

6 September 2021

Final recommendations from the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum

Background

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum was organised as a back-to-back event by the Swedish delegation to the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), the BSPC, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)/Baltic Sea Youth Platform and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden to promote dialogue between young people of the region and policymakers.

In preparation for the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum, the 100 invited youth participants - representing all 11 member states of the CBSS - were asked to prepare a recommendation that they would like the BSPC to give to the Baltic Sea States' governments, the CBSS and the EU. When the draft recommendations had been submitted by the participants, they were edited into fewer recommendations focusing on common themes while attempting to cover as many subjects as possible from the original recommendations.

During the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum event held online on August 28 four roundtable discussions were organised on different topics: land, sea, circular economy and innovation. Each group had five proposed recommendations to discuss and were asked to decide on the two most relevant for them. In all, the forum decided on eight recommendations that they would like to see the BSPC give the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU. The recommendations were presented to the members of parliament during the youth forum. Furthermore, two representatives of the youth forum were invited to present the recommendations during the Annual Conference of the BSPC on August 30.

These recommendations will in the next step be presented to the BSPC Working Group on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

Climate change, biodiversity and innovation

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum 2021 asks the BSPC to call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU to:

1. implement methods of nature-friendly farming and actively phase out the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers by local farmers, as well as allocate funds to research into less hazardous alternatives, and to do so in

collaboration with think tanks and expert organisations in order to ensure that the policies are well connected to science.

2. support sustainable innovation in green energy, reduce the use of non-renewable sources of energy and support innovation to make urban life more sustainable by enhancing green transportation solutions, and to do so in collaboration with think tanks and expert organisations in order to ensure that the policies are well connected to science.

Climate change and biodiversity in the sea

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum 2021 asks the BSPP to call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU to:

3. develop new, and strengthen existing, multinational cooperation, such as HELCOM and coordination concerning the restoration of marine environments in order to reduce the current strain; implement stricter fishing rules for certain species of fish to prevent overfishing, establish green energy requirements for fishing fleets, create marine protected areas where necessary and actively restore habitats that cannot recover naturally.
4. employ an ecosystem approach to the management of human activities at sea and on land and act to promote land–sea interaction and policy integration to reduce levels of eutrophication.

Climate change, biodiversity and circular economy

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum 2021 asks the BSPP to call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU to:

5. together with companies in power to develop and implement policies and regulations around fishing and other industries that harm the biodiversity in the Baltic Sea that align with the needs identified in the IPCC report/Paris Agreement.
6. promote the building of facilities from recycled materials by developing regulations regarding the re-use of construction materials, establish plans for the re-use of materials as a requisite for demolition permits as part of the effort to find sustainable supply lines along the Baltic Sea and to introduce public bail systems for plastic bottles in the Baltic Sea Region.

Climate change and biodiversity on land

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum 2021 asks the BSPC to call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU to:

7. support and promote sustainability through nature-based solutions across all different sectors of the economy. In this, we ask governments to support and cooperate with local farmers to develop sustainable food systems and farming in the Baltic Sea Region. We understand that sustainable food systems are ones that are based on nature, that promote local and healthy food, that mitigate the impact associated with international trade and that support local farmers. We ask the governments to prioritize protection of the plant and animal species, for example by supporting factories in their efforts to lower their emissions of toxic waste, and by promoting climate-friendly tourism. We ask the governments to protect the coasts from damaging human activities and to develop a common coastal zone protection policy that is based on nature.
8. recognize that communities are essential in dealing with biodiversity and the climate challenge on land. We ask for human well-being and the inclusion of marginalized communities to be a matter of protection of biodiversity and the climate. We ask the governments to safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples, to guarantee indigenous sovereignty, to strengthen diversity policies and ensure gender equality in all areas of society.