



Norwegian Presidency 2021-2022



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The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) in a nutshell

The CBSS – originally 12 members, and now 11 – has developed and changed considerably since 1992. But its main purpose remains: to intensify cooperation and coordination among the Baltic Sea States on the basis of the principles laid down in the UN Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and other OSCE documents. The EU enlargement in the region has added substance to but not changed the Council's mission.

Since 1992, the Baltic Sea Region cooperation family has become broad and comprehensive. (Its "architecture" can be reviewed and analyzed on the Baltic Sea Region Links/CBSS portal.) The CBSS maintains close relations with the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Arctic Council (AC), the Northern Dimension and its four partnerships, Interreg and the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), HELCOM and VASAB, and the subregional organizations, primarily the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation (BSSSC) and the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions – Baltic Sea Commission (CPMR-BSC). There are currently eleven observer states to the Council.

The CBSS permanent international Secretariat was established in Stockholm in 1998 to facilitate cooperation and to support the Committee of Senior Officials, the CBSS expert groups and networks. In 2012 a CBSS Project Support Facility was established to co-finance the development and implementation of cooperation projects.

In 2014 the ministers decided to concentrate political and practical attention on three long-term priority areas: Regional identity; Safe & Secure Region; Sustainable & Prosperous

Region. A multi-year reflection and reform period was completed during the Danish presidency in 2019-20. The ministers *inter alia* reconfirmed the CBSS as a forum for both political dialogue and practical cooperation.

During the Lithuanian presidency in 2020-21, a revised Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2030 was adopted, representing a strengthened political commitment to fostering confidence and trust, and cooperation on a broad range of issues within the realm of the UN sustainable development agenda. In parallel a CBSS Action Plan 2021-25 was endorsed.

Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in 2014 forced a cooling down also of CBSS cooperation. Political level contact was reduced. No CBSS ministerial sessions were held, but parts of the political dialogue and practical cooperation agenda eventually resumed.

The renewed Russian aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, its blatant violation of international law, of the very essence of international relations and the European security order, led the other CBSS members on 3 March 2022 to suspend Russia until cooperation under the fundamental principles of international law would become possible again. CBSS observer Belarus was suspended because of its enabling role in the war against Ukraine.

On 17 May 2022 Russia formally notified its withdrawal from the CBSS, claiming that the other members had illegally excluded Russia and that the CBSS had been turned into a politicized instrument of anti-Russian policy.

The CBSS as a regional cooperation format remains open to renewed Russian participation, - if and when the conditions are met by fundamentally changed Russian policy, behaviour and action.





The CBSS turns 30

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) marked its 30th anniversary in 2022. The CBSS was established in Copenhagen, Denmark on 5 March 1992 during a meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of the countries of the Baltic Sea Region. The ministers were seeking to establish a regional cooperation platform in

response to the geopolitical changes that were taking place in the region with the end of the Cold War. Since then, by promoting “collaboration and trust”, the CBSS has facilitated cooperation on a wide range of issues such as regional identity, culture and youth, sustainable economic development, environmental protection, and safe and secure societies.



1. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Anniken Huitfeldt, at the CBSS Ministerial Session in Kristiansand, 24-25 May 2022.

2. Ine Eriksen Søreide, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway



The Norwegian Presidency of the CBSS (2021-2022)

Norway held the presidency of the CBSS from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, first under the leadership of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Ine Eriksen Søreide, and then of Ms Anniken Huitfeldt who succeeded her in October 2021. Norway took over the presidency at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose a wide range of challenges to the security, resilience and openness of the societies of the Baltic Sea Region.

And then unexpectedly, Russia – a CBSS member – launched its war of aggression against Ukraine.

It quickly became clear that cooperation could not go on as if nothing had happened. On 3 March 2022, Russia was suspended from the CBSS, and Belarus suspended as an observer for its enabling role in the war. On 17 May 2022, Russia withdrew as a CBSS member.

Norway hosted a fully-fledged CBSS Ministerial Session in Kristiansand on 24–25 May 2022, the first formal session in nine years since Russia’s illegal actions against Ukraine that had started in 2014.

The Kristiansand meeting was a big success. The ministers thoroughly reviewed the situation and adopted a comprehensive declaration. They

reaffirmed the importance of the CBSS as a forum for both political dialogue and practical cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.

The crisis created by Russia made the CBSS’s 30th anniversary less of a celebratory occasion. Nevertheless, the strength and relevance of CBSS cooperation continue to be demonstrated and proven practically on a daily basis, especially in this year of crisis.

CBSS goes forward with planned key activities, now without Russia. Important initiatives are being implemented. The Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum (BSRYF) framework has been agreed on. The BSR Links information portal was launched. Cooperation on climate action, the environment and sustainable development with the city- and subregional organizations, and other relevant organizations and networks have been strengthened.

Cooperation has continued as planned in priority areas of civil protection, action against trafficking in human beings, and for the protection of children and youth at risk. A diverse and broad project portfolio managed by the Secretariat has added visibility and importance of the CBSS for people and institutions in the region.

“The Council of the Baltic Sea States has served the region well, as a forum for both political dialogue and practical cooperation. The circumstances have changed, but the cooperation’s values and goals stand firm.

— Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Ms Anniken Huitfeldt

The Norwegian presidency programme



Olav Berstad, chairing the 2nd CSO meeting under the Norwegian Presidency at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm on 23 November 2021

Based on the three long-term CBSS priorities of 2014, the 2020 CBSS reform process, and the new Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2030, the Norwegian presidency focused its attention on three overall aims, of high relevance in the context of climate action, post-pandemic recovery and region-wide cohesion:

1. Accelerating cooperation on the **green transition**, with an emphasis on innovation and best practice in industry, sustainable transport, clean energy and the circular economy;
2. Fostering **regional identity and cooperation**, working with young people, civil society, and city and subregional authorities across the Baltic Sea Region;
3. Supporting the current mandates on **civil protection, children at risk and trafficking in human beings**, with a strong focus on organized crime and cybercrime.

