

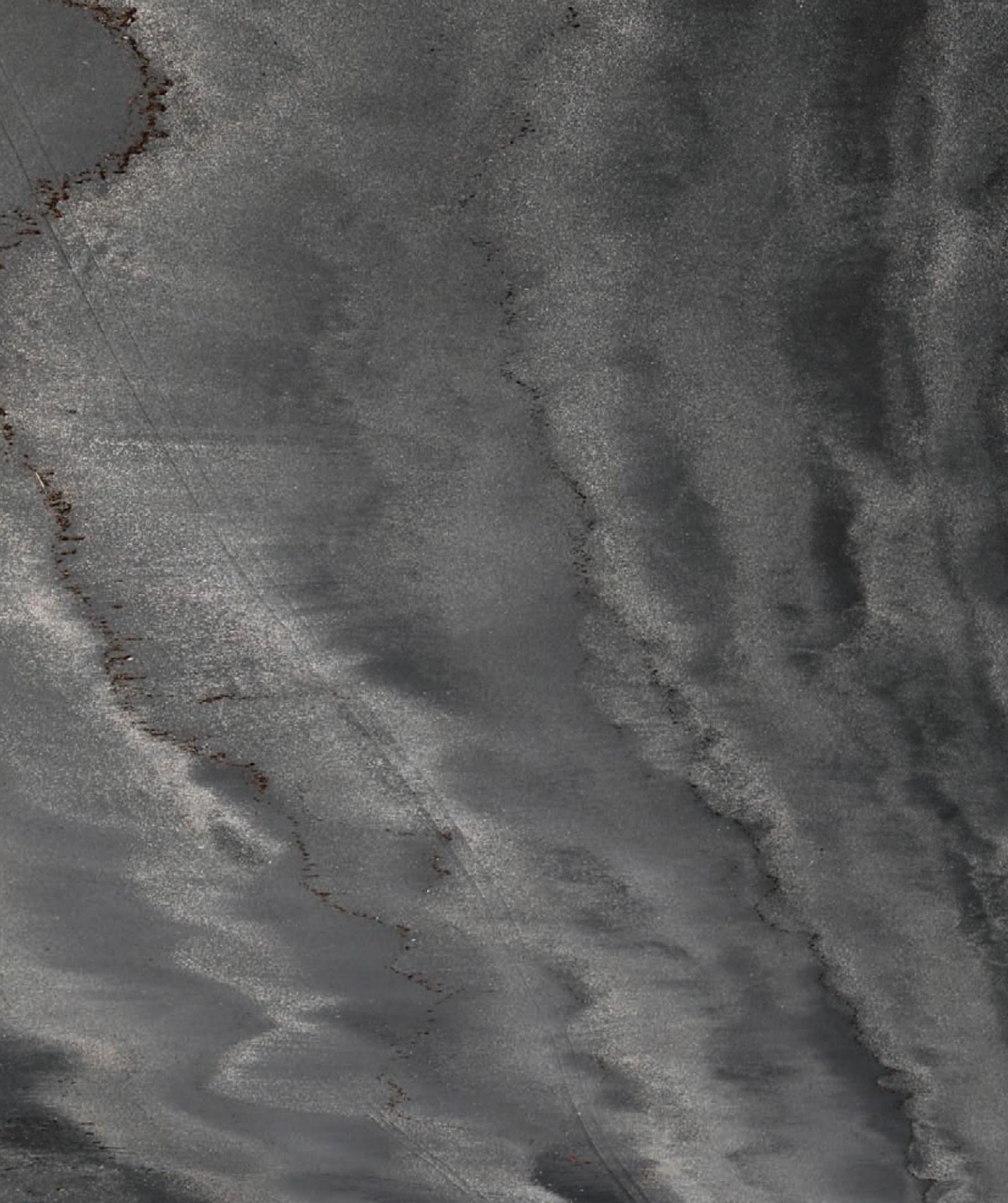


Marking
25 years
of building
collaboration
and trust



Icelandic
Presidency
2016-2017







ICELAND

Area:

103,000 km²

Capital:

Reykjavík

Population:

334,252 (2016) World Bank

4

Equality

In 1980 Iceland became the first country in the world to democratically and directly elect a female president – Madame Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. President Finnbogadóttir served until 1996.

Iceland takes the top spot for the eighth consecutive year in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index, closing more than 87% of its overall gender gap. It remains the top performer on Political Empowerment and in the top ten in Economic Participation and Opportunity on the back of solid improvements in the number of women among legislators, senior officials and managers.

Iceland was the first country in the world to adopt a law on equal pay certification for both public entities and private firms, aiming to ensure equal pay for work of equal value. The legislation was passed in Alþingi on 1 June 2017 and will come into effect on 1 January 2018. It will be implemented in stages so that by the end of 2021 all companies with 25 employees or more will have to have their equal pay systems certified by an independent auditor.

Iceland has developed a Barbershop Toolbox to enable others to mobilise men and their peers in the fight for gender equality. The Toolbox is part of Iceland's commitments to the United Nations HeForShe movement and can be accessed on the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.

Democracy

Iceland is generally held to have the oldest Parliament, starting in 930.

47.6% of the members in the Icelandic Parliament are women.

Iceland ranks number one in the Global Peace Index, which is the product of the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Index ranks Iceland 9.5 out of 10 as a full democracy, second only to Norway.

Iceland ranks top ten in the 2017 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders for freedom of information.

Children

According to the End of Childhood Index from 2017, Iceland is among the top ten countries in the world where childhood is least threatened.

Iceland ranks number three in the latest Mothers Index from 2015. The Index is part of the Save the Children State of the World's Mothers Report (SOWM report).

The first Barnahus was established in Iceland in 1998, with the Children's Advocacy Centres in the United States as an important source of inspiration. The Barnahus Model in Iceland however went one step further and advocated for the services to be an integral part of the child welfare and justice systems, which are publicly funded. In June 2017, in the framework of the PROMISE project and with the help of the CBSS Icelandic Presidency, the European Barnahus Movement was launched.

CHILDREN,
EQUALITY
& DEMOCRACY



A wide-angle photograph of a vast landscape covered in bright green moss. The moss grows in thick, rounded mounds over dark, jagged volcanic rocks. The terrain stretches out to a flat horizon under a sky with soft, grey clouds. The overall mood is serene and natural.

ICELAND

2016-2017



Foreword of the Icelandic Chair

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The demographics in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) are changing in various ways, and discussing the opportunities and challenges related to this is of utmost importance. Although the Council of the Baltic Sea States has achieved significant progress and growth in the last 25 years, the Baltic Sea Region still faces challenges that need to be addressed on a regional level, such as climate change, sustainability, migration and human trafficking. To further promote multilateral and intergovernmental cooperation, the Icelandic Presidency emphasised increased cooperation between the different task forces and working groups of the CBSS, by facilitating joint meetings throughout the year.

The cross-cutting priorities of the Icelandic Presidency “Democracy, Equality and Children”, have embraced the different projects implemented through the year, and underlined the importance of a free, fair and open Baltic Sea Region.

During the Icelandic Presidency, the CBSS has increased and strengthened cooperation with the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Forum (BSPC). By intensifying this cooperation and re-establishing a high-level political dialogue, the Icelandic Presidency sought to also empower an open democratic dialogue within the Baltic Sea Region.

On 20 June 2017, Iceland organised a meeting of the Foreign Ministers and a high representative of the EU, at the invitation of H.E. Guðlaugur Þór

Þórðarsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland. We consider the meeting to be a success and hope that the Reykjavík Ministerial 2017 was the first step towards outspoken and honest dialogues on a political level, which can contribute to increased regional and international cooperation. As mentioned by H.E. Sigmar Gabriel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, it is good to remind ourselves of the reasons for the establishment of the CBSS and to revitalise what he calls the “Spirit of Reykjavík”. The Reykjavík Declaration, adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the CBSS Member States and the high representative of the EU, symbolises that the Member States are invested in the Baltic Sea Region and share the sense of responsibility to work towards the goals of the Agenda 2030 within the adopted Action Plan and to fight the common challenges that the region is facing.

We express our best wishes for a successful year to the incoming Swedish Chair, and hope that our Swedish neighbours will continue the work of bringing the dialogue within the organisation to a political level. Our work must continue to develop and adapt to emerging challenges within the frame of the three long-term priorities of the CBSS; Sustainable & Prosperous Region, Safe & Secure Region and further strengthening Regional Identity.

Ambassador *Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson*
Icelandic Chair of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials

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REYKJAVÍK
MINISTERIAL

Delegates

Anders Samuelsen

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark

Sven Mikser

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia

Anne Sipiläinen

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy of Finland

Sigmar Gabriel

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany

Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland

Edgars Rinkēvičs

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia

Neris Germanas

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

Børge Brende

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway

Witold Waszczykowski

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland

Vladimir Titov

First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia

Margot Wallström

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

Helga Schmid

Secretary General of the European External Action Service

Maira Mora

Director General of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat





REYKJAVÍK
MINISTERIAL
2017



OF THE
A STATES

REYKJAVÍK
MINISTERIAL
2017

COUNCIL OF THE
BALTIC SEA STATES

REYKJAVÍK
MINISTERIAL
2017





20 Reykjavík Ministerial

The Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives of the CBSS Member States and a high representative of the European Union met at the Harpa Concert Hall in Reykjavík on 20 June 2017 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

The Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives adopted the Reykjavík Declaration, which included an agreement to appoint an independent group of wise women and men, including representatives from civil society. The task of the independent group will be to elaborate a report with recommendations for a vision for the Baltic Sea Region beyond 2020.

The Reykjavík Declaration also endorsed “Realizing the Vision: The Baltic 2030 Action Plan” which provides a strategic framework for future collaboration between the Baltic Sea Region countries and presents a new, common vision for sustainable development for the region.



