



Council of the Baltic Sea States

and

The Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum

**BSRYF**

Terms of Reference

Adopted by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials on 30.06.2022

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Background.....   | 3  |
| 2. Purpose of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum.....             | 4  |
| 3. Activities of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum .....         | 5  |
| 4. Structure and role of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum ..... | 6  |
| a. Participation structure.....                                  | 6  |
| b. Committee of youth representatives (CYR).....                 | 6  |
| c. BSRYF election meeting .....                                  | 7  |
| d. Steering Group .....  | 8  |
| 6. Role of the Council of the Baltic Sea States .....            | 9  |
| 7. Further clarifications .....                                  | 10 |

## 1. Background

Engagement of young people in the development of the Baltic Sea Region was highlighted in the CBSS Ministerial Declaration *A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2030* – the Vilnius II declaration, with the following text:

**“Young people participate and are represented in a meaningful way in institutions and decision-making processes giving impetus to efforts to reach a more resilient, gender equal and safe Region.”**

The *Terms of Reference for the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum* (BSRYF) beyond the Baltic Sea Youth Platform Erasmus+ funding period have been developed to clarify the relationship between the BSRYF and the CBSS—including the involvement of the CBSS Secretariat. The purpose of the document is to define responsibilities, financing, and activities, and to generally support and facilitate operation of the BSRYF without it becoming an embedded structure of the CBSS.

## 2. Purpose of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum

The BSRYF has as a primary focus to support the implementation of the *Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2030* – the Vilnius II Declaration. This can be achieved through meaningful youth participation in institutions and policy making in the Baltic Sea Region.

The BSRYF is guided by the following aims:

- Create networking possibilities for youth organizations, initiatives, and individuals in the Baltic Sea Region to ensure a broad representation and impact of young people, active in the region.
- Educate young people on decision making in the Baltic Sea Region and decision makers on how meaningful and valuable youth participation is ensured.
- Convey opinions and facilitate communication on initiatives between young people and decision makers in the Baltic Sea Region.

The BSRYF shall strengthen the youth cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region and closely cooperate with already existing youth structures on local, sub-regional, national, macro-regional, European, and global level to ensure that synergies are used, and overlaps are being avoided.

The BSRYF shall closely cooperate with decision makers in the Baltic Sea Region focusing especially on the CBSS. Further cooperation may include the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), while being open to further collaboration if resources allow.

### **3. Activities of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum**

The Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum aims to foster meaningful youth participation in the Baltic Sea Region. All activities implemented by the BSRYF shall be in accordance with the aims of the CBSS and the UN Agenda 2030.

All activities listed are subject to financial resources available.

A key priority of the BSRYF is to obtain and/or source financial support for the activities.

Activities may include but are not limited to:

- Organizing regular online networking meetings for BSRYF partners and participants
- Publishing policy recommendations written by young people in the Baltic Sea Region
- Hosting an annual stakeholder meeting for Baltic Sea Region youth organizations
- Supporting the CBSS presidency to hold a CBSS youth ministerial forum or event
- Coordinating specialized sub-groups, youth working groups in support of the CBSS agenda, CBSS expert groups, task forces etc., and/or CBSS Secretariat units
- Supporting activities within other fora, working groups, expert groups, EUSBSR policy area groups and other relevant organizations in carrying out meaningful youth participation
- Implementing a communication strategy to ensure a broad representation
- Conducting research, analysis, and monitoring of issues within the BSRYF scope

The BSRYF activities and results shall be promoted and made accessible through the BSRYF and the CBSS website.

Through virtual means, the BSRYF ensures transparency and accessibility in addition to easy access to resources for decision makers, BSRYF participants and others.

## **4. Structure and role of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum**

The BSRYF shall be an open format for youth cooperation and meaningful youth participation in the Baltic Sea Region.

The governing body is the Steering Group.

The Committee of Youth Representatives (CYR) shall explore new perspectives and policies concerning core themes of the CBSS, facilitate youth participation and promote the operations of the BSRYF.

### **a. Participation structure**

BSRYF participation will be open to pan-Baltic organizations and networks, national and regional youth councils and youth organisations in the Baltic Sea Region (partners). In addition, individuals or groups engaged in activities related to the scope and purpose of the forum, are also eligible.

The eligibility of the partners and other participants will be reviewed by the CBSS Secretariat.

Registrations on the BSRYF mailing list will be used to maintain a membership registry.

There are no membership fees.

Organizations and networks outside the Baltic Sea Region interested in the work of the BSRYF – such as other macro-regional youth initiatives – can register as associated partners and receive information on the activities.

### **b. Committee of youth representatives (CYR)**

The CYR shall consist of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 persons between the age of 16 and 30 years old, representing various organizations and backgrounds from the region.

The CYR elects its own chair/co-chair and other relevant officers and appoints its representatives to the Steering Group.

The CYR will receive guidance and support from the CBSS Secretariat, the Steering Group or other CBSS bodies upon request.

The CBSS Secretariat shall by March every year, issue an open call for members of the CYR. The number of members to be elected and their term shall be stated in the open call. The election of the CYR will be held through a BSRYP election meeting.

