

LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY 2020-2021



 Kuršių Nerija, Lithuania

Contents

Lithuanian Presidency	nr: 1
Regional Identity	nr: 8
Safe & Secure Region	nr: 13
Sustainable & Prosperous Region	nr: 22
Project Support Facility	nr: 28
Publications	nr: 32



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“We have just adopted the [Vilnius II] declaration, which affirms our strong and continuous commitment to political dialogue that enables building up regional cooperation, fostering mutual understanding, building trust, ensuring stability and promoting people-to-people contacts. We have committed ourselves to uphold the rule of law, democracy, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

*Gabrielius Landsbergis,
Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs,
CBSS Ministerial Meeting, 1 June 2021*

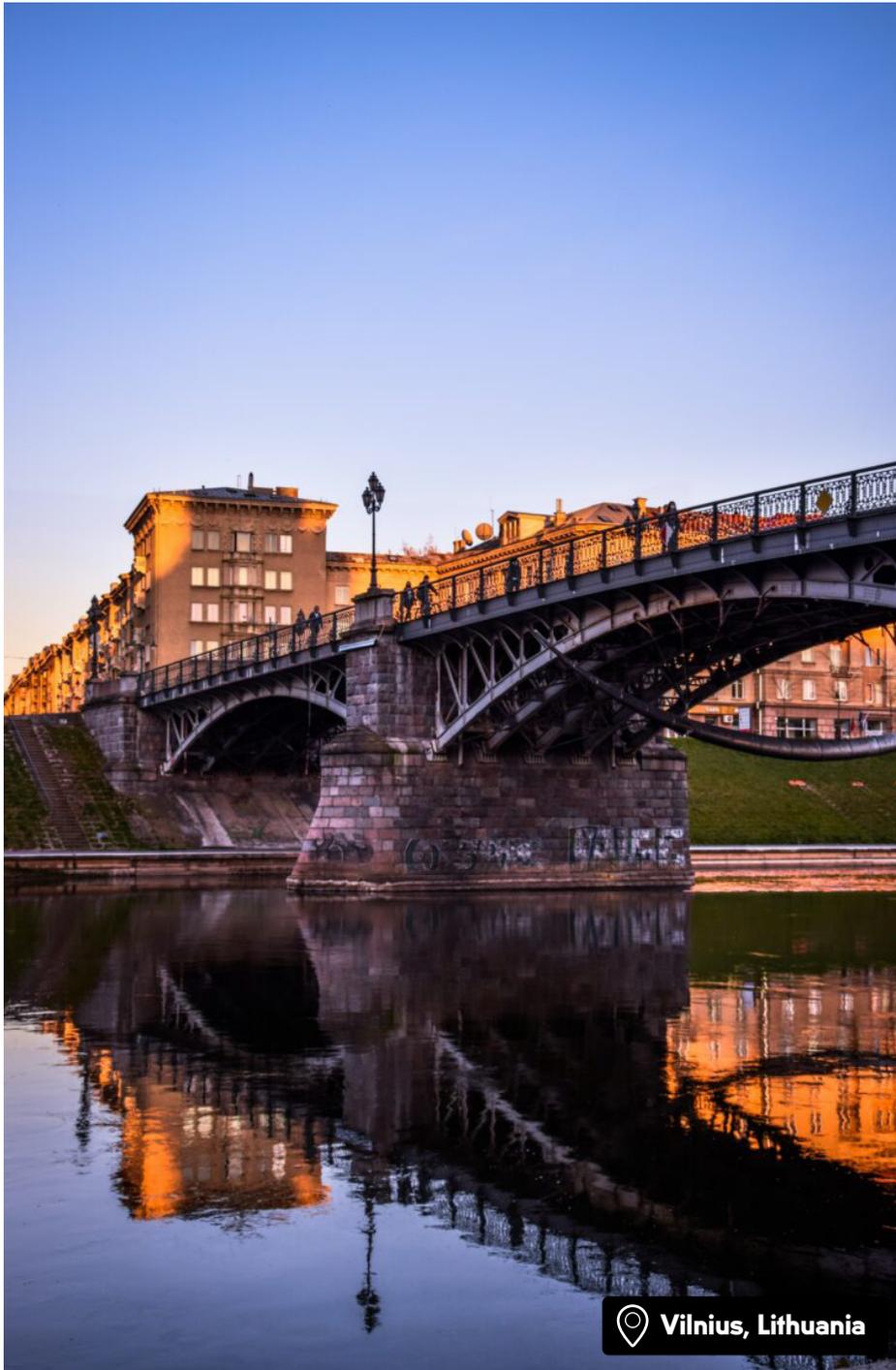
LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY

Lithuania took over the Presidency of the CBSS from Denmark, and its chairmanship was devoted to four achievable, practical and visible priorities:

- sustainable development, especially in the field of developing green industry;
- green and maritime tourism as important sector in reviving regional economy, increasing the Region's visibility, giving employment opportunities to young people;
- civil protection in the Region, strengthening resilience in the Region against major emergencies and disasters;
- fight against human trafficking for labour exploitation in the Region, as well as prevention of violence against children

Outcomes:

- The Baltic Sea Region Foreign Ministers and High-Level Representatives met to discuss and adopt the Vilnius II declaration and to endorse the CBSS Action Plan 2021-2025
- Renewed mandate for the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy



Vilnius, Lithuania

Ministerial Meeting

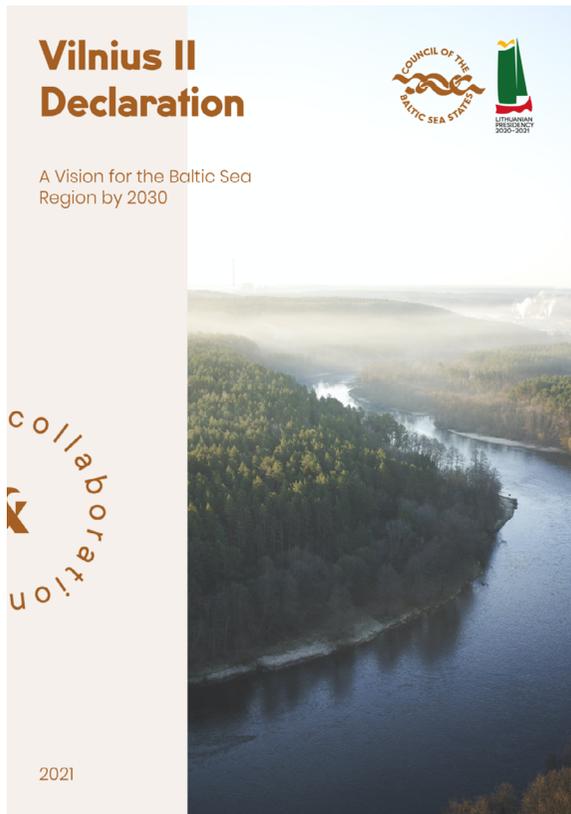
On June 1st 2021, the Foreign Ministers and High-Level Representatives of the Council of the Baltic Sea States met online to conclude the Lithuanian Presidency of the organisation, and to discuss and adopt a renewed strategic vision for the Baltic Sea Region cooperation. The meeting was organised by the Lithuanian Presidency of the CBSS and chaired by the Lithuanian Foreign Minister, Mr. Gabrielius Landsbergis.