Under its presidency, Norway particularly sought to correlate CBSS activities with the work of other cooperation frameworks that are active in the region, including the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Northern Dimension, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Arctic Council. A central part of the programme included increased synergy with the sub-national organizations. Along the

same lines, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and its new action plan was identified by Norway as being of key importance in the broader regional cooperation efforts.

The Norwegian Presidency placed particular attention on the engagement and involvement of young people, and the development of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform project into a permanent Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum. Similarly, the importance of input from civil society in the development of policy recommendations and project activities was emphasized.

The Norwegian Presidency continued the tradition of focusing on key elements within the CBSS long-term priority areas. Meeting preparations and initiatives were coordinated within a CBSS “Troika” consisting of Norway, Lithuania and Germany, and with the CBSS Director General.

The CBSS family is fortunate to have a capable international Secretariat at the basis, strongly focused on the tasks agreed by the 10 member countries and the EU. Norway took over a well-functioning cooperation format from Lithuania in 2021 and leaves an equally dynamic CBSS to the next presidency, Germany!

— by **Olav Berstad**,

**Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Chair of the CBSS Committee of Senior
Officials (2021-2022)**



Council of the
Baltic Sea States
24-25 May 2022

25 May 2022

Kristiansand, Norway

The 19th Ministerial Session of the Council
of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), 25 May 2022

Kristiansand Declaration (extracts), adopted during the Ministerial Session 2022

 [Download the Kristiansand Declaration](#)

“We stand with Ukraine. We deplore and recognise the enormous suffering and sacrifice by the people of Ukraine in the courageous defence of their sovereignty and freedom and the common values that Europe stands for, such as democracy, human rights and peace.”

“Climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest is our collective goal. We will scale up actions to ensure a green transition of the global economy, including accelerating green energy development, and decarbonising the heavy industry, transport and construction sectors.”

“We highlight the role of young people and civil society and their participation in decision-making processes. Strong cooperation against organized crime and trafficking in human beings, and in the field of civil protection has become ever more important in the present situation.”



 Kristiansand, Norway

From left to right: Mr Grzegorz Poznański, Director General of the Council of the Baltic Sea States; Mr Edgars Rinkēvičs, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia; Ms Johanna Sumuvuori, Finnish State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ms Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden; Ms Annalena Baerbock, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany; Ms Eva-Maria Liimets, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia; Ms Anniken Huitfeldt, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway; Gabrielius Landsbergis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania; Thordis Kolbrun Reykþjórd Gylfadóttir, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland; Mr Marcin Przydacz, Polish Undersecretary of State for Security, the Americas, Asia and Eastern Policy; Helena König, Deputy Secretary General European External Action Service; Mr Jeppe Kofod, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

1. Kristiansand,
Norway

2. The 19th Ministerial
Session of the CBSS

3. The CBSS Troika
Ministers (from left
to right: Minister of
Foreign Affairs of
Germany, Norway
and Lithuania)

4. Minister of Foreign
Affairs of Norway,
Ms Anniken Huitfeldt
(left)



Ministerial Session 2022



Kristiansand, Norway — The ministers of foreign affairs and other high-level representatives from the Baltic Sea Region met in Kristiansand, Norway on 25 May 2022 during the 19th Ministerial Session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). It was the first Ministerial Session of the CBSS in nine years.

Organised by Norway under its presidency of the CBSS, the Ministerial Session was attended by the CBSS member states Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden, and the European Union. Russia, which was suspended from the CBSS earlier in March and informed on 17 May 2022 about its withdrawal from the Council, did not attend.

The ministers agreed on a joint declaration, the [Kristiansand Declaration](#), which, among other things, expresses strong solidarity and support for Ukraine. The ministers stressed that Russia and its accomplice Belarus bear full responsibility for the war of aggression and that there cannot be impunity for war crimes.

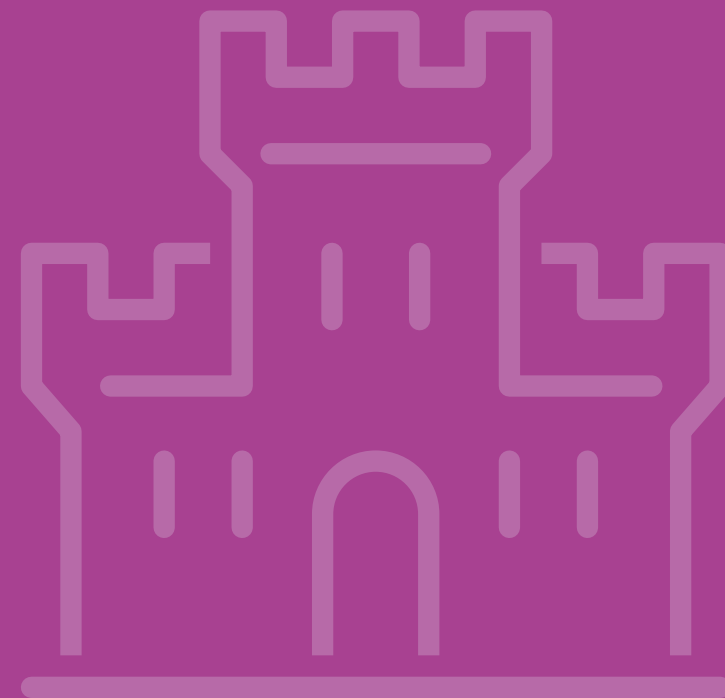
In Kristiansand, the ministers reaffirmed the validity of the Vilnius II Declaration which was adopted on 1 June 2021. The Vilnius II Declaration contains a vision for the Baltic Sea Region to be attained by 2030, notably focussing on democracy and good governance, youth and the environment. It also addresses climate change, green and blue economy, and civil protection, including the protection of children and other vulnerable groups. Other focus areas are digitalisation, education and culture.

The ministers further reaffirmed their collective goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest, by scaling up actions to ensure a green transition of the global economy. This includes accelerating the green energy development in the Baltic Sea Region, and diversifying energy supplies to rapidly reduce the dependency on fossil fuels.

In light of the Russian withdrawal from the CBSS, the ministers expressed their solid recognition of the achievements of the Council in the past and strong support for the future work of the Council.