ICELANDIC PRESIDENCY HIGHLIGHTS

1:
A Future Outlook on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

2:
High Level Conference to mark 25 years
of Nordic-Baltic Cooperation

3:
Barbershop on “Mobilising Men and Boys for Gender Equality”

4:
Labour Ministers Meeting





24 **A Future Outlook on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region**

The symposium “A Future Outlook on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region” was held at the Harpa Concert Hall, on 6 March 2017 - a date that honours the 25th Anniversary of the meeting held in Copenhagen at the invitation of the then Danish and German Foreign Ministers to bring together their peers, and form the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). In his speech, Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarsson reminded those present of the importance of exchanging views, especially in times of instability and uncertainty, and discussed common values within the Baltic Sea Region. Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark strongly reiterated the importance of open political dialogue in his keynote speech. The panel discussions focused on the potential future of the Baltic Sea Region, its development and the strengths of current cooperation.





26 **High Level Conference to mark 25 years of Nordic-Baltic Cooperation**

To mark 25 years of Nordic Baltic cooperation the President of Iceland, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson gave a keynote speech noting Iceland's recognition of the re-independence of the Baltic States. The event took place at the Nordic House in Reykjavík on 26 September 2016, where a panel of the Foreign Ministers was presided over by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, Lilja Alfreðsdóttir. The Foreign Ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania gave points on the potential way forward for Nordic-Baltic Cooperation.

The participation of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), and the Institute of International Affairs at the University of Iceland (IIA) brought added value to the dialogue.





28 Barbershop on “Mobilising Men and Boys for Gender Equality”

The Icelandic Presidency of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) hosted the Barbershop Conference “Mobilising Men and Boys for Gender Equality in the Baltic Sea Region” on 23 May 2017 at the Nordic House in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Focusing on how gender inequality and human trafficking are linked and intertwined, the conference was opened by Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland and started off with a panel discussion focusing on potential gendered aspects of violence. The panel discussions highlighted also the main gender specific causes of trafficking for sexual exploitation and tried to answer the question of how men can be empowered to reflect critically on exploitative behaviour and to communicate about their bodies and their sexuality in order to prevent trafficking for sexual exploitation.



Labour Ministers Meeting

29

High Level Representatives of the Labour Ministries of the CBSS Member States met on 15 June 2017 in Berlin, Germany under the auspices of the Icelandic Presidency of the CBSS, at the venue of the City of Hamburg Representation. The meeting was opened by Þorsteinn Víglundsson, Minister of Social Affairs and Equality of Iceland and was held in conjunction with the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF) Annual Round Table. As grounds for discussion, the Policy Recommendations' paper on issues related to the labour market, based on proposals from BSLF Members, was delivered to the ministries in advance.

The Round Table addressed the topics defined as areas of common concern for the countries in the Baltic Sea Region in the field of labour and employment.

In the field of labour and employment, the representatives defined the key areas as follows: labour mobility; demographic challenges; knowledge supply; youth employment; migration/integration and involvement into the labour market of groups of vulnerable people, including persons with disabilities.



ICELANDIC PRESIDENCY OUTCOMES

1:

Reykjavík Ministerial Declaration

2:

Realizing the Vision: Baltic 2030 Action Plan

3:

Ministers of Labour Declaration

4:

Joint Position on Enhancing Cooperation in the Civil Protection Area

5:

The Stockholm Conclusions; Promoting Good Practices in Protecting Migrant and Asylum Seeking Children, Especially Unaccompanied Children, and Finding Solutions for the Children, Families, Societies and States

6:

European Barnahus Quality Standards - Guidance for Multi-disciplinary and Interagency Response to Child Victims and Witnesses of Violence

7:

Balticlab Innovation Manifesto

8:

Five PSF projects awarded funding under the Icelandic Presidency

MAIN EVENTS

- 1:
Baltic Sea Region NGO Forum
- 2:
Permanent Secretary of State of the Icelandic MFA
at the 7th EUSBSR Annual Forum
- 3:
Ten years of CBSS counter trafficking work
- 4:
Meeting of the Directors General for Civil Protection
- 5:
Supporting the European Barnahus Movement
- 6:
Balticlab reunion
- 7:
Soft Security and Migration in focus
- 8:
Youth Dialogue at the Nordic Embassies Complex
- 9:
Initiative to Protect Unaccompanied Children





34 **Baltic Sea Region NGO Forum**

The 15th Baltic Sea NGO Network Forum took place on 18-20 May 2017 in honour of Madame Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, Iceland's fourth president and the world's first democratically, directly elected female president. Þorsteinn Víglundsson, Minister of Social Affairs and Equality of Iceland; Unnur Brá Konráðsdóttir, President of Alþingi; Kjartan Kjartansson, Major of Reykjanes Municipality and Bogi Ágústsson, President of the Nordic Association gave inspiring speeches related to the CBSS Icelandic Presidency priorities - children, equality and democracy.

The NGO Forum took place at the Duus Museum, Art and Cultural Centre of Reykjanesbær where the CBSS CSO Chair, Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson and the CBSS Deputy Director General, Bernd Hemingway highlighted the importance of children's rights, equal opportunity for all citizens and the great need to form a dialogue on the importance of upholding democratic values.

Permanent Secretary of State of the Icelandic MFA at the 7th EUSBSR Annual Forum

Stefán Haukur Jóhannesson, Permanent Secretary of State of the MFA of Iceland, discussed together with the other panellists how to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region and outlined the Icelandic position. The panellists also brought into focus how the EU can facilitate the 2030 Agenda implementation through EU macro-regional strategies and cooperation. The outcomes of the session are to be introduced to the European Commission to support their ongoing efforts for establishing a framework for an EU-wide uptake and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The session was organised by the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development - Baltic 2030 in cooperation with the CBSS Icelandic Presidency and the Prime Minister's Office of Sweden.



Ten years of CBSS counter trafficking work

35

On 24 October 2016, the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) marked its 10th anniversary with a reception and a commissioned performance at Tjarnarbió in Reykjavík. The event was organised by the CBSS Secretariat and the Icelandic Ministry of Interior, in the framework of the CBSS Icelandic Presidency, honouring ten years of CBSS work against human trafficking. Ragnhildur Hjaltadóttir, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior of Iceland gave opening remarks in which she emphasised the fact that every year women, men and children are trafficked to, through or from the Baltic Sea Region for the purpose of exploitation. The event was moderated by Hildur Dungal, Icelandic Chair of the CBSS TF-THB, where she introduced her colleagues Jan Austad, Norwegian delegate to the CBSS TF-THB, and Reda Sirgediene, Lithuanian delegate to the CBSS TF-THB, who presented an overview of ten highlights of the TF-THB work throughout the years.

The highlight of the anniversary event was the special performance “Try Human- An Attempt to be Human” by the Swedish choreographer Disa Krosness together with the dancers Emelie Wahlman and Moa Autio. As described by the choreographer “in a world of explained and intellectualised experiences, Try Human longs for emotions and a non-verbal bond between humans – from inside and out.”



36 Meeting of the Directors General for Civil Protection

The Directors General for the Civil Protection in the Baltic Sea Region held their 15th meeting in Keflavík, Iceland, on 11 May 2017. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a Joint Position on Enhancing Cooperation in Civil Protection Area, which encourages all expert networks, working in the field of civil protection, to increase cooperation within the following **priority areas**: building a common societal security culture; combining national efforts in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; strengthening cross-sectorial cooperation in Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (Explosive) (CBRN(E)) preparedness; increasing involvement of local authorities and civil society organisations; seeking more funds for macro-regional civil security cooperation from a broad range of EU programmes; initiating projects as platforms for innovation and cooperation; utilising research and project results effectively through better coordination and developing demand-driven and well-tailored training and education.



Supporting the European Barnahus Movement

37

The final conference of the PROMISE project took place on 14 June 2017 at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, Belgium. It focused on advocating for child-friendly, multi-disciplinary and interagency services supporting child victims of violence.

Several high-level speakers gave their support to the European Barnahus Movement, including Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, and Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children. Bragi Guðbrandsson, lead expert in the PROMISE project, presented the Icelandic experience and how it has inspired the European Barnahus Movement. The expert panels discussed multi-disciplinary and interagency responses to violence against children in Europe and how the Barnahus Model embodies children's rights. In this context, the European Barnahus Quality Standards document was launched.



38 **Balticlab reunion**

The year 2016 finished with a Balticlab Surprise Weekend in Stockholm: on 16-18 December 2016, 130 members of the Balticlab alumni network gathered in the Nordic capital for a reunion weekend of workshops, discussions on the notions of future, community and truth, as well as a chance to get to know the other participants across the four programme years. Following the Balticlab Surprise Weekend came the launch of the Balticlab Gold Book & Manifesto - a guide to the ethos and people behind the programme. Published in February 2017, the book includes the Balticlab Manifesto for innovation, generated by its community, as well as an overview of the members of the Balticlab network. The network connects more than 300 talents from eleven countries, all of whom are drivers in their respective communities and fields. Together they represent what we want to see our region as – creative, innovative, talented and open.



Soft Security and Migration in focus

39

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, in close cooperation with the Icelandic Presidency of the CBSS, organised a conference on Soft Security and Migration on 30-31 May 2017 in Helsinki. The three main topics of discussion were:

- Irregular migration in a soft security perspective – new migration management challenges.
- The impact of migration on host societies and the challenge of early integration – lessons learned at the national and local level.
- Safeguarding the rights of migrants – reducing the risk of exploitation and trafficking.

Based on the results of the debates, Anders Lisborg (Denmark), Magdalena Lcsińska (Poland), Bjarney Friðriksdóttir (Iceland) are to elaborate a final report to present best practices in migration policy, as well as recommendations for future migration management and integration policies in the Baltic Sea Region.



40 Youth Dialogue at the Nordic Embassies Complex

A seminar about the project Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue took place on 28 March 2017 at the Nordic Embassies in Berlin. The project consisted of three parts: the Solidarity Academy-Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue 2016, a concert of the Baltic Sea Philharmonic in Gdansk and a training for alumni of the Bridge it! project. Representatives from the European Solidarity Centre and the CBSS Secretariat discussed the benefits and challenges of different youth projects, where Ambassador Maira Mora, Director General of the CBSS Secretariat and Auður Edda Jökulsdóttir, Deputy Head of Mission at the Icelandic Embassy in Berlin emphasised that an investment in young people is always an investment in the future of every country and region.



