



**9th Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States,
16th of September 2015, Gdańsk**

Conclusions

The Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States met in Gdańsk, Poland, on the 16th of September 2015 for the Conference. The Conference was held within the framework of the Baltic Sea Cultural Gathering under the theme of “Culture as a driving force for social and economic development of the region”, inviting participating countries to share knowledge and data showcasing evidence of social and economic benefits of cultural investments in their respective countries, in order to elaborate comprehensive guidelines for the common understanding of crucial role of culture as a contributor to the regional growth.

RECALLING the declarations of the previous *Conferences of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States*, especially the Riga Declaration of 2008;

REAFFIRMING the Conclusions of the *Joint Meeting of the Regional Working Groups* held in the framework of the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States on 21 May, 2014 in Kotka, Finland;

Ministers welcome and note with satisfaction:

1. the recent developments in regional structures of cultural cooperation, especially the establishment and development of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture, Policy Area Culture of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as well as increased engagement of other relevant regional stakeholders e.g. Nordic Council of Ministers, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, Union of Baltic Cities, in the regional cooperation in the field of culture;
2. the increased involvement of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in cultural matters through: broader cooperation with existing regional networks as well as with the younger generation, expanded cultural focus of the strategic CBSS programme Balticlab in cooperation with the Swedish Institute and financing cultural projects through Project Support Facility;

3. the ongoing developments of the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage as a tool that forges strong partnership in the area of cultural heritage, supported with the adoption of the Troika chairmanship and with the establishment of financing mechanism to secure work of the Secretariat of the Monitoring Group;
4. the long-term achievements of the ARS BALTICA network and its contributions to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, within the Policy Area Culture cooperation;
5. the invitation of Poland, as the current CBSS Presidency country, to host the next Senior Official Group for Culture meeting in June 2016.

Ministers agree:

6. to keep meetings of the Senior Official Group for Culture, as appropriate platform for discussing pertinent regional cultural cooperation matters among all states of the Baltic Sea Region, with the recommendation to organize them in parallel to meetings of other regional platforms, such as EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Culture, in order to maximize synergies and avoid duplications of responsibilities;
7. to encourage ARS BALTICA Organizing Committee to elaborate concrete proposals finalizing ongoing re-orientation process of the network and to further present them to the Senior Official Group for Culture
8. on the importance of existing instruments supporting cultural cooperation, inviting Senior Official Group for Culture to consider possibilities for improvements in the use of measures fostering the Baltic Sea Region cultural cooperation.