Norwegian Presidency 2021-2022

Regional identity



Regional identity

Fostering regional identity is a cross-cutting priority among all CBSS programmes and activities. It includes the promotion of cooperation among young people in order to ensure their meaningful representation in institutions and decision-making processes in the Baltic Sea Region. The regional identity “cluster” also includes culture and higher education, and links with various organizations such as the Baltic Region Heritage Committee, Ars Baltica, the Baltic university network, the EUSBSR Policy Areas Culture and Education, and horizontal cooperation with the sub-national organizations in the region.

 Oslo Opera House, Norway



Regional identity

Regional identity section of the CBSS

During the Norwegian Presidency, CBSS furthered its support for meaningful youth participation in the BSR. The CBSS prioritized initiatives that bring young stakeholders in the region into closer dialogue with policymakers, and supported projects that focused on culture as a driver for establishing inclusive and sustainable societies and economies.

The Norwegian Presidency notably guided the process of establishing a long-term solution for the Baltic Sea Youth Platform, resulting in the creation of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum (BSRYF) that will start its activities in January 2023. In addition, youth participation in regional policy processes was enabled by several projects and events backed by the CBSS such as the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Youth Forum and the Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue.

The CBSS coordinated and supported collaboration within the BSR cultural sphere via the Baltic Sea Cultural Cities and Region project, the Culture4Climate project, and nurturing its close links with cultural network ARS Baltic and NDPC, as

well as through contribution to intergovernmental cultural cooperation through EUSBSR Policy Area Culture.

During the Norwegian Presidency, the CBSS Regional Identity unit co-organized, with the Sustainable and Prosperous Region unit, an online roundtable discussion titled “Culture for Sustainability: Memory institutions contribution for implementing Sustainable Development Goals”. The event focused on localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through museums and libraries in the Baltic Sea Region. It also sought to establish cooperation between higher education institutions in the region, supporting future region-builders and policy makers through the CBSS Summer University Programmes, organized by higher education institutions such as University of Tartu, UNECON and University of Gdansk.

Furthermore, CBSS continued supporting the work of the Baltic Region Heritage Committee (BRHC). During the Norwegian Presidency, Arts Council Norway and the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage hosted a successful 7th forum of the BRHC: “Cultural heritage in a changing climate”, focusing on climate change as a threat to cultural heritage.



Oslo Opera House, Norway



Culture

Baltic Region Heritage Committee Meeting

📍 Oslo, Norway

A meeting of the Baltic Region Heritage Committee (BRHC) under the Norwegian presidency took place in Oslo on 16–17 June 2022, followed by a handover ceremony with representatives from the German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, the new chair of the BRHC. A workshop on the theme of “Diversity and representation in built heritage and museum collections” was also held during the event.



Baltic Sea Festival: Culture and Democracy in the Baltic Sea Region

📍 Stockholm, Sweden

In a bid to inspire and encourage cultural actors to lead the way towards sustainable and resilient societies in our region, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) and the Swedish Institute (SI) organized a livestreamed roundtable discussion on 12 September 2021 which focussed on culture, cultural diplomacy and transparent democracies.





Youth

EUSBSR Annual Forum 2021 – “Empowering Youth for Green Entrepreneurship”

📍 Online

How to start a green business when you are young? This question was at the centre of a panel discussion on “Empowering Youth for Green Entrepreneurship” that took place during the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2021 on 30 September 2021, and which was co-organized by the CBSS and Nordregio, an observer in its Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD).

The panel discussion gave a platform to young entrepreneurs and representatives of financial institutions from across the Baltic Sea Region who shared their insights on how to start a green business, including overcoming existing obstacles and barriers for receiving funding and building a business model. The discussions also focused on actions to improve funding for young entrepreneurs, and on how to create a more supportive environment for young people to start a business.



Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum 2022

📍 Stockholm, Sweden


At the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum that was held in Stockholm on 11–12 June 2022, youth representatives from all 10 CBSS member states developed a set of recommendations based on the outcomes of discussions about some of the pressing issues to be urgently dealt with in the Baltic Sea Region. The topics were forest, wetlands and biodiversity; innovation; resilient cities; and sea and coastline resilience.

The forum was organized as a back-to-back youth event to the 31st Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) to promote dialogue between young people of the region and policymakers. It was supported by the Swedish delegation to the BSPC, the BSPC Secretariat, the CBSS and the Baltic Sea Youth Platform, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

In total, eight recommendations were presented to the BSPC’s Working Group on Climate Change and Biodiversity.





 Stockholm, Sweden

Youth representatives attending the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference 2022 at the Riksdag (Swedish parliament).



Higher Education

CBSS Summer University 2021

📍 St Petersburg, Russia

The CBSS held its Summer University at the Saint Petersburg State University of Economics (UNECON) on 16–30 August 2021. Supported by the German academic exchange programme, or DAAD, the summer university attracted students from some of the leading German universities such as the Free University of Berlin, University of Cologne, University of Rostock, Kiel University among others. The students notably had to work on the topic of “Climate and Energy Balance” and had to develop recommendations and propose approaches to climate risks mitigation. Over the two weeks, the students also attended lectures from academics of UNECON, the University of Helsinki and the European University in St. Petersburg, as well as from experts from the private sector and representatives of the CBSS.



Fall University in Narva 2021

📍 Narva, Estonia

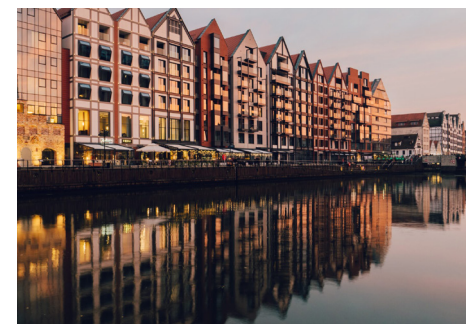
The CBSS supported the Autumn School in Narva, Estonia on “Governance, Leadership, Resilience: German and Estonian Experiences in the European Context”. The programme sought to explore different patterns of leadership in a crisis-ridden Europe as well as the different instruments of governance conducive to strengthening societal resilience and enhancing social responsibility. In particular, the students discussed and brainstormed on how the pandemic crisis has led to new requirements in terms of governance, public management and administration, and new type of leadership in Europe. This school was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the German Federal Foreign Office and Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).