Initiative to Protect Unaccompanied Children

The Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Central European Initiative (CEI) hosted 60 representatives from UN-agencies, international & local organisations, and 27 Northern, Central and South-East European countries on 8-9 December 2016 at the CBSS Secretariat. Together they shared good practices in protecting unaccompanied children in migration with the aim of finding solutions for unaccompanied children, their families, and the societies and states they interact with. At the meeting, the Stockholm Conclusions Promoting the Human Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Transnational Child Protection Cases were agreed upon.

PUBLICATIONS



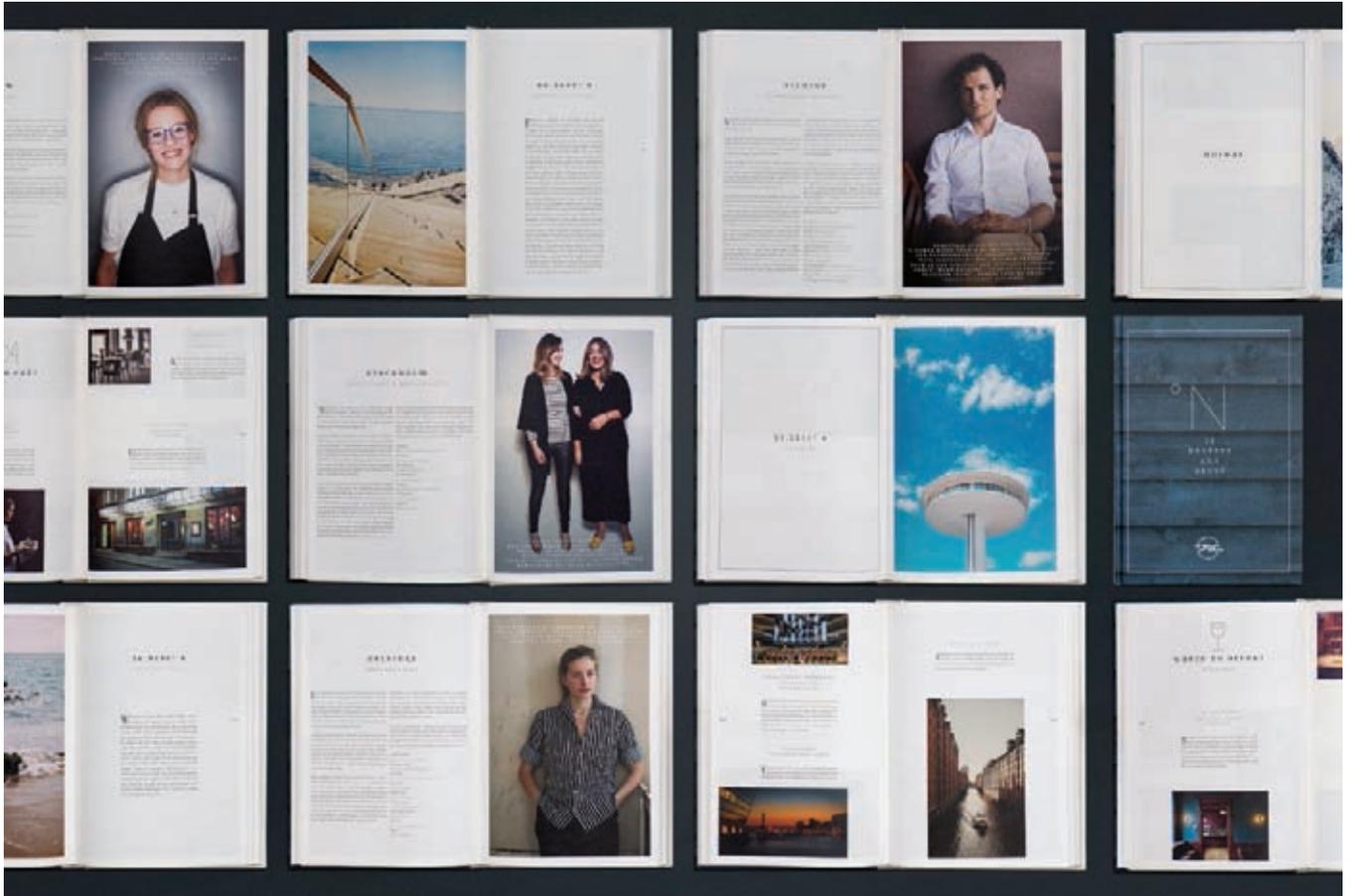
° N “52 degrees and above” – a new travel guide

“The water connects us, but culture unites us.”

To mark its 25th anniversary, the Council of the Baltic Sea States has published a contemporary travel guide to its eleven Member States. In the light of the 25 years since the Council was established, the Baltic Sea Region has grown and shifted. The region has changed, yet stayed the same. It has become closer and farther apart - much like the waves that roll up on the shores of the sea we share. So, on our 25th anniversary instead of looking backwards, we look to the future.

The Baltic Sea Region is a special place where all capitals are located above 52° north. The region spans from Reykjavík to Moscow, from the coastline to the mountain ranges. There is a sense and appreciation that comes from living in a place that enjoys short but light summers, tempered by long and dark winters. In this guide, we make the journey from 52 degrees to 65 degrees up north, taking you through all our capitals, introducing you to some of the locals, who call this corner of the earth home, and hear what they have to say about their hometowns.

The book collects a number of choices that capture at this very point in time what represents the potential of the region – to present the region as a whole, in a travel guide that has not grouped these countries together before. Each chapter offers suggestions to stay on any budget, where to grab a coffee during your time in one of the towns or cities, what to see if you have some spare moments and where to dine if you want to experience the culinary delights of our region, as well as join the locals for a drink afterhours. The countries included in the book are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden.

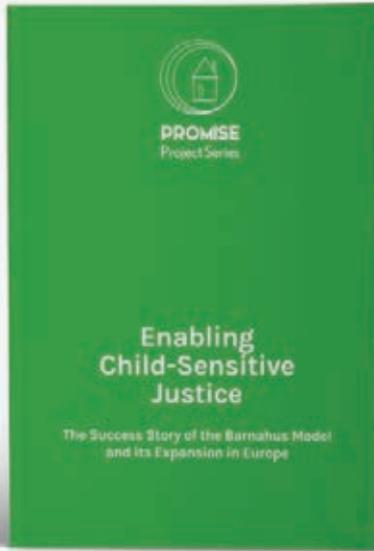




48 **Balticlab Gold Book & Manifesto**

The Balticlab Gold Book is a guide to the ethos and people behind the Balticlab innovation programme for creatives and entrepreneurs in the Baltic Sea Region. With eleven countries and 300 participants from all walks of life, the programme represents a region of diversity, openness and innovation. The book features the Balticlab community Manifesto, as well as an overview of the members of the Balticlab network. This book is for anyone with a wish to find new collaborations and contacts across the creative and start-up scene in the Baltic Sea Region.





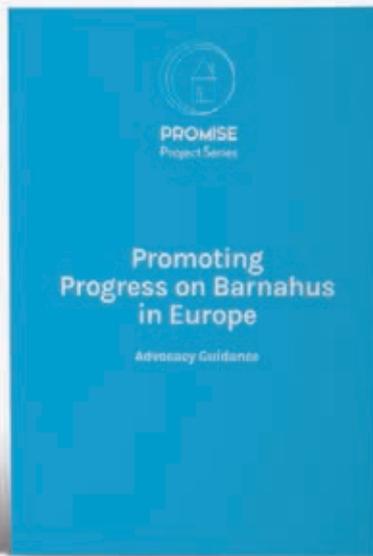
Promise Project Series

Enabling Child-Sensitive Justice – The Success Story of the Barnahus Model and its Expansion in Europe

This report provides an overview of how the Barnahus Model has emerged and gradually expanded in Europe. It documents how government officials, practitioners, advocates and entrepreneurs have promoted the model, unyielding even when confronted with doubts, obstacles and adversities. The report identifies the factors and dynamics that have enabled the establishment of the Barnahus Model and lessons learned. The accounts from Barnahus pioneers and leading agents of change offer reflections and observations that can guide the establishment of the Barnahus Model in other countries.

PROMISE Compendium of Law and Guidance – European and International

This publication provides a comprehensive view of the legal framework and authoritative guidance concerning the rights of child victims and witnesses across the EU, the Council of Europe and the United Nations (UN).



Promoting Progress on Barnahus in Europe – Advocacy Guidance

This Advocacy Guidance aims to help to develop national and regional advocacy strategies to promote progress on the Barnahus Model. Such advocacy can play a vital role in encouraging improvements to responses concerning child victims and witnesses of violence. Once policymakers, professionals and the public have heard and understood how the Barnahus can fulfil the rights of these children, support for the Barnahus Model has consistently grown.

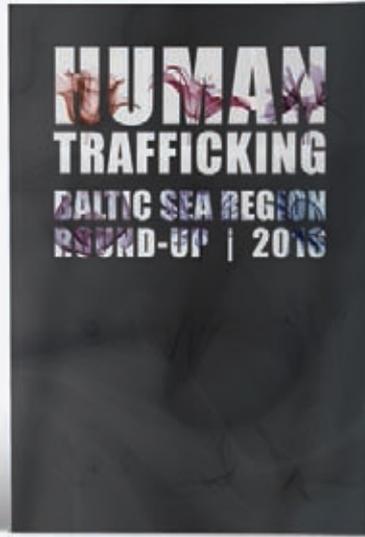
European Barnahus Quality Standards – Guidance for Multidisciplinary and Interagency Response to Child Victims and Witnesses of Violence

The European Barnahus Standards are the first attempt in Europe to define the principles of the interventions and services referred to as the Barnahus Model.

The key purpose of the Standards is to provide a common operational and organisational framework that promotes practices which prevents re-traumatisation, while securing valid testimonies for court, and complies with children’s rights to protection, assistance and child-friendly justice.