The Ministers emphasised the importance of the common values underlying the Baltic Sea Region collaboration: democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. CBSS Ministers also reconfirmed their commitment to continue to support young people's engagement in the region's policy-making. Young people have prepared and presented their own vision for the Baltic Sea Region to the Ministers, developed at the CBSS Ministerial: Youth Edition.

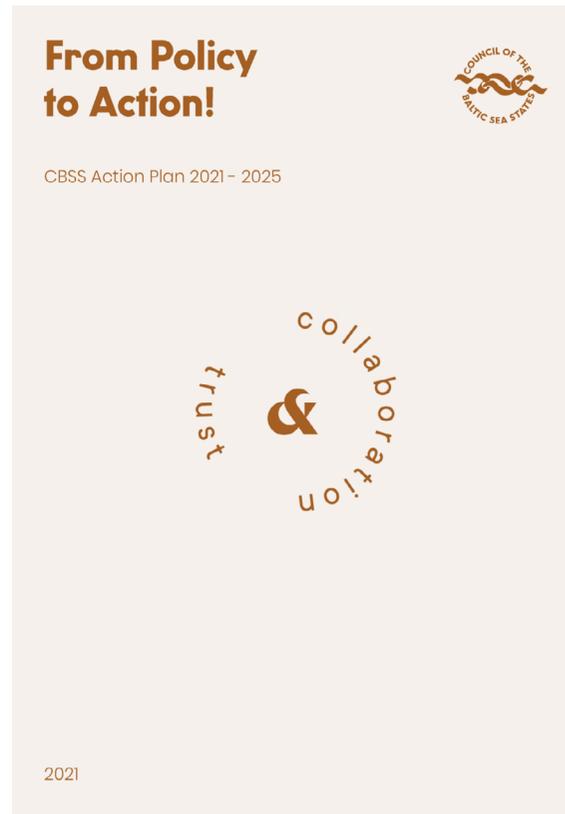


Gabrielius Landsbergis,
Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs,





The renewed strategic vision – the Vilnius II Declaration – was adopted by the Ministers and will guide the CBSS and other regional organisations in the coming decade in their efforts to build collaboration and trust in the Baltic Sea Region.



The Foreign Ministers and High-Level Representatives also endorsed an action plan, which outlines concrete activities and steps that the Secretariat of the CBSS will implement in all its three long-term priorities to fulfill the vision stated in the Vilnius II Declaration.



Presidency Highlights

There has been progress in all of the Presidency's four priorities:

- **sustainable development, especially in the field of developing green industry;**

“Sustainable and Green Transformations of the Resource Intensive Industry Sectors” was organised by Lithuanian Presidency of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD) – Baltic 2030 and hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of Lithuania together with the CBSS.

Read more about it in the “Sustainable & Prosperous Region” section ([p. 22](#)).

- **green and maritime tourism as important sector in reviving regional economy, increasing the Region's visibility, giving employment opportunities to young people;**

Sustainable tourism recovery and regional visibility were boosted by the first ever Baltic Sea Region Sustainable Tourism Award, presented at the 13th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum and young people's role in sustainable tourism was highlighted at the International Youth Tourism Forum.

Read more about it in the “Sustainable & Prosperous Region” section ([p. 22](#)).

- **civil protection in the Region, strengthening resilience in the Region against major emergencies and disasters;**

The Lithuanian Chairmanship of the CBSS Civil Protection Network hosted the Baltic Excellence Programme (BEP) Seminar Baltic Sea Region: acting together against nuclear risk.

Red more about it in the “Safe & Secure Region” section ([p. 13](#)).



- **fight against human trafficking for labour exploitation in the Region, as well as prevention of violence against children;**

In the area of wellbeing of children, the Lithuanian Presidency took leadership on promoting children's emotional health in the Baltic Sea Region with the Children's emotional health: what achievements the countries can be proud of and what challenges remain unresolved conference.

Further focus on children's safety was put at the Expert Group on Children at Risk and Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings conference, where 200 experts gathered online to discuss trafficking in digital environments.

Commitment to combat trafficking for labour exploitation was reaffirmed by the Member States by signing a Joint Statement of Commitment at the CAPE project conference on the same topic.

Read more about it in the "Safe & Secure Region" section ([p. 13](#)).

Spotlight on Youth

Efforts to strengthen young people's engagement in the Baltic Sea Region continued under the Lithuanian Presidency. At the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) local event "Integration of migrants and labor mobility" held at the CBSS Secretariat, those participating had a chance to get to know more about macro-regional strategies and discuss their views on more effective integration of foreign labourers into local labour markets.

Young people also had the chance to present their ideas, elaborated at this year's Baltic Sea Youth Camp, to the decision-makers at the CBSS co-organised EUSBSR Annual Forum.

Read more about it in the "Regional Identity" section.





Committee of Senior Officials

The CBSS Committee of Senior Officials met six times during the Lithuanian Presidency. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic all of the meetings took place online. The Committee focused its work on the Vilnius II Declaration and the CBSS Action Plan.

The Lithuanian Presidency team consisted of **Ms. Kornelija Jurgaitiene**, Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials, **Mr. Tomas Irnius**, Lithuanian representative in the Committee of Senior Officials and **Mr. Adomas Leonavicius**, Secretary at the Lithuanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

New Director General of the Secretariat

The Council of the Baltic Sea States welcomed former Ambassador of Poland to Estonia, Mr. Grzegorz Marek Poznański as its new Director General September 1st 2020. Mr. Poznański, a Polish national, succeeded the former Director General Ambassador Maria Mora, a Latvian national who completed her tenure in August 2020. Even before joining the CBSS, Director General Grzegorz Poznański was familiar with the work of the Council and has been involved in its activities through coordinating the Polish presidency of the CBSS in 2015-2016.

“Throughout my career, whenever I worked with issues specific to the Baltic Sea Region I encountered a special partnership between the countries of the Region, no matter what issues were discussed. From discussing sustainability to chemical weapons dumped in the Baltic Sea, the sense of working together persisted. So “balticness” grew within me throughout the years and I am very happy that as the CBSS Director General I have the privilege to be at the heart of the Baltic Sea Region co-operation.”

