

LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY 2020-2021



 Kuršių Nerija, Lithuania



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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*

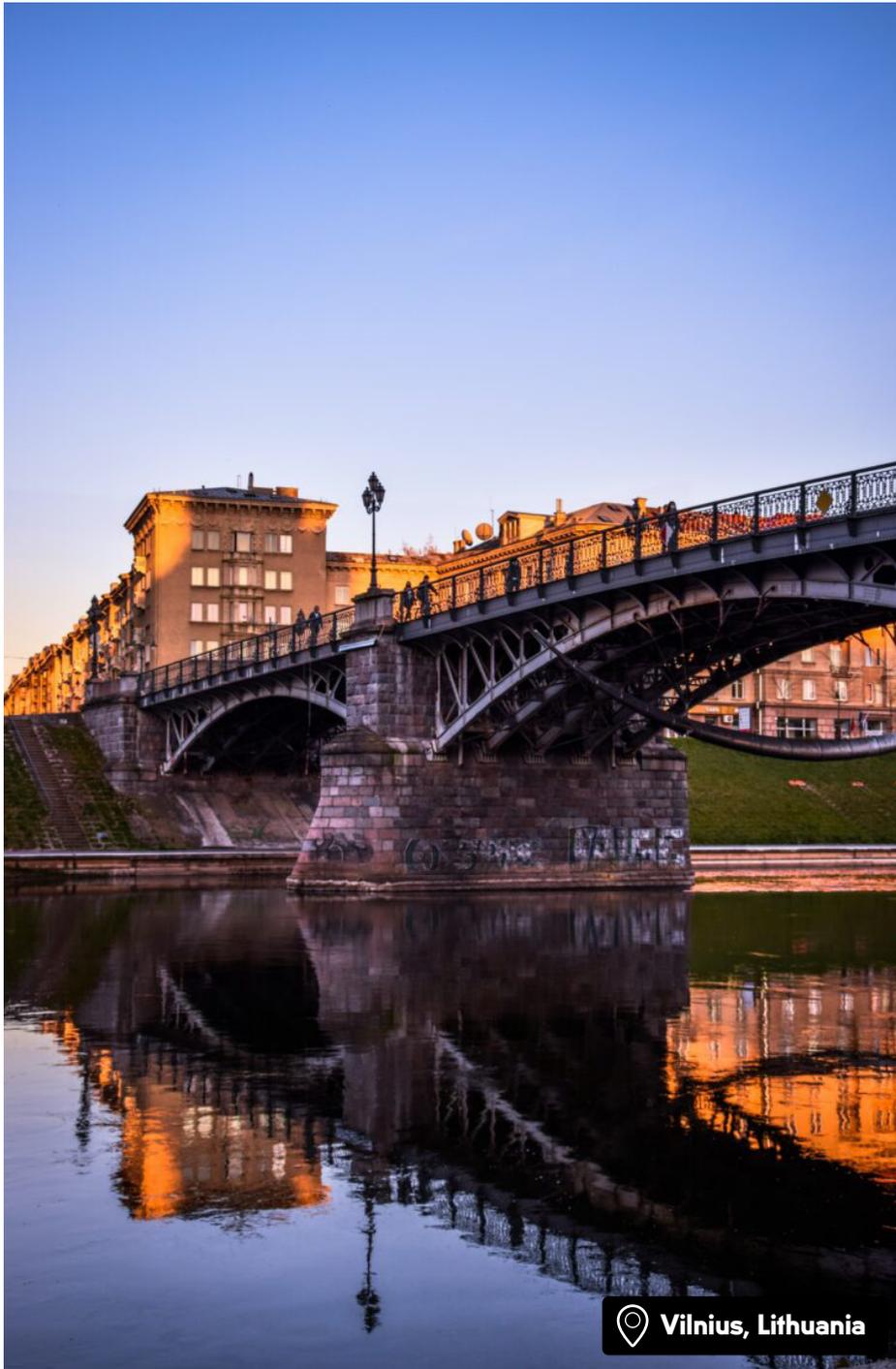
LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY

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

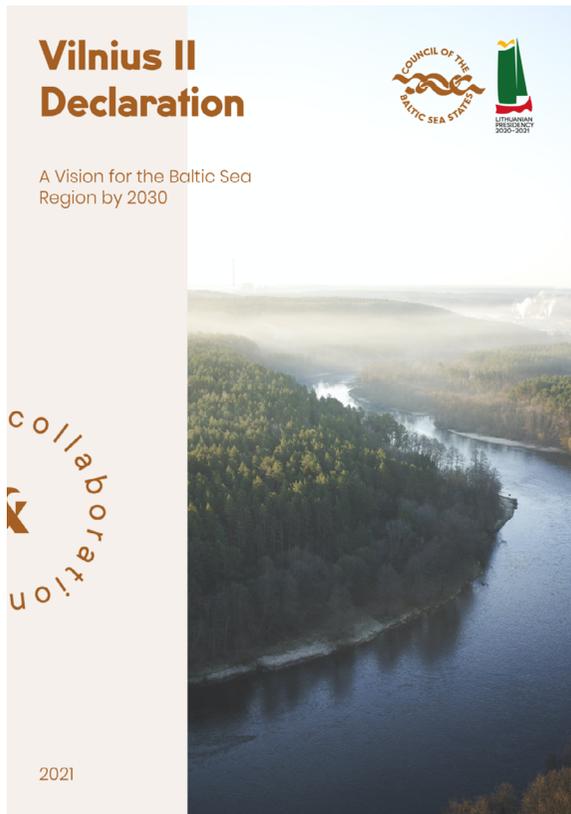
On June 1st 2021, the Foreign Ministers and High-Level Representatives of the Council of the Baltic Sea States met online to conclude the Lithuanian Presidency of the organisation, and to discuss and adopt a renewed strategic vision for the Baltic Sea Region cooperation. The meeting was organised by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

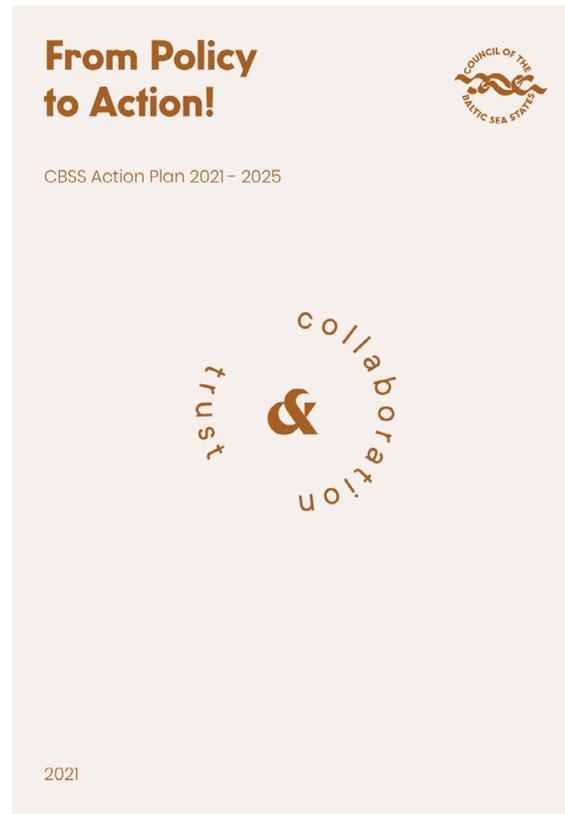


Gabrielius Landsbergis,
Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs,





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 (EUSBR) and the Strategy for North-Western Russia.

