international law will once again become possible. It can be taken by the Standing Committee of the BSPC with immediate effect and must be confirmed by the Annual Conference to be permanent.

Any amendment to the decision about a suspension requires

- * a recommendation of the Standing Committee to the Annual Conference and
- * a final decision by the Annual Conference.

If the flagrant violation of international law and the foundations and principles of the BSPC continues unabated over a longer period of time and there is no decision of the member(s) to withdraw from the BSPC, affected by the suspension, one of the next Annual Conferences may unanimously decide on the total expulsion of the member(s).

Any future conferment of membership also requires a recommendation of the Standing Committee to the Annual Conference and a final decision by the Annual Conference.

A list of eligible member parliaments and parliamentary organisations is attached in Annex 1.

2.2 Other institutions or organisations can be granted observer status to the BSPC. A list of observers is attached in Annex 2. Guidelines for Observers are detailed in section 9 below.

3. Decision-Making

3.1 Decision-making in the BSPC bodies is made by consensus among the members present in a given meeting or in the Conference. Abstentions do not disrupt consensus.

3.2 In matters pertaining to economic and financial issues of the BSPC, decision-making rights include only those member parliaments which pay financial contributions to the BSPC Joint Financing Mechanism.

4. Presidency

4.1 The BSPC is headed by a presidency, consisting of a President and two Vice Presidents. The mandate of the presidency runs from the closure of the Annual Conference until the closure of the following Conference.

4.2 The President is, as a rule, proposed by the parliament hosting the upcoming Conference.

4.3 The President and Vice President for the upcoming Conference are appointed by the Standing Committee at its meeting in connection with the Annual Conference.

5. Annual Conference

5.1 Conferences shall be held annually.

5.2 The venue follows the principle of rotation. All national and regional member parliaments can offer to host the Conference.

5.3 Parliamentary delegations may consist of up to 5 delegates or their substitutes from each member parliament and parliamentary organisation. Where appropriate, the size of

delegation as well as the kind and number of additional participants should be decided by the Standing Committee in consultation with the Host Parliament.

5.4 The Host Parliament issues invitations to the Conference. In cooperation with the BSPC Secretariat, the host is responsible for practical arrangements, necessary documentation, press coverage and the conference report.

5.5 The Host Parliament and the BSPC Secretariat agree on a cost-sharing formula for expenditures for practical arrangements in connection with the Conference (premises, interpretation, travel costs for external experts, documentation, catering etc.). All participants cover their own costs for taking part in the Conference.

5.6 The programme, agenda and chairing procedures of the Conference are elaborated in consultation between the Standing Committee and the Host Parliament.

5.7 The working language of the Conference is English. Interpretation may also be provided into other languages whenever possible.

5.8 After introductory statements and presentations in the part-sessions, the floor is opened for debate. Only parliamentarians and speakers who are listed in the programme are entitled to take the floor. At the discretion of the chairperson of the part-session, other participants may be allowed to take the floor.

5.9 Decisions and adoptions in plenary session are made by consensus. Abstentions do not disrupt the consensus. Dissenting views may be explained in the plenary session.

5.10 The Conference Resolution is prepared and adopted in accordance with the procedures detailed in section 7 below. The adopted Resolution shall be submitted to the governments of the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU, and disseminated to other relevant national, regional and local stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region and its neighbourhood.

6. Standing Committee

6.1 The BSPC Standing Committee is the highest decision-making body of the BSPC between the Annual Conferences. The Standing Committee considers and decides on strategic issues concerning the fundamentals, principles, mission, political priorities, working modes, finances and administration of the BSPC. Decisions on the Fundamentals and Principles as well as changes in the Statutes and Rules of Procedure must be confirmed by the Annual Conference.

6.2 The Standing Committee consists of parliamentarians from all national parliaments, regional parliaments and parliamentary organisations throughout the Baltic Sea Region (see Annex 1). Each member parliament and organisation appoints its member(s) in accordance with its own rules.

6.3 The President and Vice Presidents of the BSPC are also Chairperson and Vice Chairpersons of the Standing Committee.

6.4 The Standing Committee has the overall responsibility for administering the structures and functions of the BSPC, including, but not limited to,

- preparing the Annual Conference in consultation with the Host Parliament;
- preparing the Conference Resolution;
- following up on the implementation of the Conference Resolutions;
- drafting an annual Strategy and Work Programme for the BSPC;
- submitting an annual report to the Conference on the activities of the BSPC and on the annual work programme;
- preparing and approving an annual budget for the BSPC Joint Financing Mechanism as well as a follow-up of the financial results;
- maintaining contacts and interaction with other relevant institutions and organisations in the Baltic Sea Region and its neighbourhood.

