

# DECLARATION FROM THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE CBSS YOUTH MINISTERIAL 2024

Helsinki, 22-24 May 2024



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## Background

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Finland hosted a CBSS Youth Ministerial in Helsinki 21-24 May 2024, focusing on youth engagement and macro-regional cooperation. The event was part of the Finnish CBSS Presidency programme. The program included several key visits and workshops designed to encourage dialogue and collaboration among young people from the Baltic Sea region. The workshop themes were closely aligned with the themes of the Finnish CBSS Presidency program. During the Youth Ministerial, the focus was on youth participation, EU elections, security, resilience, and civil crisis management.

This declaration summarises the discussions held at the Youth Ministerial 2024 workshops and highlights the message of the participants that they wish to convey forward.

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## Youth Participation

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We believe that youth participation shouldn't be up to chance factors but systematically integrated into decision-making processes. To achieve this, we propose the following:

- ▼ **Legislation:** Through international cooperation on legislation and opportunities for youth participation, we can ensure equal possibilities for young people throughout the Baltic Sea region. Harmonising laws and policies will create a unified framework that supports and encourages youth involvement.
- ▼ **Information:** Effective outreach, engagement, and access to knowledge are crucial. Providing clear and accessible information on how to participate and engage with decision-making

processes will help young people to find information and opportunities available to them.

- ▼ **International Cooperation & Dialogue:** We propose setting quotas for participating countries to ensure diverse and inclusive representation. Practical cooperation between young people and decision-makers should be established to foster dialogue and mutual understanding, leading to more informed and effective policies.

By implementing these measures, we can create a framework that supports meaningful youth participation across the Baltic region, ensuring that young voices are heard and considered in all aspects of decision-making.

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## European Identity

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Shared values, history, culture, and lifestyles extend beyond borders. Our aim is to foster peace and solidarity between European countries, a unity that becomes especially evident in times of difficulty, such as during a crisis.

As European advocates, we recognise that educating young people about how the European Union functions brings them closer to a European identity and increases their involvement in the democratic process within the EU. We must include young people in shaping the future goals of the EU to ensure they are aware of their voice and its importance.

Young people see the need for greater accessibility and support for interrrailing. We need to find more similarities and connect people on a more personal level. This can be achieved through shared days or initiatives. Therefore, we urge governments to take decisive action and renew our call for an initiative to celebrate a Baltic Sea Day synchronised on the same date in each country.

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## Security and Resilience in the BSR

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For young people, civil protection means a general presence of security and preparedness. Civil protection goes beyond armed conflict, and it should be considered a part of everyday life. Youth should be prepared and have the knowledge necessary to do their part in civil protection. Also, we should work on the gender divide in the different sectors of security and civil protection, like the police and firefighters. Young people propose the following solutions:

- ▼ **Raising civil awareness and education through accessible means on themes of civil preparedness.** Introducing a yearly course on civil protection themes in school curriculums, covering topics like first aid, to make education on civil protection more engaging and relevant to youth.
- ▼ **Establishing a single, authoritative source of security information in each country,** capable of providing guidance and instructions to various actors, including NGOs, during crises such as pandemics or natural disasters.
- ▼ **Creating an inclusive environment that encourages participation from all individuals,** regardless of gender, disability status, etc., in all sectors of security and civil protection, without discrimination.