



Council of the Baltic Sea States

and

# The Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum (BSRYF)

**DRAFT** Guidelines for the operation of the BSRYF

Adopted by the members of the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum  
[dd.mm.yyyy.]

Endorsed by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials on [dd.mm.yyyy.]

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## Glossary

**The Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum (BSRYF)** (also referred to as *the Forum*) is a newly developed forum for youth participation in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Launching in 2023 for young people and decisionmakers to connect and develop policies and projects in an intergenerational dialogue.

**The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)** The CBSS is an intergovernmental platform for both political dialogue and practical cooperation. Consisting of 10 Member States and the European Union, it supports a regional perspective on global challenges.

CBSS member states are: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden.

**The Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States** (also referred to as *the Presidency*) rotates between the CBSS member states annually. Each Presidency is led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of a given country. The Foreign Minister chairing the Presidency is the main speaker for the organisation.

**The Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)** are representatives appointed by the Foreign Ministers of the CBSS member states that guide the work of the organisation, and the functioning of the CBSS Secretariat.

**The Terms of Reference for the BSRYF (ToR)** is a document developed to clarify the relationship between the BSRYF and the CBSS. The purpose of the document is to define responsibilities, financing, and activities, as well as to generally support and facilitate operation of the BSRYF without it becoming an embedded structure of the CBSS.

**The Guidelines for the Operation of the BSRYF** (also referred to as *the Guidelines*) is a guiding document with the purpose of complementing the ToR with additional explanations and input about the function of the BSRYF.

# **1. Background and Purpose of the Guidelines**

This document should be taken in accordance with the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum's Terms of Reference (ToR). The aim of the Guidelines is to complement the ToR with additions from youth representatives to ensure a youth-driven process. The purpose of this document is to clarify definitions, explain the *modus operandi* of the Forum and lay the groundwork of basic rules for the members to follow. The Guidelines act as a supplementary document to the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum ToR.

The structure of this document is based on the one of the ToR. The Guidelines are written for those parts of the ToR which require further explanation, and also contain additional information about the workings of the BSRYP where further guidance may be needed, and which is not contained in the ToR.

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

The BSRYF aims at creating a forum for young people to address challenges in the Baltic Sea Region, make decision makers notice relevant issues, enhance trust in policy making processes and suggest possible solutions or innovative projects. Since the BSRYF will closely cooperate with the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), which has a broad network of experts and access to decision-makers through its member states and status, the BSRYF will have access to these contacts through events and meetings which will be a regular part of the BSRYF work.

By participating in the creation, implementation, and coordination of the BSRYF or its work, or being involved in the BSRYF in any other way, an individual – representing a member state, organisations or oneself – promises, with the best of their knowledge, to act with good intentions and good faith, contributing to building a region that is more youth inclusive.

The amount of influence the BSRYF and its youth work will have on the region will primarily depend on the activeness of the members and the willingness of the decision makers, stakeholders and CBSS include the BSRYF and its outputs in their activities.

In addition to the core aims of the BSRYF that are described in the ToR, the Forum will focus on the representation and the involvement of youth in decision-making processes. This will be achieved through coordination between different BSRYF partners when implementing the activities of the Forum.

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

The concrete activities of the BSRYP will be decided on by the members of the Steering Group (SG) in close coordination with the Committee of Youth Representatives (CYR) and the CBSS Secretariat, within the scope of the core themes, mentioned in chapter 3 of the ToR and in chapter 4 section a) paragraph 6 of this document.

Alongside the activities that are described in the ToR, the members of the BSRYP, together with the SG and the CYR, will be able to make suggestions for additional activities that the BSRYP could take on.

These suggestions will have to be considered by the CBSS Secretariat in dialogue with relevant stakeholders and possible funders.

The BSRYP will not have legal status. Therefore, when required, the CBSS Secretariat can apply for funding from third parties in the name of the BSRYP and in accordance with the SG and the CYR.

The CBSS youth activities shall be linked to those of the Forum and developed and carried out in consultation with the BSRYP organs whenever possible and relevant.

## **4. Implementation Clarifications of the Terms of Reference**

As stated in the Terms of Reference, chapter 4: *The BSRYP shall be an open format for youth cooperation and meaningful youth participation in the Baltic Sea Region.* Meaningful youth participation in this sense includes but is not limited to:

- Active engagement in regional issues in accordance with the aims and responsibilities of the CBSS,
- Commitment to uphold responsibilities with the aim of ensuring that decisions taken by the BSRYP organs are being carried out, and
- Having regular contact with the CBSS Secretariat as well as CSO as defined in the ToR and the guidelines of the BSRYP.