PROMISE Tracking Tool

The Tracking Tool helps to track progress against the European Barnahus Quality Standards, which provide a good practice framework for multidisciplinary and interagency services that want to bring their practice in line with the Barnahus Model. The aim of the Tracking Tool is to provide services for child victims and witnesses of violence with a self-evaluation tool that can help determine their position. This assists agencies in the process of providing multidisciplinary and interagency service consistent with the Barnahus Model.



52 **Human Trafficking Round-up Report 2016**

The Round-up Report provides an easily accessible macro-regional snapshot, which outlines the directions of counter-trafficking work in the Baltic Sea Region. The report covers the time period 2013–2016 and contains chapters on each CBSS Member State.

The country profiles give a brief overview of the current situation in the area of trafficking in human beings, national legal and institutional frameworks and recent changes in the legislation. Each country profile also contains a summary highlighting the national coordination mechanism, main stakeholders and their mandates, as well as best practices and statistical data for 2013–2015.

The report summarises the initiatives of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings, and includes a separate piece on the current trends in human trafficking, as well as a collection of views expressed by different national and international trafficking experts on the future challenges and topical issues.



The Baltic Sea Region methodology for risk and capability assessments, a first approach



Possible future opportunities for risk and capability assessments in the Baltic Sea Region



From Gaps to Caps

This three-part report gives an overview of relevant aspects of existing civil protection capability assessment approaches in the EU and the Baltic Sea Region (5 Nordic countries, 3 Baltic countries, Poland and Germany), describes differences and similarities, and identifies main challenges and opportunities for improvement with a special focus on cross-border dimensions (of both risks and capabilities). The main publication “National Capability and Risk Assessments and related challenges in the Baltic Sea Region” is supplemented by the Baltic Sea Region Methodology for Risk and Capability Assessment and a paper on possible future opportunities for risk and capability assessment in the Baltic Sea Region.

COMMITTEE
OF SENIOR
OFFICIALS

The Committee of Senior Official (CSO) is the governing body of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and decides upon the direction of the organisation between the Ministerial Sessions. The CBSS Ministerials give political guidance to support the implementation and agenda which is carried out under the leadership of the committee.





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2017



58 **Composition of the Icelandic CBSS Presidency Team**

Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson,
Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials

Ragnar Þorvarðarson,
*Icelandic CSO Member
and Coordinator for the Icelandic CBSS Presidency 2016-2017*

Jóna Dögg Þórðardóttir,
*Coordination Assistant for the Icelandic CBSS Presidency
(Seconded to the CBSS Secretariat)*

María Mjöll Jónsdóttir,
Director, UN Affairs and Gender Equality

Hanne Fisker,
Secretary for Nordic Cooperation

Urður Gunnarsdóttir,
Press Officer

Purý Björk Björgvinsdóttir,
Specialist, Public Relations



Committee of Senior Officials

During the Icelandic Presidency, the CSO Members were the following:

Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson, Chair and CSO Member
Iceland

Kim Vinthen, MFA of Denmark – CSO Member
Denmark

Raul Mälik, MFA of Estonia – CSO Member
Estonia

Kristina Pingoud, MFA of Finland – CSO Member
Finland

Michael Däumer, FFO of Germany – CSO Member
Germany

Ragnar Þorvarðarson, MFA of Iceland – CSO Member
Iceland

Vita Zivtīņa, MFA of Latvia – CSO Member
Latvia

Kornelija Jurgaitienė, MFA of Lithuania – CSO Member
Lithuania

Per Kjell Mannes, MFA of Norway – CSO Member
Norway

Michał Czyż, MFA of Poland – CSO Member and
Grzegorz Szopiński – CSO Member-substitute
Poland

Sergey Petrovich, MFA of Russia – CSO Member
Russia

Hans Olsson, MFA of Sweden – CSO Member
Sweden

Kim Kuivalainen, EEAS – CSO Member
European Union

Other CBSS Member representatives attending the meetings during the year:

Anna Lyberg, Deputy Director at the Department for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, MFA Sweden.

Boris Iarochvitch, Head of Division Eastern Partnership, Regional Cooperation and OSCE, European External Action Service (EEAS).

Juris Bone, Ambassador at Large on Regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

Kamila Wojsznis, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland.

Tarvo Kungla, Head of Political, Press and Information section, Delegation of the European Union to Iceland.

Timofey Kunitskiy, Second European Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE ICELANDIC PRESIDENCY

60 **A briefing on the priorities of the Icelandic CBSS Presidency**

The Icelandic Presidency held a reception for Stockholm-based Ambassadors of the CBSS Member States and Observer States on 26 August 2016 at the Residency of Iceland's Ambassador to Sweden, Estrid Brekkan. The CBSS CSO Chair, Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson briefed on the priorities of the Icelandic CBSS Presidency and Jacek Śladewski, Deputy Head of Mission at the Polish Embassy, informed the participants about the highlights of the previous Polish CBSS Presidency.

CBSS Observer States

On 29 November 2016, the CSO Annual Consultations with the CBSS Observers States took place at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden, to brief the Observers on the priorities and activities of the Icelandic Presidency, as well as on the ongoing and planned projects run by the CBSS. After the meeting, the CSO and the Observer States representatives adopted conclusions stating the need to strengthen relations between the CBSS and their Observer States, especially in areas of mutual interest, such as migration, soft security including border management and the fight against trafficking in human beings, energy cooperation, and environmental issues.

Meeting of the Four Regional Councils of the North

The meeting of the Four Regional Councils of the North took place on 28 November 2016 at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden. The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson with the participation of representatives from the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The importance of identifying synergies in each of the four Councils was emphasised and the commitment to information exchange in the field of sustainable development and science and research was assured.



Extended Meeting of the CBSS Expert Group on Maritime Policy

On 14 March 2017, the CBSS Expert Group on Maritime Policy (EGMP) gathered for an extended meeting in Reykjavík, Iceland. The meeting entitled “Maritime Policy: Sharing knowledge” brought together about 20 participants from different spheres connected to maritime economy. The open discussion, exchange of opinions and best practices have been facilitated during the meeting which concerned a range of topics defined by the EGMP’s members as relevant and of common interest, namely – maritime education and training; maritime & coastal tourism; energy efficiency, green shipping and renewable fuels for marine applications; innovation and autonomous ship technology.

CBSS Presidency Handover to Sweden

On 20 June 2017, Iceland handed over the CBSS Presidency to Sweden during the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the CBSS Member States, marking the 25th anniversary of the CBSS. The meeting was held at the invitation of Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland at the Harpa Concert Hall in Reykjavík, Iceland. Margot Wallström, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden formally took over the CBSS Presidency on behalf of Sweden and introduced the priorities of the Swedish Presidency; Sustainability, Continuity and Adaptability.





REGIONAL IDENTITY

Regional Identity aims to develop and foster the concept of Baltic Sea Region identity and a sense of belonging to the Baltic Sea Region through engagement, dialogue, and people-to-people contacts.





70 **Balticlab**

On 7-12 September 2016 Balticlab concluded its 4th programme year. After having met in Stockholm, formed groups in Vilnius, Lithuania, and worked closely together in Kiev, Ukraine, the 40 Balticlab 4.0 participants finalised their projects and presented them at an open lecture at the Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture and Design in Moscow, Russia. The participants of the programme year came from Belarus, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, Russia, Ukraine and – for the first time – participants from Germany joined the programme thanks to a new collaboration with the Goethe Institute.

Balticlab also organised a public event as a part of the Strelka Institute Summer Programme: a lecture on “Creative industries for regions” on 8 September 2016 which introduced the Balticlab programme and the work of the Swedish architects Andreas Martin-Löf and Fanny Stenberg, followed by a discussion on how our living environments affect our creativity and way of living.

The Balticlab Gold Book & Manifesto - a guide to the ethos and people behind the programme was launched following the Balticlab Surprise Weekend. As a part of the launch of the Balticlab Gold Book, several local meet-ups were organised, such as a Balticlab alumni event held in parallel to the Tallinn Music Week in March 2017 and a Balticlab book launch and alumni meet-up in Riga, Latvia, in April 2017. As an extension of

the programme, the Balticlab project group “Home” also organised a workshop together with School of Life, as well as an exhibition around the “notions of feeling at home”, in Berlin, Germany, in April 2017.

Balticlab is an innovation programme for creatives and entrepreneurs, run in partnership by the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Swedish Institute since 2012. For more information check out the website www.balticlab-online.eu.





72 **Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue 2016**

In 2016, the Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue consisted of three parts: the “Solidarity Academy - Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue”, a Baltic Sea Philharmonic Orchestra concert in Gdańsk, Poland, and the “Bridge-It!” alumni training in St Petersburg, Russia.

Solidarity Academy: Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue 2016

From 13–20 November 2016, 16 young aspiring journalists from the Baltic Sea Region and beyond met in Gdańsk, Poland, at the European Solidarity Centre for the “Solidarity Academy - Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue 2016”. The project was organised by the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat in cooperation with the European Solidarity Centre and consisted of a week-long programme of lectures and workshops in Gdańsk and Kaliningrad. The articles written during the project were published in “Meanwhile in the Baltics...”, a little anthology in which the participants have taken on topics related to the different facets of the Baltic Sea Region and its diverse social, cultural and political makeup.



Baltic Sea Philharmonic Orchestra concert in Gdansk

The Baltic Sea Philharmonic Orchestra concert on 18 September 2016 in Gdańsk was hosted by the European Solidarity Centre at the initiative of the German Consul-General in Gdańsk, Poland, highlighting the role of music in promoting solidarity and cross-border cooperation in Europe.

Bridge it! Alumni training

“Bridge It!” is an empowerment programme for young people from Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and North-West Russia. It is based on non-formal educational methods, encouraging the participants to develop critical thinking, diversity awareness and giving them impulses for civic involvement and a space for trying out initiatives. To further support this programme, the CBSS and the NGO Orbita organised an alumni qualification training for the Bridge it! programme participants on 4-8 January 2017 in St. Petersburg, Russia.

SUSTAINABLE
AND
PROSPEROUS
REGION

The Baltic Sea Region is already now a model region for sustainable development and a forerunner in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals - but the transition towards a competitive and green economy is still an ongoing process. This includes also the research and science area: the CBSS engages in boosting the research and innovation excellence, not only to promote green technologies and innovation, but to improve the overall competitiveness and prosperity of the Baltic Sea Region.

