Baltic Sea Youth Declaration 2022

Contents

COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES

Top 3 takeaways from the Youth Declaration 2022

Youth participation is a process to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of policies. Young people get empowered, engage themselves and bring in new ideas and impulses to existing processes.

Recognise that youth participation requires resources and allocate the budget and time to integrate young people into planning, implementation and evaluation of all processes.

Create paid youth advocate positions (like an internship) for young people to learn about the organisation and enhance the impact of young people in the process.

The Baltic Sea Youth Declaration 2022

The Baltic Sea Youth Declaration 2022 was developed by young people in the Baltic Sea Region who are asking for actions from policy makers and therefore provide concrete steps on how their views, ideas and impulses can be better integrated into decision-making processes.

The document combines elements of earlier declarations from 2019 and 2020, as well as ideas developed during the working sessions of the Advocacy Working Group of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform – where decision makers have been invited to present their work – and the impulses developed during the Baltic Sea Youth Camp 2022 in Lappeenranta, Finland.

The document represents the various views of many young people from all around the Baltic Sea Region. In total, over 200 young people from various youth formats and fora contributed to this declaration.

How to read the Declaration

At first it is important to remind the reader of the diverse views within the youth of the Baltic Sea Region.

Finding common positions is challenging and needs enough time and resources to enable discussions and formats for young people to meet, learn and ask questions.

Understanding the Baltic Sea Region and its multi-level governance takes time and devotion, which many young people are willing to invest in to deliver a meaningful input to policy processes.

The recommendations presented in this document should be seen as a starting point of an intergenerational dialogue in the Baltic Sea Region. They are representing the priorities agreed on by young people.

Young people want to be included from the start, from planning until evaluation. Decision makers should take the time to engage with youth, and offer resources so that young people can give new impulses to and ensure more sustainability in decision-making processes.

Background

THE BALTIC SEA YOUTH CAMP (BSYC) took place in Lappeenranta, Finland on 15-19 August 2022 and was organised by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) in collaboration with the City of Lappeenranta. It was the third edition of the BSYC, previously being held in Gdansk, Poland in 2019 and online in 2020.

The aim of the BSYC is to produce valuable recommendations and ideas to be implemented by the decision makers working with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).

This year, the BSYC focused on youth participation and on how to structure it within the various governance levels in the EUSBSR.

The BSYC brought together 20 young people with various backgrounds who had applied through an open call. The aim of the organisers was to have a diverse group of young people regarding country of residence, gender, education and fields of interest, to ensure that the group is as representative as possible of young people.

Building on the experiences from several years of work on youth empowerment in the Baltic Sea Region and closely connected to the Baltic Sea Youth Platform activities within the CBSS, the event was funded by the Erasmus+ programme and is part of the European Year of Youth activities. It strived towards developing concrete actions that can be implemented immediately by decision makers to create more access points for young people, recognise young people's human rights and citizen participation rights, and to consider the existence of international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Evaluation of actions to enable meaningful youth participation

We, the young people behind this Declaration, would like to hear from you – the decision makers in the Baltic Sea Region – how our Declarations from the previous years have impacted your work in the previous years, and how you are including youth considerations in your work. We would also like to promote your actions and contribute to their effectiveness.

Take a quick survey now:
https://forms.office.com/r/bGVRw2FKrw

Contact us
If you would like to get in touch with the Baltic Sea Youth Platform / Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum to strengthen your actions in youth participation, contact us at info@bsyp.eu.

📍 **Lappeenranta, Finland**

Participants of the Baltic Sea Youth Camp 2022

Buzzword bingo
– youth washing

Some of the words and phrases regularily told to young people when engaging in policy work with adults.

Great work in such a short time!	**You have five minutes to present all your ideas.**	**You are our future.**
These recommendations will be taken into consideration.	**Add your own buzzword**	**Maybe you can start this and then it will be taken up.**
One day you will be in our position and hopefully you will do better!	**You are absolutely right, but...**	**What does the youth think about XYZ?**

Meaningful youth participation and how to achieve it

A lot of research has been done to find meaningful ways to integrate young people into political processes, you can find some of the results in our toolkit.