*CBSS Secretariat Director General
Grzegorz Marek Poznański*

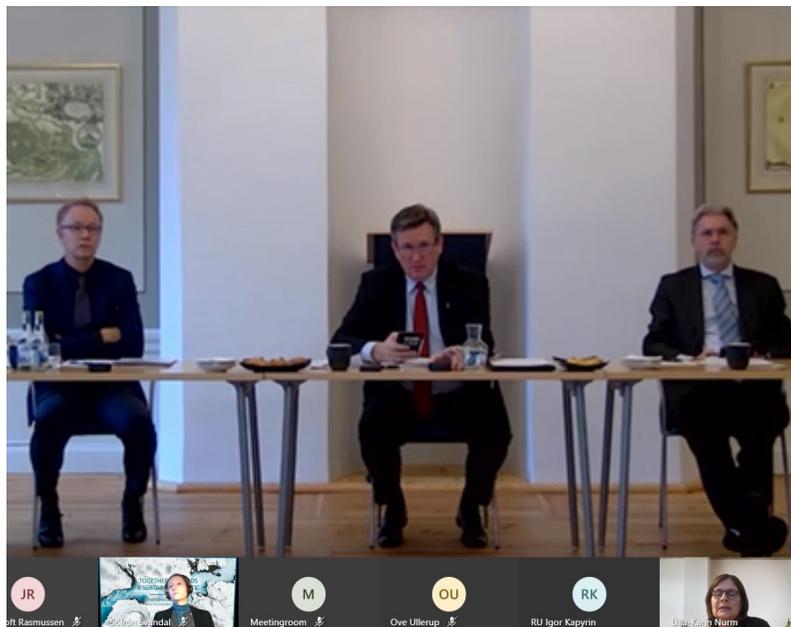


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The State of Regional Co-operation

During the Lithuanian Presidency, existing regional cooperation was enhanced and new ways of collaboration were established. The Annual Forum for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBR) was co-organized by the CBSS and the City of Turku with the help of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Within intra-regional cooperation, CBSS hosted the annual meeting of the Four Regional Councils of the North: Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers, and the CBSS, as well as the annual Observer States briefing. An introductory meeting was held with the Association of Caribbean States, to learn more about regional co-operation all over the world and share good practices.

Strengthening the CBSS long-term goals of fighting trafficking and protecting children, the CBSS became a part of UN's Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons, joined the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and the CBSS Children at Risk PROMISE Barnahus Network became a partner of EU Victim's Rights Platform. First steps were also taken towards a Baltic Leadership Programme on Neighbours, concerning co-operation between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the Strategy for North-Western Russia.



LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY 2020-2021

Regional Identity



 Vilnius, Lithuania

YOUTH

Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue

Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue took on a different form: that of a competition on the topic of Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue 2020 – let's create a sustainable future together! Young people, aged between 18 and 30, from the region competed in three categories: Creative writing, Graphic Design and Project Idea to vision a sustainable future for the Baltic Sea Region.

In total, 51 submissions were received and three winners in each category, selected by knowledgeable juries in the field of arts, literature and science, were announced and celebrated at a virtual award ceremony. 10 best entries in each category were also included in the Let's Create a Sustainable Future Together! publication.

“This is a story about and for the sea – a big friend for people like me, who breathe salty air from the very beginning.”

*Alise Ilena,
Winner of the essay competition*



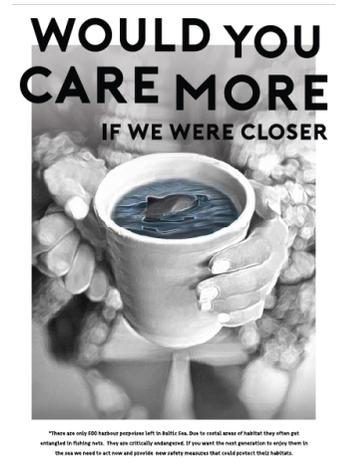
Fenja Neumann won the project idea competition with her sustainable consumption concept.



1st place in the poster competition: Gustė Mergiūnciūtė



2nd place in the poster competition: Greta Radzevičiūtė



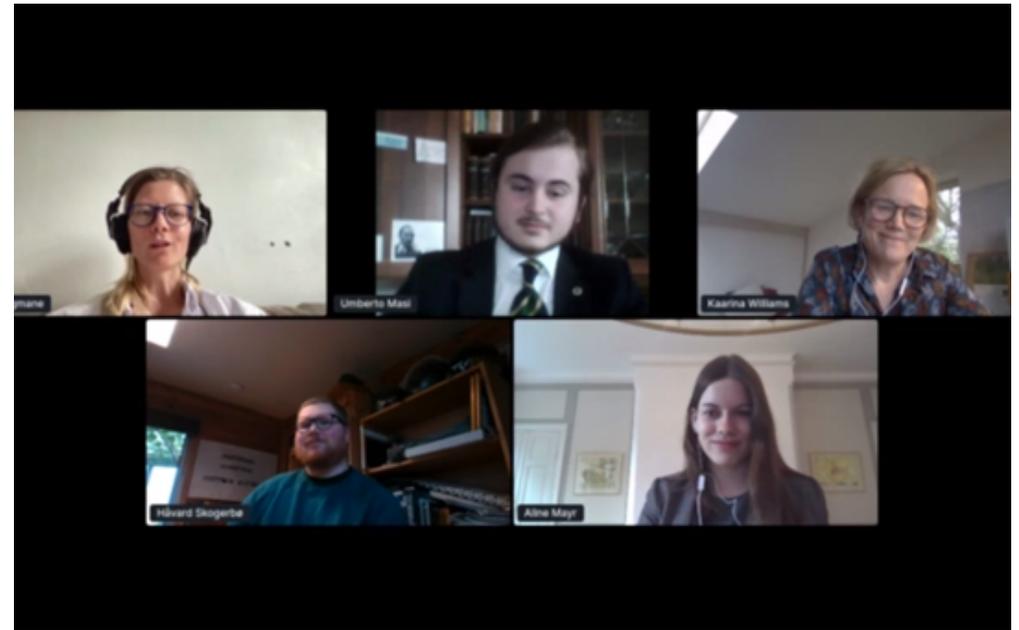
3rd place in the poster competition: Ania Wojcik

Baltic Sea Youth Camp 2.0

Just like last year, the Baltic Sea Youth Camp had to take place virtually. But nothing stopped young people getting together to contribute meaningfully to the future of the Baltic Sea Region.

Participants discussed the current issues and future ones concerning the Baltic Sea Region and invited decisionmakers and experts to get an in-depth knowledge about the region. Discussions led to formulation of priorities within the policymaking of the Baltic Sea Region. Put together by the young participants at the camp, their demands were set out in the Baltic Sea Youth Declaration. The Declaration was presented to the Baltic Sea Region policy and decision-makers at the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) Annual Forum.