### **c. BSRYP election meeting**

BSRYP election meeting is a meeting of partners and participants of the BSRYP. The meeting shall take place annually in an online or in a hybrid format, called by the CBSS Secretariat after the open call for CYR members is closed.

The invitation shall be sent at least 10 days prior to the meeting and distributed through the BSRYP mailing list. The CBSS Secretariat shall distribute a list of nominated candidates, in accordance with the results of the open call.

The purpose of the meeting is:

- to update partners and individuals on the status of the BSRYP and ensure transparency on all activities within the BSRYP.
- to elect the members of the CYR
- to elect the organizations representing the BSRYP partnership in the Steering Group
- to vote on the implementation of strategic documents prepared by the Steering Group

Participants representing an established youth organization – national or regional youth council or other umbrella organization – or pan-Baltic youth network can cast up to 3 votes for each candidate or in every election.

All other participants will have 1 vote in the meeting.

Registration of participation in the election will be done in the beginning of the meeting.

Those representing an established youth organization or network must send a “Vote Delegation Form” to the CBSS Secretariat prior to the meeting.

The CBSS will check the status of the organization or network and eligibility to cast up to 3 votes.

All votes for candidates shall be cast through a secret ballot and secure online tools provided by the CBSS Secretariat.

In the case of voting on documents or recommendations, non-secret ballots shall be cast. In case any of the participants of the election meeting opposes, a secret ballot can be cast.

The members of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials shall be invited as observers to the meeting to fulfill their advisory role in the BSRYP.

#### **d. Steering Group**

The tasks of the Steering Group may include but are not limited to:

- Development and review of guidelines for the functioning of the BSRYP
- Advising the CYR, working groups, and partners
- Proposal of topics suggested by the CYR to the CSO and other CBSS and macro-regional structures
- Approval of new projects, or additional elements/activities of the BSRYP
- Creation of timelines for activities in consultation with the CYR
- Review of cooperation partners

The Steering Group consists of five persons:

3 representatives of the BSRYP CYR

2 representatives of the BSRYP partner organizations and networks

The Steering Group elects its own chair/co-chair and other relevant officers.

The Steering Group shall be supported by the CBSS Secretariat.

The Steering Group shall aim to convene at least 3 times per year, initiated by the CBSS Secretariat, the CYR or one of the partner organizations represented in the Steering Group.

The members of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials shall be invited as observers to the meetings to fulfill their advisory role in the BSRYP.

The Steering Group shall be appointed on an annual basis, starting on 1 July every year, following the rotational pattern of the CBSS presidencies.



## **5. Role of the Council of the Baltic Sea States**

The CBSS in its role as an intergovernmental forum for macro-regional cooperation is coordinating and supporting activities of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum within the approved CBSS budget.

The CBSS Secretariat acts as secretary and coordination point of the BSRYP in close collaboration with the CBSS presidency and CSO, whilst operational decisions and representation of the BSRYP shall be youth driven and decided by the CYR.

The CBSS CSO maintains an overall advisory and supervisory role. The CSO shall endorse the guidelines for the functioning of the BSRYP and any amendments before their entry into force.

The CBSS CSO shall decide the annual CBSS financial support for the BSRYP in the form of a separate budget item in the overall CBSS Secretariat budget.

Voluntary and/or project related financial support may be accepted in addition to CBSS funding upon the decision of the Steering Group.

The Secretariat shall ensure proper accounting and audit of all funds related to the BSRYP and its activities.

The CBSS Secretariat shall within the approved budget line operate and maintain the BSRYP website and ensure that its content does not violate applicable law or run against the principles and policies of the CBSS and its cooperation partners.

The CBSS Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Steering Group and the CYR, shall develop a list of eligible budget expenses which shall be submitted to the CSO for approval and, if necessary, revision.

Within the approved BSRYP budget line the Steering Group may decide to cover costs for participation of organizations, networks, groups or individuals in BSRYP activities in exceptional cases.

The CBSS Secretariat shall not be responsible for other expenses incurred by organizations, groups or individuals and their participation in the BSRYP.

## **6. Further clarifications**

The Terms of Reference enter into force on 1 January 2023 and shall be valid until 30 June 2025. They can be prolonged by decision of the CBSS CSO. The CSO – after consultation with the Steering Group – can at any time decide to change the format or make other alterations to the Terms of Reference or functioning of the relationship between the CBSS and BSRYF.

The CBSS Secretariat will ensure the basic functioning of the BSRYF in the interim between the entry into force of these Terms of Reference and the election of the CYR and Steering Group, for instance with the possible involvement of participants of the earlier Baltic Sea Youth Platform.

Before the end of April 2025 an assessment of the BSRYF, its function and effectiveness shall be conducted. The criteria and format for assessment shall be agreed by the Steering Group and presented to the CSO for approval by the end of 2023.

The Steering Group and the CBSS Secretariat, together with the CBSS Presidency, shall oversee the assessment which shall be presented to the CSO for consideration. The observations and opinions of the CYR shall be reflected in the assessment.

Any CBSS member country, the Steering Group or Committee of Youth Representatives may, at any time propose amendments to these Terms of Reference to the CSO for consideration, including, the suspension or termination of the BSRYF or its activities. In case of suspension or termination, on-going BSRYF activities may only continue if explicitly decided by the CSO.