Young people, their ideas, their views and their passion are an extremely valuable resource to enhance such processes. But what resources are needed to create a space where young people can share their knowledge and ideas?

First of all, the will and support of decision makers, then financial resources, human resources within the political bodies- such as the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum -, time to educate and answer questions to build the knowledge and competences needed on both sides – the decision makers, as well as the young people.

You can find an overview by the Council of Europe here: https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/coyote-magazine/what-will-be-the-next-ladder-of-youth-participation.

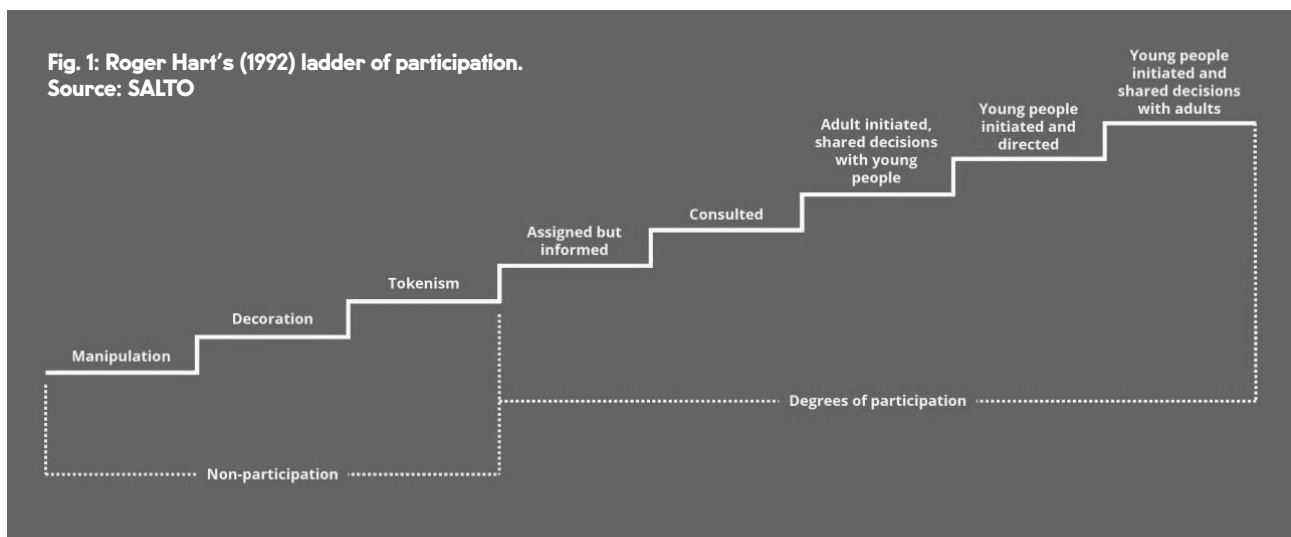## Let's climb this ladder together

You are asking how meaningful youth participation should look like? Our colleagues at SALTO – a network of 7 Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field provide a lot of resources for you to get an overview on what youth participation is, how it should look like and why it is so important. Check out their resources here: https://participation-pool.eu/resource-category/youth-participation/.

One useful graphic to keep in mind is Roger Hart's (1992) ladder of participation (Figure 1). Youth participation can look differently but the aim should be to engage in a meaningful dialogue and enable young people to implement their ideas.

Youth participation in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

- Recognise that **youth participation requires resources** and allocate the budget and time to integrate young people into planning, implementation and evaluation of all processes.
- Create **paid youth advocate positions** (like an internship) for young people to learn about the organisation and enhance the impact of young people in the process.
- 2022 is the **European Year of Youth** – make 2023 the Baltic Sea Region Year of Youth.
- Implement **follow-up mechanisms** and processes to ensure any youth contribution is valued and discussed and to get feedback on how to enhance youth declarations or contributions in panels and events.
- Create an **open-door policy for citizens participation** by offering formats like the "Coffee with the Presidency" or Webinars to a broader group of interested people.
- Recognise the **diversity within young people** – there is no one youth but it is important to find young people with an interest in the topic discussed.
- **Communicate in an understandable way** for younger audience and people not familiar with the topic.
- Ensure **social inclusion** of all underrepresented groups: young people, Sami, other indigenous people, and minorities should be included in the decision-making process through improved participatory mechanisms.
- Develop a **youth coordinators and mediator network** for various purposes and cross-cutting topics.