6.5 The Standing Committee convenes at least four times per year (beginning of the year, spring/summer, in connection with the Conference and in autumn). The first meeting of the year should include a report from the CBSS and could also include presentations on the status of relevant EU strategies and policies as well as the Northern Dimension.

6.6 The Standing Committee is entrusted, where appropriate, to set up ad hoc working groups or other temporary bodies, to nominate Rapporteurs on specific issues, and to call on external experts for information.

6.7 The Standing Committee serves as Drafting Committee during the Annual Conference (see section 7 below).

6.8 The working language of the Standing Committee is English.

7. Drafting Committee

7.1 The political recommendations of the annual Parliamentary Conferences are expressed in a Conference Resolution adopted by consensus by the Conference. The recommendations shall refer only to the topics of the Conference.

7.2 A draft version of the resolution drawn up by the Standing Committee forms the basis of the Drafting Committee's deliberations. A draft baseline resolution shall be forwarded to the delegations no later than six weeks prior to the Annual Conference. Motions for amendments to the draft resolution have to be submitted to the Secretariat no later than on the date agreed by the Standing Committee during its meeting in spring but in any case no later than one week before the first meeting of the Drafting Committee. Motions received after the deadline set by the Standing Committee will be disregarded.

7.3 The Standing Committee serves as Drafting Committee during the Annual Conference. A deputy is admissible only in case the appointed member is prevented from attending. The deputy must be a parliamentarian. One staff person per delegation is admitted to assist the member of the Drafting Committee in the proceedings.

7.4 The working language of the Drafting Committee is English.

7.5 The BSPC Secretariat is responsible for the editorial revision of the final version of the adopted resolution.

8. Other BSPC Bodies

8.1 The Standing Committee can, where appropriate, set up ad hoc bodies and functions, such as Working Groups, Observers and Rapporteurs on specific issues.

8.2 Ad hoc bodies should, as a rule, be temporary and targeted at specific issues.

9. Observers to the BSPC

9.1 The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference welcomes a widened interest in its work and in contributing to the pursuit of its objectives.

9.2 Parliaments and parliamentary organisations in the area adjacent to the Baltic Sea Region, as well as other organisations engaged or interested in the issues of the Baltic Sea Region, are invited to apply for Observer status in the BSPC.

9.3 Observers must adhere to the mission, objectives and principles of the BSPC, as stated in the BSPC Rules of Procedure and other basic documents;

9.4 The Annual Conference of the BSPC decides by consensus on the granting of Observer status to an applicant. A list of Observers to the BSPC Annual Conference is attached in Annex 2.

9.5 Observers are automatically invited to the annual Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. They are subject to the general Conference rules. Parliamentarians belonging to the Observers have the right to speak at the Conference.

9.6 Observers may, subject to a decision by the BSPC President or the Chairperson of a BSPC Working Group, be invited to attend the activities of other BSPC bodies than the Conference. Observers are not entitled to take part in the decision-making procedures in any of the BSPC bodies.

9.7 Observers are encouraged to take an active interest in the issues of the BSPC and to contribute to the dissemination of BSPC resolutions and other statements and opinions.

9.8 The Standing Committee of the BSPC has the right to review and, if deemed appropriate, suspend and freeze or annul the Observer status of a body.

10. Secretariat

10.1 The BSPC Secretariat consists of officials from the BSPC members and the Secretary General, who coordinates its work.

10.2 The BSPC Secretariat is responsible for the preparation of the BSPC Standing Committee and Working Groups meetings, as well as for overseeing the preparations of the Annual Conference and for content. The Standing Committee is informed about the current business in order to supervise it.

10.3 The BSPC Secretary General manages the overall coordination of BSPC activities, prepares the groundwork in the BSPC bodies, delivers content, provides investigative resources and is responsible for administering the BSPC Joint Financial Mechanism, as well as for other administrative and organisational matters, and for follow-up. The members of the Secretariat are involved in administrative and organisational questions and support this work. The remuneration of the BSPC Secretary General and the operating costs of the Secretariat are financed jointly by all national and regional parliaments of the BSPC.

10.4 The Standing Committee decides on a new appointment of the BSPC Secretary General based on a public vacancy announcement in line with a self-imposed procedure.