The practicalities of carrying out these activities are described in the ToR and the Guidelines.

The activities of the BSRYP will rely on third-party funding, while the CBSS will fund the coordination of the BSRYP in order to secure its basic functions. Further partner organisations and interested partners are invited to fund modules of the BSRYP to secure regular activities and long-term perspectives for the BSRYP.

The BSRYP is by design an ever-evolving structure, in order to adjust its work and workings to better respond to future requirements, in a way that the BSRYP organs would see fit. Both the ToR and the Guidelines lay the foundation of the BSRYP; however, adjustments might take place on the initiative of and in consultation with the SG, CYR, CBSS Secretariat or CBSS CSO.

### **a. Participation Structure**

1. Organisations and individuals from or residing in one of the CBSS member states can participate in the BSRYP. These countries are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, and Sweden.
2. The BSRYP is an open forum that values diversity of participants and promotes inclusion of all young people in the BSR. Positive discrimination of marginalised groups, such as indigenous young people, is encouraged if the governing body agrees.

3. Gender and geographical balance should be pursued in all organs of the BSRYP.
4. The official language of the BSRYP is English. Other languages can be used additionally in meetings when decided by consensus by all present parties. Official documents, including meeting minutes, shall be written in English.
5. There are two organs of the BSRYP, the Steering Group (SG) – the governing body – and the Committee of Youth Representatives (CYR) – the “legislative body”.
6. Both organs shall carry out their work in accordance with the core themes of the CBSS and the priorities of the CBSS Presidency, which include, but are not limited to:
  - Promotion of citizens participation in macro-regional activities
  - Meaningful youth participation and youth cooperation in a macro-regional context
  - Youth input to culture and creative industry cooperation
  - Higher education, such as developing specific Baltic Sea Region elements for curricula in Higher Education Institutions
  - Youth participation in developing mechanisms to prevent and combat human-trafficking
  - Youth participation in civil security cooperation
  - Youth driven or co-designed projects to promote the implementation of the Baltic 2030 Action Plan
  - Youth participation in projects regarding the promotion of good mental health of the Baltic Sea Region societies
  - Youth participation in projects enhancing education, training, and lifelong-learning opportunities for the labour market.
7. As stated in the ToR chapter 4, section a), the *“BSRYP participation will be open to pan-Baltic organisations 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 to join the Forum will be reviewed and decided on by the CBSS Secretariat in accordance with the



best judgement of the decision makers after relevant information about the organisations and individuals has been collected.

The necessary criteria to be eligible for participation in the BSRYP are as follows:

- a. **Organisations and networks** must operate in accordance with values and objectives of the CBSS, represent a wide range of young people within the Baltic Sea Region and be active in macro-regional cooperation.

Besides, the organisation or network must either be:

- A macro-regional, national, or regional youth council within at least one CBSS member state, or
- An organisation or network that operates within the Baltic Sea Region and within at least 3 CBSS member states, or
- An organisation active in one or more of the member states with a specific focus on CBSS relevant topics.

- b. **Other groups and individuals** must be engaged in activities related to those of the Forum (see the priorities mentioned in paragraph 6.) and be a national of or legal resident in a member state of the CBSS.

- c. In exceptional cases, entities or individuals that are not fulfilling the abovementioned criteria may be considered by the CBSS Secretariat for eligibility to participate in the BSRYP activities after a reasoned request has been submitted to the Forum or the CBSS Secretariat. The members of the SG and the CYR have the right to veto such decision.

## **b. Committee of Youth Representatives (CYR)**

1. The CYR members are elected during the annual BSRYP election meeting (see section c). To guarantee both continuity and renewal, there shall be two types of electoral terms: a one-year term and a two-year term. Half of the available CYR seats shall be of a two-year term and the other half of a one-year term.

Every candidate can run once for each type of seat; hence, every CYR candidate is eligible for a maximum of three years in the CYR.

2. The CYR shall consist of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 individuals, depending on the specific needs of the CYR and the BSRYP at a given time. In addition, the number of members will also depend on the capacity of the CYR to handle the specified amount. The number of members will be decided by the CBSS Secretariat in consultation with the SG and CYR and advertised in the open call for the CYR member election.
3. The CYR:
  - Elects its chairperson and vice-chair during the BSRYP election meeting.
  - Elects other relevant officers (advisers, deputies, speakers, etc.) within 14 days after the BSRYP election meeting.
  - Appoints its three representatives to the Steering Group within 14 days after the BSRYP election meeting.