During the Annual Forum, **Aline Mayr** from the CBSS represented the BSYP and the voice of youth during the panel discussion “**Working together, merging knowledge and skills! Emerging areas of joint, multidisciplinary actions**”.



CULTURE

Culture4Climate

Arts and culture have the power to not only help us understand, but also to make the connections beyond borders and national or political limits. In 2021, the CBSS joined the seed-money project Culture4Climate (C4C) which aims to encourage environmental action among cultural and education institutions in the Region by offering a certification of progress towards climate action among participating organisations.



Cultural Cities

Another seed-money project of which the CBSS is a lead partner, Baltic Sea Cultural Cities, has prevailed and flourished despite the pandemic, with more partners joining the consortium. The project focuses on the co-creation of cultural activities by citizens themselves, involving especially young people and those from often overlooked parts of society.

Throughout the year, the focus was on funding options to take the project from seed-money phase to a full-fledged project programme. To that end, several fruitful meetings with project partners were held, including participating in the 13th PA Culture Project Development Workshop “Perspectives on Funding for Culture in the BSR” and conducting our own digital workshop with an external consultancy to map out appropriate funding options within the region.



HIGHER EDUCATION

Summer Universities

CBSS accepted five summer university programme applications from Saint Petersburg State University of Economics (UNECON), Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, University of Tartu (two programmes) and Vytautas Magnus University. Because of ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and uncertainty, some applicants decided to cancel their summer university programmes.

However, the Saint Petersburg State University of Economics (UNECON) summer university programme, supported by DAAD, was held on 16–30 August, with speakers from the CBSS (**Senior Adviser for Sustainable & Prosperous Region Daria Akhutina, Chairperson of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials Olav Berstad, Chairperson of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME) Marit Blegeberg Østmo, and Senior Advisor for Regional Identity Thorvaldur Kristjansson**).

The Johan Skytte Institute of the University of Tartu will also hold a special autumn school in Narva, Estonia, 1–6 November 2021, entitled “Governance, Leadership, Resilience: German and Estonian Experiences in the European Context”. The school is supported by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Estonia.



New Senior Adviser

**Regional Identity
Senior Adviser
Thorvaldur
Kristjansson**



In February, Mr. Thorvaldur Kristjansson, an Icelandic national, took over the role as Senior Adviser for the Regional Identity priority area from Ms. Kaarina Williams from Germany and Finland. Watch the video to hear more about Mr. Kristjansson and his ideas for Regional Identity.

LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY 2020-2021

SAFE & SECURE REGION



 Dzūkija, Lithuania

TASK FORCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Joint Statement to Combat Trafficking for Labour Exploitation

CBSS Member States reaffirmed their commitment to combat and prevent trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation by adopting a Joint Statement of Commitment. The Statement was launched at the CAPE project conference on the same topic.

The Baltic Sea Region, together as a team, is committed to build our economies and lives free from exploitation and based on fundamental values such as freedom, equality and dignity.

The Joint Statement incorporates main findings from research work, it is based on consultations with all relevant state authorities and civil society organisations in our Member States and it confirms that the priorities listed in the Joint Statement are in line with the national goals and actions plans to prevent and fight trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation.

We hope that the Joint Statement of Commitment will be a road map and enable our Member States to support each other, to learn from and encourage each other even more.



Expert Group Meeting

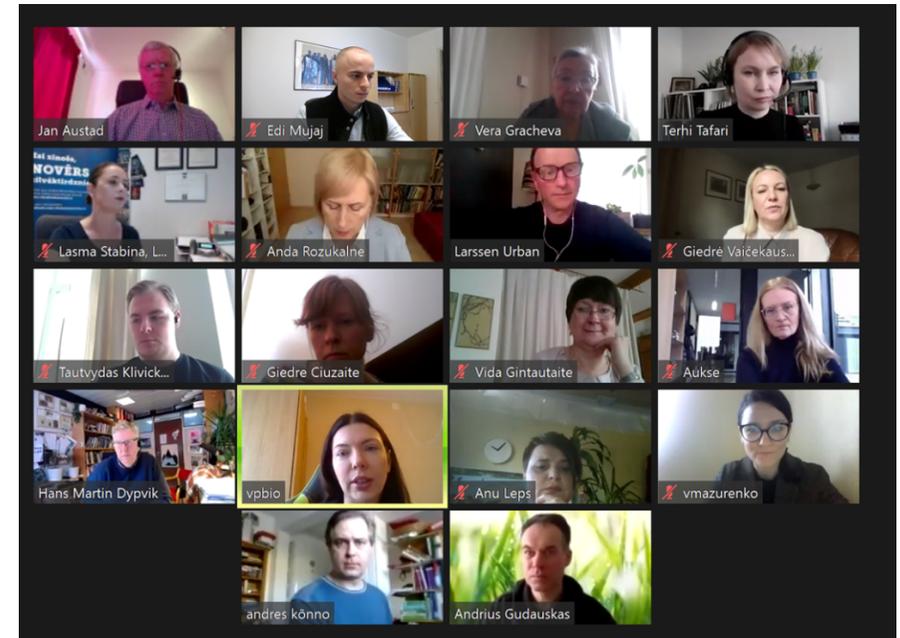
On 9 November 2020, the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) gathered for the first meeting of the Lithuanian CBSS Presidency. The meeting was opened by **Česlovas Mulma**, the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Interior of Lithuania, **Kornelija Jurgaitienė**, Ambassador-at-Large and chair of the Lithuanian Presidency of the CBSS and **Grzegorz Poznański**, Director General of the CBSS Secretariat.

Ms Jurgaitienė presented the goals of the Lithuanian CBSS Presidency and the main task to seek ways of turning regional challenges into opportunities. One of the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency was finding ways to protect those most vulnerable in our societies, such as those at risk of human trafficking for labour exploitation and children at risk of violence.

New Project: THALIA

In October 2020 new project *Towards thoughtful, informed, and compassionate journalism in covering human trafficking* (THALIA) was introduced. THALIA was created to establish a long-term cooperation with human trafficking stakeholders and universities in order to raise the competence of future journalists in the Baltic Sea Region on the topic of human trafficking. Participating countries include Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Norway, Russia, Sweden and Ukraine. THALIA is funded by the Swedish Institute (SI) and the CBSS Project Support Facility.

The first project meeting took place in March, when the TF-THB, in collaboration with the Södertörn University, gathered partners and teachers of journalism from universities in Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Sweden and Ukraine involved in the THALIA project. During the meeting, the universities stated the relevance of the project goals to focus on the role of mass media and journalism in framing Human Trafficking and underlined the need to apply journalistic theories on the topic and raise awareness on this form of organised crime among future journalists.