Expert Group on Sustainable Development- Baltic 2030

Expert Group on Maritime Policy

Science Research Innovation Agenda



30

EXPERT GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - BALTIC 2030



78 On 25 September 2015, 193 UN Members adopted a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda: the 2030 Agenda.

The Icelandic Presidency coincided with an important milestone in the history of cooperation on sustainable development in Baltic Sea Region (BSR): the 20th Anniversary of the Baltic 21 process and its main driving force – the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD). This pioneering process was initiated as a multi-stakeholder network, including the national governments and the European Commission, regional, sub-regional and intergovernmental organisations, financial and academic institutions, as well as NGOs and other relevant stakeholders. The BSR was the first region in the world to adopt common regional goals aiming towards sustainable development. Today, the CBSS Baltic 2030 Unit continues the work started within Baltic 21, and activates the implementation process of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a macro-region level.

During the Icelandic Presidency, the EGSD welcomed a new member – Norden Association, which expressed its strong intentions to contribute to the 2030 Agenda in the BSR.

Recognising that the 2030 Agenda can only be achieved through the common and cooperative efforts of all countries, sectors, and stakeholders, the high representatives of the Council of the Baltic Sea States government institutions called in June 2016 upon the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development to elaborate an Action Plan, specifically tailored for the BSR, to guide macro-regional stakeholders through the implementation of the SDGs.

According to the Declaration “Baltic 2030: Renewing the Commitment to Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region”- while addressing all the SDGs and providing a general vision for the region - the Baltic 2030 Action Plan was conceived to identify the most relevant areas for macro-regional cooperation. In particular, the Action Plan was expected to focus on the processes that would support governance collaboration, voluntary sharing of the results of national-level reporting, and on areas where transnational cooperation proves to be of evident added value.

The drafting of the Baltic 2030 Action Plan was conducted in a holistic and inclusive way, drawing on the extensive knowledge of the Expert Group members and of international experts, as well as on the collective input from the key stakeholders in the BSR countries. The Expert Group members met twice during the Icelandic Presidency to discuss the common vision for a sustainable Baltic Sea Region.

The 15th meeting and 16th meeting of the CBSS EGSD were chaired by Danfríður Skarphéðinsdóttir, Head of Division at the Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources. The 15th meeting of the EGSD was held on 7 November 2016 in Stockholm, and included an interactive and open brainstorming workshop, during which the participants agreed upon the key elements, the format and timeframe for elaborating the Baltic 2030 Action Plan for the SDGs implementation in the BSR. The 16th meeting took place in Reykjavík, where the main emphasises lied on the finalisation of the Baltic 2030 Action Plan and the information exchange regarding the Member States’ efforts in SDGs/2030 Agenda implementation.



Supporting Competence and Capacity-building

Towards Baltic 2030 – From Talk to Work

During the project “Towards Baltic 2030 – From Talk to Work”, funded by the Swedish Institute and ran by the CBSS Secretariat, workshops were organised in Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Russia and Ukraine together with the project partners and EGSD members. Government representatives, NGOs, International Organisations and researchers from Riga, St. Petersburg, Tallinn and Warsaw have collectively answered the following questions: What are our common challenges for implementing the 2030 Agenda in the Baltic Sea Region? What institutional capacities should be built to address the SDGs in each country? How should we formulate a national SDG implementation strategy?

The summary of these workshops was presented to embassy representatives, academia, ministries, municipalities, the private sector and NGOs at the final event on 27 April 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden and helped refine the focus areas for the Baltic 2030 Action Plan. To address one of the common topics which emerged from the discussions within the project – education and awareness raising – “From Talk to Work” facilitated the creation of a collaborative web-based open learning platform for the region. The platform will pool and share information, best practices and knowledge on sustainable development actors, tools, policies, initiatives, funding opportunities, projects and events.

Baltic 2030 Action Plan

The Baltic 2030 Action Plan, endorsed by the CBSS Foreign Ministers on 20 June 2017 in Reykjavik, Iceland, provides a common vision for sustainable development in the BSR and will be promoted to all stakeholders, institutions, sectors and citizens in the region. The Action Plan presents six focus areas and six activation processes for realising the vision for a sustainable Baltic Sea Region.

Common Vision of the Year 2030:

The Baltic Sea Region is among the first truly sustainable regions.

The Baltic Sea Region is transformed and empowered because we have worked together in partnership.

Following a transformation driven by innovation and entrepreneurship, the economies of the Baltic Sea Region follow a sustainable model that conserves resources, protects ecosystems, and provides meaningful employment for all.

The Baltic Sea Region has responded to the challenges of climate change in alignment with the Paris Agreement and has increased resilience to climate change.

Our cities, towns and communities are vital places that provide opportunities and a high quality of life for people of every age and background.

Everybody has access to excellent educational opportunities, at every phase of life.

Gender equality is respected, all types of inequalities are being addressed, and the rights of all, with special attention to the rights of children, are protected.

Baltic Leadership Programme (BLP) on the 2030 Agenda

Together with the Swedish Institute and the Horizontal Action Capacity of the EUSBSR, the Baltic 2030 Unit developed the outline for a new Baltic Leadership Programme (BLP) focusing on the 2030 Agenda, and aiming to increase capacity of national and macro-regional experts for adequately addressing SDGs. The programme will provide participants with tools, expert trainings and support, but will also help to create a trans-national network of key stakeholders in the BSR countries implementing the 2030 Agenda. The first module of the BLP is planned to start in October 2017 in Sweden.

EXPERT GROUP ON MARITIME POLICY



80 The EGMP annual meeting, for the first time since the group's establishment, took place in Iceland within in the framework of the CBSS Icelandic Presidency. The Icelandic Chairman of the Group was Ragnar Þorvarðarson.

The EGMP wants to ensure and emphasise a cross-sectorial and multi-disciplinary approach in its work. Therefore, besides the maritime and transport authorities, several representatives from academia, research circles and universities were invited to contribute to the meeting's agenda covering a wide range of topics: maritime education and training; maritime & coastal tourism, as well as questions on energy efficiency, green shipping and renewable fuels for marine applications. Another focus of the EGMP meeting was on innovation and autonomous ship technology.

The Baltic Sea Region has long-lasting and rich maritime traditions hence, the cooperation in the field of maritime policy and economy has vast potential in the region and should be further developed and supported. The CBSS EGMP can definitely play an important role in this process, providing politically coordinated support to relevant efforts, concrete initiatives, actions and projects which improve the BSR' international competitiveness in the sustainable maritime economy. The EGMP works on positioning the region as a model for maritime best practice, balanced and successful maritime economy, and on increasing the attractiveness of the BSR as a safe and secure destination, particularly in times of global unrest.

Baltic Leadership Programme (BLP) on Labour Mobility

In 2016 – 2017, the CBSS, together with the Swedish Institute as supporter and Norden Association as PA Education coordinator, has implemented a Baltic Leadership Programme (BLP) focusing on labour mobility. It consisted of three modules, the first one was held in Gdańsk in November 2016, the 2nd in Malmö at the end January and the 3rd one in June 2017 in Berlin jointly with BSLF Round Table.

The BLP on Labour Mobility forms a network of local, regional and national experts from the countries in the Baltic Sea Region representing trade unions, employer organisations, state agencies and cross-border services. During the three modules, the participants elaborated on the relevance of transnational cooperation in the field of labour mobility and drafted policy recommendations on how labour mobility can be supported. Moreover, identifying and removing hindrances in labour mobility as well as answering the question of how the return of needed labour force can be supported, so called “brain circulation”, were in focus at the BLP.

The final recommendations formulated by the BLP participants then became a part of the Policy Recommendations Paper on Labour and Employment Issues which was delivered to the Labour Ministries of the CBSS countries before the Ministerial Meeting in June 2017 in Berlin.

SCIENCE RESEARCH INNOVATION AGENDA

The Icelandic Presidency took the lead of the CBSS Science, Research and Innovation Agenda right after the first CBSS Science Ministerial in June 2016. Therefore, the Icelandic Chairmanship built on the political guidance ensured by the previous CBSS Polish Presidency, furthering the commitment of the CBSS Member States to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals on the basis of scientific and research advancement.

On 29 November 2016, best practices for research advancement and closer cooperation between science and business in the framework of the projects ‘Baltic Science Network’ and ‘Baltic TRAM’ were presented during the meeting of the Four Councils of the North hosted by the CBSS Secretariat. The inter-council consultations on science and research paved the way for further work towards the preparation of the CBSS report on innovation and smart specialisation governance in the Baltic Sea Region.

Baltic Sea Science Day

The first Baltic Sea Science Day, dedicated to the advancement of the CBSS Science, Research and Innovation Agenda, took place on 8 February 2017 in St Petersburg co-hosted by the CBSS Secretariat, the Council of the Rectors of St. Petersburg and the Russian Academy of Science. It gathered not only the institutions involved in the implementation of its two cornerstone projects – Baltic Science Network and Baltic TRAM – but

also other key players engaged in the Baltic Sea Region-wide research and innovation facilitation, such as the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission and the Swedish Institute.

The first Baltic Sea Science Day also served as a timely occasion to note the achievements of research institutions in the Baltic Sea Region in terms of advancing gender parity in the context of the annual United Nations observance of International Day of Women and Girls in Science. This acknowledgement is enshrined in the Director General’s Statement “Celebrating the Baltic Sea Science Day Ahead of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science”.

Baltic Sea Region Forum

The 10th Baltic Sea Region Forum “Global storms and the economic development in the Baltic Sea Region”, which took place on 30 May 2017 in Turku, Finland, discussed the growing global tensions and their ramifications in the Baltic Sea Region. The expert panels addressed the topic from the viewpoints of security, free trade and foresight, for instance whereas the event itself also served to outline the outstanding engagement of the University of Turku in the implementation of the Baltic Science Network and Baltic TRAM.

