



## **Declaration**

15<sup>th</sup> CBSS Ministerial Session, Elsinore 4 June 2009

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), consisting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Sweden and a representative of the European Commission met upon the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Denmark in Elsinore on 3-4 June 2009 for its 15<sup>th</sup> Session. The CBSS Observer States and the Strategic Partners, including the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, also attended.

### **The Council**

- *recalling* the Declaration of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Sea States in Copenhagen on 5-6 March 1992,
- *also recalling* the recommendations of the Heads of Government of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baltic Sea States Summit in Kolding on 12-13 April 2000,
- *reaffirming* the Declaration on the Reform of the CBSS adopted in Riga on 3 June 2008, among others defining five long-term priorities for Baltic Sea Cooperation, to be implemented by expert groups with clear and time-limited mandates and tasks,
- *also recalling* the guidance given by the Heads of Governments at the 7<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea States Summit in Riga on 4 June 2008,

*decides as follows:*

### **CBSS Reform**

- **to endorse** the Terms of Reference of the CBSS and of its Secretariat, as updated in April 2009 in the light of the aforementioned Reform Declaration,
- **to note with appreciation** the progress made in fulfilling the objectives of the Reform Declaration, including the enhanced project orientation of the organisation, and in this context the adoption of new guidelines for participation in projects,
- **to instruct** the Committee of Senior Officials to consider a separate budget line for project development within the CBSS Secretariat's budget,
- **to acknowledge** the results achieved by the Working Groups on respectively Democratic Institutions (1992-2009) and on Economic Cooperation (1993-2009), now dissolved in accordance with the Reform Declaration,
- **to welcome** the decision to set up an Expert Group on Maritime Policy intended to contribute to sustainable growth and employment in the maritime sector, to combine and better coordinate all sea-

related activities and tasks, as well as to strike an appropriate balance between economic, social and ecological aspects,

- **to welcome** the decisions of the Expert Group on Youth Affairs, the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk and other CBSS structures to align their work with the principles of the CBSS Reform,

- **to enhance** the coordinating role of the CBSS and to make this role more clear and visible by opening up for full integration into the CBSS of any intergovernmental, multilateral network or organisation in the region who so wishes, while preserving the CBSS as an overall political forum,

- **to accept** the request by Baltic 21 to integrate into the CBSS as an Expert Group as of 1 January 2010, and to endorse its mission, principal functions and strategic areas of cooperation as agreed in April 2009 by the Baltic 21 Senior Officials Group, while instructing the Committee of Senior Officials, after consultation with the Senior Officials Group, to decide the modalities of the integration of Baltic 21, including the financial implications thereof,

- **to instruct** the Committee of Senior Officials to contact the Visions and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea 2010 (VASAB) Committee on Spatial Development with a view to closer cooperation, for example by VASAB constituting itself as a CBSS Expert Group on Spatial Development,

- **to grant** the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Romania and the Kingdom of Spain the status as observers to the Council, effective as of 1 July 2009,

- **to look forward** to the forthcoming relaunch of the CBSS website, aimed at increasing the visibility and appeal of the CBSS,

## **External Cooperation**

- **to endorse** the Principles and Guidelines for Third Party Participation in CBSS Activities and Meetings, as updated in April 2009 in the light of the aforementioned Reform Declaration,

- **to welcome** the renewed momentum under the Northern Dimension Policy and confirm its continued readiness to cooperate with existing and emerging Northern Dimension Partnerships, as well as with the Northern Dimension Institute currently under preparation,

- **to acknowledge** the efforts of the European Commission in its consultation of all stakeholders while drafting an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, recalling the support by the CBSS to this process such as the co-organisation of the Roundtable on *Safety and Security Objective in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* in Helsinki in December 2008,

- **to look forward to** the implementation of the Strategy which should benefit the existing regional cooperation, and declares its readiness to examine actions and projects to be proposed by the Strategy with a view to possible CBSS involvement,

- **to continue** the fruitful cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers, such as in the Baltic Euroregional Network, the EuroFaculty Pskov project and the staff-exchange between the Secretariats,

- **to strive for** continued cooperation with the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Arctic Council in fields of mutual interest,

- **to note** with appreciation the recent active work of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation, including steps towards closer interaction of different Baltic Sea networks, and looks forward to the implementation of its 2009-2010 priorities,
- **to continue** exchanging experience with other relevant European regional organisations,

### **Pursuance of Long-term Priorities**

- **to acknowledge** the efforts undertaken by the CBSS and its various structures during the Danish Presidency 2008-09, and the envisaged future actions, in the following priority areas,