Fig. 1: Roger Hart's (1992) ladder of participation. Source: SALTO

- Create a **Baltic Sea Region "Cult" youth culture** for youth to promote a Baltic Sea Region identity, e.g., through common apparel (capes, diving suits, patches). Every policy area could create their own patches to be earned during (youth) activities within the policy area'.
- Offer **internship and traineeship opportunities** for youth in projects.
- Create **international camps for youth** on specific topics in collaboration with universities, private companies and policy makers.
- Establish the **"Berasmus" (Baltic Sea Erasmus)** to enhance mobility within the region.
- Create a Baltic Sea **paid traineeship/internship platform** where organisations and businesses from all over the region can post offers. This programme should be backed with a "Berasmus" grant.

Youth participation in project work

- Include a **budget line on youth** in your budget.
- Integrate a **training, education, and outreach component** in your project.
- Provide **incentives to be active** (e.g., possible internships, networks, travel, monetary compensation).
- Plan **meetings at places where young people are** (e.g., higher education institutions, youth centers).
- Provide **meaningful mentorship.**
- Reduce **bureaucratic obstacles** – e.g., create short lists of projects and organisations targeting specific groups of young people, the more concrete the better.
- Communicate the **expectations, available resources**.
- Explain the **purpose and goal of the project.**
- Give **clear guidelines.**
- Implement a **trainees and young professionals exchange** within the project partnership.

Youth participation in policy areas

- Identify at least **two young people who will be invited** to steering group meetings.
- Aim to create a bigger **"youth advisory board"** to ensure a broader youth representation.
- Offer **paid internships and traineeships.**
- Collaborate with the already existing mechanisms like the **Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum** within the CBSS and BSSSC to ensure an alignment within the Baltic Sea Region.
- Collaborate with **youth organisations** and/or voluntary organisations who have a youth branch.
- All project ideas must be discussed with a **youth board** or the Advocacy Group of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum.
- Offer **mentorship** to interest young people or young professionals.
- Organise your **own youth camp** or youth days.
- Create **youth ambassador positions** to enhance promotion on social media presence.

Youth participation on national and macro-regional level

- Establish a **youth council or youth working group** in cooperation with the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum
- **Secure finances** for summer camps and educational offers throughout the year.
- On policy papers, **consult with national youth councils** and the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum.
- Establish **youth safeguarding policies** within the EUSBSR.
- Establish a **mentoring programme** to educate interested young people and give insights into your work, while getting new ideas from the youth.
- Establish mechanisms for **youth exchange** (physical or virtually) within the EUSBSR structures.
- Offer **"coffee with the presidency"** formats with young people.
- Create a **survey** to gather data on the level of youth participation within the PAs.
- Offer and co-create **workshops on youth participation** for PA coordinators in collaboration with the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum partners.
- Ensure that funding mechanisms have a **youth quota** or mechanism.

Reflections on the priorities of the EUSBSR

Save the Sea

Use technology such as AI to reduce the hazardous substances in the sea and develop new green fertilizers that can be used on land.

Increase Prosperity

Build knowledge clusters and ensure that the knowledge gained there can be used all over the Baltic Sea Region.

Connect the Region

Enhance public transport between the countries of the region and make it green and affordable, especially for young people.

New impulses for the EUSBSR Policy Areas

Young people came together in various formats and fora to present their ideas for a better future in the Baltic Sea Region. Below you can find recommendations for every EUSBSR policy area.

These recommendations are priorities that young people see as most important and to be tackled immediately. They should be a source of impulses when planning new projects and developing new partnerships, and integrated into the work under the EUSBSR.

The youth of the region offer their support in working on these topics. Decision makers can integrated mechanisms such as the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum – launching in January 2023 at the CBSS – to connect with young people and integrate them into their projects and meetings.

