

# ESTONIA'S CBSS PRESIDENCY 2024–2025



**ESTONIAN PRESIDENCY**  
2024–2025

Estonia holds the presidency of the CBSS from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. The Estonian Presidency proceeds from the principle of continuity and long-term focus, therefore Estonia aims to build its activities on the achievements of the previous presidency, Finland.

Estonia concentrates on both political and practical cooperation. In terms of political dialogue, the meeting of the Foreign Ministers will provide a suitable platform to advance the issues important for resilience, sustainable long-term development and cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

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## Practical cooperation

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Practical cooperation, aimed at delivering concrete results, is based on three CBSS long-term priorities – Regional Identity, Safe and Secure Region and Sustainable and Prosperous Region. All three remain highly topical. Taking into account the changing security environment of the Baltic Sea region, the main focus will be on strengthening resilience and sustainability.

The CBSS should continue its strong support to Ukraine, especially on issues important to Ukrainians and where the CBSS possesses substantive competence. Estonia intends to continue good practices of inviting representatives of Ukraine to expert group meetings as appropriate, organizing dedicated events to strengthen collaboration with Ukrainian counterparts and seeking additional opportunities for cooperation, for instance in areas of civil protection of the population, anti-trafficking, border guard cooperation, heritage protection and youth engagement.

In addition, the Estonian Presidency pays attention to well-focused cooperation with other regional organizations and formats in the Baltic Sea region, based on the CBSS priorities and taking into account the need for an efficient division of labour and avoidance of duplication.

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## Safe and Secure Region

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In the framework of the Safe and Secure Region priority, the Civil Protection Network (CPN) will focus on practical cooperation and learning from failures as well as from successes. The focus will be on raising the population's crisis awareness and involving volunteers (including young people) in civil protection. Exchange of best practices in developing early warning systems will be continued. Additionally, special attention will be paid to mass evacuation and sheltering related challenges.

The Expert Group on Children at Risk (CAR) will prioritize the active involvement of children in shaping policies and practices that have a direct impact on them and will focus on developing guidelines for effective child participation. This priority is derived from the mapping of national child protection systems that was presented by the Norwegian Presidency in 2022. The Estonian Presidency will also facilitate discussions and the adoption of a renewed mandate and 5-year strategy for the expert group.

The Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) will focus on co-operation with third countries, namely Central Asian and Balkan regional anti-trafficking networks for tackling crimes of trafficking where the Baltic Sea region is the destination. Particular emphasis will be on prevention, investigation and victims' assistance, especially for migrant labour, but also for persons engaged in prostitution. Further opportunities will be explored to organize the training courses on the basis of the Handbook for Embassies and Diplomatic Missions on How to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking. The Estonian presidency will also discuss the extension of the mandate of the expert group, including the Strategy and ToR.

The cooperation between CAR and TF-THB groups that started during the Finnish Presidency in tackling online child trafficking will continue and include designing guidelines for specialists working with

children in order to raise children's awareness. The use of artificial intelligence will be explored as a potential new tool to counter the online recruitment of children.

Baltic Sea Region security and safety will be enhanced by supporting the continuation of the operational cooperation under the Baltic Sea Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC) forum with an emphasis on increased situational awareness and preparedness for unexpected situations. Estonia will take up the presidency of the BSRBCC in 2025.

Baltic Sea region by providing young people with platforms for contributing to the most pressing regional issues. The Estonian Presidency is also a partner in organizing the CBSS Summer University in Tallinn.

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## **Sustainable and Prosperous Region**

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Regarding the Sustainable and Prosperous Region priority, the Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME) will carry on the work on the creation of green corridors launched by the German Presidency and continued by the Finnish Presidency. The Estonian Presidency will work towards reaching a common understanding of the meaning of a green corridor and creating a network of interested parties. As a new initiative, the Presidency will aim to start the preparations (mapping existing projects and defining interested countries) for creating a digital twin of the Baltic Sea, i.e. collecting real-time data in order to simulate marine processes and in this way have a better understanding of the condition of the sea.

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## **Regional Identity**

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With regard to the Regional Identity priority, tangible and intangible cultural heritage forms the cornerstone of the identity of the Baltic Sea Region and plays a crucial role in connecting the states. Collaborative efforts and sharing the best practices contribute to strengthening the preservation of cultural heritage, improving the living environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change and enhancing security. Key areas of collaboration include increasing the energy efficiency of heritage buildings, safeguarding cultural heritage in a crisis, preventing the illicit cross-border trafficking of cultural goods, focusing on unique underwater heritage and 20th-century dissonant architectural heritage, and finding solutions for value conflicts related to heritage.

Active and consistent youth participation strengthens their role in discussions and decision-making processes shaping the future. The Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum and other similar youth engagement formats continue to play an important role in the