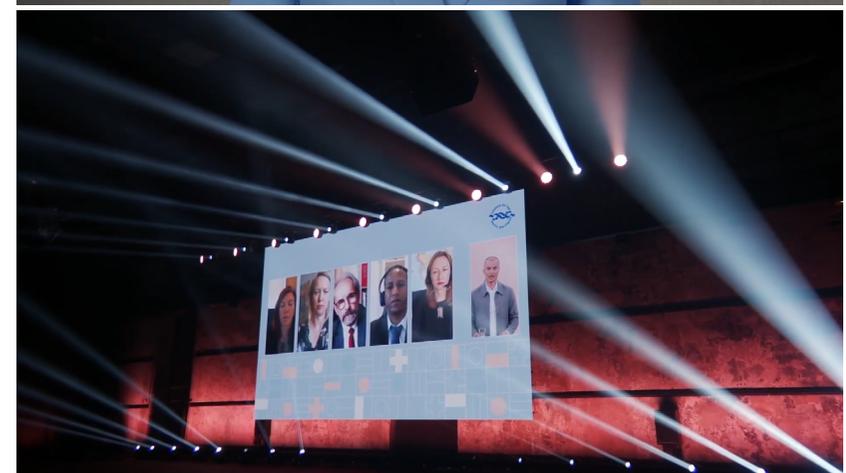


CAPE Project

Apart from the final conference, a panel discussion and a webinar were also organised within the framework of “Competence building, Assistance provision and Prosecution of labour exploitation cases in the Baltic Sea Region” (CAPE) project. The aim of CAPE is to support relevant national and local authorities in the Baltic Sea Region in combating and prosecuting cases of forced labour and labour exploitation as well as assisting victims of this form of human trafficking.

The Panel Discussion *Hidden Truths: Recruitment Practices and Human Trafficking* was attended by approximately 50 professionals from the CBSS Member states, such as Police, Social services, NGOs and Migration agencies and four studies from Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland were presented. These four studies focused on recruitment practices of labour migrants in countries of origin and examined different forms that human trafficking for labour exploitation takes in destination countries.

The webinar (in Swedish) was organized in October, where Associate Professor at Örebro Universitet, **Märta Johansson**, presented the findings of the report “Human Trafficking for forced labour and labour exploitation in the Swedish labour market: An overview of Swedish court cases”. The report provides an overview of existing court cases and how international law and Swedish law are interpreted in courts. The webinar was held in Swedish and was attended by approximately 30 Swedish stakeholders, such as the Migration Agency, Prosecution Authority, Police and Social services.



CHILDREN AT RISK

Conference “Trafficking in the Digital Era”

The purpose of the conference was to shed light on how technology facilitates trafficking in children, who the victims are, and what the impact is on children who are trafficked, and to learn more about identification, investigation, safe paths to recovery and justice for children.

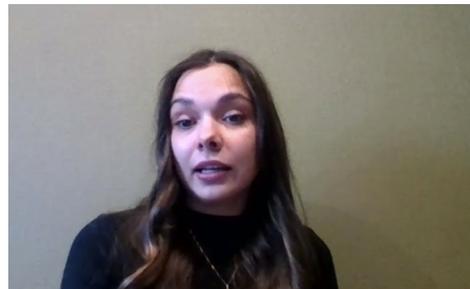
Speakers included Agnė Bilotaitė, Lithuanian Minister of Interior; Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs; Petya Nestorova, Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Cathal Delaney, Head of Team Analysis Project Twins at Europol and a series of experienced researchers and practitioners.

In an ongoing CBSS effort to involve young people in all aspect of decision-making and problem-solving in the Baltic Sea Region, a youth panel shared their perspectives throughout the conference as well.



“In the context of the recent pandemic, the digital space has become one of the main means of communication for children. <...> Human trafficking has once again revealed its unpredictable nature. It is our common responsibility to act appropriately and protect the minors”

*Agnė Bilotaitė,
Minister of Interior of Lithuania*



Conference on Children's Emotional Health

The conference was opened by the Minister of Social Security and Labour Linas Kukuraitis and included speakers from the Lithuanian Pupil's Union, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania.

The conference also marked the start of the first two-day meeting of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk under the Lithuanian Presidency. The Expert Group shared updates and national data, lessons learnt, good practices on protecting children's emotional wellbeing and building resilient national child protection services, especially in times of crisis.



New Projects

In November 2019, the Thematic Working groups of the project met at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm to launch the project's implementation phase. The event marked the beginning of the work for the two thematic working groups "Age Management and Working Conditions" and "Future Job Opportunities for an Ageing Work Force, including Entrepreneurship". The groups will identify good practices and assess ongoing initiatives to come up with actionable policy recommendations to better address the demographic challenges of ageing populations and lower fertility rates and their effects on the labour markets in the Baltic Sea Region. The groups will further focus on finding measures to strengthen synergies between education and employment for people aged 55+ in order to meet the skills requirements of the future labour market in the region.

Children emotional health:
what achievements the countries
can be proud of and what challenges
remain unresolved

Vaikų emocinė gerovė:
kokiais pasiekimais šalys gali didžiuotis
ir kokie iššūkiai lieka neišspręsti

November 5th, 2020, starts at 10.00 GMT +2
2020 m. lapkričio 5 d., pradžia 10 val.

Lithuanian Republic
socialinė apsauga
ir darbo ministerija

BALTIC SEA REGION

Children
at Risk

CIVIL SECURITY

Civil Protection Network Meets Online to Discuss COVID-19 Challenges

On 17 March 2021, the CBSS Civil Protection Network (CPN) Senior Experts Meeting was organised and led by the Lithuanian Presidency and the chair of the Civil Protection Network. The theme of the meeting was 'Covid-19 outbreak: challenges for civil protection and lessons learned'. Welcoming words were presented by the Director of the Lithuanian Fire and Rescue Service, Mr. **Saulius Greičius** and opening address was given by The Director General of the CBSS Secretariat, Ambassador **Grzegorz Poznański**. Many of the participants agreed that the pandemic has highlighted the need for increased cooperation – both between different national agencies and between the public and private sector – as well as between neighbouring countries.

19th Meeting of the Directors General for Civil Protection in the BSR

On 2 June 2021, the Lithuanian chairmanship of the CBSS Civil Protection Network (CPN) hosted the 19th Meeting of the Directors General for Civil Protection in the Baltic Sea Region. This online gathering concluded the yearlong Lithuanian chairmanship, which was dedicated to preparedness and prevention actions against nuclear risk as well as the lessons learned from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Welcoming words were delivered by the Director of the Lithuanian Fire and Rescue Service, Mr. **Saulius Greičius**, who highlighted the continuous need for cooperation across the region. Ambassador **Grzegorz Poznański**, Director General of the CBSS, gave an opening address in which he also stressed the importance of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.