Policy Area Tourism: Reinforce cohesiveness through tourism

- **Develop a concept for a Baltic Sea Interrail ticket to explore the region for young people until 27 years.**
- Establish regulations to pressure hotels (main branches) to implement sustainable tourism within their processes.
- Reduce travel demand in areas, popular among tourists, near the Baltic Sea through promotion of less known regions.
- Promote, educate and create ecological/sustainable traveling – e.g. regional subsidies to reduce the cost of eco-travel.
- Develop tools e.g. applications or common cultural routes for education purposes about the culture of the Baltic Sea Region countries.
- Advocating for a more sustainable tourism sector in our region:
  — Emphasize the unique tourism sectors of our region, especially nature tourism.
  — Promote sustainable tourism and closely cooperate with travel agencies for the development of new concepts of tourism that do not harm our environment or any non-renewable resources.
  — Promote local tourism and rural tourism as a more sustainable way to do tourism.
- Promote green tourism and make it affordable for the youth (youth camps etc.).
- Implement a tourism program for the youth in the Baltic Sea region (concept example – Interrail Pass).
- Create "green and cheap" tourism labels for the youth.
- Advocate for ferries to be free of charge for youth from 13 to 30 years of age in the Baltic Sea region.

- Promote interdisciplinary discussions through which solutions might be found for the protection of the Baltic Sea and its habitats, as tourism is currently damaging the environment.
- Create touristic routes "Around the Baltic Sea" which could connect remote and rural areas to well-known tourist sights.

Policy Area Ship: Model Region for clean shipping

- **Enhance the cooperation between universities, private businesses, start ups and policy makers to create a space for innovation.**
- Ensure comfortable, affordable and regular travel options between various ports.
- Enhance cooperation with universities and create a space for students to enable cooperation with, e.g. companies. Young people often have innovative ideas for companies, but not the required equipment to realize them, while companies have the capacity to provide necessary resources.
- Advocating for taxation of pollutants and emissions.
- Create incentive for development of measures to make it easier and cheaper for companies to build ships running on biogas.
- Introduce regulations concerning the maintenance of ships and develop regulations concerning inland water cleanliness in countries with access to the Baltic Sea.
- Share knowledge on sustainable innovations to enhance green shipping.

Policy Area Transport: Improving internal and external transport lines

- **Enhance cross-border rail travel through better coordination.**
- Use EU funds to establish a common railway track size in the Baltic Sea Region (Ex.: railway track sized in Finland and across the Baltic states differ from the EU standard).
- Coordinate train infrastructure and timetables between countries in a more efficient manner to allow for more comfortable travelling. There is need for more direct night trains and a reliable refund system in case of late train arrivals.

- Ensure trains can pass through countries within the BSR (according to the Baltic Sea Region Railway Agreement).
- Develop and promote cross-border public transport solutions (e.g. night train connections around the Baltic Sea Region).
- Promote bike lanes in cities as well as a tour through the whole region.
- Advocate for higher taxation for flight emissions especially targeting frequent fliers and large businesses which emit more than the public.
- Organize events and promote transboundary projects to face common challenges together as well as increase awareness over connectivity.
- Fund projects related to self-driving electric boats for passenger transport around the Baltic Sea to connect the region faster and greener.

Policy Area Secure: Protection from land-based emergencies accidents and cross-border crime

- **Enhance the links between Expert Groups and political bodies, young people and universities to enhance the provision of data and security measures regarding natural disaster risks for the public.**
- Further develop and maintain early warning systems in case of natural disasters.
- Deliberatively discuss the relevance of Sweden and Finland joining the NATO and its impact on macro-regional cooperation.
- Implement more projects (such as educational programs on personal security) involving female trafficking victims. Bringing gender perspective is vital for increasing prosperity in the region.
- Advocate for more attention for gender related policies as the level of domestic violence in the region is high.

Policy Area Safe: Maritime Safety and Security

- **Integrate the Youth4Ocean initiatives into your work.**
- Raise awareness about climate disasters in the region and promote good practices to prevent them.
- Improve digitalization and exchange data of travel routes and water quality between vessels in the Baltic Sea and research institutions in the region.
- Foster dialogue between various shipping companies to reduce their impact on the environment.

- Enhance ocean literacy within the crews and personnel in the harbor.