#### **Environment**

- **to take note of** the report of Baltic 21 entitled *Triennial report 2006-2008 - A decade of experience for the benefit of the future* and to express appreciation to Baltic 21 for promoting sustainable development in the region and supporting the CBSS in several of its long-term priorities, recognising Baltic 21's holistic approach,
- **to welcome** Baltic 21's Lighthouse projects *Eco-region* contributing to the development of the Baltic Sea Region into the world's first eco-region and *New Bridges* strengthening the quality of life through improved management of urban-rural interactions, as well as the initiative to develop the new Lighthouse project *Baltic Landscapes* for the sustainable use of forested areas,
- **to take note of** the successful joint operation between customs and environmental protection authorities on hazardous waste and other types of waste, held under Danish guidance in the Spring of 2009,
- **to continue** to offer support to the full implementation of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission's (HELCOM) *Baltic Sea Action Plan* which represents a major effort to restore and achieve a healthy Baltic Sea by 2021, while looking forward to its Ministerial Meeting in Moscow in May 2010,

#### **Economic development**

- **to welcome** the involvement of the CBSS as a full partner in the *Baltic Sea Labour Network Project* – a project which aims at bringing together employees, employers, politicians and governments to advance sustainable labour markets in the Baltic Sea Region – and to look forward to the mid-term project conference to be organised by the CBSS in Vilnius in 2010,
- **to positively note** the further utilization of the *Baltic Euroregional Network*, a cross-border cooperation project facilitated jointly by the CBSS and the Nordic Council of Ministers, in the new project initiative entitled *Creative Across Borders*,
- **to welcome** the approval of the Baltic 21 Lighthouse project *SPIN* aiming to increase the innovation potential of small and medium-sized enterprises in order to enhance sustainable production processes, and to note the initiative undertaken to develop the sustainable tourism project *AGORA II*,
- **to look forward to** the meeting of ministers responsible for spatial planning and development to be held in October 2009 in Lithuania and to the anticipated adoption of the "VASAB Long-Term

Perspective for Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region" on that occasion, while appreciating in particular the progress made in developing maritime spatial planning for the region,

- **to instruct** the Committee of Senior Officials to consider, in consultation with pertinent line ministries, proposals for new expert groups in the field of economic cooperation,

### **Energy**

- **to welcome** the results of the Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation's (BASREC) Ministerial Conference in Copenhagen in February 2009, and to bear in mind the possibility that this cooperation may complement the EU-Russia energy dialogue,

- **to look forward to** the statement by BASREC at the *COP 15 UN Climate Conference* in Copenhagen in December 2009, as well as its ambition to increase cooperation on low-carbon technologies,

- **to take note of** the joint BASREC and Baltic 21 project *Baltic Sea Bio-energy Promotion* to enhance the sustainable development and use of bio-energy; which has been awarded the status of strategic project in the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013,

- **to take note of** the EU's initiatives on a Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan and the European Economic Recovery Plan and to acknowledge their presence on the BASREC agenda,

### **Education & Culture**

- **to welcome** the start in January 2009 of the three-year *CBSS EuroFaculty project in Pskov*, aiming principally to upgrade university level education in Business Administration / Business Economics at the Pskov State Polytechnic Institute and the Pskov Volny Institute, among others by bringing curricula, teaching and examination methods in line with recognised international standards,

- **to express** appreciation for the contributions to the funding of the EuroFaculty Pskov project from the CBSS Member States as well as from the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, and the United Kingdom and to express support to the implementing consortium,

- **to take note of** the ongoing work of the Baltic 21 Lighthouse project on creating curricula for *Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Agriculture* in higher education and welcome the initiative to pursue the project on *Innovative Learning Transfer for Sustainability*,

- **to welcome** the results of the 8<sup>th</sup> *Conference of the CBSS Ministers of Culture* in Riga in October 2008, which stressed the importance of culture also as an economic factor in society, welcomed the principle of mainstreaming culture into all relevant policies and decided to appoint a Senior Officials Group for Culture, due to meet for the first time under the Lithuanian CBSS Presidency in 2009-2010,

- **to welcome** the efforts of the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage Cooperation to promote user-oriented access to cultural heritage through regional policies and projects that enhance citizen engagement, heritage education, sustainable tourism, integrated cultural heritage management and digitalisation of source materials and dissemination of knowledge,

- **to note** that safeguarding the uniqueness and variety of the underwater heritage of the Baltic Sea is a regional concern,