Lithuanian Chairmanship Seminar on Nuclear Risk

The seminar *Baltic Sea Region: Acting Together Against Nuclear Risk* focused on Information Management (presented by **Edgaras Geda**, Chief of the Civil Protection Board, Fire and Rescue Department under the Lithuanian Ministry of Interior), Decision making and protective measures (by **Ernestas Trunovas**, Chief of the Population Protection Division, Fire and Rescue Department under the Lithuanian Ministry of Interior), and Recommendations to the public (Ieva Gatelytė, Chief Specialist of the Population Protection Division, Fire and Rescue Department under the Lithuanian Ministry of Interior).

Overall conclusions for the Baltic Sea Region included working on practical arrangements, having a common approach to information sharing and coordination, better communication to the public in the CBSS area and re-establishing CBSS Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety.

New Project on Protecting Society from Hazardous Substances

CBSS Secretariat joined a new project **NET-CBRN-REAC**, funded by the **European Union Civil Protection**. Led by the International Centre for Chemical Safety and Security (Poland), the project aims to bring together experts from **Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Germany, Lithuania, Moldova and Latvia** to develop a Knowledge Network: an inclusive platform for shared expertise, good practices and contacts in order to establish common understanding and shared culture of prevention, preparedness and response in civil protection and CBRN disaster risk management.



CASCADE Final Conference

Final conference on CASCADE project, conducted between 2019 and 2021, was held on 8 June 2021. CBSS Secretariat was a partner in the project, responsible for organising a region-wide policy dialogue on the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – the global plan to prevent new risks and reduce existing risks of hazards such as droughts, wildfires and floods. The Climate Risk Preparedness Toolbox launched during the final conference summarises the results of the project and consists of simple, easy-to-use checklists, templates, and useful examples for climate-related risk assessment.



“I cannot emphasise enough the importance of the work the CBSS does in the Baltic Sea Region regionalising the Sendai Framework... We would like to encourage the CBSS to continue regional cooperation around local resilience!”

*Andrew Bower,
UN DRR Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia,
Keynote Speech at the CASCADE final conference*

LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY 2020-2021

SUSTAINABLE & PROSPEROUS REGION



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & CLIMATE

Sustainable & Green Transformations Conference

The conference “Sustainable & Green Transformations” was opened by **Vice-Minister of the Environment of Lithuania, Raminta Radavičienė**, and CBSS Director General Grzegorz Poznański. The conference brought in global, regional, and European perspectives, good practices from the private sector, young people’s efforts to make our region greener as well as scientific and research voices from the academia, outlining ways forward. The keynotes were delivered by United Nations Group of Scientists’ professor Jurgis Staniškis and the European Commission Director responsible for Circular Economy and Green Growth Kęstutis Sadauskas. The local level perspective was presented by Jørgen Kristiansen from Kristiansand in Norway, member of the Union of the Baltic Cities.



Climate Change Dialogue 2020: Integrated Coastal Protection



The CBSS Baltic Sea Region Climate Policy Dialogue had its 10th roundtable meeting to take a closer look at the CASCADE project outputs on new and emerging climate risks with particular focus on integrated coastal protection. CASCADE project highlights that only five of the Baltic Sea Region countries have included flooding or extreme weather event related cascading effects for Critical Infrastructure in their National Risk Assessments.

Roundtable participants exchanged experiences on how coastal erosion issues are currently addressed in various Baltic Sea Region countries and emphasized the need for more cooperation among the relevant authorities to learn from best practices to increase resilience of coastal regions. To reduce the risk of flooding and coast erosion in the years to come, innovative, nature-based solutions are necessary and both spatial and investment planning must take into account long-term climate risk projections.

Baltic Sea Sustainable Tourism Award

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the tourism industry hard. To stimulate sustainable recovery, most sustainable destination (Pärnu City, Estonia), service (Sinatur Hotel & Konferens, Denmark) and service provider (Aavameri Sea Kayaking, Finland) were honoured at the award ceremony during the 13th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum, online from Palanga, Lithuania. A high-level meeting of ministry representatives of tourism departments of the Baltic Sea States dedicated to tourism recovery measures also took place on the 13th of November as part of the Forum.

“The principles of sustainable tourism are becoming increasingly relevant and the COVID-19 pandemic has enabled us to pay more attention to their value: we start to better understand nature, people and the region and so we create and offer tourism products more responsibly. I believe that truly the best ones were announced and awarded today, and the sustainable tourism competition initiated by Lithuania will gain momentum and be announced annually.”

*Rimantas Sinkevičius
Minister of the Economy and Innovation, Lithuania*

International Youth Tourism Forum

The 2nd International Youth Forum ‘Quo Vadis Tourism? COVID-19 impact on the role of sustainability in tourism’, was held online on 7 May where young people, realising their stake in the tourism sector of the Region, discussed how to develop the Baltic Sea Region into an attractive sustainable travel location and what they can do to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as well as proposals on the topic for a new forward-looking ‘Vision of the Baltic Sea Region until 2030’ Vilnius Declaration.



SUSTAINABLE MARITIME ECONOMY

Electrifying Potential: Shore-Side Power Generation in the BSR

More than 130 participants registered for the Electrifying Potential conference organized by the Danish Maritime Authority in conjunction with the Danish Ministry of Environment and Food the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy, and EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Ship.

The conference gathered representatives from the EU Commission, governmental, local authorities and business representatives, who shared practical experiences of using shore-side power generation technology. Investment and power supply capacity challenges were highlighted.



“Shore-side power is a solution that can give an immediate positive impact on the local communities around our ports in the Baltic Sea Region.”

*Lea Wermelin
Minister for Environment,
Denmark*

Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy Mandate Extended to 2024

The final meeting of the CBSS Expert group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME) under the Lithuanian chairmanship took place on 9 June in an extended format.

The essential part of the meeting was dedicated to the important updates from strategic partners: HELCOM, EU DG Mare and VASAB, sharing with their latest strategic visions that will serve as a framework for the sector in the whole Baltic Sea Region.

The Norwegian presidency's priorities for the EGSME in 2021-2022 will be based on the White paper on the Norwegian maritime policy Greener and smarter – tomorrow's maritime industry, launched in December 2020, which highlights green shipping and digitalization, and thus continues on the same line of priorities of previous presidencies. In that regard, discussions on policies as well as industrial initiatives on green shipping and digitalization will take place.

Baltic Sea Marinas

Guest harbour associations from the Baltic Sea Region and partners of the “Baltic Sustainable Boating” project, financed by the Swedish Institute, gathered for the first meeting in a series of webinars in March to exchange views on a guest harbour overview, produced by the Swedish Union of Guest harbours.