Policy Area Health: Promoting Health of People in the BSR

- **Enhance general health literacy and knowledge about different approaches on mental health treatment within the region.**
- Develop a Covid-19 warning application that can be used in the whole BSR. This application could also be used for future diseases.
- Discuss reasons and possible prevention methods of pandemics in the future and the means of reduction of pharmaceuticals in livestock farming.
- Coordinate a common action plan for future pandemics and discuss how to prevent border closings in the Baltic Sea Region due to disease spread control.
- Develop a support group with explanation videos and chatting options where people can seek help if they have psychiatric illness.
- Create and maintain Instagram and/or Facebook pages with professional medical advice on doing sports for people with different diseases.
- Improve structural issues in patient experience within the healthcare sector.
- Enhance general health literacy and knowledge about different approaches within the region.
- Reduce waiting times for mental health support.
- Build a regional response system and helplines.
- Receive funding for a mental health fund to ensure patients they can be treated by mental health specialists all over the Baltic Sea Region if help cannot be provided in their country of residence.
- Collaborate on planning of infrastructure and use of chemicals, e.g., hospital design, use of nutrients and fertilizes that affect the human health.
- Collaborate on destigmatisation campaign and create common first aid methods for mental health patients.
- Promote research on multi-national health resources and ways of how synergies can be built.
- Create a common Baltic Sea Region health agenda to be presented on the EU level .
- Share data and become more transparent to support research.
- Organize roundtable discussions on various topics.
- Develop eco-friendly materials for disposable medical instruments.
- Create a platform for professional psychologists, psychotherapists and social workers to talk about mental health: mental illnesses, share their tricks and tips on how to help yourself and where to look for professional help, how to support others with mental illnesses or those who go through a difficult period in their lives.

Policy Area Innovation: Innovation for sustainable economic growth

- **Cross-border Mentoring Programme: connect students and mentors from different BSR countries.**
- Create a platform for innovation projects for startup developers with educational material about starting up a business with a guiding possibility by experienced mentors.
- Acquire funding for research and development of water cleansing systems focusing on large bodies of water such as the sea.
- Common seed funding for start-ups located in the region with guidelines on how to use different environments for innovation in the most efficient way.
- Create a cluster map of the Baltic Sea Region to help young innovators find the best place to start their business within the BSR, not necessarily well-known innovation hubs.
- Digitalize processes within various industries to increase free data flow and result in more accurate statistical analysis, online databases, including finances of those industries. The statistical analysis of variables obtained from different industries can help develop accurate models for spatial planning.
- Take a value chain approach to map out how different areas of the region are involved in a certain process (e.g., case study of how byproducts/waste from one industry, like fashion, is being used in another industry and how this could be scaled).
- Create a cross-border Mentoring Programme to connect students and mentors from different BSR countries.
- Develop a platform for students with innovative ideas to connect with businesses which could fund a trial of students' idea. The platform could help the idea go from testing to potential implementation.
- Create a BSR Youth "Hackathon" involving innovative youth from all over the BSR to come together and develop ideas to solve regional problems.
- Support a scholarship program "BSR in practice", where students would participate in exchange between BSR countries combined with an internship opportunity.
- Implement a common Baltic Sea research institute, funded by different countries and stakeholders, for innovation that shapes the region.
- Enhance focus on innovation towards more sustainability in industries where the Baltic Sea Region is strong, like nature tourism, manufacturing industries and harbors.
- Enhance building the region as an innovation ecosystem.
- Encourage young social entrepreneurship at local and regional level.
- Implement small funding for social entrepreneurs.
- Use social media to inform about sustainable small local businesses producing e.g. food and clothing.
- Actively attract FDI in the Baltic Sea region based on its own industrial structure and consumption structure. Accelerating regional transformation can promote Estonia's e-civil society model, accelerate e-government and e-office construction, and reduce bureaucracy.
- Actively use EU funding to take the lead in improving infrastructure construction in the region and create a favorable environment for external investment.
- Improve the construction of the education system, especially the reform of the higher education structure, increase the expenditure of scientific research funds, and create an intellectual property-based area.
- Create a start-up fund for new companies to form connections across the Baltic Sea region and advertise regional issues.
- Increase financial literacy in the Baltic Sea Region.