- **to take note of** the activities of ARS BALTICA Network supporting cultural cooperation around the Baltic Sea for a common regional identity, innovation and creative industries,
- **to instruct** the Committee of Senior Officials to explore ideas for establishing a school network around the Baltic Sea,
- **to welcome** the increased cooperation among Baltic Sea Region researchers and research funding organisations under the BONUS Baltic Sea Research Programme,

### **Civil security & the human dimension**

- **to underline** the importance of continued forceful efforts to prevent and combat all forms of trafficking in human beings, and thus commends the adoption of the new strategic activities of the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings with a focus on adults, expressing appreciation to the Swedish Government for its generous contribution for the implementation of these activities over 2008-2010,
- **to note** with satisfaction the training sessions on human trafficking for diplomats and consular personnel with the involvement of the International Organization for Migration, and to value the joint project with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on fostering NGO and law enforcement cooperation in preventing and combating human trafficking in, to and from the region,
- **to express** appreciation for the work of the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk in mapping the resources available in the region for young people leaving institutions as demonstrated in the report *Keeping the door open* from February 2009, acknowledging the further development of its network of National Contact Points for Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children,
- **to look forward to** the conference on the inclusion of young people leaving residential care in the labour market and in education as well as their access to social support, to be held in Vilnius in October 2009, and to the conference on *Child Safety on the Internet* scheduled to take place in Moscow in November 2009,
- **to commend** the concrete and operational cooperation within the Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety between the respective national authorities and the European Commission, focusing on exchange of information and of radiation monitoring data, and welcome the discussion of a future regional agreement on assistance in case of emergencies, environmental radiation as well as on illegal activities related to nuclear and radiological material,
- **to welcome** the continuation of transnational activities in the field of civil protection under the aegis of the CBSS, including the *7th Meeting of the Directors General for Civil Protection* in the Baltic Sea Region in Copenhagen in March 2009, and to note positively the aim to further this cooperation through expert networks in the framework of the EuroBaltic project regarding Risk Reduction in City Areas (ERRICA),
- **to welcome** the continued regional activities of the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC) in the field of combating cross-border crime, including the system of National Coordination Centers working on an uninterrupted basis and a new permanent Secretariat to facilitate the cooperation between border guards, police and customs operations of the Baltic Sea States,
- **to look forward to** the BSRBCC conference to be held in Potsdam in November 2009,

- **to welcome** the decision of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Customs Cooperation and Border Crossing Aspects in Riga in May 2008 to measure the time for commercial vehicles to cross land borders between EU and Russia at selected crossing points aiming at identifying and eliminating the reasons which hamper border crossing,
- **to welcome** the decision of the *12th meeting of the Directors General of Tax Administration* in Helsingborg in September 2008 to be supplanted by a Senior Officials Network, focusing on developing cooperation in the field of tax audit, on combating tax avoidance and tax evasion, and on providing effective services to taxpayers in a multilateral context,
- **to look forward to** the forthcoming *13th Meeting of the Prosecutors General in the Baltic Sea Region* in Lübeck in September-October 2009 to continue cooperation in the field of combating transnational crime together with other Baltic Sea States' law enforcement networks,
- **to take note** with appreciation of the youth conference entitled *Active Citizenship & Environmental Challenges* held under Danish Presidency in Copenhagen in May 2009, focussing on the importance of raising young people's awareness of the environmental challenges facing the region, and strengthening their ability to address such challenges through exercising their rights and responsibility as active citizens,
- **to welcome** the ongoing co-operation in the field of youth policy, and to express appreciation for the agreed continuation of youth co-operation in 2009-2011, as youth exchange and volunteer activities promote a better understanding and knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region,
- **to welcome** the successful holding of the *8<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea NGO Forum* in Elsinore in February 2009, while taking note of its Final Declaration, and instructing the Committee of Senior Officials to examine its contents with a view to enhancing CBSS cooperation with civil societies in the region,
- **to welcome** the intention of Lithuania to host the *9<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea NGO Forum* in the Spring of 2010,
- **to consider** developing cooperation in the field of people to people contacts and the promotion of tolerance,

### **Final provisions**

- **to thank** Denmark for chairing the CBSS during 2008-2009 and for hosting the 15<sup>th</sup> CBSS Ministerial Session,
- **to express** its appreciation to the CBSS Permanent International Secretariat in Stockholm for its excellent support and collaboration,
- **to hold** the 16th Ministerial Session of the CBSS in Norway in June 2011.