SAFE AND
SECURE
REGION

The Safe & Secure priority of the CBSS addresses societal security, developing sustainable national & transnational child protection systems, counteracting all forms of trafficking in human beings and strengthening societal resilience to disasters and hazards in all stages of crises.

Expert Group on Children at Risk

Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings

Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety

Civil Protection Network

The Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation

Network of Prosecutors on Environmental Crime
in the Baltic Sea Region

Baltic Sea Task Force on Organized Crime



EXPERT GROUP ON CHILDREN AT RISK

WHAT IS BARNAHUS?

The European Barnahus Movement was launched in Brussels in June 2017 – but it already started a long time ago. The Children’s Advocacy Centres in the United States were an important source of inspiration for the first Barnahus established in Iceland in 1998. The Barnahus Model in Iceland however went one step further and advocated for the services to be an integral part of the child welfare and justice systems, which are publicly funded.

The child victims or witnesses of violence are received in a child-friendly environment in the so-called Barnahus, where relevant disciplines and agencies cooperate under one roof to safeguard the needs of the child and avoid re-traumatisation. Moreover, the recorded interview with the child victim could be used in court - without the child needing to be present. It has largely been Bragi Guðbrandsson, the Director of the Government Agency for Child Protection in Iceland, and other experts from the Nordic and other countries, who have been actively advising, guiding and inspiring other countries to establish the Barnahus model, including through the important work of the Council of Europe.

The PROMISE project has since 2015 been part of consolidating and strengthening the Barnahus Movement in Europe by exchanging learning and providing quality standards and tools. PROMISE II will be launched in November 2017 and continue into 2019. The project aims to support national level implementation, capacity building and cooperation.

86 **Placing the child in the centre**

Upholding children’s rights is the obligation of all CBSS Member States and it was a key topic for the CBSS during the Icelandic Presidency 2016-2017. Through the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk, the CBSS leads key initiatives, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which takes a holistic approach to protecting children from all forms of violence, including preventing sexual abuse and exploitation and trafficking.

The long-term objective of the Children at Risk group within the CBSS is to promote comprehensive and sustainable child protection systems that prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children through increased cooperation among relevant ministries, other stakeholders and professionals in the Baltic Sea Region. Strategic activities are identified to support effective child protection systems, innovation, cooperation, policy development, and child participation.

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk was chaired by Bragi Guðbrandsson, the Director of the Government Agency for Child Protection in Iceland. One of the main priorities this year was to support and promote the European Barnahus Movement.



Launching the European Barnahus Movement

The final conference of the PROMISE project took place on 14 June 2017 at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. Almost 100 participants from 30 European countries and other regions took part in the conference, which formally launched the European Barnahus Movement and a range of new tools.

Several high level speakers gave their support to the European Barnahus Movement, including Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, and Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children. Bragi Guðbrandsson, the founder of the Barnahus Movement and lead expert in the PROMISE project, reviewed the shortcomings of traditional approaches to child abuse, the emergence of the Barnahus and the contribution of the EU supported PROMISE project.

The expert panels at the conference discussed multi-disciplinary and interagency responses to violence against children and how the Barnahus Model embodies an integrated and comprehensive approach to ensure child-friendly justice for children who are victims and witnesses of violence – with a strong focus on preventing re-traumatisation. The speakers and participants represented national child protection authorities and professionals related to the Barnahus including the judiciary, the Council of Europe and the Lanzarote Committee, Ombudsmen Offices in Europe, and academia.

A range of tools and reports were launched in Brussels: the “Barnahus Quality Standards”, a very important tool defining the interventions and services, “Enabling Child-sensitive Justice – the Success Story of the Barnahus Model and its Expansion in Europe” which identifies the factors and dynamics that have enabled the establishment of the Barnahus model and lessons learned; the “PROMISE Compendium of Law and Guidance”, which provides a comprehensive overview of the legal framework and the “PROMISE Tracking Tool”, a self-evaluation tool for the services. Within the project, an “Advocacy Guidance” for countries and services has been developed that are keen to embark on the process for establishing Barnahus.

The PROMISE project and the CBSS have also gained recognition from HM Queen Silvia, who has been an important advocate for the Barnahus Model in Sweden but also in Europe and globally. HM Queen Silvia took part in the PROMISE meeting in Linköping, Sweden, on 28-29 November 2016, eleven years after inaugurating the first Barnahus in Sweden. Her advocacy played a key role in the establishment of Barnahus in Sweden. The World Childhood Foundation, which The Queen founded, helped to establish Barnahus Linköping and continues to support the establishment of Barnahus around the world.



Protecting unaccompanied children

Based on the *Guidelines Promoting the Human Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Transnational Child Protection Cases*, the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) have organised trainings and consultations in 2016 in Helsinki, Riga, Stockholm and Tallinn for stakeholders from the region on the prevention of exploitation and trafficking of children.

In December 2016, an *Addendum to the Guidelines* was issued, with new information about changes in law and regulations during 2016 on a European level. An informal contact network for professionals has also been established and the Transnational Child Protection Portal, developed by the project on Wikipedia ranks high in search results.

The *Guidelines* and the 2016 *Addendum* were formally launched at the Conference on Promoting Good Practices in Protecting Migrant and Asylum Seeking Children on 7-8 December 2016, which was co-organised by the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk and the Central European Initiative (CEI). The *Stockholm Conclusions and Recommendations* deriving from this conference highlight the need to provide quality standards in the reception and care systems, ensuring age assessment procedures that are dignified and multi-disciplinary, to provide effective guardianship services and to ensure social integration and inclusion of the children.

The cooperation with the NCM will continue during 2017 and 2018 with meeting series focusing on identification and referral systems and including child participation. The CBSS is a partner to a project on guardianship - ProGuard - which, combined with the work being done in PROTECT, follows up on the *Stockholm Conclusions*.

PROMISE

The PROMISE project ran from 2015 – 2017. During these two years, the project brought together a group of highly professional pioneers from twelve European countries, all extremely committed and delighted to be part of this forum and to collaborate with others to support the different national processes for the establishment of the Barnahus.

Iceland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark were among the first countries to establish Barnahus and lately other countries in the Baltic Sea States have become involved, such as Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The Barnahus has become an important point of reference for the growing interest in multidisciplinary and interagency services for child victims and witnesses in Europe.

On 4 April 2017, Bragi Guðbrandsson, Icelandic Chair of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk, spoke on a panel at the *OSCE Alliance against Trafficking* Conference in Vienna, Austria, thus putting Barnahus on the agenda of the OSCE community as a concrete tool for protecting children on the move.

Quality of care for children in alternative care

The CBSS AudTrain project aims to increase the capacity and skills among professionals, who audit and monitor the situation for children in alternative care.

During the Icelandic Presidency, new auditors finished their initial training with a mentoring session, and new trainers were trained based on newly developed materials. The final conference in Vilnius on 7-8 June 2017 gathered support towards implementing the AudTrain System and advocated the importance of listening to children. In this context, the AudTrain Advocacy material “Monitoring and auditing of child welfare facilities - Advancing children’s wellbeing in alternative care” has been launched and distributed.

WHAT IS AUDTRAIN?

AudTrain is the name of a programme developed by the Council of the Baltic Sea States, which applies a child rights and a system-based auditing methodology in child welfare facilities. The methodology and auditing model was first developed and used in Norway and later introduced in the Baltic Sea Region. While the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat has a long-standing history of promoting the auditing of child welfare services and facilities in the region, it formally initiated the AudTrain programme in 2011. In 2015, the programme was revitalised with national partners and practitioners in order to continue strengthening professional capacities and promoting a standardised method for monitoring child welfare facilities.





90 **Non-violent childhoods**

Kicked-off in January 2017, this EU-funded project is working on bringing the ban on corporal punishment from law into practice. Central to the work is promoting the recognition of children as rights-holders with the right to respect for their dignity, physical integrity and to equal protection under the law. As a result of the envisaged national consultations and regional expert meetings, the project will deliver tools, guidance material and good practices based on research and relevant information to be used by decision-makers, academia, child rights advocates and practitioners. The project partnership includes the Ministries of Social Affairs from Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Sweden as well as the Polish Ombudsman for Children and the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children.

National consultations were already organised in Sweden, on 8-10 May 2017 and in Finland, on 19-21 June 2017, identifying good practices and challenges. In autumn 2017, national consultations will be conducted in Estonia, Latvia and Poland.



TASK FORCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS (TF-THB)

92 **Social media campaign “Human trafficking – a crime that is all of our responsibility”**

The TF-THB initiated the campaign “Human trafficking - A crime that is all of our responsibility” to raise awareness of human trafficking which affects us all.

Together with the Swedish artist Lovisa Burfitt and a production team in Estonia, the TF-THB designed a t-shirt, produced with an ethical supply chain. Human trafficking experts, government officials, representatives of non-governmental and international organisations, entrepreneurs, journalists, artists and many more people from various fields in the Baltic Sea Region joined the campaign. By wearing this design and sharing it on social media, we are attempting to give voice to trafficked persons and to take off “an invisible cloak of non-identity”, which they are forced to wear. Each picture is a reminder that it is all our responsibility to recognise the signs of exploitation and to report suspicious cases to the authorities.





Trainings for diplomatic and consular personnel

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Pursuant to its objective to involve diplomatic and consular missions of countries of trafficking origin, transit and/or destination in the CBSS Member States, consular officials from the embassies of Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. as well as representatives of the MFA of Iceland, the Ministry of Interior and other Icelandic stakeholders gathered for the training seminar on human trafficking. The training seminar took place at the Nordic House in Reykjavik in May 2017, with the purpose of increasing the knowledge and information-sharing between embassies and authorities and to improve identification, provision of assistance and protection to victims of human trafficking. In connection to these trainings, the participants received the CBSS Handbook for Diplomatic and Consular Personnel, on how to assist and protect victims of human trafficking.

The event was opened by Ambassador Sigríður Snævarr from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland and the Head of CBSS TF-THB Unit, Vineta Polatside, presented the latest trends in human trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region. Trafficking in human beings in the Icelandic context was introduced by Alda Hrönn Jóhannsdóttir from the Reykjavik Metropolitan Police, Gísli Karlsson from the Directorate of Labour and Sigurbjörg Rut Hoffritz from the Directorate of Immigration. Radu Cucos from the OSCE presented a trafficking case for labour exploitation and outlined main lessons learned. TF-THB Icelandic Chair, Hildur Dungal, from the Ministry of Justice, and Ragnar Þorvaldsson from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs delivered closing remarks.