YoPeNET Winter School 2022

📍 Gdańsk, Poland

The Winter School “Imagining Balticness. Transformation and Identity Politics”, part of the YoPeNET project, took place in Gdańsk on 1–9 March 2022. Focusing on regional identity, the programme addressed the challenges of the “Balticness” concept as a constitutive element of region building. Various aspects related to the economic, social, political and cultural life in the Baltic Sea Region were also considered. The Winter School was attended by 19 students from Europe (Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Germany, Denmark, Estonia), but also from further away such as India, Turkmenistan, Mongolia and Brazil. It was co-organized by the University of Gdansk, the Zatoka Foundation and European Solidarity Centre, with the financial support of the CBSS and the City Hall of Gdansk.



Norwegian Presidency 2021-2022

Safe & Secure Region



Safe & Secure Region

Promoting a safe and secure region is anchored in three dedicated groups, supported by specialized units in the CBSS Secretariat: the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB), the Expert Group on Children at Risk (EG-CAR), and the Civil Protection Network (CPN). Each group works in accordance with agreed strategic aims and action programmes. The groups are well integrated into broader European and international networks in the field of anti-trafficking, children's rights and wellbeing, and disaster prevention, preparedness and response. There are strong links with the Baltic Sea Task Force on Organized Crime, the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation and the EUSBSR Policy Area Secure.



Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings

Task Force against Trafficking in Human beings

The Norwegian Presidency of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human beings (TF-THB), chaired by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security of Norway, managed to further strengthen the already close work relationship of the member states (MS) in the TF-THB by introducing more frequent but shorter expert group meetings. This strategy proved to be effective during the pandemic when in person meetings were not possible. This was crucial in keeping up the productivity of the expert group and fostering the regional cooperation against human trafficking during challenging times for the CBSS MS. The

priorities of the TF-THB during the Norwegian Presidency were to finalize the THALIA project, which explored the role of the media and journalism in shaping our understanding of human trafficking, initiate the revision of the TF-THB Handbook for Diplomatic and Consular Personnel, as well as implement the online national seminars in Finland, Germany and Norway within the frame of the CAPE project. Finally, the Norwegian Presidency successfully facilitated a close exchange between the MS regarding the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and the common challenges faced by countries in reaching refugees with adequate information on the very real risks of human trafficking and all its forms of exploitation.





Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings

The Role of Media in Shaping the Understanding of Trafficking in Human Beings

 **Online**

To better understand the role of media and journalism in shaping our understanding of human trafficking, an online conference was held by the CBSS-led international project Towards thoughtful, informed, and compassionate journalism in covering human trafficking (THALIA) on 7 December 2021. The conference attracted about 120 participants.

The THALIA project has contributed to establish the CBSS Task Force on the Trafficking of Human Beings (TF-THB) as a leading force in the anti-trafficking work in the Baltic Sea Region and the EU, especially regarding anti-trafficking partnerships with journalists and universities.

A call for contributions was organized by the project, through which journalist students were invited to contribute with journalistic pieces ranging from podcasts, radio segments and articles on the topic of human trafficking.

Child rights-based approach for child victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation

 **Online**

The CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human beings (TF-THB) and the NGO Child10 organized an online side-event “Ensuring a Child Rights-based Approach in Identifying and Providing Access to Services and Justice for Child Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation” in connection to the annual OSCE Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference on 6 April 2022. The event explored the challenges and best practices in identifying and protecting children subjected to human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

The panel discussion consisted of key stakeholders in the international cooperation against human trafficking, such as the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings Val Richey and the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator Diane Schmitt.





Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings

Using data to better Understand and Address Trafficking in Human Beings

📍 Warsaw, Poland

The CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human beings (TF-THB), Trilateral Research UK and La Strada International organized a two-day workshop in Warsaw, Poland on 9–10 March 2022, exploring how data and statistics can be utilized in order to better understand and illustrate human trafficking. Most CBSS member states – especially their state agencies such as law enforcement – have already identified national challenges in both collecting and sharing data on human trafficking and investigations. Titled “Using data to better Understand and Address Trafficking in Human Beings”, the workshop was carried out with state agencies and NGOs to comprehensively map the varying levels of data literacy and usage across the human trafficking stakeholder community.

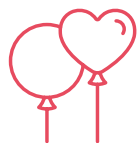


Helping refugees from Ukraine and preventing exploitation

📍 Oslo, Norway

In connection with the final two-day TF-THB meeting during the Norwegian Presidency in Oslo, the TF-THB Senior Adviser Edi Mujaj and the TF-THB Chair Jan Austad participated in a seminar organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Norway and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), on the topic of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and human trafficking. The TF-THB highlighted the ongoing projects carried out by the Secretariat and the expert group which are relevant to the refugee crisis, such as the Handbook for Diplomatic, Consular and Migration Staff, an awareness raising campaign targeting Ukrainian refugees and labour migrants and the ongoing work with the Transnational Referral Mechanism, in cooperation with the Children at Risk Unit.





Children at Risk

Expert Group on Children at Risk

Under the Norwegian Presidency, the Expert Group on Children at Risk (EGCAR), with support of the Children at Risk Unit at the Secretariat, reinforced its commitment and work towards the vision of a Baltic Sea Region in which every child enjoys the full range human rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

To this end, the EGCAR focused on good practices and building trust between child protection systems in the region. A joint project, led by the Norwegian Presidency and funded by the CBSS Project Support Facility, identified good practice concerning the resilience, preparedness, and the operational continuum of child protection services in the Baltic Sea Region.

Under the Norwegian Presidency, the Expert Group also focused on the consequences COVID-19 on vulnerable children and families, with a view to strengthen child protection and welfare systems so that they can better deal with similar crises in the future. The Expert Group also exchanged information about the war in Ukraine, and about how each country is responding to the influx of refugees.



Conference on resilient and inclusive child protection systems

 **Oslo, Norway**

On 8 June 2022, the Norwegian Presidency of the CBSS organized a conference in Oslo, Norway to introduce the results of a comprehensive mapping of national child protection systems and promising practices in the Baltic Sea Region.