The election of the new chair/co-chair and relevant officers require an absolute voting majority.

The representatives to the Steering Group must be appointed by consensus. There shall be two deputy positions for each representative.

4. The CBSS Secretariat shall, by the end of March every year, issue an open call for members of the CYR which will remain open for at least 14 days. The number of members to be elected and the duration of their term shall be stated in the open call. The election of the CYR will be held through a BSRYP election meeting at least one month after the open call was sent.
5. The CYR may create working groups responsible for specific projects or assignments. The size and composition of the working groups are decided by the CYR.
6. The CBSS Secretariat will support the CYR and the Working Groups in developing Terms of Reference for the operation of every group.

### **c. BSRYP Election Meeting**

1. The ToR states that the *“BSRYF election meeting is a meeting of partners and participants of the BSRYF”*. Since the CBSS has a large network of partners, and since the BSRYF intends to involve youth in the decision-making process, any partner organisation or individual (including BSRYF participants) can attend the meeting where they will also get informed about the work of and open positions at the BSRYF. The election meeting will function as an open event for anyone interested in youth inclusion. This could lead to further youth engagement in the partner organisation's work.
2. The election meeting is chaired by the previous chair, vice-chair of the CYR or a representative of the CBSS Secretariat. The decision as to who chairs the meeting is taken by the parties involved in the meeting and at the beginning of the election meeting.
3. As stated in the ToR, *“the invitation [to the election meeting] shall be sent at least 10 days prior to the meeting”*. The CBSS Secretariat shall aim to send the meeting invitation at least 30 days prior to the meeting, to give every organisation enough time to participate actively in the meeting.
4. The agenda of the election meeting is drafted by the CBSS Secretariat and shared no later than seven days before the BSRYF election meeting.
5. The BSRYF election meeting shall be valid when attended by representatives of at least six different CBSS member states, no less than two organisations/networks, and no less than six participants.
6. Representatives of youth councils or eligible organisations can delegate their vote to other participants in the meeting if prevented from attending.
7. The election of the CYR members and representing organisations for the Steering Group require a simple majority to be elected.
8. During the vote on the implementation of strategic documents a simple majority procedure is used.
9. As described in chapter 4, section c) of the ToR: *Those representing an established youth organisation or network must send a “Vote Delegation Form” to the CBSS Secretariat prior to the meeting*. The “Vote Delegation Form” is a document designed to help the CBSS Secretariat to evaluate partners and grant them the right of three votes as stated in chapter 4,

section c) of the ToR. The form will be available on the CBSS website and shall be signed by a legal or appointed representative of the organisation or network. The draft of the form is attached as an Appendix to the Guidelines.

10. When the voting process takes place online, secure online tools to cast votes will be used. The criteria of selection of these tools must include anonymity and competitive price of the service. The final decision regarding the tools is taken by the CBSS Secretariat.

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

1. The three representatives of the BSRYP CYR in the Steering Group shall have two deputies which can attend meetings and carry out the responsibilities of the members of the Steering Group in case the members of the Steering Group are not available.
2. The Steering Group shall be appointed on an annual basis, starting its term on 1 July every year, following the rotational pattern of the CBSS presidency. The organisations participating in the Steering Group shall be elected during the BSRYP election meeting to allow enough time for transition.

# Appendix

## Vote delegation form

*This is the **Vote delegation form** for the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum election meeting. The meeting will take place on DD.MM.YYYY online.*

*Within the election meeting organisations or networks submitting a vote delegation form and eligible as an official organisation or network in accordance to the rules specified in the BSRYP guiding documents, can cast 3 votes to elect the Committee of Youth Representatives and the organisations represented in the Steering Group, as well as all other votes cast during the meeting.*

*The signed document shall be sent to [youth@cbss.org](mailto:youth@cbss.org) prior to the BSRYP election meeting.*

## Partner information

*This section is aimed to collect partner information about each organisation or network to evaluate the eligibility.*

Name of the organisation

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Legal status

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Address:

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

### Delegate information

*This section is aimed to collect information regarding the representative of the organisation / network in the election meeting*

Delegate Name & Surname:

\_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Legal / appointed representative information

Name & Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Role / Titel: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

I [Representative's name] hereby confirm that [Delegate's name] is eligible to represent [organisation name] in the BSRYP election meeting.

The organisation operates in accordance with the values of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

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Signature of legal / appointed representative

*Thank you for submitting your vote delegation form.*