STROM II

As human trafficking has very specific implications for local communities, cities and municipalities, the TF-THB prioritised the inclusion of local-level actors in the fight against human trafficking. The follow-up project STROM II is implemented in eight chosen municipalities in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and North-West Russia with a focus on the concrete implementation of the Guidelines for Municipalities stepping up local action against human trafficking. The project aims to develop a local coordination mechanism and to provide local stakeholders with expert knowledge and tools to efficiently deal with human trafficking cases. Moreover, STROM II seeks to improve preventive work in the municipalities, specifically targeting the groups at risk of being trafficked. The project is financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Swedish Institute and implemented in cooperation with Nordic trafficking experts. STROM II is a flagship under PA Secure and will be finalised in November 2017. The project partners include the Ministries of Interior of Latvia and Lithuania, the NGO 'Living for Tomorrow' from Estonia and the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Red Cross.



ATES – Addressing Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in Sweden

In 2016, the TF-THB teamed up with the County Administrative Board of Stockholm in the ATES project “Addressing trafficking for labour exploitation in Sweden”, which aimed to increase the level of awareness of labour trafficking in Sweden. Three study visits were organised to Finland, Belgium and the United Kingdom for representatives of the Swedish Task Force against Trafficking. The project was financed by the County Administrative Board of Stockholm. The main outcome of the project was a report with a set of concrete recommendations for the national authorities to strengthen responses to trafficking for labour exploitation. The recommendations have been developed based on the lessons learned from the three country visits to address challenges identified by the different Swedish authorities that participated in the project.

EXPERT GROUP ON NUCLEAR AND RADIATION SAFETY (EGNRS)

CIVIL PROTECTION NETWORK (CPN)

96 The EGNRS is the oldest CBSS network, established in 1992. It is an expert forum for discussing a wide spectre of issues related to nuclear and radiation safety. Areas for cooperation include standardisation of measurements and exchange of monitoring data, safety and security of installations, radiation protection and radioactive waste management, both civil and military. Russia has held the chair in the EGNRS since 2014, and the 5th meeting during the Russian chairmanship was held in Stockholm – at the CBSS Secretariat – on 30-31 January 2017. The main issues considered during the meeting were: the future cooperation in the area of environmental monitoring and data exchange, cooperation of gamma spectrometric laboratories, possibilities of joint initiatives to build analytical capabilities in measuring nuclear materials. The experts conducted a review of the latest developments in their respective countries related to legislation, institutional changes as well as organisation and technical innovation in the field of nuclear and radiation safety.

The Civil Protection Network was chaired by the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management at the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police during 2016-2017.

The Chairmanship culminated with the 15th Meeting of Civil Protection Directors General of the Baltic Sea States on 10-12 May in Keflavík, Iceland. In preparation for the DG meeting, the Civil Protection Senior Experts' Meeting was held on 21-22 March 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden.

Back-to-back with the 15th Meeting of Civil Protection Directors General, the Icelandic Chairman of the Civil Protection Network organised the Baltic Excellence Programme seminar on volunteer capabilities in Keflavík, Iceland, on 10 May 2017.

In Iceland, disaster response relies to a large extent on civil society organisations. The focus of this year's seminar on volunteer organisations therefore reflected the reality in the Icelandic civil protection system. The seminar was conducted in cooperation with the Icelandic Red Cross and the ICE-SAR.

THE BALTIC SEA REGION BORDER CONTROL COOPERATION (BSRBCC)

The BSRBCC focuses on security-related issues concerning border control in the Baltic Sea Region. The most important issues on its agenda at the moment are the development of practical forms of cooperation, simplifying communication routines between the parties (e.g. the development of the data transmission system COASTNET) as well as the exchange of information on security controls at sea ports, marinas and sea areas; and counteracting terrorism. The BSRBCC organises sea exercises

and operations as well as an exchange of experiences and evaluations of existing standards of security controls. The BSRBCC cooperates with FRONTEX, particularly on preparation of the Annual Threat Assessment Reports.

The BSRBCC held its 19th Heads Conference in Jūrmala, Latvia, on 5-7 December 2016 and met in Oslo, Norway, on 8-10 March 2017.

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NETWORK OF PROSECUTORS ON ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION (ENPRO)

98 On 22 – 23 September 2016, the Network of Prosecutors on Environmental Crime in the Baltic Sea Region (ENPRO) held its annual conference in Vilnius. Focusing on waste problems and illegal waste management, the conference was opened by Evaldas Pašilis, Prosecutor General of the Republic of Lithuania and Dr Ewald Brandt, President of ENPRO, Head of the Public Prosecutor’s Office in Hamburg, Germany. Furthermore, cross-border crimes related to disposal or trafficking of waste have been

discussed alongside the international legal cooperation in criminal matters in general. Finally, the ENPRO Database collecting environmental (crime) cases in the Baltic Sea Region has been presented to the attendees by Dr Ewald Brandt. The next annual conference of ENPRO, organised by Økokrim (the National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime in Norway), will take place in November 2017 in Oslo.



BALTIC SEA TASK FORCE ON ORGANIZED CRIME (BSTF-OC)

The Baltic Sea Task Force on Organized Crime (BSTF-OC) comprises of eleven personal representatives of the Heads of Governments of the Baltic Sea States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden). Officials from Interpol, Europol and the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States have the status of observers at the BSTF-OC meetings. Currently, Latvia holds the chairmanship until the end of 2018.

The JATOC project – Joint Approach to Tackle Organized Cross – border Crime in the Baltic Sea Region – was launched in 2017 with support from the CBSS Project Support Facility. The project is aimed at institutionalising the collaboration between the BSTF-OC and the BSRBCC networks, and to enhance operational cooperation. The CBSS Secretariat has supported the JATOC project throughout the Icelandic Presidency, by identifying sources for funding for future cooperation among law enforcement organisations in the region.

The BSTF-OC held two meetings during the Icelandic Presidency: its Annual Meeting in Moscow, Russia, on 24-25 November 2016 and its Operational Planning and Coordination Meeting in Riga, Latvia, on 21-22 February 2017.

COOPERATION WITH THE UNISDR AND PROMOTION OF THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK

The CBSS Secretariat has during the year established a dialogue and a partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), with particular focus on enhancing the capacities in the Baltic Sea Region to implement the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda.

Representatives from the CBSS Secretariat participated at the 7th Annual Meeting of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction in Helsinki, Finland, on 3-5 October 2016 organised by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction – Regional Office for Europe (UNISDR EUR); Council of Europe and the European Commission. The Director General of the CBSS Secretariat Maira Mora delivered a presentation during a panel discussion at the Forum. She highlighted the relevance of the newly established cooperation between CBSS and UNISDR, as well as the opportunities the Sendai Framework provides through being a global platform for cooperation, addressing disaster risk reduction from a multi-governance perspective, aiming to establish preventive measures and building preparedness.

Representatives from the CBSS Secretariat also participated at the Open European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction, in Istanbul, Turkey, on 26-28 March 2017 which was hosted by the UNISDR EUR, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection DG (ECHO). The Head of the Baltic 2030 Unit Krista Kampus and Adviser for Policy Area Secure Jacek Paszkowski, introduced examples of cross-sectorial projects such as the upcoming project CASCADE and the current EUSBSR Flagship iWater, both of which use multi-disciplinary approaches to disaster risk reduction. This contribution resulted in the inclusion of multi-sector dialogue recommendations into the final document of the Forum.

PROJECT
SUPPORT
FACILITY



Two PSF Selection Committee Meetings have taken place under the Icelandic Presidency, the first one on 29 November 2016 in Stockholm and the second one on 17 May 2017 in Reykjavík.

Currently the PSF is renewed for the period 2017-2019 with the amount of 1 000 000 €.

In 2017 the call for applications was dedicated to the priority area “Sustainable development for a prosperous Baltic Sea Region”. Five applications were selected by the PSF SC and approved by the CSO for PSF funding requesting 294 122 €.

Ageing workforce, social cohesion and sustainable development – political challenges within the Baltic Sea Region

The project focuses on the policy challenges of fostering older peoples participation in the labour market, in order to compensate for the social and economic consequences of demographic change within the Baltic Sea Region. The planned policy dialogue and knowledge exchange established by the project aims to contribute to evidence-based decision-making and to support the development of sustainable policies for the region. Deliverables include the publication of a joint discussion paper, with input from researchers and policy makers from the region; a dialogue event with stakeholders from research, policy and societal organisations to consolidate the findings of the discussion paper; and the publication of a policy brief, summarising the project results and recommendations for future policy interventions within the Baltic Sea Region. The results will be disseminated through the European-wide communication channels of Population Europe, the network of demographic research centres in Europe.

Urban climate change adaptation in the Baltic Region

Climate change is happening around us, in our immediate environment, cities and seas. Adapting to climate change is imperative for resilient societies. The Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals call for global, national and local action.

Therefore, the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), together with the Baltic Development Forum (BDF) and the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC), plans a capacity building programme, made up by a series of workshops to train decision-makers and stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region in a set of risk management approaches for climate adaptation known as bottom-up methodologies.

The purpose of the workshops is to provide a platform to share knowledge and discuss next steps for capacity building in bottom-up methodologies at a regional or municipal level.

Reclaiming stormwater ecosystem services by education and multi-actor dialogue

The project will develop a teaching and training course on sustainable urban stormwater management and related ecosystem services. The course will bring together students, decision-makers, planners, and other professionals for a multi-actor, mutual learning programme, comprising of on-site lectures, workshops, and online courses. It will further be embedded and disseminated through the Baltic University Programme to reach stakeholders from the entire Baltic Sea Region.

The project will demonstrate the potential of sustainable stormwater management in responding to the climate change-induced risk of urban flooding, and for the improvement of urban ecosystems. It will showcase state-of-the-art approaches and the innovation potential and capacities, related to sustainable stormwater management, existing in the Baltic Sea Region.