Among the issues, the need for common definition for “guest harbours” and regional differences were discussed. Opportunities for dialogue within the international/regional dimension and further development of the overview was suggested. To that end, a Baltic Sea Region Guest Harbour Guide will be elaborated by the project, as well as a plan of measures for the creation of a common quality mark for the region’s guest harbours



LABOUR

Sustainable Working Life Project

The European Social Fund (ESF) funded Sustainable Working Life project held four digital workshops in October and April and released a policy brief series, incorporating the ESF horizontal principles, based on the results. The workshops were attended by a total of 57 participants working with labour market issues and dealt with the topics of mobility, entrepreneurship, age management and lifelong learning for those aged 55+, with keynotes delivered by renowned researchers in the area from Poland, Finland, the Netherlands and Norway.

Through the Swedish Institute funded component of the project, two hybrid conferences were also held in St. Petersburg and a webinar was co-organised with Max Planck/Population Europe in June 2021.

The first hybrid event on the topic of “Remote work as a new reality” was held in the framework of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum annual round table. The event gathered expert speakers and participants from Russia (in-person) and 35 registered online participants from other BSR countries. The second event was a hybrid conference on Lifelong Learning, also held in St. Petersburg where prominent speakers from the region addressed the in-person and online participants.

SCIENCE

Baltic Sea Science Award

On the 16th of June the Baltic Sea Science 2021 Award Ceremony was taking place as part of the online Baltic Science Network final conference. The award was presented to three young scientists for their excellence in promoting the Council of the Baltic Sea States' Science, Research & Innovation Agenda through their research projects. Eleven research projects from around the Baltic Sea Region were submitted. The international award selection committee consisting of academia, public authorities and international organisations evaluated the projects according to selection criteria covering the aspects of regional coverage, sustainability and compliance with science, research and innovation strategies.

The committee selected the following three scientists and projects as winners of the Baltic Sea Science Award 2021:

Evaldas Makrickas from the Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania and his research on “Assessment and Spatial Planning for Peatland Conservation and Restoration: Europe’s Trans-Border Neman River Basin as a Case Study in Life Science “

Marta Skorek from the University of Gdańsk, Poland and her research on “Discourse shapes marine space: Representations of the macro-regional governance of the Baltic Sea and their social-ecological implications”

Jordi Hintzen from University of Southern Denmark and his research on “Actin methylation by histidine methyltransferase SETD3: mechanism, scope and inhibition”

Baltic Science Network Final Conference

The Baltic Science Network project ended on 31 July 2021. On 16 June 2021 over a hundred high-ranking representatives from science, politics and civil society gathered online to exchange ideas about the opportunities and potentials of scientific cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, and to discuss main outcomes and the way forward for the Baltic Science Network. In this context, a new vision was presented, which should guide the course to enhanced competitiveness and excellence of the Baltic Sea science region and contribute to the realisation of the European Research Area. The “BSN Vision 2030 Future of science and research cooperation in the BSR” document was endorsed at the conference.



LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY 2020-2021

PROJECT SUPPORT FACILITY



Last year's PSF call focused on projects that put safety and security at the centre of Baltic Sea regional cooperation and strive to strengthen the resilience of the region. 12 eligible, high-quality applications were received. The following 5 projects were chosen by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials to be awarded funding of up to 65 000 Euros each:



A SAFE PLACE

Lead Partner: Active Youth Association in partnership with Lithuania, Sweden, Latvia, Poland

The project aims to address the widespread phenomenon of domestic violence in the Baltics, to support women who are increasingly victims of violence during the ongoing worldwide pandemic and to educate and train people working with domestic violence.



RURAL CULTURAL PLANNING (RURCULTURAL)

Lead Partner: Danish Cultural Institute in partnership with Denmark, Latvia, Russia

RuralCulturalPlanning is born out of the experience and knowledge accumulated in the ongoing Interreg BSR project UrbCulturalPlanning (2019-2021). The project seeks to support rural areas to unleash their full potential within municipality, community and cultural sector.



RESILIENT CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS AROUND THE BALTIC SEA

Lead Partner: The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and family Affairs (Bufdir) in partnership with Norway, Iceland, Estonia, Lithuania, Germany and Finland

The project is designed to support the implementation of the CAR strategic priority to bolster national child protection systems, and to address concerns regarding the impact of Covid-19 and other forms of crisis on the protection of children at risk.



BUILDING RESILIENT AND INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE MARITIME TOURISM IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Lead Partner: Fundacja Motus in partnership with Poland, Estonia and Lithuania

The overall objective of the project is to initiate the methodology and institutional framework for the future development of the resilient and inclusive cross-Baltic sustainable tourism through promoting sustainable and digital solutions applicable to the sector.



CREATIVE WAVES – BALTIC SISTERHOOD FOR CHANGE

Lead Partner: Intercult Productions ek.för. in partnership with Sweden, Poland and Estonia

The project objective is to empower representatives of vulnerable groups: women, youth and immigrants by bringing together traditional social relations and cultural activities with contemporary demands via innovative digital and cultural tools.



IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH MIGRANTS FOR CRISIS PREPAREDNESS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM COVID-19

Lead Partner: Tallinn University in partnership with Estonia, Finland and Latvia

This project aims at developing an appropriate communication plan, which can provide a quick response to the current crisis and future emergency situations in disseminating relevant information among migrant communities. It also seeks to strengthen cooperation between the states of the Sea Baltic Region to deal with cross-border emergencies.



CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE CRIMES IN MEDIA-COVERAGE: SUSTAINABLE MEDIA SUPPORT OF THE CSA CRIMES SURVIVORS IN BSR

Lead Partner: Stellit (Regional Public Organization of Social Projects in the Sphere of Population's Well-Being "Stellit") in partnership with Russia, Estonia and Germany

The objective of this project is to develop practical recommendations for journalists and other relevant stakeholders, to train key stakeholders, disseminate study results, and raise public awareness as well as to establish an international network of scientists, child protection stakeholders and media professionals for future collaboration, information and practice sharing.