Looking at child protection systems in seven countries in the Baltic Sea Region, the mapping identified good practice and core elements of inclusive, sustainable, and resilient national child protection systems that provide a continuum of protection, including in times of crisis. The mapping also made note of good cross-border practices that contribute to mutual trust and cross-border collaboration between national child protection systems.

The conference provided opportunities for reflections on key elements of resilient and inclusive child protection systems, including in crisis, promoting a common understanding, collaboration and mutual trust among child protection systems and actors across borders.





Civil Protection

Civil Protection Network

Under the chairmanship of the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB), the Civil Protection Network (CPN) focused on disaster prevention and regional cooperation – more specifically on natural hazards, industrial, technological and manmade disasters, and emerging risks. These priorities and assistance to Ukraine were the main topics addressed at two Senior Experts meetings of the CPN, the meeting of Directors General for Civil Protection in Oslo, and the 10th Baltic Excellence Programme in civil security. Some of the milestones

reached by the CPN under the Norwegian Presidency were the revision and adoption of the “Joint Position on Enhancing Cooperation in Civil Protection Area” and the signing of the Oslo Declaration on Regional Cooperation in the Civil Protection Network. The Directors General for civil protection agreed to further strengthen cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region and focus not only on capacity building and knowledge sharing but also on strengthening the joint response capacity of the countries in times of crisis. Initiation of closer cooperation with volunteer organizations in the BSR were another achievement under the presidency.





Civil Protection

Civil Protection Network Senior Expert Meeting

📍 **Tønsberg, Norway**

The Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB) hosted the meeting of the CPN Senior Experts on 5–6 April 2022 at the DSB headquarters in Tønsberg, Norway. The meeting focused on sharing the latest updates on national and international civil protection initiatives, with the help to Ukraine being at the centre of the discussions.



Baltic Excellence Programme

📍 **Oslo, Norway**

On 1–3 March 2022, the Norwegian Chairmanship of the CBSS Civil Protection Network (CPN) hosted the 10th Baltic Excellence Programme in civil security in Oslo, Norway. Invited by the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB), 37 participants from 12 countries came to Oslo. Since 2012, the Baltic Excellence Programme seeks to create a network of civil security actors in the BSR and equip them with the tools and information needed to effectively manage cross-border collaboration in an intercultural context.





Civil Protection

Heads of civil protection agencies in the Baltic Sea Region commit to further cooperation

Oslo, Norway

On 31 May – 1 June, 2022, the heads of the civil protection agencies of the member states of Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) agreed to further strengthen cooperation on prevention and preparedness against emergencies in the Baltic Sea Region. During their high-level meeting that took place in Oslo, Norway on 31 May – 1 June 2022, the Directors General for Civil Protection of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, and Sweden signed a key document that will strengthen regional cooperation on civil protection – [the Oslo Declaration on Regional Cooperation in the Civil Protection Network](#).



CBSS-led team of civil protection experts visits the Polish-Ukrainian border

Przemyśl, Poland

In a bid to better understand the challenges faced by Polish authorities responding to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, an international delegation, of which the CBSS was part, travelled to several Polish cities including Warsaw and Przemyśl on 10–12 May 2022.

Organized by the Polish State Fire Service at the request of the CBSS Civil Protection Network (CPN), the study visit allowed fourteen experts in the fields of civil protection, evacuation and international cooperation from six Baltic Sea countries to get first-hand impressions on the refugee crisis in Poland, especially at the Polish-Ukrainian border.



Norwegian Presidency of the CBSS 2021-2022

Sustainable & Prosperous Region



Sustainable & Prosperous Region

Promoting a sustainable and prosperous region is anchored in the Baltic 2030 Action Plan adopted in 2017, and two CBSS expert groups supported by a specialized unit in the CBSS Secretariat: the Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD) and the Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME). The groups work in accordance with specific mandates, particularly aimed at the green transition to reduce CO2 emissions, protect the environment, and increase competitiveness and prosperity. There are strong links with HELCOM and VASAB, several of the EUSBSR policy areas, and the sub-national organizations in the region. The Secretariat is additionally engaged in projects to promote science and cooperation in the labour sector.





Sustainable Development & Climate

Expert Group on Sustainable Development

The Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD) held two meetings during the Norwegian presidency, in Stockholm (inter alia celebrating the 25th anniversary of the group), and on-line. This meeting was mainly dedicated to the issue of Baltic 2030 Action Plan implementation and EGSD mandate extension. A possible reformatting of the group was endorsed (a joint chairmanship by the CBSS, UBC, BSSSC and CPMR-BSC) but eventually no final decision was made.

25th Anniversary of the Expert Group on Sustainable Development

📍 Stockholm, Sweden

On 24 November 2021, the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD) met at the CBSS Secretariat to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the group and to discuss the findings of the report “Baltic 2030 Bumps on the Road”, which outlines how the countries in the Baltic Sea Region are performing on the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The experts also reviewed the priorities of the EGSD under the Norwegian Presidency, and got an opportunity to discuss the topic of sustainable cities with Ms. Anna Hadenius, Director for Environment and Health, and Mr. Björn Hugosson, Chief Climate Officer, both representatives from the City of Stockholm. The Norwegian Embassy in Stockholm hosted a reception to celebrate the EGSD’s 25th anniversary.





Sustainable Development & Climate

Webinar “Circular Economy: Producers Responsibility and Waste-to-Energy”

📍 Online

Taking place on 15 December 2021, the webinar was organized by the Norwegian presidency of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development (EGSD), in support of its work related to the green transition. During the webinar, participants from businesses, municipalities and experts shared examples of existing cooperation at the national and regional level. Seven expert speakers provided their views on how to better address the challenges stemming from the transition to a circular economy, including the consideration of aspects related to CO₂ capture and storage from municipal waste incineration. A consensus further emerged on the way forward: governments should help to facilitate the transition via green public procurement policies, although a key starting point is the behavioural change of individuals and consumers.