Policy Area Bioeconomy: Reinforce sustainability of agriculture, forestry and fisheries by promoting an integrated approach

- **Install mechanisms to prevent invasive species from spreading in the Baltic Sea Region.**
- Implement mobile grazing units all over the BSR. The aim of the units is to save natural meadows from going extinct.
- Organize a Baltic Sea Circular Economy Day where people can see how old objects and material can be reused and retransformed for various, even innovative, purposes.
- Use AI to identify enhanced mechanisms to make fishery and forestry more sustainable.
- Enhance close cooperation with the BeUBio project by Nordregio and search for financial support wherever possible.
- Develop interdisciplinary research projects for young people from different countries.
- Development of concepts for elementary education (more education for educators) on bioeconomy, enabling young people to teach their parents.
- Focus on bio innovation to lead industries into a sustainable future.
- Advocate for tax cuts for bio economical products and raise taxation for resource-heavy products.
- Spread awareness about the importance of water clearance and cooperation of different regulatory bodies in all of the countries.
- Support and open more Baltic Sea Animal Rehabilitation Centers.
- Take direct action to reduce the input flows of microplastics into the open waters. Develop region-wide restrictions for product containing microplastics and limiting the spread of microplastics in wastewaters by introducing stricter requirements for washing machine filters.
- Introduce nature-based solutions for managing stormwater in urban areas. These solutions should be accessible in terms of funding.

☼ Promote the preservation of natural meadows within the BSR. They are home to hundreds if not thousands of different living species, and also play a huge role in maintaining biodiversity.

Policy Area Education: Social Dimension of the EUSBSR

☼ **Promote internship and work placements for young people in the region in the decision-making bodies of the region.**

☼ Develop awareness campaigns for young people about opportunities across the region. Create a deliberated career choice platform to help students and young professionals to find an ideal career based on their talents.

☼ Promote internship / workplaces in different countries across the Baltic Sea region.

☼ Focus on young people with fewer opportunities.

☼ Address the very young in our region with a book for children promoting the SGDs that is designed by artists from the region (find more information about the project on the Facebook page: "Baltic Sea Belongs to Kids").

☼ Implement the Baltic Sea Region University on a ship sailing through the Baltic Sea. Focusing on SDG 13 and 14, namely 'climate action' and 'oceans and seas' the university will ensure research-oriented, interdisciplinary and intercultural learning.

☼ Create a social project which helps mothers of young children to receive an online education while raising their children (with a scholarship during training) and afterwards helps with subsequent employment. This would enable mothers to spend reasonable time with children while advancing in their career.

☼ Raising attractiveness of maritime jobs, promotion of economic activity in and near the sea regions, making use of present EU policies, solutions and frameworks and their implementation (Farm2Fork, limiting plastic waste etc.).

Policy Area Nutri: reduce nutrients in the sea

☼ **Develop and promote the use of fertilisers made from sea biomass.** This would prevent additional nutrients added to the sea which decreases oxygen.

☼ Promote ecological agriculture at the macro-regional level.

☼ Preserve local ecosystems through a common approach for nature preservation.

☼ Develop a program to create a financial incentive for farmers targeting the reduction of pollution with nutrients in the sea.

☼ Develop an education programme for VET schools and Higher Education Institutions to inform those who are working with nutrition about the impact of their future work within the field.

Policy Area Culture: promoting culture and the creative sector

☼ **Create a Baltic Sea Region youth cult(ure) to enhance visibility and create a we-feeling among young people.**

☼ Influence the social awareness sphere.

☼ Promote the "Baltic Sea identity" through various events open for the public.

☼ Partner up with already existing initiatives.

☼ Create a Baltic Sea Region sports event with all kinds of BSR specific sports.

☼ Organize a festival for the youth of the BSR (such as the Baltic Sea Region Crocodile Festival).

☼ Implement a small and non-bureaucratic regional grant system for young people to implement their ideas.

☼ Enhance cooperation between NGOs and schools as well as youth centers and schools about creative processes.

☼ Develop opportunities in schools for students to set up and run their companies (e.g., via Junior Achievement).

☼ Develop short-term courses for young people without long-term commitment.

☼ Develop local cultural spaces.

☼ Develop youth clubs at museums and theatres.

☼ Implement personal stories and discussion evenings as a promotion tool.