CIVIC EDUCATION FOR RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES TO CRISES BY CREATING A SYSTEM OF MODERN TRAINING AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR CIVIL PROTECTION EDUCATORS

Lead Partner: Sejny Municipality in partnership with Poland, Lithuania and Germany

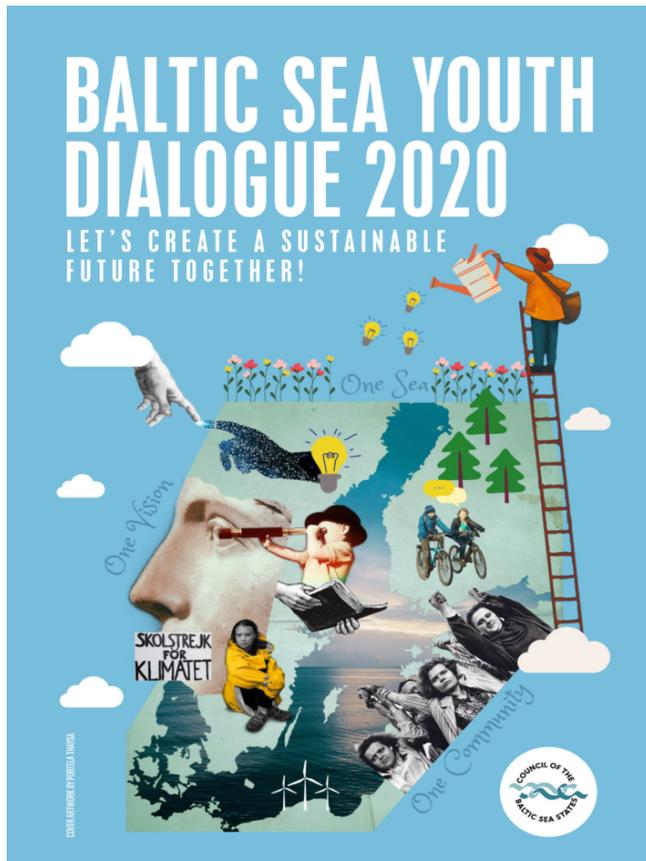
The aim of the project is to adopt a comprehensive concept of civic resilience. Resilience is seen as an intertwining of social, political, economic, environmental and military factors, not just as the ability to oppose conventional external aggression. Civil protection, by providing local resilience, is seen as the key for success in the project.

LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY 2020-2021

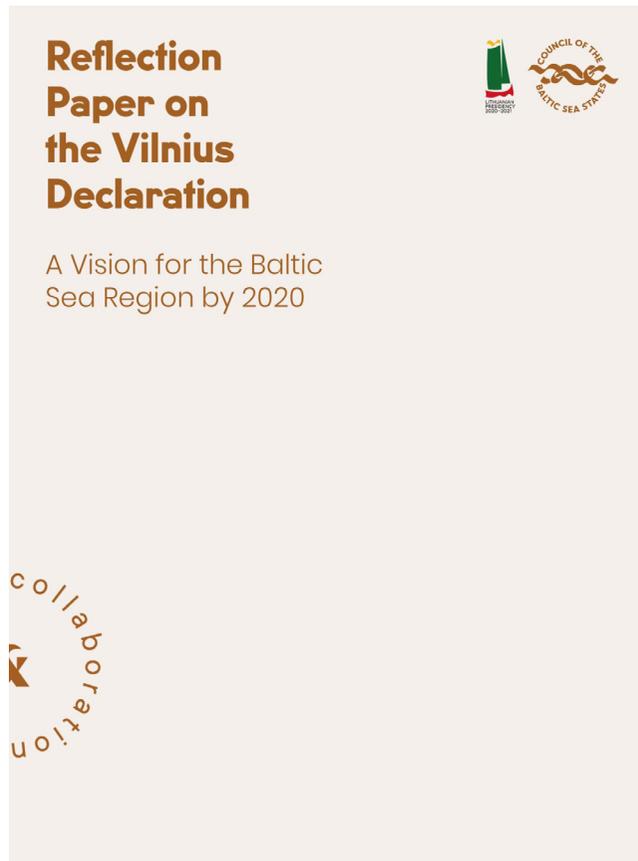
PUBLICATIONS

 Office complex in
Kaunas, Lithuania

The Year in Publications



Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue 2020 was different from the previous ones. Since we couldn't physically meet to discuss, socialise and make memories getting to know the Baltic Sea Region, we held a competition that resulted in an explosion of creativity!



The Vilnius Declaration – “A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020” (adopted in 2010) proposed twelve benchmarks for the region. This report examines the commitments by the governments of the CBSS member states in Vilnius in 2010 to “turn into reality” the twelve visionary statements.



EUSBSR Roadmap 2020–2030: Bank of Ideas concludes recommendations from three plenaries and from 13 different workshops held in EUSBSR Forum 2020, organised by the CBSS Secretariat, together with the City of Turku and in cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.



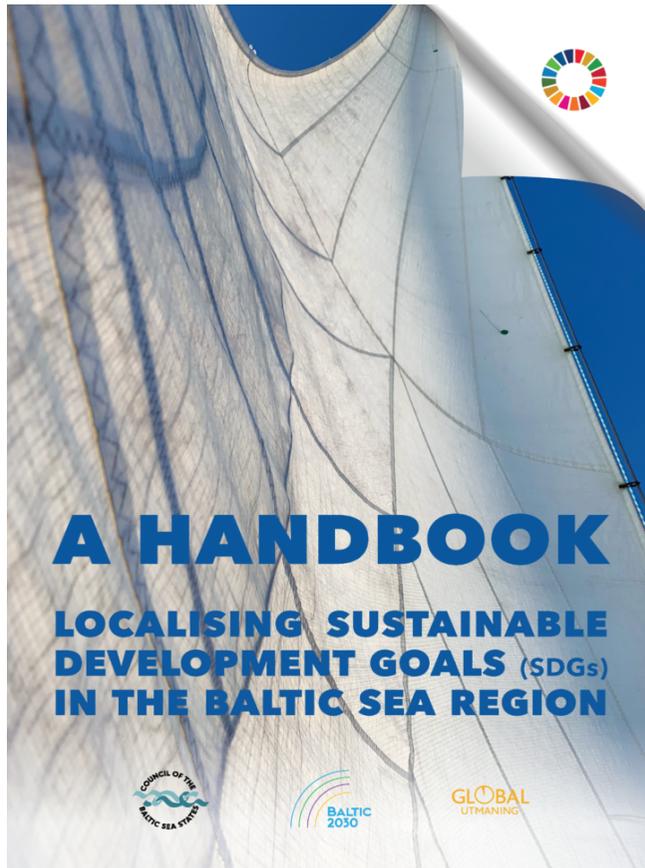
The Project CAPE addresses human trafficking (THB) for labour exploitation in all Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Member States. In 2020-2021 there were in total four publications within the project.



Baltic Sea Labour Forum for Sustainable Working Life aims to improve working life conditions and lifelong learning provisions, systems and policies for an elderly labour force in order to promote active ageing and employability. In 2020-2021 there were in total seven publications in the project.



This is the first in a series of reports that examines existing study programmes in the field of Societal Security and an analysis of the concrete curricula used in the degree programmes in the field of Societal Security in the Baltic Sea region.



The Handbook was produced based on two training sessions on Localising SDGs, where international local, municipal and regional representatives shared their experiences of advancing sustainability and circular economy in their own environments.



Report on whether Barnahus, or Barnahus like services, currently do or might play a role both in enhancing the identification, support and assistance provided to children who may have been trafficked and in supporting criminal investigations into cases of child trafficking.