NEEDS project: strengthening societal security

📍 Online

“What is societal security?” was the theme of the first Intensive Study Programme of the CBSS-led NEEDS project that was carried out online on 1–5 November 2021. Hosted by the Arctic University of Norway (UiT), the one-week training programme, which gathered several students, teachers and practitioners from the Baltic Sea Region, drew from the experience of all participants to establish a common societal security culture in the region, placing a special focus on the climate change crisis.

Demand-driven training and education in societal security, a key topic of the CBSS, has gained a stronger momentum under the Norwegian presidency. During the presidency, the CBSS Secretariat also co-organized, with the Riga Technical University (RTU), the online scientific student conference “What is the new normal in societal security”, which touched on societal security challenges such as pandemics, climate change, cybersecurity and youth.





Sustainable Maritime Economy

Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy

Under the renewed mandate of the Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME), the Norwegian Presidency highlighted the importance of speeding up the green energy transition in the maritime sector. Discussions concentrated on the implementation of zero-emission shipping industry solutions and the development a reliable global legal framework to provide certainty for the industry sector in the Baltic Sea Region. To implement the green transition, the CBSS Members States are currently engaged in policies for promoting, developing and rolling out technology and services for clean and sustainable maritime transport.

With the importance of cooperation with shipping companies and other stakeholders having been identified as fundamental, the CBSS has promoted the establishment of international public-private partnership as essential tools to boost the needed technological development. Best practice examples from the Norwegian shipping industry, such as battery-powered ferries and the use of hydrogen-electric shipping technologies, were presented to support the policy initiatives.

Under the Norwegian presidency, the seed money project Baltic Sustainable Boating was also finalised. The project supported the maritime tourism industry by connecting small harbours, and resulted in an Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme application, which was approved in June 2022 by the Monitoring Committee.



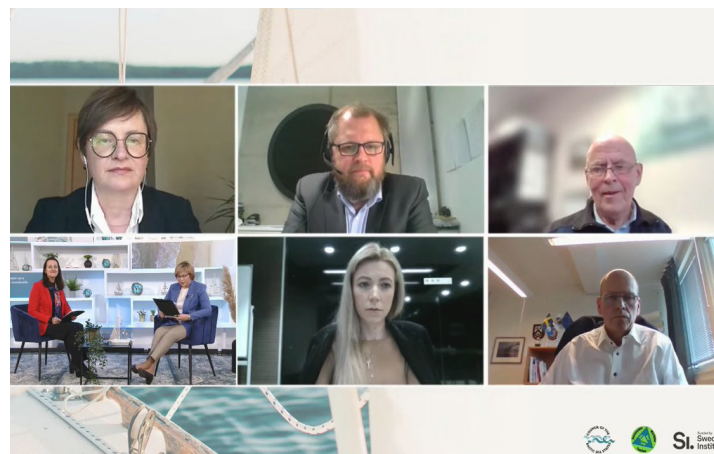


Sustainable Maritime Economy

Branding the Baltic Sea Region as a Single Maritime Destination for Sustainable Coastal Tourism

 **Online**

A common branding of the Baltic Sea as a sustainable maritime tourism destination was at the centre of the final conference of the “Baltic Sea Boating” project that was held online on 22 February 2022. In addition to presenting the outcomes of the project including the “Prototype of the BSR Common Route Map” regarding branding and marketing, the conference also featured a number of topics including the impacts of COVID-19 on the sector, existing research on maritime tourism, and the value of promoting the Baltic Sea as a “Single Green Tourist” destination.



Meeting of the Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy

 **Oslo, Norway**

The CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME) met in Oslo on 11 May 2022 to discuss the topic of green shipping and clean maritime transport. During the meeting, CBSS Member representatives and the EU Commission notably shared their positions and main priorities on green maritime transport. They highlighted the importance of speeding up the green energy transition, implementing zero-emission shipping industry solutions and developing a reliable global legal framework to provide regulatory certainty for the industry in the Baltic Sea Region.



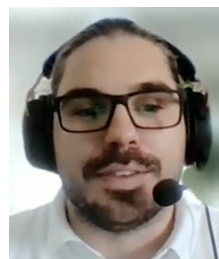
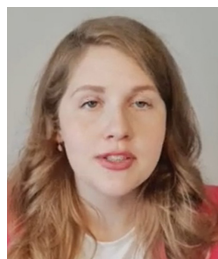
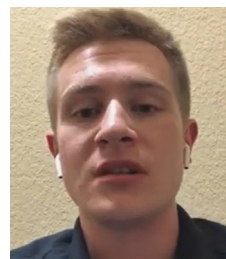


Science Cooperation

Baltic Sea Science Day 2022: Award for Young Scientists

Online

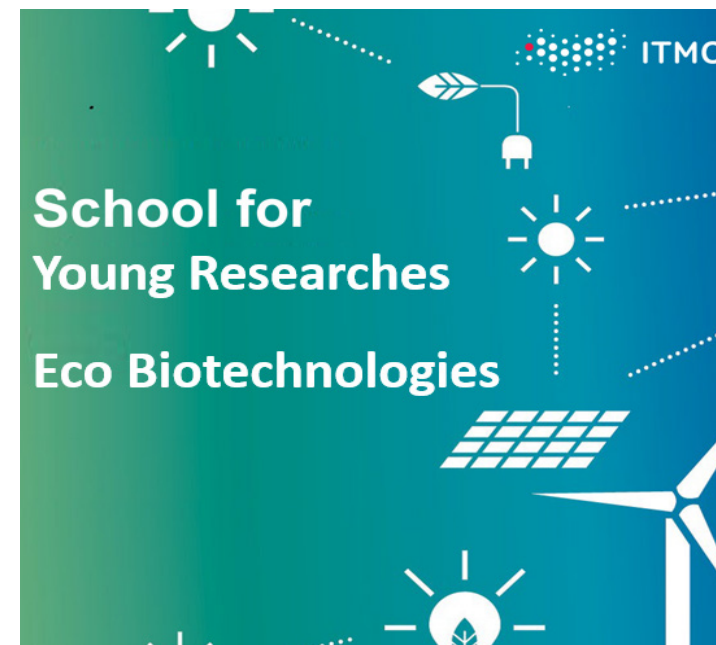
Scientific excellence among young researchers in the fields of sustainable energy, eco-biotechnologies and digital growth was rewarded on 16 June at the Baltic Sea Science Day and Award For Young Scientists Ceremony 2022. The Award for Young Scientists 2022 went to Riccardo Paoli, Justina Milerienė, and João Rocha Salazar. Their contributions are highly needed for the Baltic Sea Region to maintain its competitive advantage and be in the best position to solve today's and tomorrow's challenges.