☼ Create opportunities for young people to share their personal stories about cultural and creative experiences (on social media, blogs, events).

☼ Educate young professionals to promote cultural events and processes, as the spectrum of opportunities is already very vast.

☼ Organize Baltic Sea Olympics where people in the region can connect via sport.

☼ Create events bringing communities together but also aiming to solve littering problems. Examples may include cleaning up beaches, organize educational events for society to gain more awareness.

☼ Create a "BalticVision" song competition.

☼ Cooperate with educational institutions and develop a "Crash course of neighboring BSR state languages".

☼ Create a BSR news outlet in the languages of all the BSR states to educate the countries about political and cultural situation across borders.

Policy Area Energy: competitive, secure, and sustainable energy

- **Promote a Common Action Plan on energy security within the region in collaboration with Norway.**
- Encourage fair prices for sellers and consumers e.g. better prices per sold kWh solar energy produced by private households.
- Promote a Common Baltic Sea Region hydrogen grid.
- Support renewable energy clusters within the Baltic Sea Region.
- Utilize the recent renewable energy "hype" and work on a common energy security plan.
- Work towards regional independence from coal, gas, and nuclear energy.
- Use international funds to make the region wind energy source hub for green hydrogen.

Policy Area Spatial Planning: encourage the use of maritime and land-based spatial planning in all member states and in cross-border cooperation

- **Create participatory mechanisms for spatial planning.**
- Enhance participatory spatial planning.
- Ensure participation of marginalized groups.
- Focus on cultural urban planning in rural areas.

Policy Area Hazards: focuses on reducing the use and impact of hazardous substances

- **Advocate for an EU level disposition regarding acceptable levels of hazardous substances.**
- Find suitable disposals for hazardous waste to reduce the impact on nature.
- Use AI for detecting hazardous waste in the Baltic Sea.
- Propagate ban of landfill.

Further topics that should be discussed

- **Baltic Sea Region integration** is the subject of regional studies, both conducted within the framework of economic geography and interdisciplinary. Deep knowledge about the region contributes to its further development and functioning. The main goal of the EUSBSR is to strengthen cooperation in the region and develop the potential resulting from EU enlargement. The future role of the Strategy and its effectiveness depends on the one hand, on the political readiness of the participating countries for transnational cooperation, and, on the other hand, on the actions taken by the EU institutions.
- **Create an EUSBSR film** – exploring how to increase public interest and knowledge of the current challenges facing the Baltic Sea. This could involve producing an interactive film exploring the Baltic Sea above and below land and involving all policy areas of the EUSBSR; this would provide an educational purpose tailored to both adults and young people in the region. It could be accompanied by other materials and activities to enrich the interactivity. This interactive film could also explore different potential outcomes of climate action in the region and what the Baltic Sea may look like in the future.
- **Break the silos between the different PAs** and ensure closer collaboration.
- **Climate and Baltic 2030 Action Plan** as a cross-cutting topic.
- **Digitalization** of the processes within the industries to increase free data flow and result in more accurate statistical analysis, online databases, including finances of those industries. I think this point could be implemented mostly into Spatial Planning (but also benefit other PAs: Tourism, Innovation, Transport)-> the statistical analysis of variables obtained from different industries could help develop accurate models for spatial planning.
- Integrate **Ukrainian refugees** into the work of the EUSBSR and re-brand the Baltic Sea Region.
- More **integration and interconnection** within the region to ensure peaceful collaboration, a common Agenda with only a few points but clear common goals should be established (e.g. common fiscal policies, common defense strategies, common approach towards international bodies).
- For the Baltic Sea countries, the Council of the Baltic Sea States should **establish a unified Baltic Sea protection mechanism, policies and regulations,** establish a Baltic Sea Protection Alliance, and adopt a rotating chairman system, so as to better implement the regulations. In addition, establish an external review and oversight mechanism and invite the EU or IOC-UNESCO to conduct external oversight.
- Increasing wealth requires a **well-functioning labor market that promotes geographic and occupational mobility**. Together with sustainable growth and resource efficiency, risk prevention and management, as well as climate adaptation and mitigation, are another horizontal issue, and mitigation strategies are closely related to the wealth and competitiveness of the region. Adaptation, prevention and risk management actions are needed to cope with the challenges posed by climate change and strengthen the region's resilience to the risks of natural and man-made disasters. Inaction today could have devastating economic impacts in the future, as well as adverse environmental and social development impacts in the region, which could have been avoided by better prevention or mitigation of such disasters. Therefore, in order to improve the welfare of the region, it is extremely important to fully realize the domestic market and lower unreasonable trade barriers in transactions with neighboring states.
- **Create a maritime cluster**. It's a way of organizational structure that creates a space for intensive cooperation between a broad range of social actors. There's no one rigid and precise definition of a maritime cluster. Depending on the region, needs, political and cultural traditions the clusters differ from each other. The core idea is to create a platform/ favorable environment for greater cooperation between social actors whose work targets are similar or the linkages between them make cooperation possible and beneficial. Speaking very broadly we can deliver an illustrative example of a maritime cluster that gathers under one umbrella local fishing fleet, seafood processors, restaurants, harbor administration, units devoted to maritime research from regional universities and municipal authorities. The main goal is to coordinate the efforts of members, create communication channels to exchange views, and information and generate innovations based on common sources/experiences, optimize their work to cut unnecessary expenditures, and optionally run collaborative ventures. Principally it's scrutiny of assets and prospects to coin a joint policy for the future including input of all stakeholders. This flexibility is a great virtue of clusters when it comes to their application to concrete problems which varies immensely from region to region. The government with local authorities and the community can ascertain what kind of structure would serve the best for their unique needs and then build the cluster tailored perfectly for them. Only the central governments have adequate legal and