11. Joint Financing Mechanism

11.1 The national and regional member parliaments of the BSPC jointly contribute to the BSPC Joint Financing Mechanism (JFM). The relative cost shares of the BSPC members are listed in Annex 3.

11.2 The joint financial resources for the BSPC Secretariat should be allocated to, but not limited to,

- Remuneration which includes the annual salary for the BSPC Secretary General comprising mandatory social fees.;
- travelling expenses for the Secretariat to Standing Committee meetings, Secretary Level meetings and other relevant internal and external meetings and conferences;
- compilation, layouting and – in exceptional cases - printing of the BSPC Conference Report, as well as other joint documents from the BSPC working bodies;
- interpretation and meeting costs for meetings in various BSPC bodies, including the Annual Conference;
- information activities and maintenance of the website (www.bspc.net).

11.3 The Standing Committee decides, in its autumn meeting, on the nominal sum of the contributions to the Joint Financing Mechanism in the following year.

11.4 The Secretariat is responsible for providing continuous information about the status of the JFM, and to submitting an Annual Financial Report of the JFM to the Standing Committee at its first meeting of the year.

11.5 If additional resources are needed for organising events, the Standing Committee, after receiving an application from the BSPC Secretary General, shall decide on the possibility of granting additional funding.

11.6 The Standing Committee shall decide on the BSPC budget reserve fund and its use.

11.7 The technical modalities for transferring contributions are forwarded annually to the members of the BSPC.

11.8 An audit of the usage of the Joint Financial Mechanism is made annually.

11.9 After the approval by the BSPC Standing Committee, the Annual Financial Report for the BSPC Joint Financing Mechanism (JFM) shall be published on the BSPC website.

ANNEX 1**BSPC Member Parliaments and Parliamentary Organisations**

Member	Rep.s
Parliament of Denmark	1
Parliament of Estonia	1
Parliament of Finland	1
Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany	1
Parliament of Iceland	1
Parliament of Latvia	1
Parliament of Lithuania	1
Parliament of Norway	1
Parliament of Poland	1
Parliament of Sweden	1
Parliament of Åland	1
Parliament of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen	1
Parliament of Faeroe Islands	1
Parliament of Greenland	1
Parliament of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg	1
Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	1
Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein	1
Baltic Assembly	1
European Parliament	1
Nordic Council	1
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe	1
PA of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe	1

The memberships of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (2), the Parliament of the Kaliningrad Region (1), the Parliament of the Karelian Republic (1), the Parliament of the Leningrad Region (1) and the Parliament of the City of St Petersburg (1) are suspended and frozen.

The Russian Federation has declared its withdrawal from the work of the BSPC through appropriate publications and a letter from the State Duma to the President of the BSPC.

The Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg has also communicated this in a letter from its Chairman to the President of the BSPC.

ANNEX 2

(Status as per 29 August 2023)

Observers to the BSPC Annual Conference

1. Adrian-Ionian Initiative (AII)
2. Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR)
3. Baltic Council of Ministers
4. Baltic Sea Commission/CPMR
5. Baltic Sea Forum – Pro Baltica
6. Baltic Sea Region University Network (BSRUN)
7. Baltic Sea States Sub-Regional Co-operation (BSSSC)
8. Baltic Sea Youth Forum
9. Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS)
10. Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) Secretariat
11. European Commission
12. FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities)
13. Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)
14. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
15. NGO Forum
16. Nordic Council of Ministers
17. Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC)
18. Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN)
19. Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)
20. Nordic Investment Bank (NiB)
21. Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO)
22. Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)
23. Skåne Regional County Council
24. South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECF)

The observer statuses of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA-CIS) and the Parliamentary Association of North-West Russia (PANWR) are suspended and frozen.

ANNEX 3**Joint Financing Mechanism of the BSPC Secretariat****Relative Shares of Contributions to the JFM**

The relative cost shares of the contribution of the BSPC members to the JFM are listed below:

Member Parliament	Share (in €)
Denmark	25.000
Finland	25.000
Germany	25.000
Norway	25.000
Poland	25.000
Sweden	25.000
Estonia	10.000
Iceland	10.000
Latvia	10.000
Lithuania	10.000
Bremen	8.000
Faroe Island	8.000
Greenland	8.000
Hamburg	8.000
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	8.000
Schleswig-Holstein	8.000
Åland Islands	8.000
Total	246.000

The memberships of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (2), the Parliament of the Kaliningrad Region, the Parliament of the Karelian Republic, the Parliament of the Leningrad Region and the Parliament of the City of St Petersburg are suspended and frozen.