CBSS Baltic Science Educational Academy (CBSS B-SEA) School for Young Scientists

Online

Eco-biotechnologies were the main topic of the CBSS Baltic Science Educational Academy (CBSS B-SEA) school for young scientists that took place on 27–29 October 2021. Focusing on the development of both soft and hard skills, the programme included several workshops on eco-biotechnologies, and featured presentations leading scientists in the field of environmental and biotechnologies sciences. The event was part of the “BSR Mobilities for Young Researchers” project that is funded by the CBSS Project Support Facility (PSF).





Labour Cooperation

Baltic Sea Labour Forum

Turku, Finland

The Annual Meeting of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF) took place in Turku, Finland on 8 June 2022. The BSLF is a platform for the exchange of experiences and communication between the key labour market stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region. It was founded November 2011 as one of the main results of the Baltic Sea Labour Network (BSLN). The BSLF notably seeks to promote labour collaboration in the region, and specifically focuses on labour mobility, demographic changes, youth employment and building an inclusive labour market.



Baltic Sea Labour Forum for Sustainable Working Life: final project conference

Turku, Finland

To address the double-issue of a shrinking and ageing working population, the “Baltic Sea Labour Forum for Sustainable Working Life” looked into active ageing and the employability of older age groups. The CBSS-managed project, which ran for 3.5 years and held its final conference in Turku, Finland, on 9 June 2022, specifically focused on the working population in the age group of 55+ in the Baltic Sea countries, and on how to support the improvement of working life conditions and to establish systems and policies for an older labour force.

The objectives of the project were to 1) identify good practices and develop policy recommendations, 2) to develop a toolbox for transnational cooperation, and 3) to build a network and connect experts on the topic in the region.

The outcomes of the project were a series of policy briefs and recommendations, as well as the identification of a number of good practices. We also developed country profiles for each country in the Baltic Sea Region that summarize the respective current national policy response to prolonging working life.

Sustainable Working Life Project



Norwegian Presidency 2021-2022

Project Support Facility



Project Support Facility

In 2012, a small project support fund, the Project Support Facility (PSF), was established to co-finance projects relevant to the three long-term priority areas and to strengthen practical cooperation among diverse actors across the Baltic Sea Region and across priorities. So far, 54 small-scale projects have been implemented under the PSF, with a maximum grant level of 65 000 EUR per project. The PSF is a way also to leverage financing from other sources in key projects. Both PSF and externally funded projects add to the activity portfolio of the CBSS Secretariat.

 Boat pier in Norway



Project Support Facility



They Have a Name

Lead Partner: Lithuania: Asociacija "Aktyvus Jaunimas" in partnership with Latvia and Estonia

Human trafficking is a global issue affecting millions of people and leading them to serious mental or emotional health consequences. Keeping this in mind, the "They Have a Name" project was created. Partners seek to foster the prevention of human trafficking in the Baltic Sea States - Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Overall, the project will benefit participating organizations, human trafficking victims, and the general public by shaping the understanding of the issue, providing tools for fostering social inclusion, and helping those who have this issue.



Baltic Youth's visions, innovations and initiatives to Green Deal implemented in local communities

Lead Partner: Polski Klub Ekologiczny Okrug Pomorski in partnership with Sweden, Lithuania and Estonia

The main aim of the project is to encourage young people in Baltic Sea Region to undertake more eco-innovative actions for the European Green Deal implementation at the level of (and with) local communities. The basis for such involvement is a broadened multidisciplinary knowledge gained in the preliminary steps of the project and exchange of experiences of partnering organizations in further steps.



Consulting citizens for municipal green policies

Lead Partner: Latvia: "Sabiedriskas politikas centrs PROVIDUS" in partnership with Lithuania and Poland

The project will consult citizens to inform green policies by municipalities in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Citizens will be consulted online on a dedicated platform Polltix.co and will focus on local and Baltic region-wide environmental issues and several tens of thousands of citizens will participate. The results will be presented to the municipal decision-makers and will receive media attention.



Project Support Facility



Strengthening the identity of the Baltic Sea Region borderlands. Building cooperation for the youth

Lead Partner: Poland “University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn” in partnership with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia

The main objective of the project is to strengthen the sense of belonging to the Baltic Sea Region and to build regional identity among young people living in countries bordering the Baltic Sea. The other objectives are to build sustainable partnerships in the field of youth cooperation (including academic youth and high school students/pupils), cooperation of universities and other institutions located in the borderlands from the countries bordering the Baltic Sea.



Baltic Youth for Resilient Society - BYFORES

Lead Partner: Finland: Suomen Pelastusalan Keskusjärjestö – Räddningsbranschens Centralorganization I Finland Ry in partnership with Latvia, Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Finland

The project expects to increase the appeal of volunteering with a special focus on youth and promote the culture of volunteerism in the Baltic Sea Region. It will look into the role that children and young people can play in withstanding, managing as well as coping with disaster risk and reduce vulnerability through capacity building, education, and awareness.



YoPeNet 2.0. Enhancing capacity for strategic narratives on identity with young people in the Baltic Sea Region

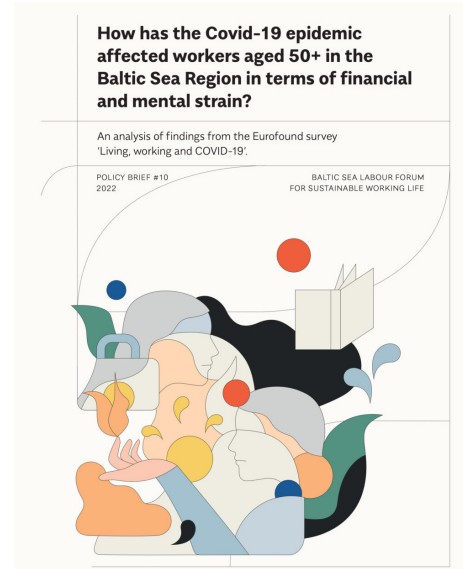
Lead Partner: Poland “Uniwersytet Gdański” in partnership with Germany, Denmark, Estonia and Sweden

YoPeNET 2.0 will consolidate the good practices and ensure sustainability of the educational experience of the current YoPeNET project implemented by the applicant in 2020–2022. The YoPeNET 2.0 will continue involving the younger generation in the BSR in educational dialogue and in the co-creation of cultural texts and media projects concerning trans-regional identity, manifested for instance as ecocultural identity. This edition of the project will reach out to a much wider regional audience through an extensive online presence as well as ensuring the strengthening of the existing partnership to cement its future viability.