economical power to make it happen, therefore their role is to create favorable conditions for clusters to thrive (grants, changes in law, public investments, round panels, boosting local efforts, subsidies tailored to specific needs). However, the clusters are based on trust between the actors and their best assessment of the needs of local communities. How these clusters could look like:

— Connect the region: The clusters are the most relevant tool to increase the level of trust between the social actors domestic and international. The idea is to create a dense net of relations and dependency links that connect the region solidly.

— Increase prosperity: Clusters favor local development over cooperation with remote companies. Hence such an approach should considerably limit the expenditures for supplies (also reducing pollution transmitted by transportation) and boost local companies seeking for the local workforce.

— Public subsidies, the concentration of local potential, an alliance between practice and knowledge, the inclusion of all stakeholders within the community would boost local economies and generate vital thriving communities.

— Scale effect: broad and closer coalition with a larger budget (additionally subsidized by the government agendas) supported by science might risk investments in cutting-edge blue technologies (i.e aquaculture, underwater energy turbines) in turn generating new jobs, revenues, and attributing to reaching sustainability.

☼ Denmark just introduced a **CO2** tax that is around 50 EUR higher than the EU's... that could be a model for the BSR to have a faster greener transformation backed by a capable market.

☼ **Social Inclusion in the Baltic Sea Region:**

— Accessibility regulations throughout the region and a joint App where people with disability can find out the state of accessibility during travelling/living in the Baltic Sea States.

— Exchange in the Baltic Sea Region about inclusion in education.

— Inclusive exchanges in the Baltic Sea Region and living projects.

Your knowledge kit: resources, literature, and further information

Where to start?

☼ Contact the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum (**info@ bsyp.eu**) and or your local, regional or national youth council and inquire about organisations, bodies or individuals to cooperate with.

☼ Read the SALTO youth participation toolkit and other guiding documents provided by the EU, the Council of Europe (CoE) and other institutions.
   — **SALTO – youth participation toolkit**
   — **CoE – Youth work: the role of local and regional authorities**

☼ Read the policy statements, recommendations and guiding documents developed by the youth in the Baltic Sea Region

Guiding documents and recommendations

☼ **European Youth Goals**
☼ **Baltic Sea Youth: Vision beyond 2030**
☼ **Manifesto for Young People by Young People to Shape the European Cooperation Policy**
☼ **Baltic Sea Youth Declaration 2020**
☼ **Baltic Sea Youth Declaration 2019**
☼ **Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum 2021 – policy recommendations**
☼ **Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum 2022 – policy recommendations**
☼ **BSSSC youth – Drøbak declaration 2022**