From the SDGS towards Sustainable Tourism in the BSR

The project “From the SDGs towards Sustainable Tourism in the BSR” will track the status quo of sustainable tourism in the BSR, identify best practices, gaps and differences and trigger processes in order to develop, provide and communicate solutions. The project is envisioned to be only a first formal step towards a more systematic approach to promoting sustainability in the tourism sector: a flagship process in the frame of EUSBSR PA Tourism, which aims at really achieving impact.

ABCD > Ars Baltica Creative Dialogue

The ARS BALTICA Creative Dialogue (ABCD) intends to gather creative and cultural practitioners, provide space for discussion in an open environment and create synergies for and with the participating partners. The format wants to highlight cross-sectorial links and allow policy-makers to follow the debates and share their perspectives on the impact of culture and cultural practice. The underlying understanding is that culture is an essential driver for sustainability. Moreover, the ABCDs function as a tool to raise awareness about culture as a driver for sustainability and other key issues which illustrate that culture and cultural practice are the horizontal binding force in our societies.







EUSBSR

The Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat coordinates three areas of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

110 Horizontal Action Neighbours

On 9 November 2016, in the framework of the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Stockholm, the HA Neighbours coordinators - the CBSS Secretariat and the City of Turku - organised the workshop “Perspectives for EU-Russia Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region”. The purpose of this workshop was to identify areas for mutual beneficial strategic interaction in the implementation of the EUSBSR and the Russian NW Strategies by joining forces, creating synergies both thematically and geographically, using the EU - RUSSIA regional cooperation instruments and partnerships. The workshop highlighted the current issues of these two strategies and aimed at finding common development subjects that could benefit the whole Baltic Sea Region now and towards 2030.

HA Neighbours had two coordination group meetings; the first one took place on 7 November 2016, back-to-back with the 7th EUSBSR Annual Forum and the second one was held in Berlin on 12 June 2017, organised together with the 8th EUSBSR Annual Forum.

Furthermore, HA Neighbours co-organised the workshop “Cooperating with Russian partners – Building on the past, looking in to future” which took place on 22 May 2017 at the City Hall of Turku, Finland.

Horizontal Action Climate

In its role as HA Climate coordinator, the CBSS Baltic 2030 Unit facilitates the Baltic Sea Region Climate Dialogue Platform, which held two roundtables during the year, both of which were chaired by the Icelandic Chair of Baltic 2030 Expert Group. The 6th meeting took place on 9 November 2016 in Stockholm and the 7th in Reykjavik on 16 May 2017. The Roundtables also serve as coordination group meetings of HA Climate.

HA Climate has taken on the new flagship initiative “iWater” and supports two new projects “BioBIGG” and “CASCADE”.

Policy Area Secure

PA Secure is co-coordinated by the CBSS Secretariat and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). The Policy Area encompasses two fields: civil protection and law enforcement. During the Icelandic Presidency, two steering group meetings were held, on 10 November 2016 in Stockholm, Sweden and on 15-16 June 2017, in Hamburg, Germany. PA Secure engages in the flagship initiative “HAZARD” and in the Baltic Leadership Programme in Civil Protection. Furthermore, the project “FIRE-IN” has been nominated for and the project “EVAPREM” acquired flagship status during the Icelandic Presidency period.

CROSS- SECTORIAL INITIATIVES



During the year HA Climate and PA Secure developed several cross-sectoral cooperation initiatives.

Cross-sectorial initiative addressing climate change risks

Risks related to climate change are not only the concern of professionals engaged in sustainable development. It is becoming more evident each year that climate change is an emerging security threat, and by that a field in need of involvement by civil protection specialists as well. There are strong links between climate and security; therefore, experts working within both areas need to collaborate to find joint solutions to the future challenges and risks. Policy Area Secure has in a joint effort with Horizontal Action Climate during the year established a multi-disciplinary network consisting of civil protection experts as well as climate change adaptation professionals, and within this network a project proposal has been developed. The consortium and the project application were facilitated under the project 'CRCC – Making Communities Resilient to Climate Change: Cross-Sectorial Cooperation in Capacity-building', funded by the Swedish Institute. As a result, an application for a larger project was submitted to The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) – Civil Protection Mechanism

on 10 May 2017. The project, named CASCADE – Community Safety Action for Supporting Climate Adaptation and Development, will seek to improve urban resilience in cities and towns, as well as the overall macro-regional resilience. The initiative is expected to adjust existing risk assessment methodology to the climate change context and tailor it for the local level. This methodology will be used in a training course for city officials, responsible for city planning. The training can be replicated by all BSR countries.

SELECTED EVENTS FROM THE 7TH AND THE 8TH ANNUAL FORUM OF THE EUSBSR

112 **Annual Forum Stockholm**

The Swedish Government together with the Nordic Council of Ministers and the European Commission hosted the 7th EUSBSR Strategy Forum in Stockholm on 8-9 November 2016. The opening session included keynote speeches by Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden; Juha Sipilä, Prime Minister of Finland, and Corina Crețu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy.

Financing climate action – seminar by HA Climate and PA Secure.

An important part of the BSR climate change cooperation is the development of preparedness for handling increased risks related to extreme events, e.g. induced by heat waves, floods or storms. The seminar focused on how disaster risk reduction can be addressed in a practical sense, and how resources for building preparedness and resilience are best allocated. The seminar also provided insights into funding opportunities for preventive climate actions. The session was moderated by Paola Albritto, Chief of the Regional Office for Europe of UNISDR EUR.

How do cultural and creative sectors encourage cooperation, innovation and inclusion in a culturally diverse Baltic Sea Region? – seminar by PA Culture and ARS Baltica.

In this seminar, a panel of officials and cultural practitioners discussed how the cultural and creative sectors in the Baltic Sea Region encourage cooperation, social innovation and inclusion between people of culturally diverse societies in the region. The seminar was opened by Alice Bah Kuhnke, Minister for Culture and Democracy, Sweden, who highlighted the importance of a free and vibrant cultural life as the very basis for a vital and sustainable democratic society.





Annual Forum Berlin

The 8th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR was hosted by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany together with the CPMR - Baltic Sea Commission and the European Commission on 13 - 14 June 2017 in Berlin. Sigmar Gabriel, German Federal Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor of Germany; Martti Ahtisaari, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate & former President of Finland and Sara Mazur, Vice President & Head of Research at Ericsson, gave keynote speeches at the opening plenary.

Climate challenges for energy supply - seminar by HA Climate, PA Energy, PA Secure and the Baltic Development Forum.

More than 60 participants attended the seminar, which continued the dialogue on energy and climate started in September 2016 during the seminar “Energy Dialogue: Financing Energy Efficiency”. The participants discussed different aspects of EU joint climate and energy policy implementation, and representatives of policy makers, businesses and academia addressed key problems caused by climate change to energy supply. The discussions also touched upon the role of climate resilient technology and improved interconnections for ensuring affordable and secure supply of carbon neutral energy to the Baltic Sea Region. The seminar panellists concluded that complex problems related to increasing the resilience against negative impacts of long-term climate change could be solved effectively only in close cooperation of relevant sectors and with the engagement of major stakeholder groups.

Culture as a driving force for sustainability – seminar by the CBSS Baltic 2030 Unit, PA Culture and ARS Baltica.

The seminar addressed the direct nexus between culture and the achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda within the Baltic Sea Region. The seminar focused on the two roles culture can play within sustainable development: driver and enabler. During the session, the participants shared their views on how the cultural and creative sectors can contribute to achieving SDGs and opportunities for cooperation. Head of the Baltic 2030 Unit, Krista Kampus, suggested three actions for using the creative potential in sustainability work: involving SDGs Ambassadors from the creative sector, setting up a Baltic Sea Region Cultural Network for SDGs and translating the priorities of the Baltic 2030 Action Plan into focus areas for cultural activities.

SWEDISH PRESIDENCY

2017-2018

The priorities of the CBSS Swedish Presidency 2017-2018 are Sustainability, Continuity and Adaptability, which are all under the umbrella of the Agenda 2030. Sweden considers it of importance to continue with work and projects that are successful in promoting the CBSS long term strategies, addressing everything from human trafficking and organised crime to the quality of the Baltic Sea, climate change and migration.

Today's world faces new challenges, where strategies towards a sustainable & prosperous region, safe & secure region and a united regional identity require adapting to emerging changes.

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Sustainability

With the adoption of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community has been given tools for dealing with the challenges the world is facing. On a regional level, the CBSS “Baltic 2030 Action Plan” will serve as a tool for a more systematic implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The further implementation of the SDGs will be something of a beacon for the Swedish Presidency of the CBSS. The goals are quite broad and far-reaching so a selection needs to be made. The six priority focus areas and the six activation processes in the Baltic 2030 Action Plan will guide our work. Wherever possible, a gender equality perspective will be adopted.

Continuity

Over the years, the CBSS has achieved considerable results in regional cooperation. In some cases, for example in the fight against trafficking or actions to protect the interests of children, the results have found an echo even outside the Baltic Sea Region.

It is the intention of the Swedish Presidency, together with other Member States and the international Secretariat, to give continued support to the work mentioned and other ongoing activities.

But continuity does not mean a static approach. Together with the CBSS Member States, the Swedish Presidency will explore possibilities to enter into new fields of cooperation in the light of new challenges and opportunities.

Adaptability

When the CBSS was established in 1992, the political landscape in the Baltic Sea Region was very different. During the twenty-five years of CBSS' existence, a number of changes have taken place. New fora for regional cooperation, for example the Northern Dimension and its Partnerships, or the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, have been established. New topics, for example migration issues and integration, have become more prominent on the agenda for regional cooperation.

Against this background, the Swedish Presidency 2017-2018 welcomes the Reykjavik Declaration which states that a group of independent wise men and women will be given the task to examine the future role of the CBSS as a forum for political dialogue and regional cooperation beyond 2020. The report of the group will serve as a basis for further discussions within the Council and with the aim of reaching a decision in summer 2019.





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