Norwegian Presidency 2021-2022

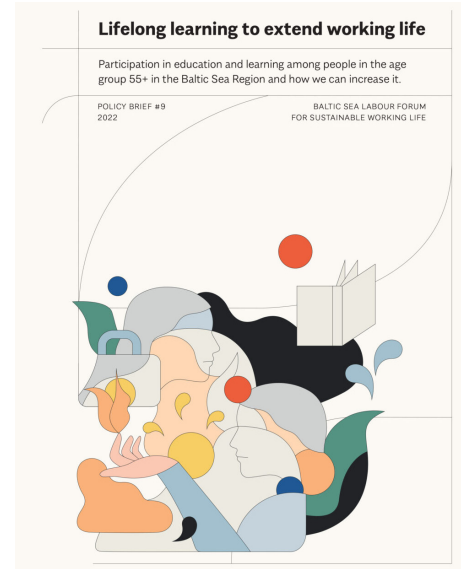
Publications





How has the COVID-19 epidemic affected workers aged 50+ in the Baltic Sea Region in terms of financial and mental strain?

The impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic on workers are multi-faceted and besides complex health concerns have also involved economic strain, forced or voluntary isolation, changed working conditions with need for distance work for many and uncertainty regarding the future. Here we look at older workers aged 50+ in the Baltic Sea Region and the economic and mental strains during the COVID-19 epidemic.



Lifelong learning to extend working life

For workers to have the possibility to extend their working lives, access to lifelong learning opportunities is of key importance. Here, we focus on learners aged 55+ in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). The countries in the BSR show great heterogeneity in terms of participation levels in lifelong learning in this age group. We look at possible explanations for this through the perspective of different types of barriers to lifelong learning and propose a range of policy initiatives to address them.



Senior female entrepreneurship: policy responses called for to support older female entrepreneurs in the Baltic Sea Region

Senior entrepreneurship can be an attractive option for older workers to remain in working life, also serving the purposes of social inclusion, reducing inequalities, boosting social innovation and active ageing. Here we look at the gender dimension of senior entrepreneurship – how being a woman aged 55+ affects challenges and opportunities when entering entrepreneurship and how policy should respond to support this specific group.



Digital solutions for online learning in societal security

This report endeavours to paint a concise picture of what the so-called ‘digital turn’ in higher education (HE) means. The field of societal security is by definition highly practice-orientated and includes such issues as close-to-real-crisis exercises, which all had to be cancelled for two years or so during the pandemic.



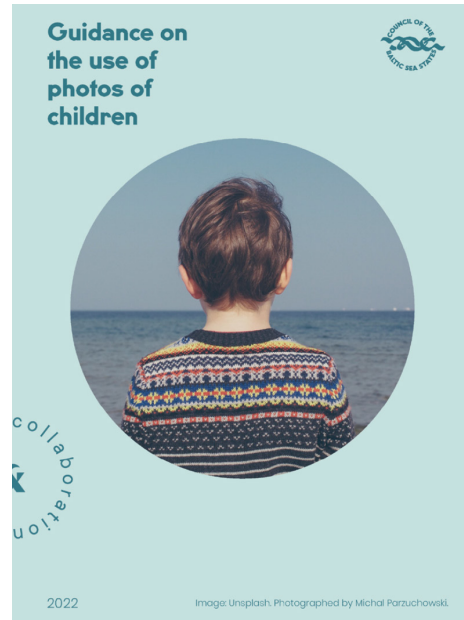
Key observations and recommendations: Higher Education Study Programmes in the Field of Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region

The report summarises the results of two 2021 desktop studies, based on comprehensive literature reviews, online surveys targeted at higher education study programme leaders and students, and NEEDS project group discussions about the state of the art of societal security higher education in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).



Enhancing societal security graduate employability in the Baltic Sea Region

The overview draws on the analysis of the responses from two questionnaires circulated in Spring 2021, one targeted towards societal security students, and the other towards programme directors.



Guidance on the use of photos of children

Images of children and young people can play an important role in raising awareness of children’s rights and needs. This guidance presents the risks and considerations for using photographs of children in communications, with respect to children’s rights to privacy, integrity and protection.



Final recommendations from the Baltic Sea Youth Parliamentary Forum 2022

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum 2022 decided on eight recommendations addressed to the BSPC Working Group on Climate Change and Biodiversity.



Cultural Heritage in a Changing Climate

This article collection presents discussions centered on the impact of climate change on cultural heritage, and poses questions for the preservation, dissemination and research on our shared legacy.



In memoriam **Uffe Ellemann-Jensen (1941 - 2022)**

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, one of the founding fathers of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and a former Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, has passed away on Sunday, 19 June 2022.

Ellemann-Jensen, together with his German counterpart Hans-Dietrich Genscher, was instrumental in setting up the CBSS in 1992, in a bid to support the geopolitical transition taking place in the Baltic Sea Region that resulted from the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

With a view to “protect, support and develop democratic institutions” and to “improve people-to-people contact”, as laid out in the Declaration of the 1st Ministerial Session of the CBSS of 1992, or **Copenhagen Declaration**, the CBSS has since then served as a regional forum for political dialogue.

Based on Ellemann-Jensen’s initial vision for the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS has since then particularly focused on individual freedom, respect for human rights, economic growth, the protection of the environment and energy, and cooperation in the field of culture, education, tourism and information.

See Uffe Ellemann Jensen commemoration video [here](#).

